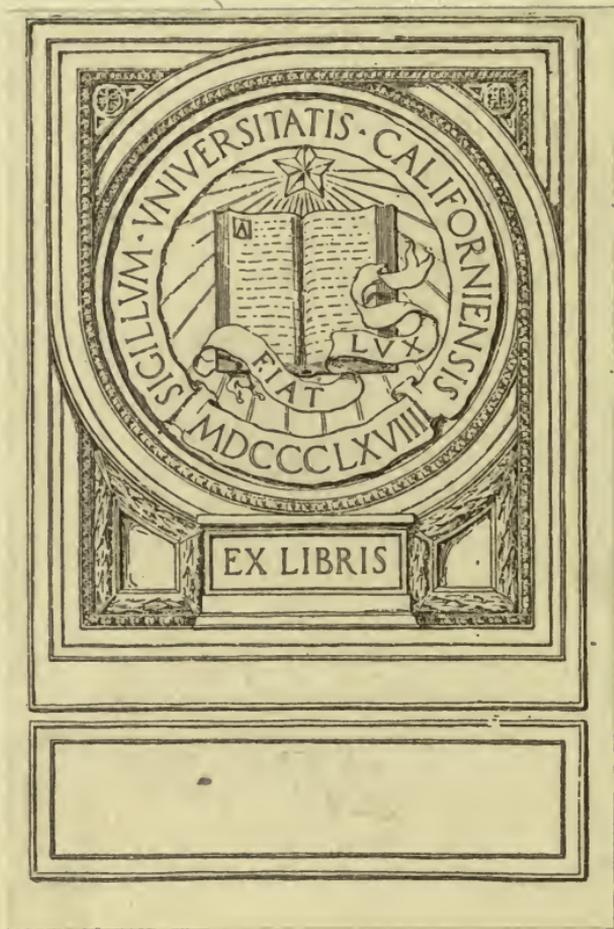


HISTORY
OF THE
CENTRAL CHAMBER
OF
AGRICULTURE

A. H. H. MATTHEWS



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FIFTY YEARS OF
AGRICULTURAL POLITICS.

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Bathurst

CAPTAIN CHARLES BATHURST, M.P.
Chairman, 1915.

Frontispiece

FIFTY YEARS
OF
AGRICULTURAL POLITICS,
BEING
THE HISTORY
OF THE
CENTRAL CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE,
1865—1915.

BY
A. H. H. MATTHEWS,
Secretary since 1901.

*This Book is dedicated to the memory of one of England's worthiest
sons and Agriculture's staunchest friend—the late*

CLARE SEWELL READ.

“Theoretical work brings more to pass in the world than practical; reality
can make no stand against a revolution in the world of ideas.”—*Hegel.*

“History may be thought to prove that of all human infirmities there is
none productive of more extensive mischief to society than fanaticism.”—*Prescott.*

London :

P. S. KING & SON, Ltd.,
ORCHARD HOUSE, WESTMINSTER, S.W.

1915.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

I have one explanation to offer. Throughout this book I have endeavoured to avoid importing party bias into any question under review. Holding no brief for either party, I have not hesitated to state plainly what seemed to me the halting action or the manifest ignorance displayed by both parties alike on various occasions. It has been pointed out to me by one or two friends, to whom I have shown portions of the manuscript, that the use of the term "Radical" as applied to one political party may be offensive to some of my readers. The term is not so intended, and it will be found that the expression is only used when reviewing the period commencing in 1906. I may be wrong, but the impression conveyed to my mind by events is that the Liberal party retired from the stage in 1905, and that its heritage has since been entered on by a party to which, as defined by the dictionary, the term I have used seems more appropriate.

I could wish that this work had been entrusted to abler hands than mine—to some other who would have invested the subject with greater interest than it was within my capacity to supply. The book has been written at odd moments, in the face of several difficulties, and under pressure of time. If there be mistakes, I must plead the foregoing in extenuation. I owe many thanks to Mr. E. C. Lister-Kay, who has kindly read and corrected the proofs, and to Mr. W. T. Chadwin, who has given me much assistance and helped to prepare the index.

A. H. H. M.

PREFACE.

THE history of the Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture is, in effect, the political history of British farming. As such, this volume, so ably compiled by the present Secretary of the Central Chamber in the fiftieth year of its existence, deserves to be carefully perused, and thereafter kept as an invaluable book of reference by everyone who claims to be in any sense an Agriculturist. Courageously and clearly expressed, it is the record of the indefatigable labours of courageous men belonging to both political parties in the State, united in the prosecution of a common and patriotic aim. These men have been inspired by the sincere conviction that upon the well-being of Great Britain's oldest industry depend the ultimate economic welfare of her people, their physical and mental virility, and that healthy outlook upon national problems which alone can maintain her pre-eminent position among the nations of the world. Braced by this inspiration, they have fearlessly and persistently, in face of the criticism of political colleagues and the powerful opposition of industrial monopolists, predatory middlemen, and unpractical urban faddists, voiced the true needs of Agriculture, and co-operated whole-heartedly to protect it against unfair and prejudiced treatment and crushing financial burdens. In this Agricultural Roll of Honour will ever be included the honoured names of Clare Sewell Read, Albert Pell, Massey Lopes, Richard Paget, Henry Chaplin, Jasper More, St. John Ackers, Bowen Bowen-Jones, Jesse Collings, William Stratton, Pickering Phipps, William Lipscomb,

Thomas Duckham, Carrington Smith, Arthur Frederick Jeffreys, Francis Channing, Edward Strachey, George Courthope, and Luke White. The efforts of these men, and of others of like ideals and calibre, and the machinery of the Central Chamber, of which they made full and effective use, and which was skilfully operated by a succession of highly competent secretaries (such as Patrick George Craigie, Robert Henry Rew, and Alfred Herbert Henry Matthews), brought about the passage into law and subsequent strenuous administration of the Diseases of Animals Acts, thus enabling live stock husbandry to become the salvation and sheet-anchor of British Agriculture when the prolonged agricultural depression which commenced in 1879 rendered the production of cereals unprofitable and the farmer's calling precarious. To their efforts it is due that, in spite of the ever-increasing preponderance of the urban population and of urban influence in Parliament, the continuance of the indefensible process of throwing upon rural ratepayers and upon the least profitable of important British industries the main cost of maintaining national education, trunk roads, and other services of a national character, to the exoneration of personal wealth, has been to a large extent frustrated, and Royal Commissions and successive Governments have been compelled to admit its injustice and to hold out hopes of its abandonment. It is thanks to them that British railways are not now, owing to their preferential tariffs and their unfair rates for the consignment of all British farm produce, particularly that of a perishable character, carrying overseas produce to the entire exclusion of that raised at home: that the unpractical education in rural elementary schools, which was inaugurated by the Education Act of 1870, is gradually giving way to mental equipment better adapted to the after career of their inmates: that

there exists to-day a Board of Agriculture with a Government representative in both Houses of Parliament, and its political Chief in the Cabinet, to watch over agricultural and horticultural interests; and, above all, that through harmonious co-operation and friendly discussion between landowners and tenant farmers at meetings, both of the Central Chamber and of its Associated Chambers, and the strenuous efforts of public spirited men, who have subordinated personal considerations to the advancement of rural industry, the land laws have been reformed, and the position of progressive and industrious farmers rendered more secure through the medium of the Agricultural Holdings Acts. For the existence upon the Statute Book of the first of these Acts, as well as for its subsequent periodical amendment, the Central Chamber has been mainly responsible. There is probably no greater tribute to its usefulness and to its conciliatory spirit than the fact that, while rival politicians, generally of urban extraction, have been noisily propounding schemes and promoting legislation for the supposed benefit of the agricultural community, the leaders of the industry—landlord and tenant-farmer alike—have, through the medium of the Chamber, quietly set themselves from time to time to put their own house in order on practical lines. Every industry—and, owing to its sporadic distribution, none more than Agriculture—has found effective combination essential to its fair treatment on the part both of other interests and of the Legislature. This necessity was recognised by the enlightened founders of the Central Chamber of Agriculture in 1865—long before the bulk of the great industrial combinations, with their immense present-day political power, were even dreamt of, and more than thirty years before any other agricultural organisation of a national character and with like objects came into being. What is in store for British

Agriculture in the future no one can prophesy with any confidence. The Great European War may—and God grant that it will—cause the nation at large to realise the wisdom, and the ultimate economy, if not the necessity, of making Britain more self-contained in the matter of food production for her teeming population. Definite encouragement, fair treatment, and official recognition will then, it is hoped, be extended by Government to those, whether landowners, yeomen, or tenant-farmers, who carry out to the best of their ability and resources this eminently patriotic duty. Pending such time, however, the loyal cohesion of agriculturists of all classes for the protection of themselves and their industry is more than ever essential. In this task the Central Chamber will welcome the assistance of other and younger organisations formed for a like purpose, and they on their part will, without doubt, recognise the immense debt of gratitude which British Agriculture owes to the pioneer work of the great organisation which fifty years ago embarked upon the fruitful and epoch-making activities of which the following pages are so faithful a record.

CHARLES BATHURST.

LYDNEY PARK,

April, 1915.

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THE HISTORY OF
ENGLAND

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

IN the history of every nation there arrives a time when, as civilisation becomes more pronounced and society more complex, its individual members organise themselves into groups for offensive or defensive purposes. In this country, isolated by the sea, and not afflicted with the existence of secret societies, the earliest grouping took the form of Guilds, which were founded rather for the sake of advertising the wares of members of those bodies or for undertaking joint adventures in foreign and unknown lands, than for political purposes. Until towards the end of the eighteenth century the staple industry of the country was agriculture. Apart from a limited number of merchants, shopkeepers and fishermen, practically everyone was more or less directly interested in the land, and the proportion of the population living in towns was a comparatively negligible quantity. Members of Parliament represented nominally small pocket boroughs, but actually the whole district round those boroughs, and in the great majority of cases were either landowners themselves or members of landowning families. Their interest was in, and their knowledge was of, the land; with the exception of a certain number of representatives of the legal profession, Parliament was in the main recruited from this class.

In those days the interests of town and country had not developed the sharp divergences of to-day, and Members of Parliament were grouped rather as personal supporters of the leaders whom they elected to follow as individuals, than as actuated by differing policies or conflicting interests. Even when the manufacturing classes increased in numbers and forced their way within the walls of Parliament, the conflict of interests between different forms of industry was

not realised for a long time ; not, indeed, until successive Reform Acts had so extended the franchise that the composition of Parliament had been entirely altered, the proportions of population between urban and rural areas been completely reversed and the landed interest, as a separate entity, been reduced to a minority in the House of Commons.

(This long immunity of the land from attack (for Whigs and Tories were alike of the landed class) not only resulted in apathy among those landowners who still held seats in Parliament, but also in their individual knowledge of the industry becoming, with rare exceptions, practically atrophied, while those among them who did realise the danger of this Parliamentary neglect yet held the view that they could not press the claims of agriculture, lest they might be accused of attempting to further their own private interests.) The sneer of the Socialists of to-day—that the agricultural party has always been over-represented—is without foundation, for, though it is true that Parliament has always had among its members a fair number of men who owned land, yet these have for several decades, with a very few exceptions, held their seats as representatives of every industry save agriculture, with the consequence that they have too much ignored, not only the welfare of their own landed property, but also the interests of those among their constituents who were owners or occupiers of agricultural land.

This nice delicacy of feeling has never swayed urban representatives, and their noisy clamour has occupied the whole attention of Parliament for more than half a century.

The truth of this charge of neglect on the part of land-owning Members of Parliament is proved by the tentative way in which agricultural organisation first developed. The earliest form of association was a mere gathering of farmers or owners for discussion upon practical questions of cultivation ; for instituting competitions among their tenants and labourers ; and for arranging for simple experiments among themselves. The starting of Farmers' Clubs in the period 1835 to '45 was but a continuation and expansion of this work on rather more definite lines. It was taken for granted

that, with "the Squire" in Parliament, their political interests were safeguarded, and that all they had to do was to improve their methods of production; the idea that some machinery was required to spur their Member into doing his duty by them never entered the heads of these worthy farmers; such a suggestion would have been looked upon as little less than profane.

It is true that sporadic attempts were made from time to time to combine for political purposes, but these were short-lived only, and were really much more the result of political wire-pulling than of spontaneous agricultural effort. The Agricultural Protection Society, which came into being about 1844 for the purpose of organising opposition to the proposal to repeal the Corn Laws, and evaporated into thin air in two or three years, is an instance in point.

It was not until 1860 that the most far-sighted and most intelligent of the landed classes saw the necessity of the creation of some definite organisation to look after the welfare of agriculture in Parliament, whose business it should be to initiate beneficial legislation and to oppose the unfair attacks which were being directed from various quarters. The general sense of this necessity did not, however, find expression until 1865, when Mr. Charles Clay addressed his historic letter to the Press,* proposing the formation of a Farmers' League or Central Chamber of Agriculture, while it was some months later before this proposal germinated into sentient life. Even then the Chambers confined their action to academic debate, and some years more elapsed before they actually took the offensive by raising debates in Parliament. (Thus, down to about 1870, while nominally agriculture was well represented in the House, agriculturists outside Parliament were slowly realising the fact that they were in effect not represented at all.)

Scotland was again the pioneer, for the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture was founded one year before the English Chamber, and a history of that body is about to be published. It is not improbable that the successful foundation of the

* Appendix No. 2.

northern Society encouraged Mr. Clay to try and follow their good example.

Details as to the earliest movements in the direction of agricultural organisation are difficult to ascertain, for the records are so scattered, accounts of early societies were so badly kept and have been sometimes entirely lost, and the time available for research is so limited, that a full history of the subject cannot be offered here ; nor is it necessary to give more than a few notes to illustrate the tendency towards combination.

Apart from the important agrarian movements, usually but wrongly spoken of as rebellions, organised by Wat Tyler and John Ball, "The crazy priest of Kent," in 1381, by Jack Cade in 1450, and Robert Kett of Norfolk in 1549, which are fully dealt with by Mr. Jesse Collings in his "Land Reform,"* the earliest known society of any sort appears to have been "The Honourable Society of Improvers in the Knowledge of Agriculture in Scotland," founded in 1723, with its headquarters in Edinburgh. This was almost entirely composed of land-owners. The next was the Farming Club at Gordon's Mill, Inverness, 1758-65 (*Aberdeen Journal*, 30th May, 1911). Thus Scotland was the pioneer. The Brecknockshire Agricultural Society, founded in 1755, claims to be the oldest society of its kind south of the Tweed. The Bath and West and Southern Counties Society was started in 1777, and became the most important Society in England until the formation in 1838 of the Royal Agricultural Society of England. Other Societies, however, existed previous to 1777, for in the *Journal* of the Society for 1891 (Vol. I., Fourth Series), reference is made to agricultural societies at York, Norwich and Manchester, which gave Mr. Rack (the founder of the Bath and West Society) the idea of starting a similar society in the West of England.† An Agricultural Society also flourished at Odiham, Hants, in 1785, for in June of that year Arthur Young was elected an honorary member, in recognition of his

* Longmans, 1906.

† *Journal* of Bath and West and Southern Counties Society, 1913, vol. viii., Fifth Series.

valuable work on behalf of Agriculture. The Highland Agricultural Society was instituted in 1784, the Holderness Agricultural Society in 1795, and the Smithfield Club in 1798.

By far the most important of all these early movements was the establishment of the Board of Agriculture in 1793.* The scheme originated with Sir John Sinclair, who urged it upon Pitt for some time before the Premier gave his consent. The Board was instituted by charter, which declared it "to be for ever thereafter a body politic and complete." It was not a Government Department, though Parliament gave it some sort of recognition and an annual grant of £3000. Sinclair was its first President, and Arthur Young Secretary, under whose guidance much valuable work was done for agriculture, but it came to an end in 1822, when all the records and documents were sent to the Tower. There must be a mass of useful information among those papers, but their present whereabouts is unknown. In 1821 the Board arranged the first *National Agricultural Show* at Aldridge's. It is worthy of note, too, that it recommended the Allotment system, and that Sir John Sinclair was an advocate of "three acres and a cow."

About the year 1836 a movement was started for promoting Farmers' Clubs, and reports of these were published in the *Farmer's Magazine* in the early 'forties. The same authority refers to an organisation called "The New Central Agricultural Association," started about the year 1838, and amongst others mentioned in that magazine were Asbocking (Essex) in 1838; Arundel, Braintree and Bocking, 1840; Burton-on-Trent, Bromsgrove, Botley and South Hants, 1844; Collingham, 1840; Croydon, Dalton (Lancs), Dorking, Exminster, Framlingham, 1839; Fairford, 1840; Grove Ferry (Kent), Guildford, Hadleigh, 1840; Harleston, 1838; †

* R.A.S.E. *Journal*, 1896. Hansard XXX., 949-53.

† The Harleston Farmers' Club held its first regular meeting on 9th February, 1838. It claims to have been the second Club started for discussing methods of Agriculture, and to have commenced the agitation in favour of Tenant Right. On 14th June, 1843, it rescinded the rule excluding discussion on political matters, but still forbade debate on those of a party nature. It published a volume about 1850 giving a summary of its work for 12 years.

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West Herefordshire, Ipswich, March, Monmouth, Moreton-Hampstead, Maidstone, Martock, North Walsham, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Norton (Sheffield), Great Oakley, 1840 ; Peterborough, Probus (Cornwall), Richmond (Yorks), 1841 ; Stowmarket, Wenlock, Winchester, Wrentham, 1839 ; Winfrith, Wingerworth, Wakefield, Weald of Kent, 1846 ; Yoxford (Suffolk), 1838.

Many of these Clubs are now defunct, and it is doubtful if any of them have a continuous history up to date, with the exception of Newcastle-on-Tyne and Winfrith. The Weald of Kent Club of to-day only started in 1911, and the present Maidstone Farmers' Club only claims to date back to 1850.

The Farmers' Club was founded in 1841-2 under the title of "The British Farmers' Club." Its objects were:—(1) "To enable persons interested in agricultural pursuits to meet together and converse upon and discuss subjects of practical utility, and (2) to be a central body which might represent local farmers' clubs, and to which they might be affiliated." In 1844 it was agreed that no political subject should be debated, but in 1849 a resolution was adopted suggesting the repeal of the "Malt and Hop Tax," and "the revision of local charges unjustly bearing upon the farming interests." At one of their debates, in December, 1853, a paper was read by Mr. G. H. Ramsey (Vice-President of the Newcastle Farmers' Club) "On the Advantages of a Central Farmers' Club," in which he strongly urged the desirability of union between all the Farmers' Clubs in the country. He even used the term "Chamber of Agriculture" and was thus in all probability the first to suggest the establishment of the Chambers. At the conclusion of the discussion on Mr. Ramsey's paper the resolution was unanimously carried:— "This meeting is of opinion that the London Farmers' Club should act as the Central Farmers' Club of the kingdom." Some effort was made to give effect to this resolution, and communications had previously taken place between this central and local Clubs in regard to affiliation, but apparently without much success. Mr. S. B. L. Druce (Secretary of

the Farmers' Club from 1875 to April, 1905) thought that the real reason why it was not carried out was that the Club would have become more of a political organisation than many members cared for.* In its long history of usefulness the Club has gone through several vicissitudes, but it is now in a stronger position than at any previous time. It became associated with the Central Chamber in 1892, and the joint dinner of the Central Chamber and the Farmers' Club, held in December every year, which was instituted in 1894, has helped to cement the close bond of union now existing between the two Societies.

In 1879 a new society, called the Farmers' Alliance, was started. Mr. James Howard was elected Chairman, and Mr. W. E. Bear, who was then editor of the *Mark Lane Express*, was the Hon. Secretary. It was a sectional movement; the supposed interests of tenant farmers being the primary consideration, as apart from the general interests of the industry as a whole. The two main objects put forward as its *raison d'être* were to secure the better representation of tenant farmers in Parliament and to alter the law relating to land tenure. As has been the case on other occasions, the new name attracted a number of men who had not identified themselves with existing societies, though, broadly speaking, it advocated no new policy. It existed for some few years, but a split in the camp occurred over the question of Protection, and the association gradually died out.

A somewhat similar movement was started about 1890 under the title of the Federation of Farmers' Associations in Lancashire. A branch of this was formed in Kent, but it also soon died a natural death.

The realisation of the necessity of organisation is evidence of a certain degree of intelligence; the less enlightened members of an industry being always the last to enter any combination formed for their mutual protection. It is natural, therefore, that, generally speaking, landowners should have taken the lead in almost all movements tending to the organisa-

* *Journal of the Farmers' Club*, December, 1892.

tion of agriculturists, since, from their social position and educational advantages, they had greater facilities for realising a situation.

In every industry there are many individuals who prefer to remain isolated. The percentage that will combine may be divided into the capable energetic workers, the apathetic and slow thinkers who will follow their leaders, and the self-assertive individuals who will join anything which gives them a chance of bringing themselves into prominence. The percentage who will not join are the most ignorant, or lazy, of their group. Some of these may refrain from dislike of publicity, while some, being themselves incapable, are jealous of others who are able to understand questions of moment and to take a lead. The selfish men will say: "There are plenty of others to do the work," but these are ready enough to share any benefits that may accrue from such work. There are others who, though incapable of seeing the advantages to be gained by political activity, will appreciate and respond to tangible benefits. In abnormal times, whether caused by threatened or actual attacks from other groups, or by a wave of political feeling, many of those who remain outside the organised ranks will join for a short period, but they soon drop out and can never be relied upon.

These features are not peculiar to the agricultural community only, though probably the followers of that industry are, owing chiefly to the isolated lives they lead, more difficult to organise than any other. At first sight this might seem sufficiently disheartening to prevent the expenditure of energy in any effort to bring them together, but it is a drawback by no means fatal to success, for the unorganised, however numerous, are practically voiceless. Let their feelings be ever so much aroused, they have no leaders, no concentration, no trust in each other, and probably no speakers with knowledge of the matter of the moment. The organised, therefore, even if the weaker, can superimpose their desires upon the whole industry. Notwithstanding this power, it will be found throughout this history that demands made by the Chamber have not been put forward selfishly, but that

legislation asked for has been for the general welfare of agriculture, while nothing has been urged that would be inequitable to other sections of the community.

The following pages will show that the Chambers have met with a gratifying measure of success and have thoroughly justified their existence. The question is often asked: "What have the Chambers done?" This book gives the answer. It is not claimed that all, or even most, of the results recorded here are entirely due to action taken by the Chambers. It is very seldom that any end can be attributed to the influence and efforts of this or that Society; as a rule, many factors are requisite to bring about satisfactory results. The Chambers, however, have no cause to feel ashamed of their record. Rather may they point to it with pride, and as cause for greater confidence and fuller support from their fellow-agriculturists in the future.

CHAPTER II.

CATTLE DISEASES.

It was the enormous losses sustained by stockowners through cattle diseases, culminating in the Cattle Plague of 1865-6, which led to the formation of the Central Chamber of Agriculture, as is shown by Mr. Clay's letter of December, 1865. It was, therefore, only natural that a number of questions relating to this subject should be brought up for discussion at the earliest meetings of the Chamber. On this ground the question of Cattle Diseases is dealt with first in this history.

In 1912 there were 83 outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease, and if we are to judge of the scare which this epidemic caused by the time devoted to it by Parliament and the space given to it in the public Press, it might be classed as one of the greatest calamities that farming has suffered in the whole fifty years under review. If the sensational headlines, and the miles of print dealing with these outbreaks are compared with the matter-of-fact treatment accorded to the subject of Cattle Plague in the 'sixties, we find an unintentional tribute paid to the administration by the Board of Agriculture of the various Diseases of Animals Acts; for it is due to that Department that a long period of comparative immunity caused a mere 83 outbreaks to appear to journalists and politicians in 1912 as of far greater importance than did the 27,815 outbreaks of Cattle Plague in 1865-6. Were we now to be liable to such national scourges among our stock as our farmers suffered from then, it is to be feared that our newspaper people would break down under the strain of finding words to express themselves adequately. In the early 'sixties the country suffered not only from Cattle Plague,

but also from Foot and Mouth Disease, Pleuro-Pneumonia, Rabies, and Sheep Pox, as well as the other scheduled diseases which are still amongst us.

It is worth noting that in matters relating to local taxation it was the general public and the rank and file of members of Parliament who needed educating, whereas in matters affecting cattle diseases it was the farmers themselves who first required enlightenment,* and next the Government and the Government Department immediately concerned that required education. As for the outside public, except a few interested parties, they never have troubled about a subject which appeared to them only to affect agriculture. Of course, there was a certain type of politician (we have him still with us) who was always on the alert for opportunities of attaining a cheap popularity by raising the cry of "interfering with the people's food." Then, as now, no effort to safeguard the people's food supply could be attempted without these vote-hunters making a stir. This was peculiarly noticeable in the early 'eighties, when a serious outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease occurred, and a strong agitation resulted among agriculturists in favour of better administration for its suppression. Most speakers on the subject at that time took care to point out that proper administration would not affect prices, and probably this was rendered necessary because about 1881-2 a group of protectionists, under the banner of "Fair Trade," became very prominent for a few years; and the pseudo free trader then, as now, saw protection in everything he did not understand.

But how short is human memory! The then farmers of England, impressed by their terrible losses, formed their organisation with the view of forcing the Government to introduce compulsory regulations, in order to stamp out and prevent fresh importations of disease, whereas during the last three or four years every Order of the Board of Agri-

* In the Annual Report for 1872 the Council express their belief "that a complete change has taken place in the opinions of breeders and graziers as to the desirability of attempting to repress Foot and Mouth Disease as well as other preventable diseases."

culture imposing restrictions on the movement of animals has been looked upon as a hardship, and petitions and deputations have been sent from local bodies asking for the immediate removal of the regulations "because it hampers local trade so much." Wild letters are inserted in local papers stating that "farmers were not harassed in this way in the old days, cattle were not slaughtered, and most of them recovered." The imposition of any regulations upon any given area is the signal for every crank in or near that area to write and talk as if the Board of Agriculture were the cause of all the trouble.

—Previously to 1866 no machinery existed for voicing the tragedies or expressing the opinions of agriculture, although Mr. Clay refers to some 400 Farmers' Clubs and Agricultural Societies as being "ready to hand." These Societies had been used as a means of getting together the "Cattle Plague Meeting," with some success, but it was soon found that these 400 institutions were by no means "ready to hand." Farmers' Clubs were started to discuss practical questions for the mutual benefit of their members, and there their functions ended. Agricultural Societies existed for the purpose of holding exhibitions and ploughing or other competitions; and, as we know now with more experience, it takes long years, much eloquence, and strenuous effort to move any agricultural organisation out of its particular groove. Under these circumstances it is not surprising to find that the very first resolution (other than those relating to the formation of the Association itself) related to Animal Diseases. It was proposed on 6th November, 1866, by Mr. Clare Sewell Read, M.P., seconded by Mr. T. Duckham, and carried unanimously :

"That the Chairman wait upon the Privy Council and represent that it is the unanimous opinion of the Council that the Orders now in force regarding Cattle traffic be continued to the end of this year.

"That a circular be sent to local Chambers asking their opinion on the present regulations respecting Cattle Traffic, and their views as to proposing any new regulations for the consideration of the Privy Council, to succeed those now in force."

A second resolution was passed at the first annual general meeting on 12th December, 1866, viz.:—

“That the Central Chamber views with alarm the opening of store markets and fairs under licence, and feels confident that there is a serious danger of the spread of Cattle Plague incurred by the relaxation of the stringent regulations which were in force previous to the 7th November last.”

From which it may be inferred that their previous resolution had been ignored by the Privy Council.

At the same meeting the following regulations respecting the importation of foreign cattle and the general cattle trade of the kingdom were adopted :—

“That the importation of foreign stock should be confined to certain ports, specially licensed by Government, which ports should be provided with suitable markets, slaughter-houses, quarantine grounds, and officers. That all foreign fat stock should be forthwith slaughtered at such markets, and that all foreign store stock should be subjected to 28 days’ quarantine before they are permitted to remove inland.

“That if the Rinderpest or Sheep Pox be again imported or break out afresh, slaughtering and compensating powers similar to those of the Cattle Disease Act of February last should at once be put in force, and the district proclaimed.

“That stringent regulations should be made with regard to the expeditious transit and watering of animals conveyed on railways, and that a thorough cleansing of all trucks, pens and lairs and the proper space and ventilation of the holds of Cattle Boats should be enforced by Government inspection.

“That the wilful exposure of any animal suffering from such contagious diseases as Rinderpest, Pleuro-pneumonia, Sheep Pox, Scab, Glanders (*or Foot and Mouth Disease*) upon any highway, boat or railway or in any market or fair, should be an offence punishable with fine or imprisonment.

“That a more stringent inspection of all dead meat, especially that imported from countries known to be suffering from Cattle Plague should be enforced by Government.”

The minutes continue thus :—“Considerable discussion ensued upon these resolutions as to the propriety of including in the fourth resolution as an offence ‘the wilful exposure of animals suffering from Foot and Mouth Disease,’ and the balance of opinion being against the retention of these words, they were struck out.”

Education has evidently made some progress. It is not easy to imagine the reception any speaker who should suggest

the wilful exposure of animals suffering from Foot and Mouth Disease would get to-day. Nor can we now realise that it was necessary to urge the Government Department in charge of cattle diseases* to adopt such elementary precautions as those set out in the resolutions. Yet it took the Chambers many years to get these precautions adopted.

On 18th June, 1867, it was agreed to circulate to all the provincial Chambers a petition to Parliament, praying for the immediate slaughter or effectual quarantine of imported animals, with the result that a large number of petitions were presented to the House of Commons before the third reading of the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Bill. The petition urged that all fat stock should be killed at the port of debarkation, and that store stock should be subject to sufficient quarantine before being moved inland. The Council reiterated this opinion by a resolution on 5th November, 1867, and sent a deputation to the Home Secretary to lay this resolution before him. The deputation was, however, postponed in consequence of an intimation in the Queen's Speech at the opening of Parliament, and of a declaration by the Duke of Marlborough (Lord President of the Council) as to the introduction of a Bill which promised to realise what the Council had demanded.

This measure (the Metropolitan Foreign Cattle Market Bill) was not quite satisfactory, for it was criticised at the second annual general meeting in December, 1867, and witnesses were sent to give evidence in support of their views before the Select Committee to which the Bill was referred. The Annual Report, dated 9th December, 1868, says:—The Council “hailed with satisfaction Lord Robert Montagu's amendments providing that the regulations for cattle importation should be made general.” Efforts were made to support the Bill, not as a satisfactory measure, but as one step toward the attainment of security against imported disease. A decisive Parliamentary majority was obtained in favour of the principle, but weak and imperfect as it was, and too

* The Diseases of Animals Acts were administered by the Privy Council until 1889

limited in its application, it failed to arouse enthusiastic support from agriculturists. In spite of the large majority which voted for the principle, it succumbed only too readily to the attacks of a small opposition. The contest over the measure, however, both in and out of Parliament. brought so many adherents to the side of the Chambers that they anticipated some reasonable prospect of carrying a good Act before long.

1868.

On 31st March, a resolution was passed viewing with satisfaction the regulations on cattle and sheep contagious diseases in force in Ireland, and urging their extension to the rest of the kingdom. This resolution was embodied in a petition which the Council sent to local Chambers, for presentation to the House of Commons.

On 22nd September, the Council issued an "Address" to local Chambers urging them to ascertain if practicable the sentiments of Parliamentary Candidates thereupon, and to endeavour to secure the election of representatives favourable to the views of the Chambers. In this Address the subject of Cattle Diseases is placed first, and all the resolutions passed by the Council up to that date are summarised.

1869.

On 2nd March a series of resolutions very similar to those of 12th December, 1866, were adopted. Soon after this the Government introduced their Contagious Diseases (Animals) (No. 2) Bill, and on 6th April the Council passed the following resolutions, all of which were carried unanimously except No. 9, to which there were six dissentients.

Having considered the provisions of the Contagious Diseases (Animals) (No. 2) Bill this Council Resolves:—

"1. That Regulations for the Proper Accommodation and Watering of Animals in Transit, by Ship or Railway, should be made compulsory.

"2. That Owners of Animals suffering from Contagious or infectious Disease should be required to give immediate Notice of the existence of such Disease to an Authority appointed for the purpose.

“ 3. That Clauses 30 and 54 should be so amended as to give less Arbitrary Powers to Inspectors.

“ 4. That the Slaughter of Cattle which have been in Contact with Plague-stricken Cattle should be made compulsory.

“ 5. That Sheep Pox should be dealt with in the same way as Cattle Plague.

“ 6. That for carrying out the purposes of the Act every Local Authority should appoint a Committee consisting of Magistrates and Ratepayers.

“ 7. That the Slaughter, Quarantine, or Sufficient Inspection of Imported Animals at the Places of Debarkation should be made Compulsory, and not left to the uncertain operation of Orders of the Privy Council.

“ 8. That separate Markets for the Reception, Sale, or Slaughter of such Animals should be established by Statutory Enactment at all places where Foreign Animals are landed.

“ 9. That unless the foregoing Regulations with regard to Foreign Animals be embodied in the Bill, it should meet with the determined opposition of the Chambers.

“ 10. That Compensation for Slaughtered Animals should be defrayed, as in Ireland, out of the Imperial Taxation ; or that, at least, a Moiety of that Compensation should be so defrayed.

“ That every facility and encouragement, by legislation and otherwise, should be given to the carrying of Dead Meat, and to the more complete development of the Dead Meat Trade.”

This Bill was further considered on 8th June, after amendment in Committee, and as it was still unsatisfactory the resolutions of 6th April were re-affirmed. The efforts of the Chamber met with but moderate success for the Bill passed, and the Annual Report for 1869 contains the following reference to the Act :—

“ The Council regret that, notwithstanding the strenuous efforts of their friends on both sides of the House of Commons, so few of their proposed amendments were accepted by the Government. The Act, as passed, leaves the whole action and responsibility of regulating the importation of foreign animals entirely in the hands of the Privy Council ; and the way in which these duties have been performed may be gathered from the fact, that foreign sheep which have been associated with diseased animals have been allowed to go inland, and to spread far and wide through this country the grievous Foot and Mouth Disease from which the agricultural interest is now suffering.”

The Privy Council appointed a Committee to consider the powers entrusted to them by Sections 64 and 75 of the Act of 1869, and a representative of that Committee (Prof. G. T. Brown) attended a meeting on 5th October to discuss this question with the Council. Resolutions were agreed to deciding that animals travelling by railway ought to have the opportunity of drinking at intervals not exceeding twelve hours, and that water should be available to animals at all loading places of railway stations; that time-tables of live stock trains should be published, and each lot of animals be accompanied by a way-bill; that railway waggons should be constructed with spring buffers, spring couplings, and roofed over, and be divisible into compartments; while freedom from undue overcrowding and a proper degree of cleanliness should be enforced; and that ships carrying animals should be licensed and under proper inspection. Most of the suggestions contained in these resolutions were embodied in the recommendations of the Privy Council's Committee.

1870.

The Council expressed their thanks to the Right Hon. W. E. Forster, M.P., by a resolution on 8th November, for the prompt manner in which the Contagious Diseases Act had been put into operation upon an outbreak of Cattle Plague occurring on the Continent; and they urged that the interests of producers and consumers alike demanded that effective regulations for waterside slaughter should be permanently extended to all imported fat animals, with quarantine for store stock.

On the same day they called attention to the exorbitant charges of railway companies for carrying dead meat, and urged a reasonable reduction of their rates, in order to facilitate a supply of meat to populous districts.

1871.

A resolution was passed on 3rd May, on the motion of Mr. T. Duckham, urging the associated Chambers to press for the rescinding of the Privy Council Order of 20th April,

which permitted cattle to pass inland after only twelve hours' detention. In moving this Mr. Duckham said :—

“ They wished the Privy Council to re-enact the Order of September last, which had recently been recalled, with the effect of introducing cattle, sheep and goats from Germany and Holland, where Pleuro-pneumonia was at present raging to a frightful extent. The September Order had been recalled in consequence of the high price of meat, but if anything was necessary for the consumer of meat it was the preservation of the health of their own animals.”

On 7th November the Council resolved that the failure of the Contagious Diseases Act had demonstrated the necessity for compulsory slaughter, or fourteen days' quarantine, of all imported animals. Mr. Gladstone was twice asked to receive a deputation on this subject during the year, but he declined to do so ; consequently, at a meeting in December, 1872, further resolutions were adopted reiterating those passed at previous meetings, and strong language was used as to the careless methods employed by the Privy Council, and of its utter disregard of the expressed wishes of agriculturists. A Committee of the Chamber was then appointed to draw up a set of rules for regulating cattle traffic, with a view to such rules being adopted by the Chamber and pressed on the Government.

1873.

Apart from the Local Taxation Committee, which immediately upon its appointment became a separate entity, this was the first Committee set up by the Chamber, on 4th February. It presented its report to the Council, who sent it to the Privy Council. The Report embodied all the suggestions contained in previous resolutions agreed to by the Council, but did not break any new ground. During the discussion on the motion for adopting the Report it was suggested that Sheep Pox be exempted from the rule as to discretionary slaughtering power proposed to be conferred on Inspectors of the Privy Council, but the suggestion found very little support.

A deputation to Mr. Forster, in conjunction with the Royal Agricultural Society, was proposed, but Mr. Clare

Sewell Read obtained the appointment of a Select Committee of the House of Commons early in the session, to inquire into the operation of the Cattle Diseases Act and the constitution and working of the Veterinary Department of the Privy Council; so the deputation was not arranged. Mr. Read was one of the chief witnesses before this Select Committee, and on behalf of the Chamber Mr. Wm. Stratton, Mr. Thos. Duckham, and Mr. J. A. Clarke (Secretary) gave conclusive evidence as to the want of safeguards and proper arrangements for preventing the spread of infectious diseases. The Report of the Select Committee was considered by a Special General Meeting in December, which expressed its profound disappointment that the Select Committee had come to a decision adverse to any stringent and systematic attempt to repress foot and mouth disease, and declared on behalf of the agricultural interest a perfect readiness to submit to such restrictions as might be necessary to effectually keep that and other diseases in check. This meeting also expressed its opinion that, for the safety of home stock, the importation of foreign live animals should be converted into a dead meat trade. The Annual Report for this year says:—

“The weak and ineffectual conclusions arrived at by the Select Committee as the result of all their inquiry (especially the miserable decision that no change should be made as regards foreign animals) are in violation of the evidence, and opposed to every sound view of the steps which ought to be taken for the sanitary protection of this kingdom.”

1874.

The change of Government, brought about by the general election early in the year, raised the hopes of those members of the Chambers interested in Cattle Diseases, especially as Mr. Clare Sewell Read was given the post of Parliamentary Secretary of the Local Government Board. A small deputation was appointed at the May meeting, to urge upon the Lord President of the Council the importance of giving effect to the views of the Chambers on this subject. The reply of the Duke of Richmond was deemed eminently unsatisfactory. No hope was held out that the Government would

deal with it on the fundamental lines laid down by the Chambers, with regard to either seaport slaughtering or quarantining of foreign animals ; of giving sufficient compensation to stock owners for securing the detection of contagious disease, or for a better supervision of the transit of animals by sea and land.

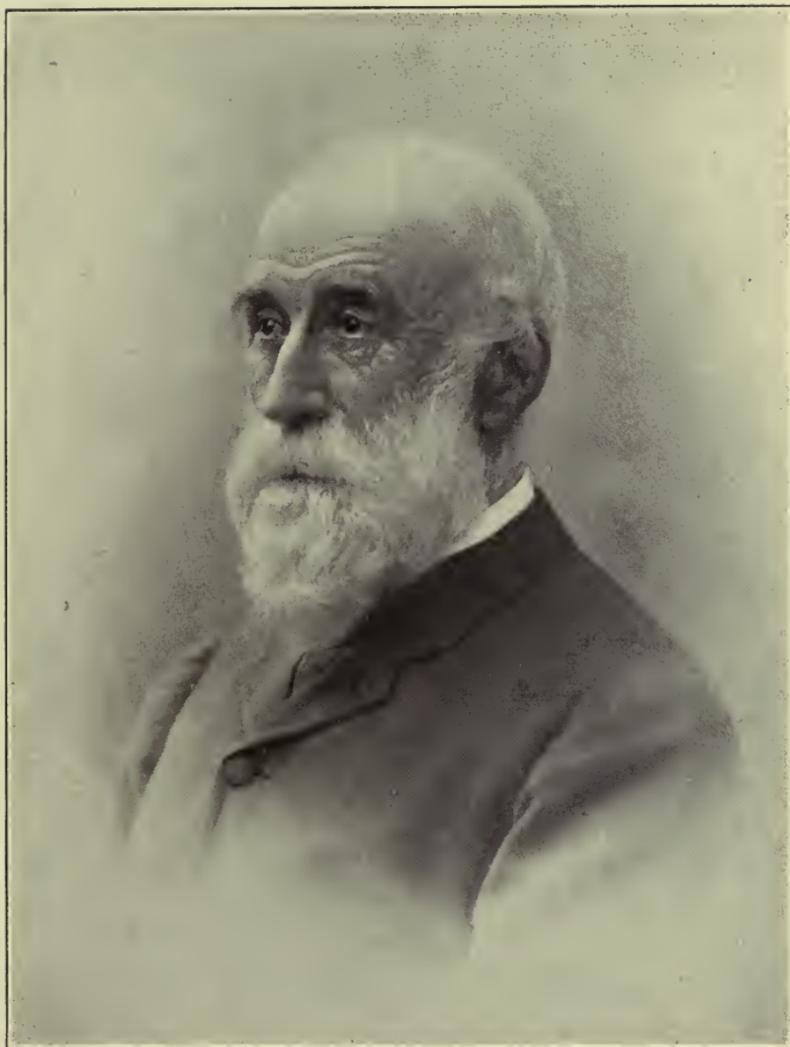
In their Annual Report for this year the Council express their opinion that the long delay of just remedial measures may be, to a great extent, attributable to the erroneous views which have ruled in the Veterinary Department of the Privy Council ; they therefore urged the Associated Chambers not only to renew their appeal for an amendment of the Act of 1869, but also to press for a change in that Department which for years together had failed to save herds and flocks from periodical decimation by imported disease.

1875.

Resolutions were passed in April and November reiterating the opinions previously expressed by the Council, and at the latter meeting it was agreed to send a deputation to the Prime Minister to present a memorial to him setting out their views. Mr. Disraeli, however, declined to meet the deputation, and intimated that all representations on the subject should be addressed to the Lord President of the Council.

1876.

The most important event of this year was the resignation of his office in the Government by Mr. Clare Sewell Read, as a protest against the policy of the Privy Council with regard to cattle diseases. Mr. Read had all along taken a most active part in the work of the Chamber, in educating the public as to their interest in the health of our live stock, in helping to formulate the demands of the Chamber, and in bringing the matter before Parliament. He was almost unknown outside agricultural circles, and the offer of a position in the Government was due solely to his worth and ability. It was no small sacrifice on his part, as he could not look for reinstatement through family influence, nor would his means



CLARE SEWELL READ.

Chairman, 1869.

assure him political prominence. His action was entirely due to his knowledge of the subject, to his strong convictions, and to his honourable refusal to retain connection with a Government which persisted in a policy of which he could not approve. Mr. Disraeli's Government was formed early in 1874, and Mr. Read resigned early in 1876, so that his tenure of office was short. It was long enough, however, for him to have earned the confidence of the Prime Minister, and it brought him the lifelong respect and admiration of all the leading agriculturists throughout England. He was the first and only tenant farmer (using the word in its strict sense) who ever held Government office in this country. "At its earliest meeting in the year the Council hastened to offer to Mr. Read its hearty approval of his honest and consistent conduct in sacrificing office as a protest against the policy of the Privy Council with respect to the prevention of Cattle Disease, and for the sake of upholding the trust reposed in him by the agricultural interest" (Annual Report, 1876).

At the March meeting the Council petitioned the House of Commons to support Mr. Read's motion for uniform restrictions throughout the kingdom for the suppression of disease. The Government gave an assurance of their agreement in the principle of uniformity, and instanced the more extensive and stricter supervision of the transit of animals by sea and land. On 14th March a joint deputation from the Chamber and the Farmers' Club was received by the Duke of Richmond (Lord President of the Council) to urge the necessity of uniform and compulsory regulations, and the deputation was requested to supply in detail the nature of the measures demanded. The members of the deputation, after conferring with the Farmers' Club, submitted to the Council in April a statement embodying their proposals. These were referred to the Cattle Diseases Committee, who reported in May, and their Report having been adopted by the Chamber and the Farmers' Club, was handed to the Lord President. This statement was as follows :—

“ 1. That all foreign animals intended to be slaughtered for meat should be landed at specified ports and sent to markets

separate from those used for English stock. That all such animals should be branded or marked on landing, and not allowed to be removed alive from the place of debarkation.

“ 2. That proper quarantine grounds should be provided by Government for foreign store stock arriving from ‘ unscheduled ’ countries, which stock should not be removed therefrom until seven clear days have elapsed. In the event of contagious diseases breaking out among any lot thus placed in quarantine, the whole should be slaughtered with the least possible delay. Cattle arriving at an English port from any country where Pleuropneumonia exists, should either be slaughtered upon arrival, or be immediately inoculated for the disease and then subjected to a quarantine of not less than twenty-eight days.

“ 3. That in respect of animals from Ireland or other of the British Isles, so long as such islands are actually free from contagious disease, no restrictions should be imposed upon exportation or importation ; animals coming therefrom should, in all respects, be treated as English, Welsh, or Scotch cattle, or animals arriving coastwise at one British port from another ; but in the event of contagious disease existing in either of these islands, no animal should leave such island until the owner has produced a certificate from the local authority of the district that no contagious disease existed upon the farm or premises, or adjoining farm or premises, from which the animals come. Should the animals be unsound, or the owner fail to produce a satisfactory certificate, such animals not to be embarked until they have been subjected to such quarantine as the inspector may order, or in accordance with the rules to be issued by the Privy Council.

“ 4. That all vessels used for the importation of animals be certified by the Board of Trade as to space, ventilation, convenience, &c.; and that regulations for the efficient cleansing and disinfecting of such vessels be issued and rigorously enforced.

“ 5. That, in order to avoid the present diversity of action, all Orders in Council or legislative enactments bearing upon the trade in disease in animals should be imperative, and not permissive ; further, that their application should extend throughout the United Kingdom.

“ 6. That a universal system of local officers be established, such officers (farmers or veterinary surgeons) to be armed with powers to enter at all reasonable times upon farms and premises ; to order isolation of diseased animals, as well as those in contact with them ; also to give orders as to the treatment of infected places ; the owners of cattle or occupiers of premises to possess the right of refusing admittance to such officers until they have undergone the process of disinfection.

“ 7. That provision be made to secure the practice of inspection throughout the three kingdoms being more thorough ; to this end a sufficient number of qualified men should be appointed by Government to act as itinerant inspectors, who should be

charged with the duty of visiting fairs, markets, and ports, to see that local authorities, railway companies, wharfingers, shipping agents, local inspectors, &c., attend to the respective duties imposed on them by Orders in Council or Acts of Parliament.

" 8. That the owner of any animal affected with a contagious disease should be compelled to give immediate notice of such case to the local officer, nor should such animal or those which have been in contact be allowed to be removed, except for the purpose of isolation, until the inspector reports them free from disease.

" 9. That, upon the outbreak of contagious disease in any locality, the local inspector should have the power of prohibiting the movement of animals without an order from the infected farm or premises, and, subject to the local authority, from any adjoining lands or premises the local inspector may deem requisite.

" 10. That, whenever Foot and Mouth Disease or other contagious maladies become general or dangerously prevalent, it should be the duty of the Privy Council to order a temporary stoppage of fairs and markets, and prohibition of removal of animals except by licence.

" 11. That, in respect of Pleuro-Pneumonia, all affected animals be at once slaughtered, and the hides and offal buried; that when immediate notice has been given, compensation be made to the owners at the rate of three-fourths the value of each animal, and the salvage of the carcass to belong to the owner—provided that the compensation and salvage together do not exceed the full value of the animal. That the remainder of the herd be isolated for a period of not less than eight clear weeks.

" WILLIAM STRATTON, *Chairman*.

" 10th April, 1876."

No reply was given until 11th November, when a most unsatisfactory letter was received from the Duke of Richmond; this was discussed at the December meeting and deferred for further consideration to the next meeting.

1877.

This year was signalised by a fresh importation of Cattle Plague (Rinderpest), which spread rapidly over a large part of the country. This outbreak clearly demonstrated (1) the inadequacy of the regulations dealing with imported animals, and (2) the complete control over a contagious disease which a central authority could attain if it took the obvious and necessary action.

The alarm created by this outbreak led to the appointment of a Select Committee of the House of Commons on Cattle Plague and Importation, and the report of that Committee included recommendations which embodied to a large extent the proposals which the Chamber had been advocating for ten years past. This was regarded by the Chamber as the chief Parliamentary event of the year, and encouraged them to increase their efforts to induce the Privy Council to give real protection against disease.

At the February meeting the Duke of Richmond's letter was fully considered, and resolutions were adopted, and sent to the Government, giving reasons for the Chamber's dissenting from the terms of that letter, and for adhering to their statement sent in in May, 1876.

Lord Fortescue (Chairman for the year) raised a debate in the House of Lords early in the Session, and at the April meeting the Council passed a vote of thanks for the able manner in which it had been introduced. This same meeting supported a motion of which their Vice-Chairman (Sir George Jenkinson) had given notice in the House of Commons, in favour of slaughtering imported cattle at the ports of embarkation, except store stock, which were to be strictly quarantined. Members of the Council were nominated at this meeting to give evidence before the Select Committee, and three of them eventually appeared before it.

In November the Council expressed their great pleasure at the terms of the Select Committee's report, and urged the Government to give immediate legislative effect to the recommendations contained therein. The Cattle Diseases Committee said :—

“ Your Committee view with extreme regret the continued reiteration of the groundless imputation that our efforts to obtain security for our flocks and herds against imported disease arise from a desire to procure any reversal of the free-trade policy long deliberately adopted by this country. We have sought protection, not against competition, but contagion from abroad.

“ Your Committee would call attention to the fact that, during the restrictions this year upon the importation of live stock from the greater part of Europe, the prices of meat have not risen, but, on the contrary, are appreciably lower—the natural result

of the comparative freedom of our home stock from disease, and of a largely increased importation of dead meat."

A form of petition was drawn up and circulated to Local Chambers before the year closed, urging Parliament to pass the recommendations of the Select Committee into law. On 13th December a deputation presented a memorial to the Duke of Richmond, praying for immediate legislation, the speakers on this occasion being Mr. Pickering Phipps, M.P., Mr. St. John Ackers, Mr. W. Stratton, and Mr. Duckham. The reply of the Lord President was very satisfactory. He acknowledged the identity of the interests of producers and consumers in preventing the destruction of meat as a result of disease, and promised immediate legislation.

1878.

The Government introduced their Bill early in the Session of this year, but it did not get its second reading until 1st July. The measure was carefully considered at the March and April meetings, and some amendments were put forward; but, owing to the delay in proceeding with the Bill, the Council were unable to meet while it was in Committee, and amendments put forward by urban members of Parliament were accepted by the Government without the agriculturists having any voice in the matter. These amendments were considered by the Council as greatly reducing the value of the measure, especially the provision which gave the right to the Privy Council to admit foreign live stock under certain conditions. The Bill, which consolidated previous Acts, received the Royal Assent, and proved to be a great advance on previous enactments. It was this measure which empowered local authorities to adopt Orders dealing with Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops.

1879.

In consequence of an outbreak of Pleuro-Pneumonia among cattle a memorial to the Privy Council was agreed upon, praying the Government to exercise their powers under the new Act, and this request was promptly complied with.

1881.

There were 4833 outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease this year, compared with 1461 in 1880. The pressure of the Chamber upon the Privy Council in earlier years had apparently had some effect, for, in spite of this great increase of Foot and Mouth Disease, the Chamber in December passed a resolution expressing thanks to the Department for their action in closing the Store Cattle Markets in the East of England. They also made suggestions to the Department for lessening the risk of contagion caused by holding the Islington and Deptford Markets on the same day, as the same men daily attended both Markets. In February the Council supported a motion which Mr. Henry Chaplin was to move in the House of Commons, asking the Privy Council effectually to prevent the importation of disease by forbidding any imports of animals from infected countries. When this motion was discussed it was opposed by the Government and was defeated by 58 votes.

1883.

The number of outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease increased this year to 18,732, and it spread into 75 counties in Great Britain. Towards the end of 1882 the Royal Commission on Agriculture issued its final Report, and one of the recommendations in that report was that foreign live animals should not be allowed to be landed from any countries as to which the Privy Council are not satisfied that they are perfectly free from contagious disease. At their meeting in February the Council heartily endorsed this proposal, which accorded with so many of their previous resolutions. Again, in March this course of action was declared by the Chamber to be "more than ever urgent." On 8th May a very influential deputation waited upon the Prime Minister and the Lord President of the Council, to urge the necessity of such action being taken, but the Lord President (Lord Carlingford) gave a decidedly unsatisfactory reply. In consequence of this answer Mr. Chaplin, having secured a place for a motion in the House of Commons, called the attention of the House

on 10th July to the continued importation of live foreign cattle suffering from contagious disease, to the consequent prevalence of Foot and Mouth Disease, and to the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, and moved the following resolution :—

“That this House desires to urge on Her Majesty’s Government the importance of taking effectual measures for the suppression of Foot and Mouth Disease throughout the United Kingdom, and is of opinion that, while for this purpose it is necessary that adequate restrictions, under the powers vested in the Privy Council, should be imposed on the movements and transit of cattle at home, it is even more important, with a view to its permanent extinction, that the landing of foreign live animals should not be permitted in future from any countries as to which the Privy Council are not satisfied that the laws thereof relating to the importation and exportation of animals, and to the prevention of the introduction or spreading of disease, and the general sanitary conditions of animals therein, are such as to afford reasonable security against the importation therefrom of animals which are diseased.”

This resolution was carried against the Government by a majority of 8 votes. The Government, however, took no action to comply with the resolution, but at their meeting in November the Chamber noted that the vote in the House of Commons had had some result abroad ; for from 24th June until the date of this meeting in November only one cargo of diseased animals was received. At this meeting the Council unanimously recorded their regret at the attitude adopted by the Government, and called upon them forthwith to prohibit the landing of animals from infected countries. In acknowledging this resolution the Prime Minister assured the Council that any engagements made by Parliament would be carried out ; but the Lord President of the Council asserted the legal impossibility of carrying out the wishes of the Chamber without further legislation.

1884.

The Cattle Diseases Committee of the Chamber was given power to admit special members and to collect funds for its particular work early this year ; and though it did not become a separate entity it appears to have had executive powers,

and to have acted without instructions from the Council. Mr. Henry Chaplin, M.P., was elected as Chairman of the Committee. It collected nearly £1000 for a fighting fund and organised a series of meetings in all the large centres of population in order to call the attention of the public to the matter, and to show consumers that the prevention of contagious disease among cattle (even if no live stock were allowed to enter the kingdom) would not increase the price of meat.

As the Government failed to promise immediate action or legislation, Mr. Chaplin gave notice of an amendment to the Address. At the same time the Duke of Richmond introduced a Bill in the House of Lords drafted on the lines desired by the Chambers. Yielding to the feeling thus exhibited, the Lord President of the Council agreed to introduce a Government Bill with a similar object, so Mr. Chaplin withdrew his amendment to the Address and substituted for it an amendment expressing satisfaction at this action of the Government, but demanding precedence for the Bill as soon as it reached the House of Commons. The Prime Minister declined to accede to the demand for precedence, so a division was taken, but was defeated by a majority of 51. The Government measure was introduced in the Lords, but proved very unsatisfactory, as well as being of a temporary character; it was, however, amended before it left the Upper House, and at their March meeting the Council expressed their satisfaction that measures were at last before Parliament for preventing the introduction of Foot and Mouth Disease from abroad. They further^s resolved against permitting any relaxation of the Government Bill from the amended form in which it then stood; they indicated details in which even greater stringency might be given to the prohibitory clauses of the measure, and expressed apprehension that considerable danger might attend the permissive introduction of animals coming from healthy parts of scheduled countries without slaughter at the port of landing.

An attempt was made by the Government in the House of Commons to restore their measure to its original unsatisfactory form prior to its amendment in the Upper House.

At its April meeting the Council strongly protested against this proposal; a very influential deputation representing agriculturists in all parts of the kingdom waited on the Lord President to emphasise this protest, and a large meeting was held at Prince's Hall the same evening to demonstrate the complete agreement of the whole agricultural interest on this point. The Government acquiescing in these expressions of popular opinion, passed the Bill substantially as it left the House of Lords, and it received the Royal Assent on 19th May.

During the year the Council had more than one debate on internal regulations concerning animals' diseases. At the June meeting of the Council a Report from the Cattle Diseases Committee was adopted, setting out the practice of local authorities in reference to the movement of animals, the isolation resorted to in case of outbreaks, and other details of administration. The Report also recommended the slaughter of all animals with full compensation when an outbreak of contagious disease occurred. Judging from the tone of the reports and the correspondence that passed, it is evident that a much more friendly feeling existed at this period between the Chamber and the Privy Council than had been the case in earlier years. The passing of the Act of this year was another great step towards the complete adoption of the policy which the Chamber had been advocating for nearly twenty years.

The number of outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease this year dropped to 949, in 1885 there were 30, and in 1886 there was only one. In a paper read by Mr. Thomas Duckham, M.P., before the Farmers' Club in November, 1883, he quoted the following figures from official sources:—"During 1881, 172 cargoes of diseased animals were imported, and of these 143 cargoes were suffering from Foot and Mouth Disease; in 1882, 95 cargoes of diseased animals were landed, and of these 66 had Foot and Mouth Disease; during the first six months of 1883 there were 94 cargoes landed affected with Foot and Mouth Disease." Taking these figures, together with the outbreaks of this disease during the early 'eighties, and comparing them with the number of outbreaks since 1884,

complete justification is shown for the policy which the Cattle Diseases Committee had consistently advocated.

1886.

Earl Spencer, on behalf of the Government, introduced a Bill to amend the Act of 1878 in several ways which experience had shown to be desirable. It also transferred to the Local Government Board and to local sanitary authorities the powers relating to the inspection of dairies, cowsheds, and milkshops, previously conferred on the Privy Council. It further gave power to the Privy Council to require local authorities to slaughter, not only animals affected with Pleuro-Pneumonia, but also all in-contact animals or any others exposed in any way to infection. The Chamber adopted a Report from its Committee, approving generally of the Bill, but objecting to compensation for slaughtered animals being paid out of rates instead of out of Imperial Taxes ; they also urged more uniformity in the regulations necessary for suppressing outbreaks of disease. No further reference was made to the Bill during the year, so apparently there was no very strong feeling on the matter in the Chamber ; the Bill was passed, however, before the Government resigned in July.

1887.

At their December meeting the Council expressed regret that the Privy Council had not made use of the power conferred upon them which enabled them to require local authorities to slaughter in cases of Pleuro-Pneumonia, and again urged the Department to adopt uniform and stringent measures to stamp out this disease. The Council pointed out that unless the Irish Privy Council adopted similar methods any efforts on this side of the Channel must fail : they therefore asked the Government to secure effective and simultaneous action in both Great Britain and Ireland. A deputation waited upon the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to present these resolutions, and the requests were ultimately acceded to by both Privy Councils. A Departmental Committee, on which Mr. Bowen-Jones (afterwards Sir J. B.

Bowen-Jones, Bart.) served, was appointed by the Lord President, and this Committee, which issued its Report in 1888, unhesitatingly endorsed the policy recommended by the Chamber; it further recommended the payment of compensation out of national funds, instead of out of local rates.

1889.

At the February meeting the Council pressed for the adoption of the recommendations of the Departmental Committee. It also urged the payment of compensation out of the National Exchequer, and condemned the hesitation shown in some parts of the country as to the policy of stamping out Pleuro-Pneumonia.

In March a strong deputation waited on the Lord President of the Council and urged him to take prompt and effective steps for stamping out Pleuro-Pneumonia. Repeated questions in Parliament failed to draw any promise of immediate action, and the question was left unsettled to be dealt with by the Board of Agriculture (created this year), to whom the former functions of the Privy Council had been transferred.

An Order in Council, dated 1st March, acceded to the repeated applications of the Government of the Netherlands, and allowed the free importation without slaughter or quarantine of animals from Holland after 1st June. It was reported, however, to the Council on 26th March that Foot and Mouth Disease had been landed in this country at four different ports by German sheep. The Privy Council thereupon prohibited further importation from Germany, but declined to meet the Chamber's wishes to withdraw the Order allowing the admission of Dutch cattle. After further pressure, however, the Government postponed the operation of the Dutch Order until 1st September.

In November the Council called the attention of the new Board of Agriculture to the necessity for vigilant precautions against the admission of disease from Holland. At the same time they welcomed the effective reply which the first President of the Board of Agriculture (Mr. Chaplin) had made to the complaints of traders who—on the ground of the incon-

venience suffered by persons employed at Deptford—desired him to expose the live stock of this country to the risk of further outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease, by admitting animals from one of the German provinces. They also brought under the notice of the new Minister the request, which they had repeatedly pressed on the Privy Council, for effective efforts to stamp out Pleuro-Pneumonia; for entrusting control to a Central Authority, and providing for compensation from the National Exchequer.

1890.

In February a very large deputation organised by the Chambers waited upon the President of the Board of Agriculture to again press the urgency of dealing with Pleuro-Pneumonia on the lines recommended by the Departmental Committee in 1888; Mr. Chaplin gave a most satisfactory reply, and immediately afterwards introduced the Contagious Diseases (Animals) (Pleuro-Pneumonia) Bill. At the Council meeting in April this Bill was generally approved, but regret was expressed that the power given to the Board of Agriculture to slaughter all cattle that had been in contact with diseased animals was not compulsory. The Bill received the Royal Assent on the 4th July. During July the Board addressed a letter to the Chairman of the Chamber, asking for the aid of the Central Chamber in carrying out the provisions of the Pleuro-Pneumonia Act. At the November meeting the Cattle Diseases Committee presented a Report expressing appreciation of the energy displayed by the Board in carrying out the Act, and stated that it had been received with unanimous approval by stock owners.

At the April meeting the attention of the Board was called to the revival of efforts to obtain the removal of the prohibition on the importation of store cattle from certain States of America, and an emphatic opinion was expressed as to the extreme danger of such relaxation. At the November Council meeting the Committee referred to the Meat Inspection Act, then recently passed by the United States as “a menace to this country,” and expressed the opinion that at least six

months should elapse after a country had been declared free of disease before its cattle were accepted as free from infection. The Council endorsed this view of the Committee with only one dissentient.

The Infectious Diseases (Prevention) Act was passed this year. As a Bill it was considered by the Council in June, when the proposal requiring vendors of milk to furnish a list of their customers was objected to as being too inquisitorial. They also protested against the inspection of animals in a dairy herd by a medical officer unless he was accompanied by a veterinary surgeon. The Bill was amended in the direction indicated by these two suggestions before it passed, and no other point was specially noticed; though Mr. J. Treadwell, of Bucks, expressed the opinion that "the introduction of the Bill was a step taken without sufficient thought." If the Council had given a little more thought to the Bill at that stage and proposed further amendments much of the subsequent work of the Chambers in connection with Milk Legislation would not have been required.

1891.

The Chamber asked for legislation to regulate the Trans-Atlantic Cattle Trade on the lines recommended by the Departmental Committee with a view to preventing some of the animal suffering which long ocean voyages entailed. The Board of Agriculture introduced a Bill to carry out this object, but it met with so much opposition from the shipowning interest that it was withdrawn. The Board, however, issued an Order under the powers conferred by the Board of Agriculture Act which laid down regulations for the more humane conduct of this traffic.

1892.

Foot and Mouth Disease was imported from Denmark in February, and at their March meeting the Council called on the Board of Agriculture to take such action as would avert a recurrence of the danger, citing this case as a further proof that the importation of live stock could only be carried on at

the constant risk of reintroducing disease among British stock. The Board acted with promptness and vigour, and issued an Order suspending the importation of animals from Europe while Foot and Mouth Disease existed on the Continent. In November the Council pointed out that a comparison between this outbreak and previous ones showed the good effect of the policy adopted by the Board.

Pleuro-Pneumonia was imported from Montreal and was discovered at Dundee on 29th September. At the November meeting the Council arranged a deputation to the Board to ask that Canadian cattle should be subject to the same conditions as those coming from the United States. The President of the Board (Mr. Gardner, afterwards created Lord Burghclere)* met the deputation three days later and promised to issue an Order prohibiting the landing of Canadian cattle except for slaughter at the port. This Order came into operation on 21st November. On 26th September the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture at Washington issued a proclamation that the United States was free from Pleuro-Pneumonia, but on 7th October a cargo from New York landed at Deptford was found to be affected. This gave added weight to the request of the deputation in November.

Swine Fever.

This subject had been considered on several occasions, but in 1890 and 1891 the Council felt that public opinion was not sufficiently settled to accept the same procedure as had been adopted in the case of Foot and Mouth, Cattle Plague, and Pleuro-Pneumonia. By November, 1892, however, it was thought that similar means should be employed,—viz., the central administration of uniform restrictions and payment of compensation for slaughter out of the National Exchequer. A deputation therefore waited upon the President of the Board (Mr. Chaplin) on 2nd February to urge this view. The deputation was received very sympathetically, but Mr. Chaplin

* A General Election took place in July of this year, and the Liberal Party came into office. Mr. Herbert Gardner was appointed President of the Board of Agriculture.

mentioned three considerations which had to be taken into account before a Bill could be introduced : (1) The provision of the necessary funds by the Chancellor of the Exchequer ; (2) the willingness of Scotland and Ireland to agree with England ; and (3) the probability of the Board being effectually supported if it took up the task of stamping out Swine Fever. The outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease prevented the Board from dealing with Swine Fever, so at the November meeting the Council again drew attention to the importance of the subject.

Two other matters were dealt with by the Council at the November meeting. (1) The President of the Board was requested to introduce a Bill giving powers for dealing with all Contagious Diseases on similar lines to those adopted in the case of Pleuro-Pneumonia. (2) Welcoming the Order of the Board dealing with Glanders or Farcy. The Council welcomed this extension of the principle for which they had so long contended—that compulsory slaughter with fair compensation afforded the only chance of coping with Contagious Diseases, but they protested against the principle of throwing the cost of compensation on the rates.

Tuberculosis.

This disease was referred to for the first time at the Great Agricultural Conference of December of this year, and the following resolution was adopted :—

“ That, having regard to the fact that on July 10th, 1888, a Departmental Committee on Tuberculosis reported as follows : ‘ In order to ensure the gradual extirpation of tuberculosis, we are of opinion that it should be included in the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act,’ this Conference is strongly of opinion that Her Majesty’s Government should forthwith give effect to such recommendation, and thus, in the words of the aforesaid Committee, ‘ minimise a disease so dangerous alike to animals and to mankind.’ This Conference is further of opinion that swine fever should be similarly treated.”

1893.

During February meetings were held on the 14th and 28th. At the former the President of the Board was asked to receive

a deputation to urge the importance of maintaining the regulations requiring the immediate slaughter of all cattle imported from Canada. Mr. Gardner replied that he was in possession of the views of the Chamber, so the deputation was not necessary, and he made a public statement on the question of importation which was deemed eminently satisfactory. At the later meeting the Council expressed their satisfaction, but Mr. Gardner was requested to introduce a Bill to amend the Contagious Diseases Act of 1878, providing for the slaughter of all animals at the port of debarkation except under very special conditions.

At this same meeting the Council recognised the appointment of a Departmental Committee on Swine Fever as evidence that their contentions as to the necessity of dealing with this subject were admitted. In June the Report of the Departmental Committee was considered and found to be in entire accord with the views which the Chamber had previously urged. On 13th June a deputation asked Mr. Gardner to introduce a Bill to give effect to the recommendations of the Departmental Committee. On 20th June Mr. Ailwyn Fellowes moved the adjournment of the House to call attention to the delay in bringing in this Bill. The Government resisted the motion, but soon after introduced a Bill, which received the Royal Assent on 12th September.

Anthrax.

In October the Council expressed the opinion that if local authorities could award the owner the market value of the carcase of animals found dead from anthrax, it might be the means of securing an early notice of an outbreak. As this award need not in any case exceed £1, they suggested that the Board should grant this power to all local authorities.

1894.

Mr. William Stratton, who proposed the formation of the Committee in 1872, and had been its Chairman ever since, resigned office in March of this year. Mr. B. St. John Ackers, who had been a member of the Committee since its formation, was elected to succeed him.

On 3rd April a deputation, supported by other Agricultura Societies, waited on the President of the Board to again urge the slaughter of all imported animals except in special cases. Mr. Gardner held out no hope of being able to advise Parliament to agree to this proposal.

In November the Council urged all agriculturists and local authorities to co-operate with the Board in their endeavour to stamp out Swine Fever. They also expressed approval of the action taken by the Board in connection with an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease in Essex.

An Act consolidating all previous Contagious Diseases Acts was passed this year.

1895.

On 28th May the Council unanimously adopted a Report from their Cattle Diseases Committee which dealt with the Report of the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis. They suggested that inquiry should be made as to the extent to which tuberculous meat was imported, and expressed the opinion that no tuberculous animals should be used for breeding purposes. They concluded their comments as follows :—

“ While recognising that the labours of the Commission have resulted in valuable information, are of opinion that the subject of tuberculosis needs to be regarded not less from the point of view of the stockowner than from that of the meat or milk consumer. It is not reasonable that the loss of a beast condemned and destroyed in the interests of the public health should fall upon the owner, unless it can be shown that he had been guilty knowingly of keeping and selling diseased animals. A Departmental Committee appointed in 1888 to consider, among other matters, the best method of dealing with tuberculosis with a view of checking the progress of the disease, recommended that tuberculosis ‘ should be included in the diseases in the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts, so as to provide for the slaughter of diseased animals when found on the owner’s premises, for the payment of compensation for the slaughter of such animals, for the seizure and slaughter of diseased animals exposed in fairs, markets, &c., and during transit, and for the seizing and slaughter of diseased foreign animals at the place of landing in this country.’ The report of the Royal Commission shows no cause for receding from the position then taken up by the Departmental Committee, and this Committee recommend that the Government be

urged to carry into effect the recommendations of the Departmental Committee of 1888. They are further strongly of opinion that compensation out of the Imperial Exchequer should be given for apparently healthy animals, or the carcasses of such, condemned in the interests of the public."

On 5th November the Council expressed their satisfaction that the new President of the Board,* like the first holder of the office, was a member of the Cabinet. They reiterated their view

"That no real security can be felt by British stockowners against the re-introduction of Contagious Diseases so long as the Board were compelled to admit animals from certain countries. They consider that no such responsibility should be thrown upon a Government Department, but that the Legislature should, definitely and once for all, lay down the only sound and safe principle, namely, that all cattle, sheep, goats and pigs sent to this country shall, except under very special conditions, be slaughtered either before shipment or at the port of debarkation."

At the same meeting they expressed concern at the apparent failure to stamp out Swine Fever, as after two years' work the number of outbreaks showed a marked increase.

"It is impossible to overlook the fact that the failure of the Agricultural Department for the first time to deal effectively with a contagious malady, after receiving full executive powers for its suppression, has coincided with internal changes in the organisation of the Department. The alterations which have been made, and which have aroused the natural resentment of the veterinary profession, have not been justified by results."†

On the 11th December one of the most influential deputations ever arranged by the Chamber waited on the President of the Board to urge him to give effect to their resolution of 5th November in connection with importing live animals. The deputation, which was introduced by Mr. A. F. Jeffreys, M.P. (President of the Chamber), received a very sympathetic reply from Mr. Long.

1896.

The Government introduced their Bill on 20th April giving effect to the wishes of the Chamber. It was opposed at

* A General Election took place in July and Mr. Walter Long was appointed President of the Board of Agriculture by Lord Salisbury.

† Report of Cattle Diseases Committee, 4th November, 1895.

every stage by a group of the Opposition, partly composed of East Anglian Members of Parliament, but was supported by Mr. E. Strachey (afterwards Lord Strachie). The Bill was strongly supported by the Chamber, where it was debated on three occasions between the date of its introduction and the 20th July, when it received the Royal Assent. Thus after twenty-seven years the final Act required to give effect to the series of resolutions adopted by the Council on the 6th April, 1869, was passed. It was a notable achievement, and probably credit was chiefly due to Mr. Wm. Stratton; first, for the broad views and far-sighted reasoning which caused him to lay such a clear statement of policy before the Council on that occasion; and secondly, for his steady and untiring persistence in urging that policy on every opportunity, notwithstanding many rebuffs and disappointments. It was most unfortunate for him that increasing deafness compelled him to resign the chairmanship of the Cattle Diseases Committee before this crowning victory was gained. While, however, according Mr. Stratton his full share in this triumph, agriculturists of the country are greatly indebted, among others, to Mr. Thomas Duckham, M.P., Mr. Clare Sewell Read, M.P., Mr. Henry Chaplin, M.P., Mr. A. F. Jeffreys, M.P., Mr. (afterwards Lord) Channing, M.P., Sir Ailwyn Fellowes, M.P., Sir J. B. Bowen-Jones, Lord Fortescue, Mr. B. St. John Ackers, and Mr. John Treadwell for helping to bring this campaign to a successful conclusion.

Tuberculosis.

The appointment of the Second Royal Commission on Tuberculosis was welcomed by the Council in June of this year, but the Reports of the Cattle Diseases Committee now strike a new note. Hitherto they had, outwardly at least, been content to send witnesses to official inquiries. In this instance, apparently for the first time, they urged that representatives of stock owners should have seats *on* the Commission:

In November the Chamber began to urge a more vigorous and uniform enforcement of their powers against Sheep Scab by local authorities.

At the same meeting they put forward the following statement :—

“ In the financial year ending 1895–96 the Local Government Board were required to make good a deficiency in the Cattle Pleuro-Pneumonia Account, and, accordingly, under certificates made by the Board of Agriculture, a total sum of £145,200 was paid out of the Local Taxation Account, and thus, indirectly, out of the rates. As the Committee have always strenuously insisted that the expenses incurred in stamping out disease among stock should be defrayed from the Imperial Exchequer—a principle which was distinctly recognised by Parliament in the Pleuro-Pneumonia and Swine Fever Acts—they are bound to protest against the continuance of this draft upon ratepayers’ money. The provision that any deficiency in the amount provided by Parliament should be made good out of the Local Taxation Account was obviously intended to meet an emergency, and was not intended to authorise a yearly call upon the Local Taxation Account exceeding the amount paid out of the Exchequer. In the opinion of the Committee, application should be made to Parliament for a further vote of money.”

1897.

In March and again in June the Council passed the following resolution :—

“ That in the opinion of this Council, the administration of the Swine Fever Act should be undertaken entirely by the Board of Agriculture, and county boundaries ignored, and that compensation for swine slaughtered should be paid from Imperial Funds and not out of drafts on the Local Taxation Account ” ;

and they sent a small deputation to discuss these points with the Board of Agriculture on 1st July.

In November they urged the Board to deal with Sheep Scab by uniform and compulsory regulations instead of leaving the matter to the independent action of local authorities.

At the meeting on 2nd March a letter was read from Mr. Chaplin (President of the Local Government Board), expressing regret and giving reasons for not being able to reopen the Commission on Tuberculosis in order to add new members to it.

1898.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis was issued at the end of April and was considered by the Council

at their May and June meetings. They recalled the points agreed upon in February, 1897, which served as the basis of their witnesses' evidence given before the Royal Commission. These were :—

“(a) That any proposal for ‘stamping out’ tuberculosis by means of slaughter—on the lines adopted with marked success in the case of Cattle Plague, Foot and Mouth Disease and Pleuro-Pneumonia—is quite impracticable.

“(b) That compensation for pecuniary loss suffered by farmers, butchers or others, by reason of the seizure of tuberculous animals or meat in the interests of the public health, should be paid for from Imperial funds.

“(c) That the owners of milking cows visibly affected with tuberculosis, or having chronic diseases of the udder or found to yield tuberculous milk, should be compelled to notify the fact, and that such animals should be at once slaughtered, and compensation paid for them out of Imperial funds to the extent of at least three-fourths of their value. With the view of giving effect to this suggestion, an inspection of all dairies at stated intervals by a veterinary surgeon appointed by the Board of Agriculture.”

On (a) the Commissioners agreed with the Chamber. On (b) they “cannot on the merits of the case recommend compensation.” The Chamber expressed their objection to this on the ground that three out of the seven Commissioners signed a memorandum dissociating themselves from their colleagues on this point, and stating that “out of fifty-four witnesses formally summoned before us only one expressed the opinion unfavourable to compensation, and nearly every one advocated it.” The Committee endorsed the recommendation of the three Commissioners, but they demurred to the suggestion that payment of compensation should be charged upon county rates, and that only half should be repaid from Imperial funds.

With regard to (c), the Commissioners recommended compulsory notification of disease in the udder under a penalty; they suggested more stringent provisions for inspection and for prohibiting the sale of milk from cows condemned by Veterinary Surgeons.

The Chamber agreed generally with the recommendations of the Commission for promoting the substitution of public

in place of private slaughter-houses, but they considered that the Commission failed to deal satisfactorily with the fundamental question of compensation, and this affected the recommendations as a whole and made them unworkable.

In their Report, adopted by the Council on 31st January, the Cattle Diseases Committee again dealt with Tuberculosis, and referred to a meeting of the newly formed "National Association for the Prevention of Consumption" at Marlborough House, on 20th December, 1898. The Committee said that

"They note with satisfaction that the Association recognises the impracticability of stamping out Tuberculosis in cattle by immediate slaughter of all diseased animals, and that the method proposed to be adopted is that of instructing public opinion and stimulating public interest rather than the advocacy of measures of compulsion. On this point the Prime Minister was reported as follows:—

"It would considerably prejudice the spread of sound opinion if any attempt were made to procure or ensure the sanitary condition by any action of central or local authority. It must be taught; it cannot be enforced. I am afraid if you attempted to enforce the use of tuberculin, which has been referred to, you would find among the farmers many conscientious objectors who would object to the operation of your law."

"With this view of the case your Committee emphatically agree, and they would recommend the Council to offer the strongest opposition to any attempts that might be made to enforce the compulsory inoculation of cattle with tuberculin, and the consequent compulsory slaughter of re-acting animals, unless combined with a satisfactory scheme of compensation for animals seized in the public interest."

The third paragraph of this Report, and the debate upon it, was the first reference to the prolonged effort made by the Chambers to obtain general legislation for the control of the production and distribution of milk. The necessity of a general Act was demonstrated by the attempts made by Leeds and other boroughs to obtain special powers under their private Acts to control their milk supplies. On 28th February the following resolution was passed with only two or three dissentients:—

"That this Council considers that any measure for dealing with the important and national question of tuberculosis should

provide that the central authority only should obtain parliamentary powers; that under no conditions should local authorities be allowed to take any action not sanctioned by the central authority; and that compulsory slaughter should not take place unless compensation be made out of the Imperial Exchequer."

Meanwhile the Parliamentary Committee of the Central Chamber had taken steps in the House of Commons to oppose the inclusion of clauses relating to milk supply in Private Bills, for it was found that all the clauses proposed by the various Corporations differed from each other, and their enactment would have caused great confusion to milk producers. This action resulted in the Local Government Board and the Board of Agriculture intervening, and these two Departments agreed as to the nature and extent of the provisions which they considered might properly be substituted for the varying clauses to which the Chambers objected. These proposals were considered by the Council on 28th March, when the opinion was expressed that clauses based thereon might, subject to the settlement of details, to payment of compensation from Imperial sources, to the omission of the phrase "or exhibiting clinical symptoms of tuberculosis," and to the substitution of two Justices for one Justice of the Peace, be accepted by the Council in response to the demand for greater protection of the milk supply. One reason why the Council agreed to these provisions being inserted in private Acts (although they objected to the principle of partial legislation being extended) was the hope that possibly the experience gained in working them might prepare the way for a general Act applicable to the whole country.

Eventually the actual text of the clauses which it was proposed to substitute for those originally in the Bills was considered at a conference, convened by the Parliamentary Committee at the House of Commons on 18th April, when there were present the President and other officers of the Board of Agriculture, the Parliamentary Agent of the Local Government Board, the Cattle Diseases and the Parliamentary Committees of the Central Chamber, representatives of the Municipal Corporations, and of the National Agricultural

Union. The result was that the draft clauses were accepted by all the parties to the conference, subject to the omission of the phrase "or exhibiting clinical symptoms of tuberculosis," thus limiting the application of the clauses to cows affected with tuberculosis of the udder. These "Model" Clauses, as they were called, were incorporated in the Private Acts of Blackpool, Bootle, Darwen, Derby, Leeds (with some modification inserted by a Select Committee of the House of Lords at the instance of Yorkshire County and District Councils), Manchester, Salford, and Stockport.

The main points of these clauses were that the milk of cows affected with tuberculosis of the udder should not be sold; that power to take samples of milk and inspect dairies outside the municipal area should only be granted subject to the Order of a Justice having jurisdiction in the place where the dairy was situated; that cows suffering from tuberculosis of the udder should be isolated; that no sanitary authority should have power to apply the tuberculin test except with the consent of the owner of the suspected animal; that restrictive or prohibitory action taken as regards milk from tuberculous animals should be limited to the existence as certified by the Veterinary Surgeon of tuberculosis of the udder; and that cases of tuberculosis of the udder should be notified to the Medical Officer of Health of the Borough in which the milk was supplied.

Sheep Scab.

On 28th February the Council passed for the first time, on the motion of Mr. A. Amos, a resolution in favour of the Board of Agriculture being empowered to order the compulsory dipping of sheep in order to prevent and eradicate Scab.

1900.

The Model Milk Clauses were this year inserted in the following Private Acts:—Bradford, Coventry, Croydon, Farnworth, Halifax, Hastings, Ilfracombe, Lancaster, Liverpool, Oldham, Preston, Rochdale, Scarborough, Sheffield, Southport, Taunton, and West Bromwich.

In connection with the Taunton Bill Mr. E. Strachey (afterwards Lord Strachie) arranged a conference, at which Mr. T. W. Russell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board) presided, and the Central Chamber and other bodies were represented, and a new clause was added to the Model Clauses, which allowed a dairyman to appeal against an Order of the Corporation to the Board of Agriculture. All the Acts passed this year which contained the Model Clauses had this new clause inserted.

The Chamber was chiefly indebted to the late Mr. A. F. Jeffreys, M.P. (Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee), for the energy he showed in getting these clauses inserted, uniformly, in all these Bills in the years 1899-1900 and 1901. After that Sir Edward Strachey (who succeeded Mr. Jeffreys as Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee) took immense trouble to ensure this uniformity for some five or six years.

The position taken up by the Chambers on this question was perhaps most clearly stated in the Annual Report for 1905, when the following paragraph was inserted :—

“ Your Council wish again to express their decided opinion that no alteration of the Model Milk Clauses by private legislation ought to be allowed, but that they should be adhered to without modification or extension until the Government is prepared to deal with the whole question of Tuberculosis in a general Act. In making this statement, the necessity of safeguarding the Public Health is not overlooked, and, so far from wishing to oppose any necessary and general restrictions, they are anxious to assist any reasonable measures tending in that direction ; but they strongly object to piecemeal legislation, to unreasonable interference, and to any loss and inconvenience being incurred by farmers, on behalf of the public, without compensation.”

A series of outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease occurred this year, the first since 1894. The Board, by a vigorous policy of isolation and slaughtering of all affected and in-contact animals, succeeded in stamping it out by April, 1901.

A further resolution was adopted by the Council on 6th November, urging the Board to obtain the necessary legislative powers to order the compulsory dipping of sheep in order to eradicate Scab.

Towards the end of this year the Board altered their practice in connection with Swine Fever, and adopted a policy of isolation instead of slaughter with compensation. The Chamber expressed their strong disapproval of this practice on 6th November.

1901.

On 30th April the Council condemned the action of the Board in adopting isolation instead of slaughter in two outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease at Romford, and again expressed their disapproval of this practice in connection with Swine Fever. On 4th June the Council adopted a Report from the Cattle Diseases Committee which said that "great dissatisfaction exists in the country with regard to the vacillating and inadequate measures taken by the Board in dealing with this disease." The Chamber arranged for a very large deputation of representatives of various bodies to wait upon the President of the Board of Agriculture (Mr. Hanbury) on 18th June, to urge the adoption of compulsory slaughter with compensation instead of isolation. Although not in agreement with the chief point put forward, Mr. Hanbury promised to take steps in other important directions recommended by the Chamber. Thus, he agreed (1) that the attention of magistrates should be called to the inadequacy of fines usually imposed by them for infractions of the law relating to the diseases of animals; (2) that all animals actually diseased with Swine Fever should in future be slaughtered, the Board's veterinary surgeons having in some cases misapprehended their instructions on this point; (3) to considerably increase the number of veterinary surgeons employed by the Board; (4) to employ local veterinary surgeons with a more accurate knowledge of Swine Fever; and (5) to suggest regulations for the better disinfection of the premises and carts of pig dealers.

Tuberculosis.

The British Congress on Tuberculosis was held in London this year, from 22nd to 26th July. The Central Chamber

was represented on the Organising Council of the Congress by Mr. B. St. J. Ackers, while the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary of the Central Chamber, and the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee were appointed as official delegates to the Congress. The proceedings were rendered remarkable by the statement of Dr. Koch, of Berlin, to the effect that bovine tuberculosis was not communicable to human beings. This reopened a question which had been regarded as settled, and so on 31st August the Government appointed another Royal Commission to inquire into the subject. The Veterinary Section of the Congress adopted a series of resolutions as to tuberculous meat and milk, moved by Mr. Bowen-Jones. These resolutions were embodied in a report of the Cattle Diseases Committee adopted by the Council on 5th November, when general agreement with the resolutions was expressed, and the Council considered that legislation giving effect to the principles set forth should be undertaken at the earliest practicable opportunity.

In the session of 1901 some twenty-one local Acts were passed containing the Model Milk Clauses. In connection with the Brighton Act a new clause entitling the dairyman to compensation from the Corporation, if not himself in default, was agreed to, and this new Clause was added to the "Model" Clauses, and inserted in all the Acts containing Milk Clauses which were passed this session. The new Clause was also inserted in the Acts of some of the other Corporations which had obtained the Model Clauses in 1900, and which were promoting further Bills in 1901. There were, however, only a few of these, and so there were three groups of Acts differing in points of great importance passed in these three years. The variation in the Leeds Act of 1899 was removed and their Act of 1901 brought it into conformity with the others of this year.

On 11th December the Council unanimously passed a resolution urging the necessity of the police in different counties being placed in a position to give proper information as to regulations for moving animals from one county to another.

On 17th May the Council sent two representatives to support the deputation to Mr. Hanbury, organised by the Horse-Breeding Societies, with reference to the importation of horses suffering from Pink Eye, Influenza, or other diseases.

1902.

In June the Council again urged the Board to obtain powers to order the compulsory dipping of sheep. The Board replied to the effect that such an order could only be exercised by means of a requirement that it should be carried out throughout the whole of Great Britain on or about certain specified dates. This, the widely differing conditions of climate affecting (to mention only one instance) the time of shearing, in their opinion, rendered the difficulties attending the selection of such uniform dates almost insuperable.

One outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease occurred near Canterbury in March, and the Board, adhering to its policy of isolation, prohibited the movement of animals in a scheduled district which covered nearly half the county of Kent.

Ten local authorities obtained Acts containing the Model Milk Clauses. The London County Council introduced a Bill containing clauses providing for much wider powers than the Model, which was therefore opposed by the Parliamentary Committee. After prolonged negotiations, all the Milk Clauses were withdrawn from this Bill.

1903.

The repeated requests from the Chambers relating to Sheep Scab had some effect this year, for Mr. Hanbury carried a Bill through Parliament, entitled the Diseases of Animals Act, 1903, empowering the Board to make orders for securing the periodical treatment of all sheep by effective dipping or by some other method. He also appointed a Departmental Committee in April, to inquire into the subject of Sheep Dipping, and two witnesses were deputed by the Council to give evidence on their behalf.

Sixteen local authorities obtained private Acts containing the Model Milk Clauses this year.

1904.

The Departmental Committee on Sheep Scab presented its report in August. This report recognised the necessity of compulsory dipping, and in November the Council expressed its approval of this report.

The Chamber sent representatives to support a deputation to the President of the Board (Lord Onslow) arranged by the Bath and West Society, to urge the desirability of appointing a Departmental Committee to consider the question of Abortion in cattle, and the expediency or otherwise of legislating upon it. Lord Onslow agreed to set up a scientific Committee to investigate this disease at an early date.

Sixteen private Acts were passed containing the Model Milk Clauses, but uniformity was not quite maintained, for the London County Council were allowed, after a fight, to insert some special provisions. Manchester proposed to insert extra clauses, but after some discussion with Sir Edward Strachey, these were withdrawn. Two other Corporations applied for variations, but they at once agreed to make them conform to the Model. The London County Council peremptorily declined even to consider any alterations to their Bill, so Sir Edward Strachey (as Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee) moved the following Instruction on the motion for second reading in the House of Commons:—

“ That it be an instruction to the Committee to insert provisions in the Bill to provide that a cow suspected of suffering from Tuberculosis of the Udder may be removed, and that a sample of such cow's milk shall be submitted before slaughter to the Medical Officer of Health for the county for bacteriological examination, and to provide, if this examination shows evidence that the cow is so diseased, that the animal shall be slaughtered in the presence of and examined by a veterinary surgeon appointed in the way proposed in Sub-section (2) of Clause 34:—and to provide that if, on examination, the veterinary surgeon certifies that such cow was not suffering from Tuberculosis of the Udder, the Council shall pay, in addition to the compensation provided for in Sub-section (3) of Clause 34, a sum, not exceeding 50 per cent. of the full value of such cow immediately before slaughter, as special damages for loss of such cow:—to provide that, if the veterinary surgeon certifies that the cow was so diseased, the Council shall pay compensation in the manner provided by

Part (a), Sub-section (3) of Section 14 of the Diseases of Animals Act, 1894, and that the Council shall also bear half of the reasonable costs incurred in carrying out the purposes of Clause 34 :— and to provide that the value of a cow slaughtered by the Council, whether diseased or not, shall be assessed by a valuer appointed by the Board of Agriculture, and not by a veterinary surgeon.”

A statement was issued by the London County Council stating that the Instruction imposed additional compensation of 50 per cent., but that was not so, for Sir Edward, acting on the discretion given him, had stated in the Instruction that 50 per cent. was a maximum, not a minimum percentage of compensation. Further, in moving the Instruction, he said that he was ready, if desired by the House, to reduce the limitation to 25 or 20 per cent., or even less. The Chairman of the Central Chamber, Mr. Beaumont, who wound up the debate, offered to reduce the percentage to 10 per cent. if Mr. Burns (who represented the London County Council) would agree to the bacteriological examination of the cow's milk before slaughter. Neither of these proposals being accepted, a division was taken, and the Instruction was lost by 195 to 57.

The Police and Sanitary Committee, to which the Bill was referred, conceded three of the four points in the Instruction, notwithstanding the result of the division; they would not, however, give way in favour of a bacteriological examination in place of the clinical one proposed in the Bill.

The Tuberculosis (Animals) Bill, promoted by the National Federation of Meat Traders' Associations, with the object of providing compensation to the owner of a carcass condemned after slaughter, and destroyed on account of tuberculosis, was supported by the Council on 29th March. The Bill received a second reading, and was referred to a Select Committee, which recommended that one-half the value should be provided by the Imperial Exchequer, subject to certain safeguarding conditions, and advised that this assistance should not be given in the case of imported meat or animals. The Bill was not, however, allowed to make further progress.

1905.

Twelve local authorities promoted Bills containing clauses dealing with milk supply. Of these, the Bristol, Ealing and London County Council Bills were opposed because they proposed to vary the Model Clauses. The promoters of the first two were induced to withdraw their variations, while in the case of the London County Council Bill, Sir Edward Strachey moved an Instruction in the House of Commons to omit the Clause, and this Instruction was agreed to by the House. The retention of the Model Clauses was objected to by the Local Government Board on other grounds in some of the other Bills, and only five private Acts this session retained them, viz., Bristol, Ealing, Morley, Otley and Rhondda.

The Board issued a new Sheep Scab Order in January, which the Council carefully considered on 28th February and 4th April. They pointed out several weak features, and again urged the Board to issue a general Order for compulsory dipping.

The President of the Board appointed a Departmental Committee on Epizootic Abortion, and nominated Sir Edward Strachey a member of the Committee as a representative of the Central Chamber. The Council sent Professor Penberthy, Mr. Thomas Davies (Cheshire) and Mr. Christopher Middleton (Cleveland) as witnesses to give evidence before the Committee.

1906.

The general election which took place in January resulted in the return of a Radical Government, and Lord Carrington was appointed President of the Board of Agriculture.

The principal event of the year in connection with Cattle Diseases was the attempt to repeal the Diseases of Animals Act, 1896. That Act, which was one of the most beneficent measures ever passed by Parliament for British agriculture, and which it had taken the Chambers nearly thirty years to obtain, was always opposed by a certain group of interested parties. Thus, the feeders of stock in Norfolk and parts of

Scotland, some of the shipping interest and those concerned with the trade in live stock, as well as a strong section of the Butchers' Associations, were united in condemning the Act. Their chief contention was the old theory, so much used by the opponents of every measure promoted to check diseases of animals, that it raised the price of the people's food. The general election had made probably greater changes in the House of Commons than any previous single contest, and, with such a large proportion of new and unknown members, there was no means of judging what view the new House would take on this question. By the luck of the ballot, one of the new members got a place, and introduced a Bill to repeal this Act. There was reason to believe that Lord Carrington had an open mind on the subject, but the cry of "raising the price of the people's food" of course appealed strongly to him, for it suggested "protection," and he appeared to view the attempt of the repealers with some sympathy. The Bill was the first Order of the day for second reading on 6th April. On 6th March the Council passed a resolution with only one dissentient (a Norfolk deputy) asking local Chambers to urge their representatives in Parliament to oppose the Bill.

On the same day one of the largest and most representative deputations ever arranged by the Chamber waited upon the President of the Board to protest against any relaxation in the restrictions enforced with regard to the importation of live store stock. Every Agricultural Society of any importance in England and Wales, as well as Ireland, sent representatives to support the Chambers, and the deputation was introduced by Sir Courtenay Warner, Bart., M.P. (Chairman of the Chamber this year). Lord Carrington was greatly impressed both by the size and the representative character of the deputation, and by the moderation with which the views of agriculturists were expressed, and was convinced of the necessity of adhering to the Act of 1896.

When the debate took place in the House of Commons there was a large attendance for a private members' day, and there were many anxious to speak. At five o'clock the

Speaker (Mr. J. W. Lowther) declined to accept the motion "That the question be now put," so the debate was adjourned, which, of course, meant that the Bill was killed. It was not made a party question; though, so far as could be gathered, the support for the Bill came mainly from the Radical side of the House. On the other hand, among its strongest opponents were Sir Edward Strachey and Sir Courtenay Warner, the latter making an excellent speech against it in the second reading debate. The Chamber circulated the following memorandum which the Secretary had prepared, to every member of the House of Commons the day before the debate took place, which is worth reproduction as it gives the chief arguments against the repeal of the Act.

FACTS TO BE REMEMBERED.

FROM THE CONSUMERS' POINT OF VIEW.

Freedom from the scheduled contagious diseases has tended to keep down the price of home-grown meat. The feeling of security from loss by disease has induced many hundreds of farmers to become milk producers, with the result that increased production has caused an abnormal increase in consumption, and yet the price remains reasonably low. If an outbreak occurred the quantity of meat in the market would be suddenly decreased, and the fresh supply of milk, upon which hundreds of thousands of children are being reared, would be cut off at the fountain head, and the price would necessarily be raised to a point beyond the reach of all but the wealthy.

There is, moreover, the risk of milk being received in towns from herds in which disease has not fully developed, or where it has not been diagnosed and reported. This is by no means an imaginary danger, for Foot and Mouth Disease may exist for weeks before it is officially declared to be such. This actually occurred in the United States in 1902, when an outbreak occurred in Massachusetts in August, but was not reported to the Department of Agriculture till 14th November, and was not officially declared until 17th November. With the certain loss to the individual and the expense entailed upon the locality and the country, it is not surprising that outbreaks are not declared until there is no possibility of mistake.

That the quantity of meat available for consumption has not been decreased by the restrictions now in force is shown by the following imports of live and dead meat:—

CATTLE DISEASES

Imports of Fresh Beef from Argentina.

Year.		Cwts.	
1899	... ..	150,365	Free importation for slaughter at port.
1900	... ..	142,262	Up to April.
1901	...Immediate rise ...	771,929	Prohibited.
1902	... ..	923,748	Prohibited.
1903	... ..	1,152,211	Part time prohibited.
1904	...Immediate rise ...	1,675,271	Prohibited.
1905	... ..	2,580,152	Prohibited.

	Live cattle.		Cwts.	Total weight, live and dead, Cwts.
1899	... .. 85,365	representing	524,385	... 674,750
1900	... .. 38,562	„	242,390	... 384,652
1903	... .. 27,817	„	178,824	... 1,331,035

These figures show that there is now imported from Argentina more than twice as much beef as was imported before the total prohibition of live stock from Argentina.

Imports of Live Cattle and Fresh Beef from Canada.

	Live cattle.	Fresh beef.
		Cwts.
*1887-1891	... .. (1) 88,091	... .. 5,722
†1893-1897	... .. (2) 97,865	... .. 4,632
†1901-1905	... .. (3) 133,605	... .. 13,738 (1901-4)

Figures for 1905 not yet available.

* Before prohibition of store stock. † After prohibition of store stock.

(1) About 50,000 of these were store stock, not fat. (2) All fat. (3) All fat.

This shows that more than twice the weight of fresh beef, live and dead, is now imported from Canada as was imported before the prohibition of store stock.

FROM THE PRODUCERS' POINT OF VIEW.

Notwithstanding the fact that the increased importations have kept prices very low, the home producer has found that, on the whole, the production of meat and milk has been the least unsatisfactory feature of British Agriculture; but this condition has been brought about, and its continuance made possible, solely by the security that farmers have felt against any risk of disease. Were the introduction of Contagious Disease rendered probable, as it would be by *any* relaxation of existing restrictions, and the possibility of valuable herds (which it has taken years of careful selection to build up) being lost, and only a portion of their value being recoverable as compensation, it would be quite impossible to produce either meat or milk at present prices.

The argument that dairy farmers and cattle breeders oppose the importation of stores because the present restrictions act in a protective manner is neither sound nor correct, except in so far as protection from disease is concerned. Very many dairy farmers are not breeders, as they buy newly calved cows in the market and sell them again when dry. If unrestricted importation of stores were permitted this class might possibly buy slightly cheaper, and it might therefore be thought that they would favour their importation, but they wisely prefer security to a possible reduction in the price of their renewals.

It is said that breeders have nothing to fear, as those having pedigree stock do not let their animals intermingle with others intended for the butcher (*Dundee Courier*, 16th March, 1906). But infection may be carried for miles by birds, foxes, cats, or hares, and it is not necessary for *intermingling* to take place for herds to become infected. In fact, it is impossible in this country to effectually isolate a herd at a sufficient distance from the source of infection.

It is said "that large numbers of graziers require them." This is not true. It is true that a limited number of farmers (nearly all of whom are found in restricted areas in Scotland, and a part of Norfolk) think that the admission of stores would cheapen their raw material, though this remains to be proved. Some of these have boldly asserted that they would rather have cheap stores with disease than the continuation of restrictions and freedom from disease. This is very short-sighted policy on their part, for directly an outbreak of any sort occurred the movement of all kinds of stock for a wide radius around the infected area would be prohibited, and they would be unable to purchase stores of any kind. This might, of course, occur just when their root crops were ready for consumption, and thus a whole year's crop be wasted.

It is a great mistake to suppose that this carefully engineered agitation in favour of repealing the Act of 1896 has been organised by farmers. The chief promoters of this movement have been shippers, dealers, and officials of a few big Corporations, who expect to increase their wharf dues, and to make a profit in other ways out of the trade in foreign stores. The number of farmers who support them is less than one per cent. of the farmers of the United Kingdom, but the agitators have carefully put these few well in the front.

FROM THE COLONIAL POINT OF VIEW.

Another argument used is that the exclusion of Canadian stores is opposed to the present spirit of Imperialism. If Canadians were unanimously anxious to send their cattle here in a lean condition instead of fat we should regret extremely having to oppose their wishes. But Canada is by no means unanimous.

The following extract, taken from the *Field* of 6th January, 1906, shows what, at any rate, one Canadian paper thinks of the proposal :—

Canada and the Canadian Cattle Question.

A leading article in our Canadian contemporary, the *Farmers' Advocate*, presents the Canadian cattle question, if not in a new, at all events in a very different light to that in which it is represented by the agitators for the reopening of the ports in this country. It has been a leading aim of the British graziers, as well as of a number of representatives of public opinion in the Dominion, to make us believe that Canada as a whole strongly resented the action of the British Government in refusing access to her cattle into the interior of the United Kingdom. In short, they pictured our premier Colony as harbouring thoughts of a serious wrong inflicted upon her, and as waiting for a suitable opportunity of repaying the Mother Country in her own coin. To those conversant with both sides of the question this view savoured of the ridiculous, but it seems to have had the desired effect in certain quarters, and it is especially gratifying, therefore, that the opposite side to the controversy should be provided with trustworthy evidence which enables them to absolutely refute such absurd allegations. Our Canadian contemporary referred to admits a desire to see the policy of open ports reverted to, but merely on principle, and not in order that it might be taken advantage of by Canadian stock owners, so that, whatever ground there may be in agricultural Canada for asserting that a repeal of the Act of 1896 is desired, it is based on entirely different grounds to those which underlie the selfish object of the harbour trusts and non-stock-breeding farmers in the United Kingdom. According to the journal named, which can claim authority to speak in name of the great body of cattle breeders and feeders in the Dominion, the revival of the trans-Atlantic trade in immature Canadian cattle would be one of the worst calamities that could befall the Dominion stock raiser, and therefore it emphatically dissociates itself from the exaggerated and largely unfounded contentions advanced by the British discontents for a return to the old state of affairs. Of course, there are middlemen in Canada, as well as in this country, who are keenly desirous of renewing the old traffic, which was unquestionably more lucrative to them than to the farmers in the Dominion or the consumers in the United Kingdom; but we firmly submit that it is not the middlemen whose interests are to be chiefly considered in a matter of such momentous import, but those of the two main bodies, the producers and the consumers. It is, perhaps, unfortunate for the comparatively few British graziers that they should be unable to procure the Canadian store cattle they seem to appreciate so highly; but, as our contemporary remarks, the British feeder who wants to get cheap store cattle is, after all, simply another middleman between the British consumer and the Canadian producer, scooping in profits that the latter ought to have. This remark correctly represents the position of affairs, and it is gratifying to find that the true situation is thoroughly understood by the vast majority of the interested public on both sides of the Atlantic.

But, while our contemporary is strongly averse to a renewal of the traffic in immature cattle, or, in fact, in live cattle at all,

it strongly urges the introduction and development of a chilled meat industry between the Western Provinces and the Mother Country, and adds that "if our Canadian cattle admission friends were as anxious for the Canadian cattle raiser as they profess, they would be advising him to finish more well-bred cattle at home, and would be arranging companies to start the chilled meat industry in Canada, thus effecting a big saving in the freight on offal and providing for additional new Canadian industries." Naturally, an article of this description will not be palatable to the disappointed graziers in this country, but they must turn to some other quarter than the Dominion in order to procure the convincing evidence which they are so anxious to discover and which is so slow in forthcoming.

Moreover, we are convinced that the exclusion of stores, while fat stock is admitted, is not at all detrimental to the best interests of Canada, as this means that she is exporting a manufactured article instead of a raw material. And there is reason to believe that the small agitation in Canada—if, indeed, such exists—is not altogether unconnected with local party politics.

FROM THE RATEPAYERS' POINT OF VIEW.

It is admitted on all sides that the burden of rates is already far heavier than ratepayers can well bear. But if any serious outbreaks of disease were to occur the cost to the ratepayers of administering the Acts would be considerable. Are they prepared to take the risk for a possible but illusory advantage? Ratepayers, in such a contingency, would suffer both by the increased rates and by the increased price they would have to pay for wholesome meat.

CANADA IS SAID TO BE FREE FROM DISEASE.

It may be true that none of the scheduled diseases exist in Canada at the present moment, but they have a peculiarly offensive and infectious Mange which the Canadian Department of Agriculture has long been trying to suppress without success. This entails a compulsory dipping order for horned stock. Anthrax is also very common there. Even if Canada is free now they have a frontier of from 3000 to 4000 miles, and though a watch is said to be kept over all stock crossing the boundary, it is most perfunctory and ineffective. Cases are known of farmers in Canada frequently driving stock into the States, and back again, without even a question being asked.

On 10th February the Board issued an Order making dipping of sheep, twice a year, compulsory over the whole of Scotland, and on 9th April very similar Orders were issued applying to the six northern counties of England and the whole of Wales, including that part of Monmouthshire west of the river Wye. The North of England Order was weakened

by an area in Holderness being exempted, in spite of an outbreak of scab occurring in Hull market just before the Order was issued. On 3rd April the Council protested against this exemption of Holderness, and reiterated their opinion that the Order should be extended to the whole of the United Kingdom.

A deputation to the President of the Board, on 2nd May, again urged compulsory dipping throughout the country.

The principal object of this deputation, however, was to urge the Board to obtain an increased grant from the Treasury to enable them to augment the amount of compensation from one-fourth the value (the amount then given) to one-half, for animals found when slaughtered to be suffering from Glanders. It was pointed out that Glanders was then almost confined to London and a few other large towns, but that the substitution of motors for horse-drawn vehicles would cause a dispersion of horses all over the country, with the consequent probability of spreading the disease. It was further pointed out that several deaths of human beings were caused every year by Glanders, and that it would be easier and cheaper to stamp out the disease while it was confined to restricted areas. The President of the Board made urgent representations to the Treasury and asked for a grant of £25,000, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Asquith) declined to make any grant.

Only five Bills contained clauses dealing with the milk supply, but no attempt was made to depart from the Model Clauses, and they were therefore not opposed.

1907.

The Home-office added Glanders to the list of industrial diseases under the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906. In consequence of this, the Board of Agriculture was requested to meet a deputation from the Council in order to again urge upon the Treasury the need of allowing a grant towards compensation for glandered horses, but the President replied that it would be useless for him to receive the deputation as Mr. Asquith had arrived at the conclusion that he would not

be justified in making a special grant from the Exchequer after the fullest possible consideration, and there was no prospect of any modification of his decision.

The Board issued a new Glanders Order repealing and amending the Order of 1894. The new Order allowed local authorities to pay compensation up to one-half the value of an animal, instead of one-fourth as previously, in cases of horses slaughtered, on the evidence of the mallein test, but the old rate was retained so far as regarded animals showing clinical evidence of disease.

A considerable increase in the number of outbreaks of Swine Fever caused the Council to express again their gravest dissatisfaction with the policy of isolation persisted in by the Board, and on three occasions during this year to urge the Department to return to the practice of slaughter with compensation. The Board, however, expressed themselves "confident that a steady persistence in the administrative measures taken to control the disease will before long result in regaining the ground which has unfortunately been lost."

The Board this year adopted the policy which the Chambers had been so long urging, and enforced the compulsory dipping of sheep throughout the whole of Great Britain, while the Department of Agriculture for Ireland adopted a similar policy in that country. The Council, after consideration of the Order, asked for greater stringency in its administration.

The Bill to repeal the Act of 1896 was again introduced, but, as it was not favoured in the ballot, was not discussed. Sir Edward Strachey, speaking on behalf of the Government on the Vote for the Board of Agriculture on 23rd May, gave a decided refusal to a request that Deptford should be opened for imported live stock, and the Council recorded their satisfaction with the attitude he adopted.

The London County Council again introduced a Bill, containing some ill-considered and drastic milk clauses. These were strongly opposed by the Parliamentary Committee, and ultimately they were all withdrawn except the Model Clauses. Several other private Bills contained the usual Model Clauses, and following precedent these were not opposed.

At a later stage the London Bill was allowed to go through with one modification, which provided that instead of milk from a whole dairy being stopped when Tuberculosis of the Udder was suspected, the milk from the suspected cow only should be stopped.

A private member's Bill, called the Public Health Bill, was introduced by Mr. J. W. Wilson, containing various clauses which had been previously accepted by Parliament in a number of private Acts. The object of the Bill was to enable urban authorities to adopt its provisions, or any portion of them, and it empowered the Local Government Board to extend them to rural districts. Adoption of any part of the Act was by simple resolution passed at a meeting of the local authority, and publication of the resolution in one or two local papers. As the Bill contained, *inter alia*, the Model Milk Clauses, the Parliamentary Committee were instructed to oppose it, for two reasons. First, because this method of obtaining these Clauses would not be consistent with the repeated demands of the Council for general and comprehensive legislation, and because if this piecemeal legislation were to be continued it was deemed better that it should be obtained in the ordinary way, by private Act, rather than by this less public method. Secondly, although the Model Clauses were accepted by the Council as a compromise and as a temporary measure, the Council could not accept them as representing the general legislation which they had demanded. The Bill was befriended by the Government and allowed to slip through after eleven o'clock one night, but the Milk Clauses were struck out before it became an Act.

1908.

At the June meeting the resignation of Mr. St. John Ackers, as Chairman of the Cattle Diseases Committee, was accepted with great regret, and Colonel Le Roy-Lewis was elected in his place. Mr. Ackers had been Chairman since the resignation of Mr. Stratton in 1894.

At the end of 1907 the Council had addressed a letter to the Board calling attention to the great danger of allowing

the importation of hay and straw from Holland and Belgium, when it was known that Foot and Mouth Disease was prevalent in those countries, but the Board took no action in the matter. On 5th February an outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease occurred at Leith, followed by two others, and these were traced to some Dutch hay. By prompt action the Board succeeded in preventing the disease from spreading. On 4th March, in response to an urgent request from the Council, backed up by Mr. Henry Chaplin and Mr. G. L. Courthope in the House of Commons, the President of the Board issued an Order prohibiting the importation of hay and straw from any countries infected with Foot and Mouth Disease. This did not include packing material, and on 31st March the Council demurred to this not being also prohibited.

Considerable agitation was caused among agriculturists by a threat from the Butchers' Associations that they would refuse to purchase any animal for slaughter unless the seller gave a warranty, to hold good for ten days, that the animal was free from disease, and fit for the food of man. Numberless meetings of protest were held by farmers all over the country, and some heated and injudicious statements were made on both sides. At the end of October the President of the Board of Agriculture addressed a letter to the National Meat Traders' Federation suggesting that they should suspend their resolution requiring their members to decline to purchase after 2nd November, pending a conference to be held between representatives of their Federation and the Central Chamber of Agriculture. This was agreed to, and the date of the demand for the warranty was postponed until 1st January, 1909.

On 3rd November a report from the Cattle Diseases Committee was adopted which pointed out that :—

“ In view of the great difficulty usually experienced in getting any meeting of agriculturists together during the harvest months, it is hard to say which is the more surprising, the large attendances that have resulted at these meetings, or the unanimity with which they, quite spontaneously, have decided in the most emphatic way to give no warranty.

"Your Committee have no hesitation in saying that any other course of action would have been most ill advised, and they urge upon all Societies who have not already done so the necessity of passing similar resolutions, and thus showing a united front against this attempt to throw an unreasonable burden upon farmers. If such a warranty is given, it will open the door to many fraudulent transactions, and any agriculturist giving such a warranty may frequently have a claim made against him for some carcase quite different to the one he originally sold. Moreover, the number of cases of seizure of tuberculous carcasses is so small, except among those of inferior quality, that butchers doing a respectable trade can easily protect themselves against loss by the payment of a very small insurance premium. Mr. W. Coggan has stated that his losses would be amply covered by a premium of twopence per head.

"It is alleged that butchers are now subject to criminal prosecution if diseased meat is found on their premises, and that in some cases they have been subjected to great hardships in this connection. This may, no doubt, be the case, but your Committee submit that this aspect of the matter in no way affects the question which we are now brought face to face with, namely, the demand of a warranty from the farmer. Parliament will probably so amend the existing law as to remove this specific and apparently well-founded grievance of the butchers, and the Council would be willing to extend its sympathetic co-operation in any such course ; but the question of the warranty, to which your Committee object, would not be touched by such action.

"The farmer has to buy stock without any guarantee, and he cannot be expected to commit himself by warranting an animal free from disease when he has no means of knowing whether that disease exists or not.

"Some resolutions received by your Committee express sympathy with the butchers in the possible losses they may sustain through carcasses being seized which have been purchased in good faith, and suggest joining hands with the Meat Traders' Federation in urging upon the Government the equity of public funds paying for the protection of public health. Your Committee quite agree that when carcasses are confiscated in the public interest compensation ought to be paid out of national funds, and they have, in fact, consistently urged this for many years ; but they cannot recommend any attempt being made to consider joint action in this direction, unless the butchers agree to withdraw their demand pending a conference."

The Federation proposed the Earl of Northbrook as an independent Chairman of the conference, and the Central Chamber expressed their satisfaction with this suggestion, and invited some thirty other Associations to send repre-

representatives. Mr. Courthope acted as Chairman of the agricultural representatives. The conference met twice, 2nd December and 3rd February, 1909, but a letter from Lord Northbrook to the Council stated that :—

“ Although I regret to have to report that the conference has been unable to come to a satisfactory arrangement, I am led to hope that the meetings between representatives of Agriculture and of the Meat Traders' Association, and the friendly and courteous manner in which the points in dispute have been discussed by both parties, may not have been altogether in vain.”

The butchers threatened to enforce the warranty on 3rd May, but in the Annual Report issued in December, 1909, the Council said :—

“ So far as there are any means of judging, the whole matter has died down, except in a few isolated localities where the farmers weakly consented to give a warranty (in one or two cases) or to pay an insurance premium. The result in such cases is that those farmers have saddled themselves with an additional liability without any corresponding advantage ; for a study of official market returns fails to show that prices are any higher in those markets where farmers gave way than elsewhere.”

1909.

The London County Council promoted another Bill containing Milk Clauses, and it having been read a second time, Mr. Courthope moved an Instruction to the Committee to strike them out. Mr. John Burns, on behalf of the Government, strongly urged that these Clauses ought to be abandoned, as the regulation of the milk supply ought not to be dealt with locally. They were eventually struck out in Committee. A few other private Bills containing the Model Clauses were not opposed.

In reply to a question by Mr. Astor, on 2nd March, 1914, Mr. Herbert Samuel gave the names of 102 Corporations and Urban District Councils which had obtained powers under their special Acts to regulate the milk supply up to the end of 1909.

The Government introduced in the House of Commons their long-promised Milk Bill, to deal with the production and distribution of milk ; a separate and better Bill being

introduced for Scotland in the House of Lords. These measures are dealt with in another section, but in connection with them the Board of Agriculture issued a Tuberculosis Order, which was to be read with the Bills, and to come into operation on 1st January, 1910. This Order, with the exception that the proposal to pay compensation for slaughtered animals out of the rates was strongly condemned, was generally approved. It was this proposal in the Order which was the ultimate cause of the two Bills being withdrawn.

On 2nd February the Council passed a resolution recommending that a conference should take place between the Governments of the United Kingdom and Argentina to consider a scheme for establishing testing stations on this side of the water ; animals passing this test to have free access to Argentina.

1910.

Once again the London County Council attempted to legislate on their own lines with regard to milk. In spite of what he said in 1909, Mr. Burns this year supported the London Bill, but after the second reading Mr. Courthope moved an Instruction, and on carrying it to a division defeated the Bill by 85 votes to 81. Shortly after, Mr. Courthope introduced a Milk Bill himself, based on the Government measure of 1909, but embodying the amendments recommended by the Chambers ; of course, no facilities were given for any progress being made with it. Only two other Bills contained the Model Clauses, and these were not opposed.

Continued efforts were made by interested parties to induce the Board to admit Argentine cattle alive, but the Council expressed their extreme satisfaction with the determined attitude taken up by Lord Carrington and Sir Edward Strachey on this question. That this was justified was shown by the renewed prevalence of Foot and Mouth Disease in Argentina officially reported in June of this year. Two outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease occurred in England, but the Board were able to prevent the disease spreading ; they could not, however, ascertain the cause of the outbreaks.

On several occasions the Council had urged the Board to carry out a scientific investigation on Swine Fever, without success. On 1st March the Council adopted a report from their Cattle Diseases Committee stating that thirty-one local Chambers had passed resolutions asking for this inquiry, and again urging the Board to set up a Departmental Committee without delay. The next day Mr. Beville Stanier asked in the House of Commons if the Board would carry out this investigation, but as the report from the Chamber had not then reached the Board the answer was in the negative. On 10th March Mr. Stanier repeated his question, when it was stated that a Committee would be appointed. In due course it was set up, and included Professor Penberthy, Sir Luke White, M.P., and Mr. Courthope, M.P., as representatives of the Chamber.

On 1st November the report of the Departmental Committee on Epizootic Abortion was considered, and a report from the Cattle Diseases Committee, which approved the recommendations of the Departmental Committee, subject to certain conditions, was discussed; the question was, however, thought so important that it was referred to local Chambers for their consideration. On 7th December thirty-five resolutions were received on the subject, of which thirteen supported the Cattle Diseases Committee, and twenty-two opposed it. The Committee therefore withdrew their report. The Board of Agriculture, feeling that they must have the support of agriculturists if they were to take any successful action in a new direction, decided not to move in the matter for the present.

1911.

At the first meeting of the Cattle Diseases Committee held this year the resignation of Colonel Le Roy-Lewis was received, and Professor Penberthy was elected as Chairman of the Committee in his place.

The following private Bills, Chiswick, Gloucester, Ipswich, Luton, Newcastle-on-Tyne and St. Helens, contained Milk Clauses. All these adhered to the Model except Newcastle,

which contained some new and contentious proposals. Previously to this year no objection had been raised to the inclusion of the Model Clauses, but this year, owing to the further delay in proceeding with the long-promised Government Milk Bill, the Parliamentary Committee opposed the inclusion of any clauses whatever dealing with the milk supply, and were successful in getting them struck out in every case.

On 30th May the Council asked the Board to put the Tuberculosis Order of May, 1909, into operation, provided that compensation was not made a charge on the rates. It also asked the Board to submit a scheme to the Development Commissioners, asking them to provide money from the Development Fund for paying compensation under the Order.

Four outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease occurred this year, and in no case could the Board trace the cause. In each instance the Board by energetic action, by isolation and slaughter, prevented the disease spreading, and the Council expressed their thanks to the Board for the promptness with which they had acted. At the same time they urged that searching inquiry should be made into the origin of these outbreaks. During the recess Lord Carrington announced his intention of appointing a Departmental Committee to make this investigation, and later in the year Mr. Runciman (who succeeded Lord Carrington as President of the Board in October) appointed the Committee with Sir Ailwyn Fellowes as Chairman, and Sir Bowen Bowen-Jones and Mr. Charles Bathurst, M.P., as members of it; the Council sent Professor Penberthy to give evidence on their behalf.

The Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill, a Government measure, proposed to set up a separate Board of Agriculture for Scotland. A similar Bill which was before Parliament in 1908 did not pass, and on 1st November, 1911, the Cattle Diseases Committee's report was adopted, which stated that :

“ When this same Bill was before Parliament in 1908 the Council adopted a Report from your Committee, dated 24th February of that year, in which attention was called to the grave risks which might arise under this Bill in connection with

the proposal to set up an independent Board of Agriculture for Scotland, and expressed the hope that in any rearrangement of the Department the administration of the Cattle Diseases Acts within Great Britain might be retained under one head. In spite of this motion, and notwithstanding the strong opposition of Scottish agriculturists, the Bill passed the House of Commons, but was rejected by the House of Lords on second reading, partly on these grounds.

“On 26th October, Mr. Charles Bathurst called the attention of the Prime Minister to the present opposition of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture, and to the resolution passed at York, and asked whether the Government would modify the Bill in the manner suggested in the resolution. Mr. Asquith in his reply curtly declined to modify the Bill. As the measure has already passed through Committee, the only practicable step that can be taken is to appeal to the House of Lords either to insert and insist upon a clause which will give effect to the wishes of agriculturists in both England and Scotland, or to reject the Bill altogether. Your Committee recommend that this course be taken.”

Mr. Charles Bathurst, on behalf of the Council, put down amendments to give effect to the Council's decision, but when the debate took place on 6th November there was only a small House, and on the principal division the figures were 197 to 115, a majority of 84 against agriculture. An appeal was consequently made to the House of Lords to amend the Bill by reinstating the English Board as the authority to administer the Diseases of Animals Acts over the whole of Great Britain. This appeal was responded to, and the Bill was amended in the desired direction before receiving the Royal Assent.

1912.

A deputation waited upon Mr. Runciman on 27th February to ask for the appointment of a Departmental Committee to investigate “Johne's Disease.” The suggestion was not accepted, but Mr. Runciman promised that the Board's veterinary officers should devote special attention to this disease.

On 16th July the Council considered the report of the Departmental Committee on Foot and Mouth Disease, which they considered somewhat weak and unsatisfactory, though some of the recommendations were quite approved. At the

same meeting the proposal of the Home-office to add Cow Pox to the Schedule of Industrial Diseases under the Factory and Workshops Acts, 1901-1907, was considered, and the Council offered no objection to the proposal. They deputed Professor Penberthy to give evidence on their behalf before the Departmental Committee which the Home-office had appointed to inquire into the subject.

The eighty-three outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease in England this year caused great alarm, and, coming as they did just when the animals were assembling for the Royal Show at Doncaster, caused great loss and widespread inconvenience. A general Order was issued by the Board prohibiting the exhibition of all stock except horses at the Royal Show, and large areas were placed under Orders prohibiting movement of animals wherever the disease showed itself. It was found that the original cause was stock imported from Ireland, and all animals from Ireland were debarred entry for some months. Yielding to Irish pressure, however, Mr. Runciman issued an Order permitting the landing of stock from Ireland on 30th September, on which day a further outbreak of this disease occurred in Ireland. At the provincial meeting of the Central Chamber at Chester on 3rd October a resolution was passed expressing the opinion that this admission of stock from Ireland was fraught with great danger. On 9th October a large deputation, organised by the Chamber and the Royal Agricultural Society, waited upon the President of the Board to urge him to reconsider the matter and to prohibit the landing of any stock from Ireland until it was certain that it could be done without risk. Mr. Runciman refused to withdraw the Order, but within a few days almost every County Council in England issued orders prohibiting the entry of any stock from Ireland into their respective areas, and on 5th November the Council expressed their approval of this action of the County Councils.

1913.

In March the Council gave general approval to the Tuberculosis Order, 1913, and expressed some degree of satisfaction

that the Treasury had allocated £60,000 per annum for five years towards the cost of compensation to owners whose cows were slaughtered in the public interest. The Council pointed out that as the Order and the Milk and Dairies Bill were both promoted as safeguards of the public health, and that as the benefit would accrue chiefly to the population of large urban areas, it was only equitable that the cost of administration should also be defrayed out of the National Exchequer.

The Milk and Dairies Bill, introduced by Mr. Burns, was found to be a much more reasonable measure than that introduced in 1909, and subject to certain amendments which were set out the Council gave general approval to it. In April the Council sent representatives to support a deputation to the Board of Agriculture, which had been arranged by the Cheshire Milk Producers' Association, to discuss the Tuberculosis Order. The points asked for were that there should be one valuation only of any animal condemned to be slaughtered and the scale of compensation which ought to be paid. The Board declined to accede to the wishes expressed by the deputation.

1914.

In February a report was adopted from a special Committee, of which Mr. W. A. Haviland was Chairman, deploring the waste occasioned by the slaughter of immature calves. The Provincial Advisory Councils appointed by the Board of Agriculture in connection with their scheme for the improvement of live stock, were urged to organise a trade in calves between "the rearers—especially those in non-dairy districts—and the dairy farmers, so that the former might be enabled to buy calves from good-class cows, the heifers of which could be sold again as 'down-calvers.'" This Committee, however, objected to interference by legislative action.

In March the Tuberculosis Order of 1913 was again considered, in view of a speech made by Mr. Runciman at Crewe on 26th January. The Council reiterated their request made by the deputation in the previous April for certain amendments to the Order, which were then refused. A deputation

sent by this Council met Mr. Runciman on 4th March, and he then admitted that the experience gained by some ten months' working of the Order showed that it needed some amendment. Later in the year, when the new Tuberculosis Order was issued, most of the amendments asked for were found to have been adopted. In July the Council welcomed these alterations, especially the abolition of the dual valuation, and the payment of compensation on a more generous scale. This Order came into operation on 1st July, but was suspended on 6th August owing to the war. The number of bovine animals suffering from Tuberculosis, in respect of which notice of intention to slaughter was received for the twelve months commencing 1st May, 1913, the date when the original Order came into operation, was 7276. The main grievance of the cost of administration, however, remains untouched, and the rural ratepayers have to pay the expenses incurred in this connection for the benefit of the urban population.

On 9th December the Council pointed out to the Local Government Board that the Tuberculosis Order was suspended, but that the Milk and Dairies Act (which was to be administered collaterally with this Order) was due to come into operation on 1st January, 1915. They asked, therefore, that the Act should not be put into operation until circumstances permitted the reinstatement of the Tuberculosis Order. On 18th December the Local Government Board issued an Order postponing the date upon which the Act should come into operation until 1st October, 1915.

The Swine Fever problem was before the Council on several occasions during the year, but while the Departmental Committee were still prosecuting their investigations it was found very difficult to suggest any changes in the methods of administration adopted by the Board. Mr. H. R. Beeton (Chairman of the Berks and Oxon Chamber of Agriculture, and of the National Pig Breeders' Association) took up the question with great energy, and after a prolonged effort in which he was supported by the Chambers and by other Societies, he induced Mr. Runciman to agree to institute

independent research in the pathology of Swine Fever by some scientific centre, concurrently with that carried on by the Board of Agriculture in conjunction with the Departmental Committee.

There were twenty-seven outbreaks of Foot and Mouth Disease during the year, and though this was a welcome drop from the figures of 1912, a good deal of uneasiness was created. The Board were unable to account for the cause of any of these outbreaks, but as cases were occurring in Ireland from time to time, the Council in May asked all County Councils in England and Wales to issue an order prohibiting the entry of live Irish stock into their respective areas, and a very large proportion immediately issued such an order. These were generally removed during August, as owing to the war it was felt undesirable to place any restrictions upon the movement of stock, unless absolutely imperative.

In July the Council discussed a motion suggesting that the Board should make compulsory regulations on stockowners with a view to stamping out the Ox Warble Fly, but after a long debate an amended resolution was agreed to asking the Board to institute research as to the best means of eradicating the pest, and urging agriculturists meanwhile to adopt the best-known methods for preventing attacks by this Fly.

On 7th November a sale of fifty-nine imported Friesland cattle took place and the extraordinary average price of £253 per head was reached. At the meeting on 9th December the Cattle Disease Committee's report expressed grave concern at the action of the Board of Agriculture in allowing this importation of foreign animals. The Committee considered it a most inexpedient use of the powers given by the Diseases of Animals Act, 1896, as it involved danger to the live stock in this country, and tended to shake the confidence of colonial and foreign purchasers. Very strong objection was taken in many quarters to this importation; and perhaps still stronger objection to the secrecy with which the affair was surrounded. It was felt that the Department were guilty of dereliction of duty in thus stooping to condone a mere commercial speculation. Probably no step has been taken

by the Board ever since its creation in 1889 which has so shaken the confidence of agriculturists in the wisdom and impartiality of the Department.

Among other arguments used to show the peculiarity of this action by the Board is the fact that that Department is responsible for the Sale of Milk Regulations, a Departmental Order having the effect of an Act of Parliament, which has been the cause of scores of innocent farmers being prosecuted and convicted of selling milk which did not come up to the Department's presumptive standard of quality.* By allowing this wholesale importation the Board have assisted to scatter broadcast over England animals which are notorious for the quantity of milk they can produce, but equally notorious for the low percentage of butter-fat which that milk contains.

* See page 300.

CHAPTER III.

LOCAL TAXATION.

1836-1870.

THIS subject in its various phases has occupied more of the attention of the Chambers of Agriculture than all other questions put together, and their efforts have met with greater success in this than in any other direction, save one, namely, bringing about the creation of the Board of Agriculture. But that matter demands a chapter to itself.

It is no matter for surprise that the question of Local Taxation has agitated agriculturists more than other sections of the community, for the simple reason that the former have been most unjustly victimised by the incidence of local rates ever since the passing of the Parochial Assessments Act in 1836. Nor is it unnatural that it has occupied the time of the Chambers often to the exclusion of other important matters, for it is unceasingly being brought to the notice of their members by the continual and increasing demands made upon their pockets by the rate collector. Every fresh burden added to local rates is immediately and directly felt by the ratepayer, and every alleviation of that burden is similarly directly appreciated. Small wonder, therefore, that the Chambers have continuously striven to remedy some of the injustices thereby inflicted upon agriculture.

When the Chambers were first founded there was in existence no association of any importance, if indeed any at all, which attempted to defend the interests of ratepayers; but the example set by the Chambers brought other bodies into being, and in their third Annual Report the Local Taxation Committee make mention of the Metropolitan Poor Rate League,

and the Leicester and Norwich Ratepayers' Associations.* The minutes of October, 1870, also refer to the National Association for the Equalisation of the Poor Rate. The Social Science Congress discussed the subject at Plymouth in 1872 when Major Craigie opened the discussion, and again at Norwich in 1873 ; but there is no further reference to any of these agencies after 1873, and the Chambers were left to carry on the fight single-handed from that time until about 1900, when the County Councils' Association took the question up, and a number of ratepayers' associations came into existence.

The Act of 1836 mentioned above, marked an epoch in the history of Local Taxation, and it is not necessary in this connection to go further back than that year, except to remark in passing that previous to 1834 no grants-in-aid of local burdens had been made from the National Exchequer ; in that year, however, a Select Committee recommended that the expenses of prosecutions at assizes, of the conveyance of prisoners, of maintaining militia establishments, and of preparing certain Parliamentary Returns should be met out of public revenue, and in 1836 £110,000 was provided for defraying half the cost of prosecutions and of removing prisoners.

Between that year and the institution of the Chambers the subject was raised in Parliament on several occasions. In 1845 Mr. Miles urged that the State should bear the whole cost of assize prosecutions, maintenance of prisoners, half cost of county prisons, and coroners' inquests, and the whole cost of registration of voters. The estimated cost of these services was £350,000. In 1846 Sir Robert Peel promised to provide for transferring a part of local burdens from the rates to the Exchequer, as a sort of *quid pro quo* for the repeal of the Corn Laws. In the same year a Select Committee of the House of Lords recommended the relief of real property from

* A paper was read by Mr. Dudley Baxter at the Royal Statistical Society's offices in 1869, and the Royal Statistical Society's prize essay by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Inglis Palgrave, in 1871, were also two important contributions on the question.

such of its exclusive burdens as the cost of criminal prosecutions, of pauper lunatics, and of certain poor law officers' salaries.

In 1849 Mr. Disraeli initiated a debate, and, after contending that the Poor Rate, the Highway Rate, and the County Rate were all applied to what were really national purposes, proposed that a sum of six million pounds (equal to half the rates and half the Land Tax) should be borne by the Consolidated Fund. In 1850 the same hon. Member moved for the appointment of a Committee to consider a revision of the law relating to the relief of the poor and the removal from the rates of a charge of some two millions. Mr. Gladstone pronounced this proposal both honest and reasonable, adding that "He would vote for it on the ground of its justice; it was impossible to look at the nature of the tax for the support of the poor without being struck by the inequality of its incidence. . . . The relief of the poor was a purpose for which, as far as could be done, all property, and not one description of property only, should be liable." In the same session a Committee of the House of Lords declared "that the relief of the poor is a national object, towards which every description of property ought justly to be called upon to contribute, and that the Act of 43rd Elizabeth, c. 2, contemplated such contribution according to the ability of every inhabitant."

In 1856 an Act was passed compelling counties and boroughs to provide an adequate police force, towards which Parliament was to contribute one-fourth of the cost of pay and clothing of each force certified to be efficient. In 1859 Government agreed to make an annual contribution in lieu of rates in respect of lands and buildings owned or occupied by any of its departments. In 1864 provision was made for the gradual extinction of turnpike tolls and the maintenance of roads was thrown upon the rates, with a very small contribution from the Exchequer. In 1867 Mr. Goschen called attention to the continuous increase of burdens on rateable property, and suggested, as a means of obliging other property to contribute, the imposition of an additional penny of Income Tax, to be collected and retained by the Government, who should hand

over as an equivalent the Inhabited House Duty, to be collected and applied by local authorities.

This brings us to 1868, when Sir Massey Lopes moved a resolution in the House of Commons, on behalf of the Central Chamber, and thus inaugurated the Parliamentary intervention of that body.

In the early period of the struggles which took place between the spokesmen for the Chambers and successive Governments, many of those who opposed any subvention being made from the Treasury argued that the rates should be levied on the owner instead of on the occupiers, or that at least each should pay half. This was the line taken by Sir Thomas Acland (Liberal member for North Devon) on 16th April, 1872. But Sir Thomas Acland is not the only prominent Member of Parliament who has shown a woful or wilful ignorance of the incidence, or even of the theory of Local Taxation. During a debate some time in the 'nineties Mr. Labouchere said that if landowners were sincere in their desire to reduce the rates which their tenants had to pay they had only to reduce rents, and rates would go down automatically. He conveniently ignored the patent fact that where a certain amount has to be raised, the rate in the pound must go up according as the rentable value of any given area goes down. Again, at a more recent date, Mr. Lloyd George, M.P., is reported as saying that it really did not matter whether rates or taxes bore these burdens, as they both came out of the same pocket.

A student of political economy might perhaps express surprise that farmers (or occupiers) should have taken so keen an interest in this subject, since the burden of local rates is declared to be, in fact, a burden on the owner. But farmers are not political economists, and few of them delve very deeply into questions of this sort. What they do know is that the Act of 1836 placed the burden on the *occupier*, and that though the landowner ultimately pays it, in the form of reduced rents, yet the tenant actually has to hand it to the rate collector; and they also know that any rise in rates must be borne by the occupier until there is a change of

tenancy. Equally, that until there is such a change, he reaps the benefit of any reduction.

We often hear from Socialists to-day that agriculture is, and always has been, over-represented in Parliament: that the landlords have legislated in their own interests, and taxed other people for the benefit of their own class. There can be no better refutation of this untruth than to point to the Parochial Assessments Act. When that Act was passed in 1836, landowners certainly predominated in Parliament. At that time it was realised that land was by no means the only form of property, as it was when the great Act of Elizabeth was passed in 1601, but that personalty was increasing rapidly. Yet this Parliament of landlords deliberately laid on themselves, and on their descendants, the burden of local rates by passing this Act. Further than this, when, after a few years' working of the Act, it was found difficult to assess "Stock in Trade," they passed the Poor Rate Exemption Act, of 1840, and that Act has been renewed every year since by the annual Expiring Laws Continuance Acts.

1867.

Turning now to the actual records of the Chamber, we find that the first debate on Local Taxation took place on 5th February, 1867, and that, apart from matters pertaining to the organisation of the Chamber itself, this was the second subject taken up, Cattle Diseases being the first. The resolution carried was:—

"That as two Committees of the House of Commons, one in 1836 and another in 1864, have, after full inquiry, reported that the turnpike system is vexatious and expensive, and that, under certain conditions, the abolition of Turnpike Trusts as at present existing would be beneficial and expedient, and as some trusts are in course of abolition, thereby inflicting serious hardship and injustice on certain parishes, it is the opinion of this Chamber that Turnpike Trusts should be abolished simultaneously, and that provision for the future maintenance of all public roads should be settled by legislation on a fair and equitable basis."

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, M.P. (afterwards created Viscount St. Aldwyn), then moved :—

“ That as much of the expenditure in the formation of Turnpike roads was incurred for Imperial purposes, it is the opinion of this Chamber that the Consolidated Fund should aid in the liquidation of the remaining debt, when that debt has been fairly appraised or valued by competent authority.”

This was also carried, and a deputation was thereupon appointed to lay these resolutions before Mr. Walpole (Home Secretary). The deputation interviewed this Minister on 12th February, and he “ promised his best attention to their claims.”

At the next meeting, 2nd April, 1867, the Chamber approved the principle of Mr. Hunt's Valuation of Property Bill, but as there were several clauses in it which the Chamber did not approve, the Select Committee was requested to hear evidence from their members, and five witnesses were nominated who were willing to be examined. Another resolution was adopted the same day, urging that

“ the assessment for Local Taxation should be extended as far as possible to other property than that now rated, and that a Select Committee of the House of Commons be asked to take evidence on the subject.”

1868.

In February Sir M. Hicks-Beach moved in the House of Commons for a Return on Local Taxation. In May Sir Massey Lopes moved the resolution, referred to on page 76, as follows :—

“ That inasmuch as the local charges on real property have of late years much increased, and are annually increasing, it is neither just nor politic that all these burdens should be levied exclusively from this description of property.”

In June Mr. F. S. Corrance moved for a Select Committee, but the motion, after an animated debate, was withdrawn.

Resolutions were adopted by the Chamber on 3rd March, deprecating any measure which requires an Education Rate, and asking for more liberal grants, less restricted as to conditions, in aid of the then existing Voluntary School System.

On 31st of the same month the Chamber reiterated their resolution of February, 1867, on Turnpike Trusts,

“and, considering that no settlement of the question can be satisfactory which is based upon exclusive rating of real property, determines to oppose Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen’s Turnpike Trusts Bill.”

On 5th May the Chamber

“recorded its gratification that the importance of establishing County Financial Boards is now acknowledged in Parliament, and expresses its reliance on the Government carrying out their declared intention of making the inquiry into the whole subject speedily effective for legislation” ;

and eight members were nominated as witnesses to give evidence before the Select Committee on the Bill.

Although the Local Taxation Committee were insistent in their demand for the establishment of County Financial Boards, and although the subject was frequently debated in the Council, members of the Chambers did not seem to realise the modern trend towards bureaucracy, with its inevitable increase of paid officialism. They also overlooked the natural emulation for ostentation among these county authorities, which has caused a competition between them for palatial offices, huge staffs, high salaries and all the consequential extravagance. Had they realised this their eager desire for county centralisation might have been somewhat tempered.

At a public meeting arranged by the Chamber to take place at Leicester, on 17th July, during the visit of the Royal Show, the subject was discussed, and Mr. Duckham (afterwards Liberal Member for Hereford), moved a resolution urging members of all Chambers to support Parliamentary Candidates who declare themselves in favour of a revision of Local Taxation.

This is apparently the first recorded instance of such advice being given at a meeting of the Chambers.

On 22nd September, the Chamber issued “An Address” to the Associated Chambers, opening as follows :—

“Gentlemen,—Your attention is invited to resolutions which have been passed by this Council upon some of the most important

questions affecting agricultural interests; and the Council respectfully urge upon you the desirability of giving the widest possible circulation to these resolutions—of ascertaining, if practicable, the sentiments of every Parliamentary candidate thereupon, and of endeavouring to secure the election of representatives favourable to the views of the Chambers.”

Then follows a summary of the various resolutions passed, those relating to Cattle Diseases taking first place, Local Taxation next, then the Malt Tax, and finally Rural Education.

Some use may have been made of this Address in the General Election which took place in December, 1868, but I can find no evidence of this. It was the first attempt made by agriculturists to be heard, as such, in a Parliamentary Election, and possibly this industry may not have been much behind others in taking a step of the kind. But, comparing the phraseology with that of Parliamentary Programmes thrown at the heads of political candidates to-day, one realises the difference in expression and the deterioration in political manners since that time. The present generation of candidates would start with pleasurable surprise were they *respectfully asked to express their sentiments* upon any given list of questions.

1869.

In February the following resolutions were carried:—

“That the unequal pressure of the Poor Rate as at present imposed is a grievance which renders necessary the early and serious consideration of Parliament. That in the opinion of this Council the maintenance of the poor is a national liability to which income from every source should contribute. That, in the disbursement of the Poor Rate levied in accordance with the principle enunciated, local administration should be guaranteed.

“That the Income Tax affords an economical means of raising from all income a contribution to the Poor Rate, which may be placed to a separate account in the National Exchequer to the credit of the Poor Law Commissioners, this resolution being without prejudice to any better mode of removing that unjust incidence of the Poor Rate which was affirmed by resolutions of the Council on 5th May, 1868, but suggesting a means of redress worthy of careful examination, should her Majesty be graciously pleased to grant the Royal Commission of Inquiry for which Sir Massey Lopes has given notice of motion.”

A deputation was nominated to urge these views upon the Prime Minister. At the opening of Parliament, 23rd March, Sir Massey Lopes moved for a

“Royal Commission to inquire into the present amount, incidence, and effect of local taxation, with a view to a more equitable readjustment of these burdens.”

Mr. Gladstone refused a Commission, saying that the motion was one which recommended itself by every motive which could address itself to the indolence and indifference of an administration, because it would give the Government a lease of several years' peace and tranquility in reference to the discussion of the matter. He hoped it would be understood from his remarks that the Government were by no means insensible of the urgency of the question, and, if indisposed to accede to the motion, it was because the Government did not wish to turn their duty over to an irresponsible body. The motion was accordingly withdrawn.

An important step was taken by the Chamber on 6th April following, for a Sub-Committee was appointed to consider the setting up of a special committee to collect and circulate information on the subject of Local Taxation. This Sub-Committee reported on 4th May, recommending:—

“That a committee be appointed by the Council to diffuse information on Local Taxation by the circulation of printed matter, or by such other means as may seem desirable.

“That it be empowered to make rules and regulations, to appoint officers, and to raise a special fund; and that the Committee report its proceedings when called upon by the Council.

“That the Committee be instructed to put itself in communication with Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Guardians, and Municipal and Parochial Bodies, as well as Chambers of Agriculture, Farmers' Clubs, and all other Public Bodies, inviting them to appoint sub-committees of ratepayers to co-operate with the Local Taxation Committee.

“That it be an instruction to the Committee that its publications shall be designed to expose the injustice and inequalities of the present Poor Rate assessment, and of the incidence of other local burdens, and also to promote the discussion of remedial measures; but that the Council will not be held responsible for any views or policy expressed in such publications, unless the same views or policy have been resolved upon at a Council meeting.”

This report was unanimously adopted, and from this time until 1898 the Committee had a separate existence, though always working in the closest harmony with the parent body.

It is open to question whether greater success was attained by a separate body than would have been the case had the Committee remained an integral part of the Chamber. Undoubtedly a separate existence made for greater concentration on the part of those interested in this particular work, and it is difficult to over-estimate the importance of this concentration. On the whole, however, it seems that separation attained the best results. Certainly the Committee accomplished wonders on a small income, which exceeded £600 for one year only, and was seldom more than £300 per annum.

The new Committee at once got into harness, stating its objects thus :—

“To endeavour to obtain a reform and readjustment in the present unjust system of levying Local Taxation *exclusively* upon income arising from real property (land and houses), by extending the present area of assessment, and by transferring the expenditure for national objects from Local to Imperial Taxation.”

Surely there never was a more complete statement made in so few words. It forms the basis, and covers the whole ground, of the contentions fought for by the Chambers from that day to this, and will still serve to-day as an excellent form of resolution for a debate upon this subject.

The creation of this Committee did not, however, relieve the Chamber from dealing with this matter, for the Committee, desiring always to have the weight of the parent body behind it, kept in view the fourth paragraph of the report which called them into being, and almost every month presented a report to the Chamber, the adoption of which kept the two bodies in perfect touch with each other. Moreover, the Chamber frequently held debates on different aspects of the question, without waiting for the Committee to raise them. Thus on 4th May they registered the opinion that—

“Though approving the object of the Valuation of Property Bill, in aiming at uniformity of assessment, in view of the opinion

it has already expressed as to the great injustice in principle of the present entire rating system, it must withhold its support from any measure which provides merely for the perpetuation of that system by a costly and cumbersome machinery."

Again, on 8th June it was agreed—

"That the Chamber approves the principle of the County Administration Bill in introducing the representation of rate-payers into the administration of county finance, but considers that the proportion of elected members should be greater than is proposed by the Bill."

This same day the Committee presented their first report, which concluded as follows :—

"Your Committee cannot too strongly express their opinion that this is a question which should be entirely removed from party politics. The most distinguished statesmen on both sides of the House have admitted that the present mode of assessment is unjust and anomalous, and agree that it is a subject which must very shortly occupy the serious attention of the Legislature. It was never originated as a party measure, and its promoters are most anxious to divest it of all party feeling, in order that it may be fairly, fully, and impartially considered and discussed."

1870.

In February the Committee reported that they had offered a prize of £50 for the best essay on "The Injustice, Inequalities, and Anomalies of the Present Poor Rate Assessment, and of the Incidence of other Local Burdens of England and Wales," that there were sixteen competitors, and that the prize was awarded to Mr. C. F. Gardner, B.A., who sent it under the motto, "This is not the cause of faction, or of party, or of any individual, but the common interest of every man in Britain" (Junius). His motto was afterwards adopted by the Committee and printed in front of all their reports.

The same report contained a form of petition, and local Chambers were asked to obtain signatures to it.

On the same day the Chamber discussed another resolution on Turnpike Trusts, but as Mr. E. H. Knatchbull-Hugessen, M.P. (then Under Secretary for the Home Department, and afterwards Lord Brabourne) was present, and announced that the Government had prepared a Bill extending the

incidence of rating, giving also his own views of a measure for applying one comprehensive road system to the whole country, the motion was withdrawn.

As a result of pressure by the Committee, a Select Committee was appointed on 21st February, on the motion of Mr. Goschen. In the debate arising on this proposal Mr. Gladstone is reported to have said :—

“ Real property enjoys an exemption which it would not be possible to maintain for a single moment after you removed the exemption of personal property from local taxation.”

And again :—

“ Real property in various forms has borne the main part of Local Taxation, and personalty the main part of Imperial Taxation.”

The inquiry of the Select Committee was limited to consideration as to whether it would be expedient that the charges now locally imposed upon occupiers of rateable property should be divided between owners and occupiers, and what changes in the constitution of Local Bodies now administering the rates should follow such division. On this the Local Taxation Committee said :—

“ By this it appears that no extension of the rateable area is contemplated, and no readjustment of our local burdens upon a more equitable basis is to be proposed. The vital principle for which we contend is not touched, and any recommendation simply to adjust the payment of rates between the same parties is illusory, and will bring no alleviation of our just grievances.”

The Committee also denied the accuracy of Mr. Gladstone's statements, and challenged the fullest and most impartial investigation into the facts of the case.

Only five days after the appointment of this Select Committee the Government brought in their Elementary Education Bill, which aggravated the ratepayers' grievances by increasing local rates more than any other measure, save perhaps the Education Act, 1902. On the 8th March the Chamber protested against School Boards being empowered to borrow money to be repaid out of the rates, and to levy a rate of threepence, as increasing an injustice already inflicted on

rateable property. On 5th July Sir Massey Lopes endeavoured to impose a statutory limit of 1d. in the pound to the proposed School Board Rate, but, influenced by the confident assurance of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Forster that a threepenny rate would amply suffice to discharge the new liability, Parliament would not accept his proposal. He carried it to a division and ninety members supported him.

Some time during 1870 Mr. Goschen, assisted by Mr. Giffen, prepared a report for the Treasury, which showed a growth in rates between 1843 and 1868 from £8,000,000 to £16,000,000, but contended that this increase chiefly affected houses and urban property. It also compared the local taxes of this and other countries. The Committee let no opportunity pass of refuting Mr. Goschen's contentions. In their reports, and in a series of letters written by the late Mr. Dudley Baxter at the suggestion of the Committee, it was shown that comparisons with the high rates of the old Poor Law were valueless, and that, taking land by itself apart from other property, its burdens had continually advanced since 1834. Mr. Goschen denied the possibility of contrasting the respective burdens of real and personal property; it was, however, satisfactorily shown by Mr. Baxter that their relative taxation could be set out with approximate accuracy, and the relative burdens of realty were proved to be double those of personalty.*

During the autumn the Committee pressed their views on Quarter Sessions in different counties, when numerous discussions took place in all parts of England, the subject being thus ventilated among an influential body of men. They also drew up a form of petition to Parliament which many benches of magistrates adopted. As these steps met with so much success they adopted the same line with Boards of Guardians, and again met with a great deal of support. In this way valuable educational work was carried on. In December of this year the Committee started a Monthly

* These letters were published in a volume entitled "Local Government and Taxation and Mr. Goschen's Report." By R. Dudley Baxter, M.A. 1874.

Review, giving information on Local Taxation, which they distributed gratuitously to the number of four or five thousand copies. They reported, too, that by this time 20,000 copies of the prize essay had been circulated.

Up to this point the various steps taken have been detailed at length, partly in order to show the different problems which the Local Taxation Committee had to deal with in those early days, as compared with ours. The main principle for which Sir Massey Lopes and his supporters fought is still waiting to be dealt with ; real property is still the basis, and bears the larger proportion, of local rates ; but our predecessors had many questions to grapple with then which we only faintly realise now. They had to see Turnpike Trusts abolished, School Boards and County Councils established, and other new features introduced which we now accept as a matter of course. Another reason for giving fuller credit to the Committee for the work which they accomplished is that they had not only to put pressure on the Government, but at the same time to educate and carry public opinion along with them, and this upon ridiculously inadequate means.

The work of subsequent years may be somewhat more condensed.

CHAPTER IV.

LOCAL TAXATION FROM 1871 TO 1898.

1871.

At the beginning of this Session Sir Massey Lopes asked the House of Commons to pass the following motion :—

“ That inasmuch as many of the existing and contemplated charges on the local rates are for National Purposes, and that it is neither just nor politic that such charges should be levied exclusively from one description of property (*viz.*, houses and land), this House is of opinion that it is the duty of the Government to inquire forthwith into the incidence of Imperial as well as Local Taxation, and to take such steps as shall insure that every description of property shall equitably contribute to all national burdens.”

The Government, however, moved the “ previous question,” which they carried by 241 to 195, on their undertaking to produce at once comprehensive measures of their own. This was the first occasion on which members of the Committee felt justified in pressing their motion to a division, and they were highly gratified by the result ; it appeared that they had reason to know that the majority would have been considerably smaller had the motion been met by a direct negative.

Ten Bills which would have increased the ratepayers' burdens were strenuously opposed by the Committee this Session. Among these were the Rating and Local Government Bill and the Local Taxation Bill, which proposed a large reconstruction of the then existing forms of local administration, based on a system of Parochial and County Boards. These latter proposed to divide the primary incidence of the rate between owners and occupiers and suggested the surrender at some future date of the Inhabited House Duty to Local Authorities ; but they repealed the provisions of the old Act of Elizabeth which fixed the area of rating on “ ability ”

generally. The Committee showed the defects of these measures, and especially the very partial character of the relief proposed by means of the House Duty, which would have almost exclusively benefited town populations, and one-half of which would have fallen to the share of London alone. These two Bills were received with so much disapproval that they were withdrawn.

Another was the Army Regulation Bill, Clause 7 of which proposed to transfer the power of granting Commissions in the Militia from Lords-Lieutenant to the central authority, but to continue and extend the system which charged the County Rates with all the expenses of Militia Storehouses and building Militia Barracks. Lord George Hamilton, on behalf of the Committee, opposed this, and in a division the Government obtained a majority of two. At the beginning of the following Session the Government announced that they had abandoned their proposals for throwing these charges on ratepayers, and that they recognised their Imperial character. In their Annual Report the Committee expressed appreciation of the satisfactory manner in which Mr. Cardwell (Secretary for War) proposed to carry out this transfer.

The Elections (Parliamentary and Municipal) Bill was also opposed successfully, and the Government abandoned all the clauses in this Bill which originally proposed to charge ratepayers with a considerable proportion of election expenses.

Four other opposed Bills were withdrawn, but two were hurried through the House in the last days of the Session, when the great majority of Members had left London, and when fair discussion was impossible. These two were the Pauper Inmates Discharge Act and the Vaccination Act (1867) Amendment Act.

Sir Massey Lopes brought to the notice of the House of Commons certain gross inaccuracies in the abstract of County Treasurers' Accounts, and also in the Borough Accounts. Amended returns were obtained, but these were still unsatisfactory; he therefore moved for a new form of return of these accounts, in order that the public might get a clear idea of the state of Local Finance.

The Committee also discovered that, notwithstanding the provision by Parliament in 1847 for the cost of Criminal Prosecutions, Treasury officials were disallowing some of these costs, and so throwing them back on the rates. Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, with the unanimous concurrence of the Bench, declared the action of the Treasury to be unjustifiable, and stigmatised it as monstrous, but intimated that Parliament alone could afford a remedy.

1872.

Early this year, therefore, the Committee raised the matter in Parliament, and their motion received cordial support from all sides of the House; after a good deal of fencing the Treasury undertook to deal effectually and at once with the grievance, so the motion was not pressed to a division. Nothing was done in the matter, however, this year; in 1873 proposals were made in the Public Prosecutors Bill to remedy the grievance, but the Bill did not pass; the question was raised every year in some form or other, until it was at last settled by the passing, in 1877, of the Prisons Act by the next Administration.

Sir Massey Lopes moved the following resolution, when, in spite of being strongly opposed by the Government, he carried it by a majority of 259 to 159 :—

“That it is expedient to remedy the injustice of imposing taxation for National objects on one description of property only, and therefore that no legislation with reference to Local Taxation will be satisfactory which does not provide, either in whole or in part, for the relief of occupiers and owners in counties and boroughs from charges imposed on ratepayers for the administration of justice, police, and lunatics, the expenditure for such purposes being almost entirely independent of local control.”

Sir Thomas Dyke Acland led the opposition to Sir Massey, and offered as his remedy of the injustice a redistribution of rates between owners and occupiers. The Committee renewed their opposition to the proposal for placing the cost of Election Expenses on the rates, and on a division had a majority of

92 in a House of 435 Members. Mr. Disraeli spoke in this debate, using these words :—

“ I hear with alarm from the Government that they are favourable to defraying the charges from the rates ; I think the time has come when it ought to be made clearly apparent to any Government that may exist in this country that no increase of the rates can be tolerated so long as the area of taxation from which those rates are drawn is limited, as it is at present. If we cannot solve that most perplexing problem of increasing the area we must leave the rates alone ; but whatever the purpose, or whatever the amount, I am convinced the wisest policy of the ratepayers of the country is to resist any increase of the rates, however slight, and however plausible the pretext, until Government make up their minds to encounter a difficulty which may be most perplexing to any member who comes forward with any proposal to increase them.”

These are excellent sentiments, which ratepayers to-day would do well to remember.

A long series of Bills was successfully opposed again this year, most of them being withdrawn or defeated, while two were amended as desired before passing.

1873.

The resolution carried against them in 1872 was ignored by the Government in 1873, but they introduced three measures which were severely criticised and condemned by the Committee in an excellent report issued in May. The principal one, the Rating (Liability and Value) Bill, passed the Commons, but was rejected by the Lords, and the other two were withdrawn. A number of other Bills were successfully opposed, and the Committee introduced the Local Taxation Accounts Bill themselves. With the assent of the Government this passed through the Committee, but was then blocked by certain Municipal Authorities who objected to comply with some of its provisions. Mr. Pell, however, moved for a series of Returns, the publication of which approximated to the same result as that which would have followed the passing of the Bill.

1874.

A General Election took place in February, and great prominence was given to this subject by the leaders of both

political parties during the election campaign. Mr. Gladstone, in his address, promised that the relief of the ratepayer from exceptional burdens should be the foremost item of his future financial policy, admitting that the time had come when "a further portion of the charges hitherto borne by real and immovable property should, with judicious accompanying arrangements, be placed upon property generally."

With the new Parliament came a new Ministry, and without delay the Chambers sent a deputation to Mr. Disraeli on 23rd March. He unhesitatingly expressed his concurrence in the views advocated by the Committee, and said that "a system of raising taxation for general purposes from one particular kind of property involves as great a violation of justice as can well be conceived." He added that, short as was the time allowed for maturing comprehensive measures, their grievances would be considered in reviewing the financial position of the country.

This admission was followed by Sir Stafford Northcote's Budget, which provided for relief in respect of charges borne for Police and Pauper Lunatics, and the transfer of the charge for Prisons to the Imperial Exchequer. This saved the ratepayers the sum of £2,000,000 per annum and led to improved and uniform prison administration.

Mr. Clare Sewell Read and Mr. Sclater-Booth carried a further measure this year, extending the rateable area so as to include mines, woods, and sporting rights, which were formerly exempt from rating.

Another feature of this year was the decrease in the number of Bills proposing increases to the rates, there being only five in all. Of these, three were dropped, one was defeated, and another had the objectionable features removed. The last (Registration of Births and Deaths) was a Government measure, but the President of the Local Government Board gave way to the Committee's views.

Sir Massey Lopes retired from the Chairmanship of the Committee this year, on his acceptance of office in the Government as a Lord of the Admiralty, and was succeeded by Mr. Albert Pell, M.P.

1875.

Various points relating to Local Taxation were raised in Parliament, but the chief accomplishment was obtaining certain Returns relating to the administration of the Poor Law. There was, of course, the usual crop of Bills, which the Committee were fairly successful in opposing. It was in this year, too, that they induced the Local Government Board, established in 1870, to insist upon the Demand Note for rates exhibiting clearly in detail the particular purposes for which the rate is required, thus introducing a small but important administrative reform.

1876.

A suggestion, long urged by the Committee, was this year adopted by the Government, when Mr. Sclater-Booth made a formal statement in Parliament, of the nature of a Local Administration Budget. This statement was repeated in 1877 and again in 1878, in which year it was brought forward, as originally desired, in closer connection with the Imperial Budget. To the regret of the Committee this statement was not continued after that year, and in 1881, in a debate on the annual Customs and Inland Revenue Bill, Mr. Pell moved for its continuance. The proposal was favourably received by Mr. Gladstone, but he refused his assent to the motion itself, and it was not pressed to a division.

It is easy to understand the objection of a modern Chancellor of the Exchequer to having a Local Budget laid before Parliament, and especially his objection to its juxtaposition to the Imperial Budget. This objection would be stronger to-day than at any previous time, for it would show up more plainly than anything else could do how much of the national work is being carried out and paid for by Local Authorities at the expense of the ratepayer. Mr. George, M.P., would have found it impossible to make both ends meet as Chancellor of the Exchequer had he not thrown a large portion of the fresh expenditure for which he was responsible upon local rates instead of upon the National Exchequer.

The Poor Law Amendment Bill, a Government measure, was passed after the Government had accepted some amendments moved by the Committee. This Act conferred powers on the Local Government Board, simplified local boundaries, and removed obstacles to the formation of County Boards.

The Committee had a busy year in opposing some and amending other Bills, and again they were very successful in attaining their ends. Several of these Bills were objected to, pending the establishment of County Boards to administer county finance, rather than for any inherent faults in the measures themselves.

1877.

This Session was marked by the passing of the Prisons Act, already mentioned, which transferred all expenses connected with the maintenance of prisons and prisoners. The Local Taxation Returns Act of this year, which the Committee had striven for since 1872, secured uniformity in the dates of subsequent annual returns of Local Taxation. The Training Schools and Ships Bill, which proposed to charge the rates with the cost of new institutions for training boys for the Army and Navy, was rejected on second reading by a large majority. The Summary Prosecutions Bill was refused a second reading by 228 to 164. The Intoxicating Liquors (Licensing Boards) Bill was rejected by 133 to 85, while other Bills were withdrawn. In March Mr. Clare Sewell Read moved his resolution in favour of establishing representative County Boards, which was unanimously adopted by the House of Commons. It was important, because it was the first occasion when the views of the Chambers on this question were so directly before Parliament, and because the assurance given by the Government that they meant to propose representative provincial authorities heralded the creation of County Councils. The resolution was worded thus:—

“That no readjustment of Local Administration can be satisfactory or complete which does not refer county business, other than the administration of justice and the maintainance of order, to a representative County Board.”

1878.

This year was uneventful. Six Bills were opposed and withdrawn, while the Public Health Act, 1875, Amendment Bill was amended before it passed. This dealt with water supply in rural districts; it was referred to a Select Committee, on which several members of the Local Taxation Committee served. As regards this Select Committee's report, the Local Taxation Committee say:—"Very useful suggestions are to be found for practical purposes, while those for rendering more equitable the mode of charging for supplies of water may not be found to be inapplicable for future extension to other sanitary undertakings, which under the existing law benefit particular properties at the cost of other unbenefited ratepayers."

1879.

This was another uneventful year. The Committee gave a good deal of attention to laying evidence before the Royal Commission on Agriculture, and when that Commission issued its report in 1882 the Committee found the fullest admission of the complaints they had preferred, as to the peculiar injustice inflicted on the agricultural community by the then existing system of local taxation. In fact, the most prominent of the remedial measures suggested related to this subject. The Committee suffered somewhat this year by the absence of two of their most active members—Mr. Clare Sewell Read and Mr. Pell—who were sent to America to make enquiries on behalf of the Royal Commission.

There was a longer list than usual of Bills which the Committee had to oppose or amend, and only one of minor importance (the District Auditors Bill) was passed. Other important measures which were considered and amended, but ultimately withdrawn, were the County Boundaries Bill and the Valuation Bill.

1880.

This year saw another General Election and a change of Government, and this interruption of business precluded the continuation of the previous years' work. Only one

measure affecting local taxation was passed, viz., the Municipal Corporations (Property Qualification Abolition) Bill, and this the Committee succeeded in amending in several important particulars.

A Select Committee of the House of Lords was appointed to inquire into the working of the Highways Act, and they took evidence from witnesses appointed by the Central Chamber; and although their report, issued in 1881, was rather indefinite, it pointed to the admitted expediency of relieving ratepayers from some of their liabilities under this head.

1881.

The Irish question monopolised practically the whole of this Session, although seven Bills were introduced proposing new charges on the rates. Six of these were opposed by the Committee, and all six were withdrawn. One other—the Local Government Boundaries Bill, reintroduced by Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice—the Committee cordially approved, but time did not permit of its being proceeded with. In March Colonel Harcourt moved a resolution declaring the expediency of defraying part of the cost of the maintenance of main roads out of other sources than the county rates, and this was only defeated by a majority of 14 votes. In this debate Mr. Gladstone declared that it was incumbent on Parliament “to examine upon a large scale what is the best mode of giving real property that aid which it was once accustomed to receive from personal property.”

1882.

The Committee opened their campaign this year by an influential deputation to the Prime Minister, and were gratified shortly afterwards to learn from the Queen's Speech that Parliament would be invited, in connection with local government reform, to consider “the proper extent and the most equitable and provident form of contribution from Imperial Taxes in relief of local charges.” Their hopes were disappointed, for the Government made no attempt to bring forward any proposals relating to either local taxation or

local government. On 21st February, therefore. Mr. R. H. Paget (afterwards Sir Richard Paget, Bart.) moved a resolution urging that the injustice of the present incidence of local taxation should, without further delay, be remedied by an adequate increase of contribution from general taxation. The Government defeated this motion by 110 to 105 votes by moving "the previous question." Only three days later Colonel Harcourt again raised the question of relieving the ratepayers of the cost of maintaining main roads. The close division on the 21st now bore fruit, for Mr. Gladstone made an urgent appeal for the motion not to be submitted, and undertook that, whatever fate attended the general propositions, he still hoped to make, a distinct proposal for relief at least in the matter of main roads would be pressed during the Session. In a debate on the Budget the Prime Minister announced the reduction of the Government's programme, and stated that while he was willing under the circumstances to ask Parliament to vote £250,000 in relief of the charges entailed in maintaining main roads in England, Wales, and Scotland, he proposed to recoup the Treasury for the sum thus contributed by adding 50 per cent. to the existing duties on four-wheeled, and 40 per cent. to those on two-wheeled carriages. The Committee in a report issued in May pointed out that by this arrangement heavy trade vehicles (which caused the greatest wear of the roads) would continue to enjoy the exemption conferred on them by the abolition of turnpike tolls. The general dissatisfaction felt with the proposed scheme of relief by means of a new carriage tax led to the proposal being given up altogether, and a direct subvention from the Treasury was conceded in the shape of an annual grant of £250,000 for main roads.

Among a number of Bills proposing to add to the rates ten required the special attention of the Committee. Seven of these were successfully resisted and were withdrawn; one (the Boilers' Explosion Bill) was amended, to prevent the cost of enquiries falling on the rates, before it was passed; two others were approved, but failed to make progress. These two were the School Boards Bill, which sought to confine



MR. ALBERT PELL, M.P.
Chairman, 1866-67



SIR MASSEY LOPES, BART., M.P.
Chairman, 1871.



The Right Hon.
SIR RICHARD PAGET, BART., M.P.
Chairman. 1882.



Photo by Messrs. J. Russell and Sons, Baker St.

MR. THOMAS DUCKHAM, M.P.
Chairman, 1883.

the Education Rate to dwelling-houses only, and the Local Boundaries Bill of the previous Session.

1883.

As the Queen's Speech in February gave no promise of legislation, and the Budget made no proposals for relief to ratepayers, the Committee took the only alternative left them, and on 17th April Mr. Pell moved the following resolution :—

“That no further delay should be allowed in granting adequate relief to ratepayers in counties and boroughs in respect of national services required of local authorities.”

To this unconditional demand for immediate action Mr. Albert Grey moved the following amendment :—

“That this House, recognising the connection which must exist between the reform of local taxation and that of local government, is of opinion that the relief granted to ratepayers in counties and boroughs should be by the transfer to local authorities of the revenue proceeding from particular taxes or portions of taxes, and that a measure dealing with the whole question of local taxation and of local government is most urgently required.”

Mr. A. J. Balfour spoke in support of the original motion, but the Government supported the amendment, which was carried by a majority of ten only, in a House of 450 members. Immediately after the division thirty-one of the usual supporters of the Government, whose votes for this amendment secured the defeat of the motion, signed a memorial in the following terms, which was drawn up and presented to Mr. Gladstone by Mr. Thomas Duckham :—

“We, the undersigned, are desirous of conveying to your notice that our votes were given in favour of Mr. Grey's amendment, rather than Mr. Pell's motion, from the fact that the Government supported an amendment which declared that a measure dealing with the whole question of local taxation and of local government is most urgently required; and in the full confidence that the oft-promised legislation of these objects would be proceeded with with the least possible delay. We trust you will pardon our suggesting that the urgency demanded for recent legislation on just and sufficient grounds for coercive measures might not unreasonably be asked for on behalf of the overburdened ratepayers of the United Kingdom in this time of severe depression.”

In reply, Mr. Duckham received an acknowledgment of the memorial, in which the Prime Minister expressed his regret that the state of business rendered it impossible to deal with the subject that session. Notwithstanding this expression of regret, and the declaration contained in the foregoing amendment, the Government carried the National Debt Act this year, in spite of the resistance of the Committee, the effect of which was to make it more difficult for any succeeding Chancellor of the Exchequer to find any funds for the relief of local rates.

1884.

The Queen's Speech of this year again omitted to make any reference to reform either of local government or of local taxation, so once more the Committee, through Mr. Pell, moved a resolution, deprecating the postponement of further measures of relief acknowledged to be due to rate-payers in respect of local charges imposed on them for national services. This was moved on 28th March, and although it was opposed by the Government, it was carried by 208 votes to 197. In the debate Mr. Walter Long and Mr. Akers-Douglas (afterwards created Viscount Chilston) supported Mr. Pell, while Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Childers (Chancellor of the Exchequer) spoke for the Government. This defeat, however, did not induce the Government to make any effort to redeem their many promises, and the session closed without any other incident worth recording, although mention may be made of an undertaking by Mr. Childers, in his Budget speech, that the consideration of proposals for increased charges on real estate by way of Death Duties should be entered on only in conjunction with the readjustment of local burdens.

1885.

The principle measures of this session were the Parliamentary Franchise, the Redistribution of Seats, and the Registration Bills. On going into Committee on the last named, Sir Massey Lopes moved :

“ That this House, while desirous of facilitating in every way the registration of voters, is of opinion that, inasmuch as the

preparation of the Register for Parliamentary Elections is a matter of national rather than local concern, the expenses connected therewith should not be imposed on ratepayers in counties and boroughs, and levied in respect of the occupation of a single description of property."

This motion was only defeated by the Government by a majority of two, the figures being 240 to 238, and the closeness of this division led to a grant being agreed to for that year calculated to relieve the rates from the enhanced charge for registration. In this debate Mr. Pell, Mr. Duckham, Mr. St. John Ackers, and Sir M. Hicks-Beach supported the motion, while Sir Charles Dilke opposed it on behalf of the Government, and Mr. E. Heneage (afterwards created Lord Heneage) also opposed it.

Notwithstanding Mr. Childers's undertaking in his Budget speech of the previous year, his Budget for 1885 did propose additional burdens on real property, without offering relief to the rates. On the 8th June, therefore, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach challenged the second reading of the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill. This motion, besides censuring other financial proposals in the Budget,

"Declined to impose fresh taxation on real property until effect had been given to the resolutions of 17th April, 1883, and of 28th March, 1884, by which it had been acknowledged that further measures of relief were due to the ratepayers in counties and boroughs in respect of local charges imposed on them for national services."

This was carried against the Government by a majority of 12, the numbers being 264 to 252, and Mr. Gladstone at once placed his resignation in the hands of the Queen, thus quitting office without having made any serious attempt to redeem his numerous promises to reform the incidence of local taxation.

A noticeable feature of the ensuing General Election was that the manifestos of both party leaders gave prominence to the double problems of reformed local government and the readjustment of local taxation. Lord Salisbury, speaking at Newport, on 7th October, said:—

"All men in proportion to their ability should contribute to the expense of local government. This is now defrayed by what

are called rates, and they were now levied upon all men according to the amount of land or houses which they may possess; they may possess very large resources, and yet escape altogether contributing to the administration of the local government. I hold it to be an indispensable part of any reform of your local government that it should include the sanction of this great principle—that all men should pay according to their ability.”

Mr. Gladstone announced his intention of dealing with local government, and promised “to rectify the balance of taxation as between real and personal property.” In doing this, however, he stipulated for the withdrawal of all relief now drawn from the general income of the community through the Consolidated Fund, and intimated a desire to further extend the taxation of land “during life and upon death.” Mr. Gladstone thus foreshadowed the Finance Act of 1894.

The Committee appear to have taken up a slightly more militant attitude at this election than they did in 1868 (see page 79 *ante*), for it was pointed out to local Chambers from the Central Office that “it must obviously rest with the associated bodies what, if any, steps it may be desirable for them to take with a view of bringing these points under the notice of candidates,” and it was suggested that it was expedient that a general effort should be made to secure the return of representatives favourable to the views entertained by the Chambers.

Among other measures which the Committee opposed this year and which were withdrawn was one introduced by Mr. Jesse Collings, entitled the Peasant Proprietary and Acquisition of Land by Occupiers Bill. This proposed to burden the rates with any loss arising from the undertaking, and with the cost of administration. On these grounds the Committee recommended opposition to it, but it was eventually dropped without discussion in Parliament. This session also appears to have seen the birth of the Rating of Machinery Bill, which gave the Committee much work in subsequent years. It proposed to exempt from rates all machinery except fixed motive powers, fixed power machinery, and pipes for steam, gas, and water. Had it passed it would have relieved the owners of the exempted machinery at the expense

of other ratepayers, so the Committee opposed it, and it was dropped.

It was in this year that Sir Massey Lopes, Mr. Clare Sewell Read, and Mr. Pell retired from parliamentary life, to the very great regret of the Local Taxation Committee, who, in their annual report for this year, offered their heartiest thanks to these three gentlemen for their long and energetic defence of ratepayers' interests.

1886.

In February of this year Mr. Gladstone came back to office with a majority, but only held it for a few months, and in August another General Election gave the administration into the hands of Lord Salisbury. Under these circumstances the Committee found small opportunity of urging their views. On 23rd March, however, Mr. Thorold Rogers moved a resolution in favour of charging owners directly with at least a part of the rates, instead of their falling directly on the occupier; to this Sir Richard Paget moved an amendment in the following terms, which was only defeated by 19 votes in a House of 391 members:—

“That, while the apportionment of the payment of rates between landlord and tenant may be desirable, as part of a complete scheme for remedying the admitted inequalities of the incidence of local taxation, this House is of opinion that the financial injustice complained of can only be removed by a comprehensive measure, and that such a measure is urgently required.”

The debate thus raised was remarkable for the general concurrence expressed on both sides of the House as to the justice of extending to personal property that liability to local taxation which it then escaped; and, as showing the advance of public opinion in the direction of the Committee's views, it may be recorded that Mr. Joseph Chamberlain (President of the Local Government Board in Mr. Gladstone's administration) expressed his readiness to accept the general conclusions of the amendment, and spoke as follows:—

“ . . . The hon. member for Bermondsey had proposed that there should be a division of rates as between owner and occupier, and the hon. baronet included that in his amendment.

The hon. baronet, from the terms of his speech, was of opinion that a more complete readjustment of rates was necessary. He thought there would be very little difference of opinion in the House as to the desirability of that readjustment. (Hear, hear.) He did not himself anticipate any very great practical result from such a readjustment—(cheers)—but he thought it would give satisfaction to interests which at present considered themselves to be the subjects of injustice. (Hear, hear.) He did not doubt for a moment that when rents were settled the question of taxation was taken into account, and to some extent affected the amount of the rent, and that the injustice, where it was injustice, applied to the case where there had unquestionably been increased taxation since the terms of the lease had been settled. If that were so, was there any objection to the change—although perhaps it should make them cautions of expecting any advantage from it? Then the hon. member proposed another important change, that the law of rating as regarded the taxation of parks and mansions should be altered, and he thought that the hon. member had made out a very strong case in favour of that change. Take the case of Blenheim, a tremendous palace presented by the nation to the Duke of Marlborough, the mere expense of keeping up of which would require a very large income. If the present owner desired to give it up it would be almost impossible to find a tenant for it upon any terms whatever; therefore the local assessment of Blenheim was ridiculously small, probably smaller than that of some moderate houses in the same or other parts of the country. It had also been suggested that instead of assessing the parks and mansions according to their rent they should be assessed according to their original cost. What would be the effect of that? The proposal sounded *prima facie* a fair one enough; but, in his opinion, the House would not be wise in accepting it. (Hear, hear.) The result in such a case as Blenheim would be that with any percentage upon the original cost of the mansion the rate would be so high that an ordinary tenant would be unable to continue his occupancy, and the owner, unless he happened to be a person of exceptional wealth, would be obliged to give up his occupancy also and to pull down the house. And, therefore, if the idea of cost were taken as the basis of rating in every case, it would lead to the destruction of many of the most splendid historical places in the country, which, as now maintained, were part of the tradition and glory of the country, but which could only be maintained if a reasonable valuation were placed upon them. But, although he found himself quite unable to agree that cost should be taken as the basis of valuation, on the other hand, he did not think that the present system of valuation was satisfactory. (Hear, hear.) He would be inclined to take the view of the Committee on Local Taxation, who proposed that in the first instance there should be taken the selling value of the property, and that the rental value should be something like 4 per cent. on that selling valuation. . . . He was

willing to agree to it, as he was desirous that all classes of property should contribute fairly to local as well as to Imperial taxation. (Hear, hear.) He had publicly stated on many occasions his opinion that personal property did not contribute fairly. . . . He could speak from a large experience of the effect of local taxation in towns and urban districts, and he was bound to say that the grievance was much greater to the shopkeeping population than it was in the case of the farmers and the landowners. A shopkeeper in a town was charged for all local improvements in proportion to the premises which he occupied. So was the manufacturer or a banker, but it might happen that a banker was making an enormous profit out of premises which had a comparatively low rating. He might be rated at £1000, for instance, and might make an annual profit of £20,000; but £1000 would not be a heavy rating for a large shop, the profits from which could hardly be expected to exceed £3000 or £4000 a year. Therefore the shopkeeper would pay five times as much as the banker, and in the same way he might establish another series of illustrations equally exhibiting anomalies and injustice. He knew of a man who died leaving a fortune of about £1,100,000, and who had lived in a house the value of which did not exceed £30 a year. Could there be a greater anomaly than that?"

Mr. A. J. Balfour, speaking as the previous holder of the same office in Lord Salisbury's administration, said:—

“ . . . The hon. member for Bermondsey seemed to be animated by the view that there were certain wealthy persons who escaped their fair share of contribution to local burdens. He agreed with the hon. member that there were many persons who now escaped their fair contribution to the rates of the district in which they lived, and from the rates of which they derived all that made life tolerable, and it was earnestly to be trusted that that evil would be remedied. If it was remedied it would be by the adoption, not of the resolution of the hon. gentleman, but by the amendment put by his hon. friend the member for Somersetshire. Over and over again had Government after Government and Parliament after Parliament assented to the justice of the principle which his hon. friend had laid down. That principle was in accordance with precedent and with justice. It was not put forward and ought not to be accepted by the House as a boon to the large landowners of the country. It was a boon to the small landowners, to the occupiers, to the farmers, and above all to that vast mass of occupiers in the towns who now struggled against unnumbered difficulties, and who had to pay those rates, of which an undue share fell upon them.”

In view of Mr. Childers's Budget of the previous year proposing to increase Imperial taxes on real property, Sir R. Paget, on behalf of the Committee, obtained a Return from

the Treasury of an official estimate of the relative taxation of real and personal property so far as Imperial Taxes were concerned. This information was needed to confute the frequent assertions that the pressure of rates on real property was balanced by much lighter Imperial taxation. The Return was presented before the end of the year, and was of such importance that a memorandum issued by the Committee upon this Return is here reprinted in full.

TAXATION OF REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY.

The return contained an official estimate by the Treasury of the approximate capital value of the Real and Realised Personal Wealth of the country, and also of the direct Imperial taxation which can be said to fall exclusively on one or other of these forms of property.

Grouping for convenience under a few general heads the detailed estimates of property and income, and supplying, from the income tax accounts, the omissions to state the income yielded by investments in the funds and farming capital, the estimate laid before Parliament shows that the capital in either category may be approximately thus divided:—

Real Property.

Invested in—	Capital.	Income.
Land	£1,636,000,000	£65,000,000
Houses	2,033,000,000	127,000,000
Other real property	109,000,000	8,000,000
Total	£3,778,000,000	£200,000,000
Estimated yearly* direct Imperial taxation	£8,441,000	
Or per cent. on capital .22; on income 4.22.		

Realised Personalty.

Invested in—	Capital.	Income
Home trade and industries	£2,718,000,000	£208,000,000
Home Government and local debts	885,000,000	24,000,000
Foreign or colonial debts or enterprises	1,030,000,000	64,000,000
† Movable property yielding no income	1,000,000,000	—
Total	£5,633,000,000	£296,000,000
Estimated yearly* direct Imperial taxation	£9,716,000	
Or per cent. on capital .17; on income 3.28.		

* The figures of direct Imperial taxation are those for the year 1883-4 (when the income tax stood at 5d. in the £).

† The property here shown as yielding no income includes furniture, works of art, &c., and is an estimate made by the compilers of the return,

Although any exact apportionment of taxation to the capital, or the income above represented, is impossible without further analysis, and without allowing for certain cross entries in these rough and only approximate figures, the preponderance of Imperial taxation on real as opposed to personal property is very evident, although the inequality of incidence of the death duties, when looked at by themselves, is fully allowed for in the official estimates.

But the position is in fact far more unfavourable to real property than the above estimate appears to show. The *gross* figures (being at least 16 per cent. above the *net*) are quoted as income from land and houses, whereas the income in the personalty schedule is *net* income after allowing for outgoings. This would reduce the income on the real property side of the account from £200,000,000 to £168,000,000, and make the percentage of direct Imperial taxes 5 per cent. on real, as against 3.3 per cent. on personal income, while if, as may well be contended, the quota of Land Tax redeemed be included in the taxes on real property, the taxation would rise to 5.5 per cent.

On every sovereign, therefore, of clear income from real property, at least 1s. is taken by direct Imperial taxes—assuming the year's quota for succession and probate duty to be an annual average—while from each clear sovereign of personal income, not quite 8d. is taken by the State. If, then, the balance stands thus, *without including the local rates at all*, it is clear that even if the proportion of these rates ultimately incident on real property were taken as low as 1s. 8d. in the £, real property must now, if Imperial and local burdens are jointly taken into consideration, be paying exactly four times as heavy taxation as falls upon personalty.

Mr. Pell retired from the chairmanship of the Committee at the end of the year, and Sir Richard Paget was elected in his place.

1887.

In his Budget speech the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Lord Randolph Churchill), yielding to the representations pressed upon the Government, announced that the subvention previously granted for main roads would be doubled. This meant a transfer of £280,000 to Great Britain, while equivalent concessions in another form were given to Ireland.

In accordance with the repeated suggestions of the Committee, a Boundaries Commission was appointed with the view

on the basis suggested in an earlier calculation by Mr. Giffen, in which he suggested that half the value of the houses themselves might be taken.

of preparing the way for a comprehensive scheme of local administrative reform.

The Rating of Machinery Bill re-introduced this year obtained a second reading and was referred to a Select Committee. This Committee reported that, without going into the question as to whether the law relating to the rating of machinery had been altered by recent decisions, it was clear that the system acted upon by valuers in different parts of the country had varied considerably ; they recommended that, as uniformity was important, the whole subject of rating should be comprehensively dealt with by the Government with the least possible delay. The Local Taxation Committee opposed the Bill strongly, and it was again dropped.

A Bill to promote Technical Instruction was introduced by the Government, but as it threatened serious additions to the rates was opposed and afterwards withdrawn. The Allotments Act was carefully considered by the Committee, but, as any expenses in carrying out the Act were to be levied as a "special expense" under the Public Health Act, the Committee approved the measure.

1888.

This year marked another epoch in matters relating to local government, as the Local Government Act was placed on the Statute Book, and thus effect was given to the views which this Committee had urged ever since they passed their resolution on 5th May, 1868, on County Financial Boards. What they regarded as of almost equal importance was that this Act afforded further relief to ratepayers by grants from the Exchequer of over £2,000,000. This was provided by the allocation of half of so much of the Probate Duty as was levied in England, and by the transfer of certain locally collected licences formerly paid to the Treasury. Mr. Gladstone protested against the surrender of the Probate Duty, but the contentions of the Committee were upheld by Mr. Goschen and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.

This grant is important from another point of view, as it inaugurated the principle of assigned revenues.*

The meaning of the term is that the whole (or part) of the proceeds of a certain tax is given (assigned) as a grant in aid to local authorities. The difference between an “ assigned revenue ” and a “ grant ” of fixed amount is important to ratepayers, for assigned revenues increase year by year with the prosperity of the country, while a fixed grant remains, of course, a stationary figure. As the expenditure of local authorities also increases yearly, mainly as a consequence of the new duties successively imposed upon them by the Government, it would seem only fair that the revenues granted by Government should similarly increase. As Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George has lost no opportunity of reversing the policy of his predecessors by gradually getting rid of the system of assigned revenues, and giving in their place annual grants on an average of the amount raised under the head of the particular revenue under review for two or three years. Thus in the Revenue Act of 1911 (Section 17) he substituted a fixed sum for the Customs and Excise Duties which had previously been paid to the Local Taxation Account under the Finance Act of 1907, the amount being arrived at on the basis of the proceeds of those Duties in 1909. The Committee of the Chambers used every effort to prevent this robbery of the exchequers of local authorities, but fruitlessly, for Mr. George had to rob local authorities under many heads in order to provide funds to carry out his social policy, and at the same time show a surplus in his annual Budgets.

The question of the soundness of the financial policy of giving assigned revenues in place of fixed grants was dealt with at great length in a Minority Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation (1901) by Sir Edward Hamilton (Assistant-Secretary to the Treasury) and Sir George Murray. But in reading this Report it should not be forgotten that the views of Treasury officials must almost inevitably be biased.

* This principle was recommended in Mr. Grey's resolution carried as an amendment to Mr. Pell's motion in the House of Commons, on 17th April, 1883.

The duty of those officials is to guard the National Exchequer, and in their official capacity it matters nothing to them if local authorities are made bankrupt. On the other hand, there is no one in Parliament, or in any Government Department, whose special duty it is to look after the ratepayers' interests, or to safeguard the finances of local authorities. The Local Government Board, whose duty it should be, is too much occupied in devising orders and legislation compelling a continuous increase in their expenditure.

A further subvention had been suggested by the Excise Duties (Local Purposes) Bill, which proposed a new duty on horses, heavy carts, and vans, and this would have provided some £800,000 towards the cost of maintaining the roads; but the traders affected by this proposal proved to be too well organised, and their resistance to it caused its ultimate withdrawal, greatly to the regret of the Committee. Had agriculturists supported them as well and as energetically as the traders supported their leaders, ratepayers would have been this much to the good every year since that time; but as frequently still happens, agriculturists would not be stirred into activity until it was too late to take effective action.

Naturally, some of the provisions of the Local Government Act were not exactly what the Committee had asked for, but on the whole they were prepared to be well satisfied with this result of twenty years' agitation; although, in their annual report for this year, they remind their supporters that "a further and more complete remedy for the incidence of local rates has yet to be sought."

1890.

The year 1889 was quite uneventful, but 1890 was another red-letter year. Early in the session the Committee approached Mr. Goschen (Chancellor of the Exchequer) with regard to a grant in substitution for the proposed Van and Wheel Tax which failed to pass in 1888. Mr. Goschen, in his Budget statement on 17th April, met their views in a substantial way by imposing a surtax for local purposes of sixpence per gallon on spirits, and by the transfer to local requirements of part

of the Beer Duty of threepence per gallon ; this was estimated to produce for that year £1,043,000, of which £300,000 was earmarked for Police Superannuation, and the residue of £743,000 went in relief of local taxation generally. This amount was handed over without any positive liability being attached to it, but provision was made in the Act (Local Taxation Customs and Excise Act, 1890) that the share falling to any county or county borough council might be applied for purposes of technical education within the meaning of the Technical Instruction Act, 1889, and this permitted diversion of funds intended for the relief of the ratepayers for the benefit of one section of the community has been largely taken advantage of, as a consequence of the plenary delegation of powers by County Councils to their Education Committees. The provision of £300,000 for Police Superannuation was considered by the Committee as an important and fairly satisfactory settlement of a question which had long been one of anxiety to local authorities.

The Cattle Diseases (Pleuro-pneumonia) Act was also passed this year, providing for compensation from Imperial funds for animals slaughtered if affected, or suspected of being affected, with that disease ; thus removing another charge previously borne by the rates.

An important feature of the grant in aid of this session was that it was the first time indirect taxation was applied (by means of the new Beer and Spirit Duties) to the relief of rates ; thus extending, to some degree, the burden of rates to other classes of the community. In this connection it may be pointed out here that there is a distinct difference between the grant given in 1890 and that given in 1888. In the latter case, coming as it did from indirect taxes, it touched every class of the community to some extent ; in the former, although a share of the Probate Duty was handed over from the National Exchequer as a contribution of personalty to the rates, the actual charge upon personalty was not increased to the smallest extent. Personalty merely contributed so much less to general taxation, while the whole body of taxpayers had to make up the deficiency so caused in the National

Exchequer. It was a withdrawal of part of the previous contribution of personalty to Imperial taxation. It is true that to that extent local rates were relieved, but the money was provided by all classes of taxpayers, and not specially by owners of personalty.

The net result of the financial rearrangement made by the Local Government Act, 1888, and the Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act, 1890, for England and Wales was as follows, the figures being taken from the 20th Report of the Local Government Board :—

	Year ended Mar. 31st, 1891.
Proceeds of local licences	£3,037,304
Share of probate duty	1,930,935
Local beer and spirit duties	1,040,376
	<hr/>
	£6,008,615
<i>Deduct</i> amount of discontinued grants which ceased to be paid out of the Exchequer by reason of the transfer of these revenues to the Councils	2,860,384
	<hr/>
<i>Balance</i> being the gain to local taxation in England and Wales	£3,148,231

Major Craigie, who had been Secretary to the Local Taxation Committee since 1871, retired from that post early this year, and Mr. R. H. Rew was appointed in his place.

1891.

Little of consequence occurred during this session, but on 27th February Mr. Provand (Blackfriars, Glasgow) moved a resolution in the Commons claiming that "the proportion of taxation which falls upon, and is payable by land and its rentals, is insufficient, and ought to be increased." Mr. Gladstone strongly supported the motion, but the Government opposed it. Sir R. Paget expressed the Committee's views, and the House rejected the proposal by 58 in a House of 205 members.

On 23rd April the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his Budget speech, made a statement to the effect that any reconstruction of the Death Duties involving an increase in taxes

on real property could not rightly be undertaken without some change in the incidence of the Income Tax.

1892.

The dissolution, which took place on 28th June, prevented much business of any sort being accomplished, and the most interesting event in this short session was in connection with the Rating of Machinery Bill. The promoters of that measure had been very active in the two previous sessions, and the Committee, working in conjunction with local Chambers of Agriculture, had been equally active in opposing it by means of petitions, whips to Members of Parliament, and other methods. On 5th April of this year a deputation waited upon the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) to lay their views on the Bill before the Government. The deputation was introduced by Sir Edward Grey (Chairman of the Central Chamber for that year) and it was attended by representatives of the United Property Owners' Association, the National Amalgamated Sailors' and Firemen's Union, and the Birmingham and District Joint Committee of Rating Authorities. The Bill obtained a second reading, but made no further progress.

The great National Agricultural Conference, convened by the Central Chamber, took place in London this year, and as it was probably the largest and most representative agricultural gathering ever held in this country, its opinion upon this subject is worth recording. The following resolution, moved by Sir Richard Paget, and seconded by Mr. John Treadwell, was carried unanimously :—

“ That, in the opinion of this Conference, the charges now imposed upon agricultural land by Imperial and local taxation are unfair and excessive as compared with those falling upon personalty and other classes of property, that such charges are injurious to all concerned in the cultivation of the soil, fall with especial severity on the class of yeoman farmers, and by tending to increase the cost of production, and to overtax a struggling industry, are opposed to the interests of the community at large.”

1893.

The session of this year opened on 31st January, but did not close until 5th March, 1894. Some part of the record for the latter year will therefore come into this section.

On 10th April Mr. H. H. Fowler (created in 1908 Viscount Wolverhampton), President of the Local Government Board, presented a report to Parliament on Local Taxation. The Committee deemed the fact of sufficient importance to be dealt with in a special report, and this was widely circulated in the following June. The Committee pointed out that the Fowler Report "was not a simple record of facts and figures, but partook rather of the nature of a laboured argument directed against the rural ratepayer. Every point which could be made against the rural ratepayer was repeatedly pressed, while the urban ratepayer was treated with marked tenderness. It was necessary, therefore, for the Committee to insist specially on the fact that the higher rates in urban, as compared with rural districts, are mainly occasioned by expenditure upon objects—all of which may be perfectly legitimate and natural—from which the urban ratepayer gains direct benefit, and which the rural ratepayer does not pay for because he does not enjoy them."

Mr. Fowler introduced the Local Government (England and Wales) Bill on 21st March. The Committee, while recognising that the establishment of District and Parish Councils was the natural consequence of the Local Government Act of 1888, were yet obliged to move a number of amendments to the Bill, and although only partially successful in getting them adopted, they did, to some extent, obtain recognition of their views. Thus the borrowing powers of parishes were limited to half the assessable value of the parish, instead of double the assessable value as first proposed. The limit to the possible rate which a Parish Council could levy was, under the Bill as introduced, quite illusory; this was made an effective limit, although, in the opinion of the Committee, put at too high a figure. Proposals for restricting the practice of owners compounding for rates on small tenements, and for fixing the basis of assessment for the new parochial rate at one-

fourth the rateable value of agricultural land, were defeated. The Bill received the Royal Assent in March, 1894.

1894.

During the period 1893–6 the Committee did much useful spade work and issued a number of valuable and instructive reports dealing with different aspects of the question. They were mostly of topical interest relating to matters then before Parliament, and need not be recited here ; but one commenting on the Finance Act of the year, being of more permanent value, is quoted at some length :—

THE FINANCE ACT.

In view of the great alteration in the relative burden of Imperial taxation as between real and personal property effected by this Act, it is evident that the conflict which the Committee have so long waged upon the incidence of local taxation enters a new and even more acute phase.

The Bill was introduced on 25th April and received the Royal Assent on 31st July as the " Finance Act, 1894." It may be noted that the title is new, previous Budget Acts having for many years past been usually known as " Customs and Inland Revenue " Acts.

Prior to the Finance Act, the Death Duties were :—

(a) Probate and Account Duty : £1 for each £50 and fraction of £50 on estates exceeding £100 and not exceeding £500 ; £1 5s. for each £50 and fraction of £50 on estates exceeding £500 and not exceeding £1000 ; £3 for each £100 and fraction of £100 on estates exceeding £1000.

(b) Legacy Duty : 1 to 10 per cent., according to consanguinity.

(c) Succession Duty : $1\frac{1}{2}$ to $11\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., according to consanguinity.

(d) Estate Duty (temporary) : 1 per cent. on estates above £10,000.

Their net total yield in the financial year ending 31st March, 1894, according to the thirty-seventh report of the Inland Revenue Commissioners, was £9,941,855. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget statement stated the amount in round numbers as £10,060,000, and allocated the proceeds from realty and personalty by sums which worked out at 12 per cent. on the former and 88 per cent. on the latter.

The principal alterations made by the Finance Act are as follows :—

(a) In place of the Probate, Account and old Estate Duties, a new Estate Duty is imposed upon the principal value of

all property real and personal, settled and unsettled (aggregated so as to form one estate), passing on death. It is graduated on the following scale:—

Principal value of the estate.		Rate per cent.
£	£	
Above 100, but not above	500	.. .. 1
„ 500,	„ 1,000	.. .. 2
„ 1,000,	„ 10,000	.. .. 3
„ 10,000,	„ 25,000	.. .. 4
„ 25,000,	„ 50,000	.. .. 4½
„ 50,000,	„ 75,000	.. .. 5
„ 75,000,	„ 100,000	.. .. 5½
„ 100,000,	„ 150,000	.. .. 6
„ 150,000,	„ 250,000	.. .. 6½
„ 250,000,	„ 500,000	.. .. 7
„ 500,000,	„ 1,000,000	.. .. 7½
„ 1,000,000 .. . . . . .	.. . . . . .	.. .. 8

Interest at the rate of 3 per cent. per annum on Estate Duty is also charged from the date of the death up to the date of the delivery of the Inland Revenue affidavit or account or the expiration of six months after the death, whichever first happens.

(b) An additional “Settlement Estate Duty”—payable once only during the continuance of a settlement—is imposed at the rate of 1 per cent. on settled property passing on death by will or settlement to some person not competent to dispose of the property, except where the only life interest is that of a wife or husband.

(c) Where Estate Duty is paid, lineal ancestors and lineal descendants are free from both Legacy and Succession Duties.

Where Succession Duties continue to be paid they are assimilated to Legacy Duties, by the assessment of the duty—in the case of a succession to an interest of which the successor is competent to dispose—upon the principal value of such interest instead of upon the capitalised value of an annuity for the life of the successor, and by the charge of interest upon instalments.

Estates of £1000 or less, exclusive of property settled otherwise than by the will of the deceased, are relieved from Legacy, Succession and “Settlement Estate” Duties. With these exceptions Legacy and Succession Duties remain as before.

(d) The husband or wife may be chargeable with duty on all real estate devised to him or her, though they neither were nor are liable to Succession Duty.

(e) The Inland Revenue Commissioners are to ascertain the value of any property for Estate Duty by any means they may think fit, and the system of official valuation of property is further established by the County Councils being compelled to appoint valuers to act in cases of disputed value.

The annual proceeds of the new Death Duties were estimated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to be £13,050,000, being an increase of £1,350,000 on realty and £2,090,000 on personalty. This increases the payment of personalty by 24 per cent. and of realty by 117 per cent.

The effect of these increased duties will fall with especial severity on agricultural land. The large proportion of the gross rental—amounting frequently to from 20 to 30 per cent.—which is required for outgoings necessary for the mere “up-keep” of an estate, renders entirely impossible any equality in the ability of owners of realty and personalty respectively to pay an amount which may be arithmetically the same.

As an illustration, the case may be taken of a settled agricultural estate with a rent roll of £5000. There would be deducted from this the allowances under the Succession Duty Act, 1853, which are “all necessary outgoings,” and a further amount not exceeding 5 per cent. of the annual value (Sec. 7 of Finance Act) for expenses of management. In the absence of any other basis as to the allowance which will be made for “all necessary outgoings,” it may be assumed for purposes of calculation that the deduction will be the very insufficient sum of one-eighth, as provided (Sec. 35) for assessing the annual value under Schedule A of the Income Tax.

The annual value for the purpose of valuation for Death Duty would therefore be under the Act £4125, and it is provided that the principal value is not to exceed twenty-five times this amount (Sec. 7). Assuming the principal value to be assessed on this basis, it would amount to £103,125, exclusive of the furniture or other personal property of the late owner. This would subject the successor to the estate to a Death Duty at the rate of 7 per cent. (6 per cent. Estate Duty and 1 per cent. Settlement Estate Duty), or a sum of £7217, an amount which, with other necessary expenses consequent on his succession to the property, would swallow up more than the whole of two years' income. It is true that payment may be spread over eight years, but as 3 per cent. has to be paid on the amount left unpaid after the first instalment, the total payment would be increased to nearly £8000, while more than 25 per cent. of the annual income of the successor would for eight years be devoted to defraying the duty.

It must be evident that so serious a drain on the income of the successor to an estate must for a considerable period materially affect his ability to carry out improvements for his tenants, to employ labour, and to give financial support to deserving objects in his locality.

The real effect of the new Death Duties will not be to equalise their incidence upon realty and personalty, the difference in the nature of the two classes of property preventing a similar charge from bearing equally upon each. But assuming that it was true that realty and personalty will for the future bear an equal proportion of Imperial taxation, the claim for a complete adjust-

ment of local taxation has now become absolutely unanswerable. This was strongly urged by Mr. Walter Long, a member of this Committee, and other speakers in the debates on the Finance Bill, and was admitted by the late President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Fowler), who said in the House of Commons on 17th July:—"He was ready to admit that on this question [local burdens on agricultural land] the door was not closed . . . No doubt we had a condition of affairs in which landed property was exempt from Imperial taxation which it ought to bear, and *personal property was exempt from local taxation which it ought to bear*. He would not say the time had not come when there should be inquiry as to the real incidence of local Taxation, and how that taxation—which he could assure the House was not a decreasing quantity, and which he hoped in many places would continue to increase—should be borne by the two descriptions of property. It would be a great injustice to put that on any particular property."

A further reference to this Act is made under the head of Income Tax on page 361.

1895.

A General Election and the return of an Unionist administration to power was the most interesting event of this session. In their annual report the Committee quoted the following extract from a speech made by Mr. A. J. Balfour at Alnwick, on 19th July, important because it embodied the contention of the Committee on local finance:—

"Then what is the nature of the complaint against Sir W. Harcourt's Budget, to which I especially wish to draw your attention? My complaint is, when Sir W. Harcourt was making a radical change, or a change entirely opposed to all the principles, so far as I know, ever laid down by Mr. Gladstone (one of the greatest financial experts of the age) in his Budgets—when Sir William Harcourt, under the name of democratic finance, was upsetting liberal finance, then I say he should have taken the trouble to survey the whole question of public burdens falling upon individuals—whether those public burdens were assessed locally, or whether they were assessed for Imperial purposes. There is, after all, only a technical, an arbitrary, an unreal distinction between the two. In one case, no doubt, the tax-gatherer is directly under the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the taxes he collects go directly to the Exchequer, and for the expenditure of which out of the Exchequer the Government of the day and the Parliament of the day are directly responsible. No doubt, also, the local expenditure is collected by different

people and is spent by different people. But, after all, when you are dealing with different objects the distinction between local and Imperial may fall to the ground so far as taxation is concerned. Nor is it even true to say that local taxation goes entirely to local purposes. What is the taxation raised for the education of youth? Is it Imperial or is it local? Why, we are told on every platform throughout the country—it is a mere educational commonplace to say—that the training of the young is a question in which not merely the parents and not merely the locality are concerned, but the greatest interests in the State are involved. And yet vast sums are raised locally and expended locally for this Imperial purpose of education. Therefore I say that any Chancellor of the Exchequer who desires, rightly or wrongly—I do not argue it now—to revolutionise the whole system of our finance should have looked at the whole system of our finance. He should have taken the burdens on land, or real property, which are raised locally, and apportioned the weight of local burdens; and if he wished to lay a new foundation of our fiscal system, he should at least have laid it in a manner which would bear the test of examination, and which every class concerned would have felt to be equitable. That has not been done, and at this moment I do not think anybody who has examined into the question can deny that, if you take local and Imperial finance together, real property in general, and agriculture in particular, are being weighed down by burdens disproportionate to the comparative amount that they bear to the general wealth of the whole nation.”

Another instructive document was issued this year, and as it gives so clear an exposition of the policy of the Committee, and applies with as much force to-day as it did then, it is reprinted here almost in full:—

12th March, 1895.

To the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Sir,—1. On the 15th of December last, when declining to receive a deputation from the Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture and the Local Taxation Committee, you stated that you would be glad to receive “any representations in writing on the subject of local taxation.”

In accordance with your expressed wish, we beg to submit the following statement:—

2. The claim for further relief from the burden of local taxation is grounded solely on the principle of equality of taxation as between different classes of property, which was the avowed object of the Finance Act of last session.

3. We admit that so far as that branch of Imperial taxation known as the “Death Duties” is concerned, an apparent equality between realty and personalty has been secured. We use the term “apparent” advisedly, for though the amount of the

graduated duty actually payable on two estates of equal value, one consisting of personalty and the other of realty, is undoubtedly the same, yet an inequality arises from the fact that the payment is far more easily made in the one case than in the other. It is certainly evident that there now remains no single branch of taxation—Imperial or local—of which it can be said that personalty bears more than its proportionate share.

4. We submit that the principle of equalisation having been extensively applied to the Death Duties cannot in common justice be allowed to stop there, but must be further applied to all other branches of direct taxation. The Land Tax and the Inhabited House Duty, amounting together in 1893-4 to £2,443,738 (exclusive of £878,360 Land Tax redeemed), are two branches of Imperial taxation which fall upon realty alone, and constitute glaring instances of inequality, as no equivalent tax is imposed on personal property. The inequality is specially marked in the case of the Land Tax, which is officially acknowledged to have been originally imposed upon all property.

5. The total sum of the Death Duties to which the principle of "equalisation" was applied amounted to £8,910,000. The total amount of local expenditure to which we desire to see the same principle applied was in England and Wales in 1891-92, £24,809,294. The details of this are given subsequently. If it was fair and just to equalise the smaller amount of Imperial taxation, we submit that it cannot be less fair and just to equalise the larger amount of local taxation.

6. It is not necessary to attempt to show that taxation—whether Imperial or local—ought to fall equally on all classes of property. The principle that all property should contribute towards local taxation has been repeatedly recognised by the Legislature, and the Finance Act perpetuates the principle by providing for the permanent allocation of a portion of the Estate Duty to the relief of the rates.

7. The two main propositions which we desire to establish are :

I.—That real property pays an undue share of local taxation as compared with personal property.

II.—That agricultural land pays an undue share of local taxation as compared with other real property.

8. Our chief complaint is with regard to that portion of local expenditure which is devoted to objects of an Imperial or national character, viz. (taking the figures for England and Wales, 1891-92):—

Relief of the poor and lunatic paupers	£8,590,848
Police, prosecutions, &c.	4,695,591
Highways, &c.	6,684,834
Education (including school boards, reformatories and industrial schools and technical and intermediate education)	4,838,021
	24,809,294

Deduct the following payments from Imperial taxation—

Licenses and Probate Duty	4,272,502
*Residue of Customs and Excise Duties..	1,035,771
Contribution out of Local Taxation	
Account in respect of police pay,	
clothing and pensions	1,022,211
Treasury subventions and payments ..	1,782,333
Other receipts	3,946
	8,116,763

Leaving a balance raised by local taxation on real property £16,692,531

9. It must, however, be remembered that the sum of £8,116,763 is taken from the general Imperial Purse, to which all classes of income, *including real property*, alike contribute, and that the great and increasing mass of personalty pays nothing in aid of local rates.

10. We are aware of the contention that railways are assessed for local rates, and that personalty is thus to some extent included.

11. The following figures clearly exhibit the inequality of taxation of which we complain. It appears by official Income Tax tables that the gross values assessed were in the United Kingdom:—

Year.	Land.	Houses.	All other property.
	£	£	£
1873	65,513,977 ..	89,456,746 ..	358,836,561
1893	56,969,940 ..	144,922,326 ..	510,288,833
Increase + or			
Decrease—	—8,544,037 ..	+55,465,580 ..	+151,452,272

Agricultural Land is depreciating year by year.

Houses are gradually increasing in value owing to the necessity of housing an increasing population.

All other property is rapidly mounting in value, and already exceeds the value of land in the proportion of nearly 10 to 1.

12. The extent to which agricultural land is unfairly assessed to local rates in comparison with house property is admittedly a less simple question, but the broad facts of the case can hardly be disputed. A concrete example will fairly illustrate the position:—

A., a yeoman farmer, owns and occupies land, house and premises, rateable value £300 per annum, paying the average rural rate of 2s. 3d., his rates amount to	£33 15 0
B., a tradesman, having a capital equal to that possessed by A., owns and occupies shop, house and premises, rateable value £30 per annum, paying the average urban rate of 4s., his rates amount to	£6 0 0

* This amount is applied almost exclusively to an entirely new purpose, viz., provision of technical education.

In both instances, it will be observed, the case is taken of a person who is at once owner and occupier and pays rates directly. In both instances, also, the rate in the £ is assumed to be that at which the average was calculated in Mr. Fowler's Return on Local Taxation (168 of 1893). It will also be observed that although B.'s rates are 4s. in the £, as compared with A.'s rates of 2s. 3d., A. pays more than five times as much as B. It may be noted that if B. were a tradesman resident in the same parish as A., his rates would only amount to £3 7s. 6d.

13. In connection with the question of local rates upon "land," there is one point which cannot be ignored. It has been urged on high authority that rates upon "land" are—to a certain extent not clearly defined—an "hereditary burden," and therefore inappreciable and irremovable. We desire emphatically to protest against this contention. Suppose that a parish has been subject to rates since the days of Elizabeth—an Elizabethan house in the same parish will have been equally so subject. Why should the rates on "land" be styled "hereditary," and therefore no burden at all, whilst the rates on the house are to be regarded for ever as a burden? Why, again, are not taxes of long standing, such as the Income Tax, equally "hereditary?"

14. We dispute most strongly the view that any rate or tax, however long it may have been imposed, can become a fixed charge by prescription. A tax or rate does not cease to be a tax because the requirements of revenue necessitate its long-continuance; and however long it may be continued, those who bear it have the right to demand its readjustment when any change in the conditions under which it was imposed makes its incidence unjust. It is hardly necessary to observe that, when the present system of assessment to local rates became fixed, the conditions as regards agricultural land were greatly different to those which now prevail.

15. It will no doubt be alleged that the rates in the £ are no heavier now than they were twenty years ago, but, even if this be true, it in no way gets rid of the present glaring inequality of taxation on land as compared with personalty.

16. The truth is that the whole existing system of rating is wrong. Rates, such as those for poor, police, lunatics, roads and education, are levied on real property alone—whereas they benefit the whole community, and should either be directly paid by the nation, or—if it be thought advisable still to continue local administration, and to maintain the method of a local rate—this rate should be levied, as originally proposed under this Act of Elizabeth, on all inhabitants according to their ability.

17. Several methods of dealing with the difficulty have been and might be suggested. For example:—

(1) Seeing that the relation of the value of real property to that of all other property assessed to Income Tax is as 2 to 5, and that at present realty is bearing the whole sum of £16,692,531 (par. 8), a fair adjustment would be that

reality should bear directly by rates or taxes £4,769,294, and that personalty should bear directly by rates or taxes £11,923,237.

(2) Or—the whole of £17,000,000 required might be raised directly by Income Tax. This would have the effect of imposing on all incomes a burden for expenditure of a national character now saddled on one class of property alone.

(3) Or—the cost of the poor, lunatics, police, prosecutions, highways, reformatories and education might be transferred to the Imperial Exchequer, subject to such conditions as to efficiency, economy and departmental supervision as Parliament might deem necessary. (For example, it has been proposed that contributions should be paid to local authorities, based on the average of three years' expenditure.) And in the event of this being done, all agricultural land, pasture or woodland should be assessed to local rates on one-fourth its value, as is now done for expenses under the Public Health Act, 1875.

(4) Or—as a very partial relief, the Inhabited House Duty (amounting to £1,440,627), and the Land Tax (amounting to £1,003,111) levied in their districts, might be transferred to local authorities.

18. We are not insensible to the fact that objections may be made to these proposals, but we are of opinion that the necessities of the case demand that drastic and comprehensive measures should be taken. It may be that some better means may be devised for accomplishing the object which we have in view, but in the meantime we venture to submit that by these or some other methods the gross injustice of the present system of local taxation ought forthwith to be dealt with.

R. H. PAGET, *Chairman.*

EDWARD BIRKBECK,
ROBERT DIMSDALE, .
JOHN E. DORINGTON,
J. GRANT LAWSON,
R. JASPER MORE,
ALBERT PELL,
JAMES RANKIN,
CLARE SEWELL READ,
J. ROUND,
MARK J. STEWART,
WINCHILSEA,

*Executive
Committee.*

R. HENRY REW, *Secretary.*

Mention is made in the annual report for this year of the important evidence given before the Royal Commission on Agriculture by the Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue

(Sir Alfred, afterwards Viscount Milner), which bore directly upon the relative proportions of real and personal property, and the amount of Imperial taxation falling upon each. The Committee expressed their satisfaction at thus learning from the highest official authority that the conclusions based on the Treasury Return of 1885 (moved for by Sir R. Paget) were substantially correct, as the figures of that Return had been frequently challenged. (See page 104.)

Owing to his retirement from Parliament at the general election, Sir R. Paget deemed it necessary to give up the chairmanship of the Committee, to the very great regret of that body; and Mr. J. Grant Lawson, M.P., was elected to fill that office.

1896.

The Royal Commission on Agriculture issued its second report in February, in which a considerable majority recommended, *inter alia*, that in order to place agricultural lands in their right position as compared with other rateable properties, they should be assessed at one-fourth only of their rateable value. (Page 16 of [C. 7981] of 1896.) The greater part of this report deals with the burdens on land, and contains Sir Alfred Milner's figures referred to above. (Page 10, C. 7981.)

The Government were not willing to go as far as this report proposed, but they introduced and passed the Agricultural Rates Bill, in face of a very strong and persistent opposition from the Liberal party in the Commons. Among the very few of that party who did not vote against the Bill may be mentioned Sir Luke White, Sir Robert Perks and Mr. E. Strachey (now Lord Strachie). This Act relieved agricultural land in England of one-half of the rates payable in respect of buildings and other hereditaments. The Act was definitely stated to be a temporary measure only, to give immediate relief to agricultural land, pending a full inquiry into the whole question; and in August the Government appointed the Royal Commission on Local Taxation—to inquire into the system under which taxation is raised for

local purposes, and whether all kinds of real and personal property contribute equitably to such taxation.

The Liberal party ostensibly opposed this measure on the ground that it would only benefit the owners, and termed it the Landlords' Relief Act. The Royal Commission anticipated this, and the Majority Report says (page 16 of C. 7981):—

“It may be alleged as an objection to this recommendation that one result of carrying it out may be that owners of agricultural land may ultimately share in the relief thus given. If this is to be regarded as an objection to our proposal, it is an objection which will apply to almost every recommendation which can be made with any reasonable prospect of success for improving the position of agriculture. It is indisputable that the relief will go in the first instance wholly to the tenants and occupying owners; that no non-occupying owner can share in it, until after the termination of existing tenancies; that when new contracts of tenancy are entered into, the owners will only participate in the relief in cases where the land is rack-rented, and the rates are taken into account in fixing the terms of the new contracts; and that if the present depression in agriculture continues or increases, it will be only in exceptional cases that the landlord will be enabled to obtain in the rent any increase equivalent to the reduction in the rates.”

The Act came into operation on 31st March, 1897, and the relief was felt when the rates were levied for the half-year ending 30th September following. The Local Government Board presented a Return to Parliament on 30th July, 1897 (No. 379) showing that the rateable values were as follows:—

	Agricultural land.	Buildings and other hereditaments.	Total.
	£	£	£
England and Wales (excluding London)	24,534,290 ...	105,487,994 ...	130,022,284
London	30,785 ...	35,359,212 ...	35,389,997
Total	£24,565,075 ...	£140,847,206 ...	£165,412,281

This Act has always been looked upon by farmers as a great boon, and unquestionably it has saved their pockets a very considerable sum in the aggregate. For a purely temporary measure it may be considered not altogether bad, and had the Government been prepared with a complete

settlement of the whole question, as they ought to have been, by about 1902, its promoters might have been pointed to as real benefactors of a hardly treated industry. But for an Act which has been re-enacted for seventeen or eighteen years the principle was altogether wrong. The relief which it appeared to give to agricultural ratepayers was illusory after it had been in operation some ten years, and it has grown worse each year since, although few farmers have realised this fact yet. The sum voted by Parliament under this Act was a definite amount, fixed by the sum required to make up the deficit of one-half the rateable value of agricultural land for the year previous to the passing of the Act. It amounted to about £1,332,000 that year, and has shrunk to £1,324,949, owing to certain areas classed as agricultural land in 1896 having since been classed under other heads. By the Act, although the amount is practically a fixed sum, and although the amount required to be raised in rural districts has vastly increased, agricultural land still receives a rebate of half the rate payable on other properties. The result has been that the general rate of the district has been increased in order to make up the deficit, and farmers have had to pay their share of this increase.

1898.

Nothing worth recording took place in 1897, the Committee being mainly occupied in helping to work the Agricultural Rates Act of 1896. The Annual Report of the Committee for 1898 was the last one issued by them as a separate body, as they were re-absorbed into the Central Chamber at the end of the year. They handed over their funds on the understanding that a Standing Committee of the Chamber should be appointed to deal with local taxation, and the Executive of the old Committee were then appointed to form this Standing Committee.

CHAPTER V.

LOCAL TAXATION.

1899.

THE Royal Commission on Local Taxation issued two interim reports early this year, one dealing with Valuation for and Collection of Rates in England and Wales ; the other with Valuation and Rating in respect to Tithe Rent Charge. As regards the former, the Chamber decided that they could not agree with the Majority Report, but that they agreed in principle with the Minority Report, presented by Mr. (afterwards Sir) T. H. Elliott. The Government gave effect to the recommendations of the other interim report by passing the Tithe Rent Charge (Rates) Act during this session, but the Chamber took no part in this question.

1900-1.

Nothing in this connection occurred during the former of these two years. As there was no prospect of the Government being able to legislate, the Chamber urged them to extend the Agricultural Rates Act for a further period, and a Bill was passed in 1901 extending it until 1906. The Royal Commission issued its Final Report towards the end of the year. The Government introduced a Bill dealing with education, upon which the Chamber issued a report opposing some of its financial proposals. The Bill was not read a second time, but a second Education Bill, dealing temporarily with the difficulty created by the "Cockerton Judgment," was introduced and passed. Sir J. Grant Lawson resigned the chairmanship of the Committee this year, on his appointment as Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board, and Sir John Dorington, Bart., was elected in his place.

1902.

In February the Chamber considered the Final Report of the Royal Commission, and unanimously adopted a report of their Local Taxation Committee upon it. This constituted such an excellent summary that it is given in full :—

REPORT OF THE LOCAL TAXATION COMMITTEE ON
THE FINAL REPORT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION
ON LOCAL TAXATION.

The Final Report contains, in addition to the Majority Report, which is signed by twelve out of the fifteen members of the Commission :—

Special recommendations by Lord Balfour of Burleigh (Chairman).

Reservation by Mr. C. B. Stuart-Wortley.

Reservation by Mr. E. Orford Smith.

Memorandum by Mr. James Stuart.

Minority Report by Sir Edward Hamilton and Sir George Murray.

Separate Report on Urban Rating and Site Values, signed by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Lord Blair Balfour, Sir E. Hamilton, Sir George Murray and Mr. Stuart.

Separate Report by his Honour Judge O'Connor, K.C.

The grievances of the ratepayers are summarised thus by the Commissioners :—

(1) Complaint is made on behalf of ratepayers in general that there is thrown on the rates too much of the cost of certain national services which the State requires to be undertaken, and the burden of which, it is alleged, ought consequently to be borne on the broader back of the taxpayer.

(2) Complaint is made on behalf of ratepayers in certain districts that the burden of these services is heavier than in other districts.

(3) Complaint is made that local expenditure is met in too large a measure by what is in effect a tax levied in respect of the occupation of rateable property, or, in other words, that sufficient variety has not been given to the means by which the revenue required by local authorities is raised.

(4) Complaint is made that those who possess and enjoy property not rateable are placed in too favourable a position as compared with the owners and occupiers of rateable property.

(5) Complaint is made on behalf of special classes of ratepayers (*e.g.*, those interested in agriculture and in certain industries and trades) that, inasmuch as they require for their business an amount of rateable property very large

in proportion to their general ability, an undue share of local burdens is imposed upon them, as compared with persons who neither own nor occupy any rateable property except their own residence. It is felt especially strongly that the increase of an onerous rate falls with great inequality.

(6) Complaint is made by urban ratepayers and ratepayers other than agricultural in agricultural districts that, relief having been given under the Agricultural Rates Act to agricultural ratepayers, no corresponding relief has been given to urban ratepayers, or to ratepayers other than agricultural in agricultural districts.

(7) Complaint is made on behalf of urban ratepayers that all the rates are paid by the occupiers and none by the owners of land (at least directly), although the owners of land benefit largely by the development of towns and by expenditure from the rates on improvements. (Page 11.)

The most important features of the main report are :—

(1) The confirmation of the old principle—which has been so long the text of the Central Chamber—“That principle is the distinction between services which are preponderantly national in character and generally onerous to the ratepayers, and services which are preponderantly local in character and confer upon ratepayers a direct and peculiar benefit more or less commensurate with the burden.” (Page 12.)

[NOTE.—To this Sir E. Hamilton and Sir George Murray agree, and they, with the majority, further agree that to “Onerous” expenditure persons should contribute according to *ability*, and to “Beneficial” expenditure according to benefit received. (Page 14.)

(2) National or Onerous services are named and commented on as follows :—

(a) “Poor relief, including the maintenance of pauper lunatics, the provision of asylums, the minor onerous services administered by Boards of Guardians and Overseers, viz., registration, valuation, vaccination and some others.

(b) “Police and criminal prosecutions.

(c) “Education is also national in a high degree. This includes technical and secondary education.

(d) “Maintenance of main roads we also consider to some extent a national service, and likely to become more so.” (Page 12.)

(3) Towards the cost of these services the Majority propose that the main principles of Mr. Goschen’s policy of 1888 should be adhered to, *i.e.*, the transfer of the proceeds of certain assigned revenues instead of direct grants in aid; the central authority reserving control. (Pages 17, 18, 19.)

(4) The amount proposed by the Majority as being the sum which should come from the central Government is £9,715,000 (or, according to the report of Sir E. Hamilton and Sir G. Murray, £10,025,000, less the amount granted under the Agricultural Rates Act, 1896-1901), instead of £7,145,000, the sum allowed at present. (This means an additional grant of rather more than 2½ millions to local authorities.) (Pages 32, 133.)

(5) The recommendation that the Inhabited House Duty should be transferred to the Local Account. (Pages 21, 22.)

(6) The impracticability of the suggestion to impose a "Local Income Tax." (Page 13.)

(7) The unqualified opposition of nine out of the fifteen Commissioners to the "Taxation of Ground Values." (Page 44.)

(8) The admission that the nature of agricultural land makes it unfair for it to contribute more than half towards national services, and one-fourth in respect to certain local burdens.

[NOTE.—Sir E. Hamilton and Sir G. Murray agree that agricultural land should be taxed at one-half for national services.] (Page 37.)

(9) The declared inability of the Commissioners to determine the final incidence of local taxation, and the insertion of a table (page 15) as some evidence of its apparent incidence, showing that 82.8 per cent. of the revenue raised by local authorities is derived from rateable property, and only 17.2 per cent. is borne by non-rateable-property owners. (That the signatories of both the Majority and Minority Reports do not consider this equitable, is shown by their recommendation—paragraph (4) above—that half of 20 millions, which is the sum annually expended by local authorities for national services, should be defrayed by the Imperial taxpayers.) (Pages 10, 11, 15.)

It is difficult to see why Sir E. Hamilton and Sir G. Murray did not join in the Majority Report, agreeing, as they do, on all the essential points, and differing in the main only as to whether special taxes should be allocated for relief of local taxation, or whether, as they prefer, it should be done by a fixed grant, and also as to whether the distribution of this grant to local authorities should be through the channel of the County Councils, or direct from the Local Government Board to the local authorities. These are not essential articles of difference, but only differences of administration, which do not affect the general principle that a large amount from the Imperial sources should in equity be given in aid of local rates. If the questions of "Taxation of Land and Site Values" be excepted (matters which are outside the scope of this Committee), the same may almost be said of the Special Reports, or Reservations, of Lord Balfour of Burleigh,

of Lord Blair Balfour, of Mr. Orford Smith, of Mr. Stuart-Wortley, and of Mr. James Stuart; we therefore feel justified in saying that the Report—on the whole— supports the policy advocated and the claims put forward by this Committee ever since its formation.

Sir Edward Strachey has been granted a Return, the issue of which may shortly be expected, as to the methods adopted for raising a Local Income Tax in certain countries for local purposes, and an examination of this Return may modify the views the Commissioners have expressed on this matter.

The report on valuation and collection of local rates was dealt with in the report issued by this Committee on 31st October, 1899, and we are glad to see in the King's Speech that this portion of the reform of local taxation is to be dealt with this year.

Your Committee do not hesitate to state their conviction that whether the contribution comes from the central authority in the shape of "assigned revenues" or "direct grants-in-aid," no arrangement can be considered equitable which does not provide that local authorities have an amount assigned from the Government fully representing the interest of the general community in local expenditure on onerous services. We are further convinced that such an arrangement would not encourage extravagance if the local authorities were empowered to raise, by a local rate, the amount needed to cover any excess of expenditure over the Government grant.

In conclusion, your Committee wish to express their satisfaction that the contentions of the Local Taxation Committee and of the Central Chamber of Agriculture have been so thoroughly endorsed by the Royal Commission, and trust that before long their opinions may bear fruit in permanent legislation.

JOHN E. DORINGTON, *Chairman.*

At the April, May and June meetings the Council considered the Government's Education Bill, and protested strongly against the enormous additional charges it proposed to throw upon local authorities. On 13th June a strong deputation waited upon Mr. A. J. Balfour (Leader of the House of Commons, and in charge of this Bill) to urge their views upon the Government. All the speakers dwelt on the statements of the Royal Commission regarding national and onerous services; and it certainly was extraordinary, in view of this recently issued report, and bearing in mind some of Mr. Balfour's own speeches in earlier years on this very question of the burdens on ratepayers, that he should have proposed to add to those burdens, as he did by this Bill.* His reply to the

* Page 116.

deputation was decidedly unsatisfactory. On 24th June he made a statement in the House of Commons to the following effect :—

“ The existing aid grants of £640,000 to voluntary schools and of £220,000 to necessitous Board Schools would be abolished, and a new grant in aid of elementary education is to be substituted, amounting to £1,760,000. The grant to be applied to elementary education only.”

During the autumn session amendments to the Bill were carried which materially affected the ratepayers, and involved further liabilities from the rates for secondary education. The Council again discussed the Bill at their November meeting, when Mr. Henry Chaplin moved a resolution, which was carried with acclamation, as follows :—

“ This Council, agreeing entirely on this point with the views of the Royal Commission, considers that the provision of education is a matter of national concern, and that the cost of education, with due regard to economic administration, be borne as far as possible by the National Exchequer, and not by local rates.”

In accordance with a request from the Council, Mr. Chaplin then gave notice of an amendment to Clause 13 of the Bill providing that—

“ The expenditure out of local rates under this Act shall in no case exceed one-fourth of the whole expenditure on education by the education authority, and the expenses of that authority.”

Mr. Balfour on 7th November gave notice of motion to closure by compartments that portion of the Bill which had not been dealt with on 12th November ; this would have prevented any discussion on Mr. Chaplin's amendment. The 7th was on Friday, and with Sunday intervening there was little opportunity of taking effective action before the 12th, but by a lavish expenditure on lengthy telegrams to about a hundred active members of local Chambers, explaining the position, a sufficient number of Members of Parliament received urgent messages from constituents requesting them to oppose the closure motion until Mr. Chaplin's motion had been discussed. This produced the necessary pressure upon Mr. Balfour, the amendment was discussed, and it ultimately resulted. not in getting Mr. Chaplin's amendment adopted, but in an extra grant of about £450,000 from the National

Exchequer towards local educational expenses. For this ratepayers have to thank Mr. Chaplin, and the activity displayed at very short notice by a number of local supporters.

1903-4.

Nineteen hundred and three was a blank so far as this subject was concerned, but 1904 saw the introduction of the long-desired and long-promised Government Valuation Bill. It was received with a chorus of approval from both sides of the House of Commons, and the Chamber agreed to its main object. On examination, however, it was found altogether unworkable; the Chamber had numberless criticisms to make upon it, and Mr. Trustram Eve (a member of the Local Taxation Committee) published a pamphlet, which showed the Bill to be complicated, vexatious and wrong in principle. The Chambers had always wanted the net annual value to be the basis of assessment for Imperial as well as for local purposes. This Bill would have left at least five different values upon which the following annual charges would have been based—Land Tax, Schedule A, Inhabited House Duty, Schedule B, and Poor Rate. The unfortunate measure made no further progress.

The Education Code for this year contained proposals affecting the finance of educational administration—of course, to the detriment of the ratepayer. Sir John Dorington, on behalf of the Chamber, opposed these proposals, and, after some negotiation, the Government withdrew them and retained the scale of grants in force under the Code of 1903.

1905.

The Agricultural Rates Act was again extended until March, 1910, with but slight opposition from the other side of the House of Commons.

The Government promised to introduce a new Valuation Bill, but did not attempt to redeem their pledge, and the Chamber expressed their grave disapproval at this continued neglect of a most important subject. At the April and June meetings resolutions were passed expressing the opinion that

as motor traffic was beginning to monopolise the roads, and the new regulations necessitated increased expenditure, the main roads should be nationalised and maintained by the Government, and that at least one-third of the cost of district roads should be defrayed by an Exchequer contribution.

1906.

At the General Election in January the country returned a Radical Government. The Chamber passed two resolutions during the year urging the Government to introduce legislation to readjust the incidence of local taxation on the lines recommended by the Royal Commission, but no attempt was made by the Government in this direction.

Notwithstanding the extra grants obtained towards the cost of elementary education in 1902, the additional expenditure involved by the Act of that year was now being felt, and the Chamber passed a resolution again urging that, as education was a national question, its cost should be borne by the Imperial Exchequer.

1907.

At the close of 1906 the Prime Minister (Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman) was asked to receive a deputation to urge the necessity of dealing with local taxation in the next session. The Prime Minister refused to meet the deputation, and his manner of declining somewhat annoyed a section of his followers. A further communication from him asked for a statement in writing, and this was sent to him after it had been approved by the Council on 26th February. As the King's Speech referred to a Valuation Bill, this statement only dealt with that part of the subject.

Your Committee are decidedly of opinion that a Valuation Bill will not be satisfactory unless effect be given to the following recommendations of the Chambers of Agriculture:—

(a) *Expense.*—The burden of taxation is continually increasing, and we urge the Government to frame the machinery of the Bill so as to cause as small an addition to the rates as possible; and that the greater portion of the expense should be drawn from Imperial rather than local sources if the new basis is used for taxes as well as rates.

(b) *Valuation Authority*.—We recognise that the County Council must be the supreme rating authority for each county, but in view of the many duties already thrown on the members and officials of County Councils, we consider that much of the work should be carried out by local Valuation Committees. We are of opinion that it would be a mistake to abolish the present assessment areas, but the Committees working therein should be under the direction of the county valuation authority. By this means it is hoped that uniformity of valuation throughout the county would be attained.

(c) *One Basis for Imperial and Local Taxation*.—The main object of the Bill should be to provide one assessment which would be used for (i.) Schedule A, (ii.) Schedule B, (iii.) Land Tax, (iv.) Inhabited House Duty, (v.) County and Local Rates (including Water-rate). This would not have been obtained under the Valuation Bill, 1904, as is shown in Appendix I. of our report. The figures therein stated are calculated on the hypothesis that the several authorities agree in their estimate of value; where (as nearly always happens) they differ, still greater anomalies may result.

It was found in 1904 that the Local Government Board were apparently either not able or not willing to ask the Inland Revenue authorities to alter their basis of Schedule A, Schedule B, or Inhabited House Duty, but we now ask the Government to introduce a method in the forthcoming Valuation Bill which will give one figure for both Imperial and local taxation. This will necessitate the amendment of various Income Tax Acts by the insertion of a clause in the Finance Act of 1908.

We consider this one assessment to be impossible so long as the Inland Revenue authorities collect Schedule A on the Gross Annual Value, less one-eighth or one-sixth for repairs, and a deduction for Tithe and Land Tax; and the Inhabited House Duty on the Gross Annual Value with no deduction; while for local rates varying deductions for repairs are allowed from the Gross in accordance with the requirements of each particular case to form the Rateable Value.

Land Tax should be assessed on the "net annual or rateable value" [*R. v. Ivychurch Land Tax Commissioners (1894)*, 58 J.P. 446]; but in practice for some reason it is assessed on the gross and not on the net annual value.

The County Rate (County Rates Act, 1852) is assessed according to a "basis or standard" of the "full and fair annual value" of the property rateable to the poor in each parish, and under Sec. 6 is to be estimated *on the same principle* as the rateable value under the Parochial Assessments Act, 1836, Sec. 1.

We therefore recommend that there be one Net Annual Value only, which figure should be used as the basis for both taxes and rates.

(d) *Surveyor of Taxes.*—For many reasons, and in view of the large area which is covered by each Surveyor of Taxes, we are strongly of opinion that he should act *in an advisory capacity only*, and should not be paramount, as was proposed in the Valuation Bill, 1904.

This year's Budget proposed that the Agricultural Rates Act grant, and all the assigned revenues which had been paid to local authorities, should be retained by the Treasury, and an equivalent sum be paid to the spending authorities from the Consolidated Fund. In this statement the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Asquith) promised that "the equivalent sum" should include any natural growth in the produce of these taxes. As this was merely a question of book-keeping, the Chambers approved of the proposal, and it was given effect to in the Finance Act.

In July the Chamber opposed some of the clauses of the Small Holdings Bill, particularly those which empowered Commissioners to take action involving County Councils in expenditure of which they had not approved, in pursuance of schemes which might be wholly visionary and very costly. Under the Bill all the powers of County Councils were given to these Commissioners, and all expenditure by them was chargeable on the rates. Such powers were wholly unprecedented, and the Chamber objected to the Board of Agriculture being allowed to incur expenditure unless this were to be entirely defrayed out of monies voted by Parliament. The amendments suggested by the Chamber were largely adopted before the Bill received the Royal Assent.

The Destructive Insects and Pests Bill was introduced by the Government in response to requests from the Chamber, but it threw the cost of administration wholly on the rates. The Chamber used every effort to get the cost placed upon the National Exchequer, but without avail. The result was that the Act was for some years practically a dead letter, as some County Councils refused to add to their rates by putting it into operation or by appointing inspectors under the Act.

This non-compliance spread to such an extent that in 1912 the Board of Agriculture obtained the consent of the Treasury to include in the Board's annual estimates a sum which would

enable the Board to make a contribution towards the expenditure of those local authorities who appointed inspectors, equal to half the salary and travelling expenses incurred.*

As time went on this process of removing the cost of administration from the ratepayers to the Board of Agriculture became more pronounced, and in the second report of the Horticultural Branch of the Board (Cd. 7605), 1914, it is pointed out that the variable energy displayed by County Councils, and the absolute refusal to appoint officers in some cases, made it urgently necessary for the Board to reform the method of control; the Board therefore secured authority to appoint a number of Inspectors, whereupon the need of local authorities maintaining inspectors ceased.

1908.

The Annual Report for this year said that Local Taxation had occupied a great deal of the attention of the Council, and that, though there were no tangible results, good educational work had been carried out among Members of Parliament; an admission had also been drawn from the Prime Minister and others that the present incidence of local taxation was altogether unjust. It could also be claimed that the Chambers had lifted this question out of the slough of party politics, as both the great parties agreed that the whole subject needed revision and readjustment.

The work referred to included the preparation by Mr. Trustram Eve of a long report of twenty-three pages on Exchequer Contributions, giving a complete statement of the burden of rates upon real property; the proportion of the different charges falling on the rates, and on the National Exchequer; and the conclusions of the Chamber based upon these figures. Some indication of the value attached to this document is afforded by the fact that 9000 copies were purchased for circulation by local Chambers, and a large number of well-attended meetings were held in the country at which resolutions approving of these conclusions were carried, and

* Part II., Annual Report of Intelligence Division of the Board of Agriculture for 1911-12, page 4. (Cd. 6730.)

sent to Ministers. A deputation waited upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Asquith) to lay the report before him on 20th March. He met them in a very sympathetic manner, admitted the grievances under which agriculture especially suffered, and agreed with the Royal Commission that the services of which the Chamber chiefly complained were national in their character. The report of this deputation is too long to insert here, but it is unusually instructive. Here is an extract from Mr. Asquith's reply :—

“ One of the speakers seemed to think that the ratepayer had a peculiar and prior claim to the solicitude and care of the Government over every other class of the community, but there is another figure besides the figure of the ratepayer that I, at any rate, have to keep steadily in view, and that is the figure of the taxpayer, who is too often forgotten in discussions of this kind and who happens, by the way, not infrequently to be the same person as the ratepayer. That is where the real importance of this question of valuation comes in, because it is the (to a large extent) artificial distinction resulting from the existing law between the class of ratepayers and the class of taxpayers, and also the extreme inequality of rates in different parts of the country arising from the application of totally different systems of valuation and a complete absence of uniformity, which make this problem in some respects the urgent problem which I do not deny that it is. I am not going over again what I said in the House of Commons only a very few weeks ago, that, in my opinion, and that of my colleagues, the question of valuation does lie on the threshold of a satisfactory treatment of this question as a whole. You may dole out a little bit, here or there, but you will never get to the bottom of or really remove these particular grievances which you have come here to urge to-day until you have grappled with the question of valuation.

“ With regard to the case of these so-called national services—I prefer to call them services that are both national and local, but they are locally managed—the state of the case is this. Taking a period of fifteen years, in 1889–90 they cost, roughly speaking, 19 millions; in 1904–5 they cost, roughly speaking, 45½ millions. That is the total amount expended upon them by local authorities. The Imperial contribution in the first year which I have mentioned, 1889–90, was £5,850,000, and in the last year, £19,290,000, so although the expenditure has increased undoubtedly, and increased very heavily, so has the Imperial contribution, and in greater proportion. I am only saying that in order to correct a misapprehension, which seems to prevail in many quarters, that the State has been remiss and has been going behind the standard of contribution which fifteen years ago it thought it right to be lived and to be worked up to in regard

to local matters. That is not the case, but the contrary; but having corrected, I hope, that misapprehension of fact—which does not prevail among you, I am sure, but which prevails among people outside who have not studied the case—I can only say that this is a matter which is seriously engaging the consideration of my right honourable friend and myself, and that the special points which you have brought before us to-day, such as the main roads and the lunatics—I think that those are the things which struck me the most, but there are others also—will not escape our attention, and we are greatly indebted to you for the additional light which you have thrown upon them.”

A further statement on Exchequer Contributions, emphasizing certain portions of the earlier report, was approved by the Chambers and sent to Ministers. This elaborated the figures relating to highways and bridges, which, owing to abbreviation, had been somewhat misunderstood. It quoted Mr. Asquith's reply to the deputation (above), but pointed out that some relief might be given without waiting for a Valuation Act, as—taking the five chief national services—the police could be dealt with per head; lunatics, per bed; education, per child; poor relief, per inmate and per official; and main roads, per mile. It gave the percentage paid by the State and by rates for these services, based upon the expenditure of 1904-5 (the last then available), as follows:—

	Paid by State.		Paid by rates.	
	Per cent.		Per cent.	
Police and police stations	...	39	...	61
Lunatics and lunatic asylums	...	25	...	75
Education	...	52	...	48
Highways and bridges	...	14	...	86
Poor relief	...	9	...	91

The statement then quoted the following extract from a speech by Viscount St. Aldwyn at Gloucester, on 21st March, which the Chamber emphatically endorsed:—

“He thought the principle on which relief should be based was wisely laid down by Sir Massey Lopes as long ago as 1868—viz., that the Exchequer ought to relieve ratepayers of expenditure which was not dependent upon local control. That principle was acted upon fully with regard to the prisons, and the result had been great improvement in the efficient and economical administration of the prisons throughout the country, and the ratepayers had been relieved of their total cost. That was the principle which, to his mind, ought to be acted upon in any reform

of local taxation. They might apply it to the cost of lunatics. Why should not the State take over the entire management and expenditure of the lunatic asylums, placing them, if necessary, under local inspection by the magistrates, just as the prisons were now placed? Why should not the State take over the whole cost of the management, through Commissioners, of course, of the workhouses, paying the whole cost of indoor relief and leaving nothing but outdoor relief—*minus*, he hoped, the amount which might be saved by any proper scheme of old-age pensions—to the local ratepayers? Why should not the State take over the whole cost of the police? He did not think there was very much local control over the police now. Why should not the State take over the whole cost of idiot asylums, sick asylums, Poor Law, industrial and reformatory schools? He believed that in that way and through a system of that kind would be both the best and safest relief found to the ratepayers.

“Probably some of his hearers who had taken an admirable part in local administration would say at once that that would be a great and an unfortunate interference with local government. No one was more sensible than he was of the admirable work done by the members of County and Town Councils throughout the country—men, often with plenty of business of their own, who devoted an enormous proportion of their time, with no gratuity or reward whatever, to the service of their neighbours. But he wished them to consider precisely what was going on with reference to local government at the present time. Every year for many years Parliament had occupied itself in imposing more and more duties on those engaged in local government, till it had almost come to the point that a man who had any business of his own to attend to could hardly find time by any possibility to attend to all the duties that devolved upon him as a member of a County or a City Council. He thought it would be a very good thing for local government in the future, on that ground, if the members of such bodies could be relieved of some of the duties they now had to do, because if those duties were to increase, as they were increasing, he believed the result must be one of two things—either the administration would pass from the hands of the representatives of the people to a few paid officials, or else capable business men enjoying the confidence of their neighbours would find it necessary to give up the work of local government, which would then fall into the hands of men less trusted by their neighbours, less fit to be trusted by their neighbours, who might turn the power in their hands as representatives of the ratepayers to their own corrupt purposes.”

The King's Speech contained a reference to a Valuation Bill, so the Chamber communicated with the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. John Burns) recalling their statement on Valuation sent to him last year. At the end of

July, in reply to questions, Mr. Asquith said definitely that it was the intention of the Government to introduce the Bill before the recess, but it did not make its appearance this year.

As the Budget made no reference to local taxation, twenty-three members put down amendments to the second reading of the Finance Bill, on behalf of the Chamber—regretting that the Bill made no provision for the relief of local taxation in respect of national services, and strong support to the amendment was promised from both sides of the House ; but it was precluded from being moved, time being only allowed for one Opposition amendment, and precedence being given to one put down, on behalf of the Front Opposition Bench, on tariff reform. A good deal of feeling was displayed at this frustration of the Chamber's effort to bring this question to a head, and on a report presented by the Committee to a subsequent meeting of the Council, an amendment was moved, which was practically a vote of censure on the Member for the Ashford Division, and it was carried by a small majority. The Chairman of the Committee (Sir Luke White, M.P.), however, acting in accordance with the custom of the Chamber, in view of the small majority, declined to accept the amendment as an addition to the report, so the report was consequently referred back, and the matter dropped. During the debate on this report, an objection was raised to the Chamber accepting a motion which was a vote of censure on the Front Opposition Bench, and the belief was expressed that a similar case had never occurred before. It is extremely probable that this was the first time such a suggestion had been made, but it marks the decided growth of the feeling in favour of breaking away from old traditions, and the tendency of agriculturists to take their own line.

The Education (Administrative Provisions) Act of 1907 was put into operation this year, so far as the question of the medical inspection of elementary school children was concerned. The Chamber made ineffectual protests against this charge being put upon the rates, as it was estimated that this inspection would cost local authorities nearly a million pounds per annum.

Even the Government recognised the hardihood of expecting local authorities to submit to this imposition, and employed a clever political subterfuge to put it on to their shoulders without themselves finding any part of the cost. They introduced an Elementary Education Bill, which, while it imposed new duties and new expenditure on local authorities, did propose financial assistance from the Exchequer, which Mr. McKenna (President of the Board of Education) said, in introducing the Bill, would amount to £1,400,000 a year, towards the cost incurred by local education authorities. Adding this to the grants then being distributed, the whole amount would equal a grant of 47s. per child per annum. This same Minister definitely promised a deputation from the County Councils' Association, on 11th February, 1908, that, if the Bill passed, the result of the financial proposals would be such that the expense of medical inspection would be met out of public funds, and that it would be possible for County Councillors to meet their ratepayers with a substantial reduction in the rates. This Bill was read a second time on 20th May, and referred to a Committee of the whole House. No further progress was attempted before the recess, and it was adjourned to the Autumn Session. The compulsory order of the Board of Education regarding medical inspection was put into operation on 1st July, and, having the promise of Mr. McKenna before them, local authorities incurred all the necessary expense and provided all the necessary machinery for working it, confident that the Government would honour their obligations. Having accomplished their object, no further effort was made by the Government to provide the funds. Their Education Bill was withdrawn, mainly owing to the strong public feeling evinced against those clauses that touched on the religious aspect of the question.

To the uninitiated this may appear a perfectly reasonable excuse for the Government's withdrawal of their Bill. So it may have been ; but it affords no excuse for their attempt to pass an unpalatable measure by holding out a tempting bait to ratepayers. A purely financial question of this sort should have been dealt with in a Finance Bill. not in a measure

tainted with sectarian animosity. The mere introduction of this Bill and Mr. McKenna's statement were, however, acknowledgments by the Government that the demands of the Chamber were just.

On 18th February Mr. A. F. Hedges (Liberal Member for Tonbridge and a member of the Chamber) moved the following resolution :—

“That in the opinion of this House, the present system of local taxation and the relations between local and Imperial burdens demand the immediate attention of His Majesty's Government, with a view to a more equitable adjustment as between local and Imperial obligations.”

Another Liberal, Mr. Rogers, seconded, and after a useful debate, in the course of which Mr. Asquith made an important speech accepting the motion, and expressing general agreement with the views advocated by the Chamber, the resolution was agreed to by the House without a division.

The Finance Act of this year (Section 6) imposed on County Councils the duty of collecting the proceeds of Local Taxation Licences, and although the County Councils' Association made it perfectly clear to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that such an amount was inadequate to cover the expenses of local authorities in this connection, he only provided £40,000 for that purpose.

As the political horizon appeared very unsettled, and the possibility of a General Election not remote, the Chamber prepared its Parliamentary Programme, and that part of it referring to local taxation was as follows :—

(1) (a) In your opinion should the cost of any of the following national services be removed *entirely* from the shoulders of the ratepayers, and, if so, which ?

- Police and Police Stations.
- Lunatics and Lunatic Asylums.
- Roads and Bridges.

(b) Are you prepared to back your opinion by your vote and voice in the House of Commons in the present session ?

(2) Failing a reply to the first question in the affirmative, are you in favour of the cost of the Police being met more largely out of the National Exchequer than is now the case ; and, if so, to what extent ?

(3) Are you in favour of the cost of Lunatics and Lunatic Asylums being met more largely out of the National Exchequer than is now the case; and, if so, to what extent?

(4) Are you in favour of the cost of Education being met more largely out of the National Exchequer than is now the case; and, if so, to what extent?

(5) Are you in favour of the cost of Roads and Bridges being met more largely out of the National Exchequer than is now the case; and, if so, to what extent?

(6) (a) In your opinion is the Medical Inspection of School Children a national service? (b) If so, are you in favour of the cost thereof being borne wholly by the National Exchequer? (c) If not, to what extent?

(7) Are you prepared to back your opinion on the last-named matter by your vote and voice in the House of Commons in the present session?

(8) Do you favour, and will you support the re-enactment of the Agricultural Rates Act, 1896, and at the earliest possible moment will you help to secure its amendment so as to ensure to agricultural occupiers such a degree of financial relief as was intended by, and was the immediate result of the Act of 1896?

NOTE.—In 1896–7 the rateable value of agricultural land was £24,565,058, and the expenditure £2,661,214, an average of 2s. 2d. in the £. The grant was therefore fixed at 1s. 1d. in the £, and amounted in that year to £1,330,607. In 1907–8 the amount of the grant was only £1,326,290, in spite of the fact that the rates have doubled during the intervening years. In order to give the relief intended by the Act, this grant (assuming that this basis be continued) should be at least 2s. in the £, and the total amount to more than £2,500,000. The rates in rural districts in 1905–6 were 4s. 2d. in the £.

(9) Will you oppose any proposals which the Chancellor of the Exchequer may make for placing the cost of any extension of the Old Age Pensions Act on the rates?

(10) In the event of a Housing Bill, or any other Bill containing compulsory powers, being introduced into the House of Commons, which if efficiently and honestly administered will involve an additional burden being thrown upon ratepayers, will you oppose such Bill or Bills, at all their stages, unless satisfactory provision be made for meeting equitably the cost involved thereby?

(11) Will you offer all possible opposition in the House of Commons to the financial clauses of any measure throwing additional burdens on the rates for purposes of a national character?

(12) (a) Are you aware that the £40,000 allocated to the county authorities in respect of the collection of Local Taxation Licences is wholly inadequate to meet the expenditure involved?

(b) Will you support any steps that may be taken to try and induce the Government to make up the deficiency out of the National Exchequer ?

(13) (a) Do you believe that the adjustment of public burdens as between Imperial taxation and local rates involves the previous passing of a Valuation Bill? (b) If so, why?

NOTE.—Taking the national services: The police could be dealt with per head; lunatics, per bed; education, per child; and roads, per mile.

1909.

At the first meeting of the year the Chamber adopted a report containing the following:—

“In view of the forthcoming Budget, your Committee wish to recall some of the statements laid before Parliament by the Council last year, as the still increasing expenses of local authorities, and the events of the past twelve months, have but added force to the requests made to the Chancellor of the Exchequer before the introduction of the last Budget. Your Committee consider that local rates have been very improperly burdened with heavy and increasing amounts disbursed on behalf of national services; that local rates have enormously increased during the last twenty years, notwithstanding a rise in rateable values of over 40 per cent.; therefore if the grants-in-aid were sufficient when fixed on a basis which might have been fair in 1888 and 1890 (though we do not admit it was fair), it is manifestly unfair that the same fixed basis should be used in 1909.”

On 25th February Lord Helmsley (M.P. for Thirsk, and a member of the Chamber) moved as an amendment to the Address a similar resolution to Mr. Hedges', of 1908. Mr. Hicks-Beach seconded it.

Several Liberals supported it by their speeches, but being an Amendment to the Address they naturally did not record their votes for it; although it should be mentioned that Sir Luke White, Mr. Hedges and Mr. Lamb were courageous enough to vote in accordance with their opinions. The Chancellor of the Exchequer replied for the Government in a speech which admitted once again the fairness of the Chambers' contentions, and expressed an indefinite hope that although he could do nothing this year, he might be able before the Government went out of office, to take a considerable step in the direction advocated.

The next raid upon the pockets of the ratepayers was by the Board of Education. In March that Department issued a memorandum, known as Circular 709, stating that the Code of 1909 would require a change in the staffing of elementary schools. This, it was estimated, would add to the education rate amounts varying from £500 per annum in West Sussex to £5000 in Lindsey (Lincs). The President of the Board of Education (Mr. W. Runciman) replied so evasively to questions asked in the House, and with such an apparent unconcern as to the cost, that all local Chambers were made acquainted with the matter. It was pointed out to them that—

“There is no intention of suggesting that any necessary educational reforms should be hindered, provided that the Treasury is prepared to pay for them, but there is objection to any further addition being made to the education rate.”

The question was before the Council on 4th May, when a strong resolution of protest was agreed to unanimously, and the Parliamentary Committee were instructed to oppose the Code. Discussions in many parts of the country showed that the chief objection (apart from the increased cost) was that a Government Department in Whitehall should have power, and should exert that power, *to dictate* to local authorities, who have no alternative but to pay the cost involved by such interference. This feeling was only natural, for whenever the Government is asked to relieve the burden of the education rate, its reply is: “You have local control, and the Government cannot pay for local administration.”

The Code was laid on the Table on 25th June, where it had to remain for thirty days before becoming operative. As usual, no opportunity was given for its discussion, but after much negotiation the Government promised that the vote for the Board of Education should be taken on 15th July, so as to give a chance of debating the proposals of Circular 709. That was the theory, but in fact the very short time allowed for this vote was wholly taken up by the discussion of other topics, and so no opportunity was ever given for raising the question.

Section 97 of the Education Act, 1870, provides that the Code or any other Minute issued by the Education Department shall not become operative until it has lain on the table of both Houses of Parliament for not less than one month. In theory this is supposed to give members a chance of discussing or moving resolutions protesting against any such Minutes ; but, in fact, so far as the House of Commons is concerned, the Government takes care that no opportunity is given for such discussion ; even if a resolution were passed by either House objecting to any Minute or Order, it does not follow that any notice of it would be taken. This gives practically unlimited power to a Government Department, and is in effect the frank adoption of bureaucracy.

Before the Code actually became operative some slight changes were made in it, in response to the action taken by the Chamber, the County Councils' Association and the Central Land Association, but it still remains most unsatisfactory from the ratepayers' point of view.

As the period for which the Agricultural Rates Act was extended expired in 1910, the Chamber moved for a further extension, and it was this year incorporated in the Expiring Laws Continuance Act.

The "People's Budget."

Although the Finance Bill was an attack upon agriculture in several directions, the Council referred it to their Local Taxation Committee, as part of it came within their province. That Committee presented six reports upon the Bill, and several extra meetings (including one extra Council meeting) were held to deal with it. The following extracts from their reports will show the views of the Chamber :—

Your Committee express their profound regret that the opportunity presented by the extensive revision of the basis of Imperial taxation now proposed has not been accompanied by the necessary readjustments of liability between real and personal property for the purpose of local taxation, which have been continuously demanded by the Chambers of Agriculture.

Your Committee consider that the selection of land as the only form of property for taxation of its capital as well as its

income is economically unsound, and likely to create a feeling of insecurity among all classes of the community.

That the cumulative effect of the burdens sought to be thrown upon land by the Bill is calculated, by impoverishing agricultural landowners (especially those who adequately maintain their estates) to seriously affect the welfare of those occupying, and employed upon, agricultural land.

That land that is not to be subject to taxation should not be subject to valuation.

The principle of imposing taxes upon land over and above those which are imposed on other forms of property should be uncompromisingly resisted, notwithstanding any offers made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make grants out of the same in aid of local taxation.

. . . The land clauses of the Finance Bill are unjust in principle, and should be withdrawn. While the Bill proposes to tax the substance on its capital value, in our opinion, the true principle of just taxation is to tax each inhabitant according to his ability to pay.

INCREMENT VALUE DUTY.

Such a charge is indefensible. Agricultural land as a whole has, during the last forty years, decreased in value, and to levy a tax on any return to its former value would be grossly unjust to owners of land.

The principle of taxing the increment value of agricultural land would put a premium on the non-improvement of such land, and discourage enterprise on the part of both owner and occupier.

UNDEVELOPED LAND TAX.

The site value of agricultural land should be placed at £100 per acre instead of £50. Your Committee consider that the imposition of this tax will, directly or indirectly, cause great hardship to occupiers of land in the vicinity of towns and villages, and especially to market gardeners and allotment holders.

STAMP DUTIES.

In view of the already heavy existing charges on the passing of real estate, your Committee object most strongly to the proposed doubling of the Stamp Duties on deeds of conveyance.

SCHEDULE A.*

MOTOR TAXES AND UPKEEP OF ROADS.

By Clauses 64-70 duties are charged on motor spirits and increased duties on licences for motor cars. The amount of these

* The reference to Schedule A will be found under "Income Tax," on page 361.

duties, after making provision in respect of existing duties on motor cars, is to be carried to a separate account to be established under regulations made by the Treasury, and to be appropriated to the development of roads in the United Kingdom. The Chancellor of the Exchequer estimates that the amount to be placed to this separate account during the present financial year will be £600,000. The Finance Bill does not lay down any provisions as to the application of these duties; they are to be appropriated in such manner as Parliament may hereafter determine, the only important point being that the amount is for "development of roads" in the United Kingdom.

Some amendment is necessary in order to define the term "development of roads." An attempt will be made to restrict the money to the improvement and construction of roads, and not on maintenance, the latter being still paid for by local authorities out of local rates. If this is done the Bill will not afford any relief to the rates, but there may be a constantly increasing expenditure, owing to the increase in the road area.

The Finance Bill should be amended so that those duties might be applied, not only to defraying the cost of making and the maintenance of new roads, but also in aid of the cost of improvement and maintenance of existing roads. Further, a fair proportion of the fund should be spent from time to time in each county, and each County Council should prepare a scheme for their respective areas to be submitted to the central authority.

It is true that the Chambers have frequently expressed a desire for the creation of a central road authority, but that was only as a corollary to the cost of maintaining main roads being defrayed by the National Exchequer. That is as widely different to the present proposal as possible, and your Committee protest most strongly against a central authority having uncontrolled spending powers.

CIDER TAX.

That the duties proposed to be imposed upon cider makers, under the Finance Bill, will seriously damage a growing agricultural industry, and this proposal should be withdrawn.

In November the Council decided, on the recommendation of its Committee, that, as the objections to the Bill raised in their previous reports had not been met or removed, a deputation should wait upon the Leader of the House of Lords (Marquis of Crewe) and the Leader of the Opposition in the same House (Marquis of Lansdowne). There was a very animated debate on this proposal, opponents of the motion (ten in number) being Members of Parliament sitting on the Government side of the House, who argued that the House of Lords had no power to amend or reject the Finance Bill;

it was also pointed out that taking such a step would give a decided appearance of "party" to the Chambers. The Chamber decided that as opinions differed as to the powers of the House of Lords, it was not for them to express an opinion upon a constitutional point; but that as regarded the semblance of "party" bias, they might equally be accused of that if they refrained from stating their views on a measure so detrimental to agriculture, simply because it had been made a party question in Parliament.

It was then left for the Local Taxation and Parliamentary Committees to prepare jointly a statement for presentation to Lord Crewe and Lord Lansdowne, and as those Peers both declined to receive the deputation, but asked for a statement, this sixth report was sent to them, and to every member of the House of Lords. A portion of this report is subjoined:—

3.—The Chamber is of opinion that taxation should be based on income, and according to "ability to pay." Under the Bill the land is taxed and not the individual. Land is the raw material of the farmer, and he occupies it with a view to profit; and the Chamber feels that on behalf of farmers, which it represents, this attempt to tax their raw material on capital value for purposes of income should be resisted.

It is quite clear that the present proposals are merely tentative and "the thin end of the wedge," and the Chamber views with alarm this novel form of legislation.

They note with apprehension that agricultural land with no building possibilities either immediate or remote is to be valued by the State, and unless this is pure waste of money the only possible construction is that at some future time this valuation will be used to the detriment of agriculture. It is quite clear that it cannot do any good to farmers, and the probability is that it will do harm in the future; consequently, the Chamber strongly objects to its being carried out, apart from the cost, which will apparently be a serious charge on the general taxpayer.

4.—The Committee feel that in answer to the above it may be said that under the Bill all agricultural land while remaining agricultural is wholly exempt from fresh taxation as far as its agricultural value is concerned. The Committee agree that this is true, but this is a very different statement from that frequently made that under the Bill agricultural land is exempt, and is not subjected to any fresh taxation.

Under Clause 2 of the Bill it is admitted on all sides that the rise in value of agricultural land will be subject to Increment Value Duty, and this point was clearly brought out in the Report

stage in the House of Commons, and not denied by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The following example will show this :—If land which is purely agricultural on 30th April, 1909, is valued at £15 per acre, increases in value owing to rise in agricultural values to £35 per acre in, say, 1919, and is sold for building purposes in 1925 at £80 per acre, the Increment Value Duty is charged, not on the basis of between £35 and £80, but between £15 and £80; thus showing that Increment Value Duty will, in fact, be charged on the agricultural value as £20 per acre.

5.—The Undeveloped Land Duty will also be charged on an enormous area of agricultural land in the form of land which has a future possibility as ripe building land.

The definition of undeveloped land is given in the Bill as follows :—

16. (2) For the purposes of this part of this Act land shall be deemed to be undeveloped land if it has not been developed by the erection of dwelling-houses or of buildings for the purposes of any business, trade or industry other than agriculture (but including glasshouses or greenhouses), or is not otherwise used *bona fide* for any business, trade or industry other than agriculture.

The minimum value of undeveloped land is defined thus :—

17. (1) Undeveloped Land Duty shall not be charged in respect of any land where the site value of the land does not exceed fifty pounds per acre.

In the case of agricultural land of which the site value exceeds fifty pounds per acre, Undeveloped Land Duty shall only be charged on the amount by which the site value of the land exceeds the value of the land for agricultural purposes.

From the above it is clear that—

(1) Any land having possibilities of future building must be charged with Undeveloped Land Duty, or, in the words of the Finance Act, 1894—

“Where part of the principal value is due to the expectation of an increased income.”

(2) If that value at the time of valuation is £50 per acre or under, it is exempt even in cases—

“Where part of the principal value is due to the expectation of an increased income.”

(3) That the agricultural value as found at 30th April, 1909, will be deducted.

(4) Under Clause 3 (5) an allowance of 10 per cent. is to be made on the original site value.

6.—It is admitted that a very large proportion—practically the whole—of the land chargeable with Undeveloped Land Duty is, in fact, occupied as agricultural land, market gardens or

allotments. (An exemption has been made in respect of land covered by glasshouses, and land occupied by the owner whose total ownership is of less value than £500.)

11.—It has been stated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the probable area of land affected by the Undeveloped Land Duty is from two to three million acres, and it was pointed out to the Chamber that the development of the lesser area would provide buildings for 200,000,000 persons, or nearly five times the present population.

12.—The Committee have gone into this somewhat technical calculation for the sole reason that the “unripe” area chargeable with Undeveloped Land Tax Duty is, in fact, occupied, and will be occupied during the annual payments of the duty, by farmers, market gardeners and allotment holders.

13.—The tendency of any person who is taxed is to attempt to pass on the tax to others, and if an owner feels that he is paying an annual tax on land which it is admitted he is not “holding up,” and which the Government valuers admit is not ripe, and will not be ripe for many years, he will try to raise the rent of the occupier of such land.

The Chamber wishes to point out that it is a fact that there is a marked rise in agricultural values, which has, in fact, raised the rental value of agricultural land during the last few years where farms have changed hands. It is not the custom, however, of the large majority of owners to raise rents to sitting tenants, but that a great many rents could, in fact, be raised is not disputed.

Farmers, market gardeners and allotment holders naturally object to any legislation which gives owners an excuse to raise rents, thereby putting these new land taxes on their shoulders.

The tendency of this class of legislation is to reduce the relation of owner and occupier from a more or less sentimental basis to a commercial one, which the Chamber deploras.

15.—The Committee wish to point out the fallacy which underlies the Undeveloped Land Duty, viz., that the theoretical market value of a vast quantity of land theoretically sold at one and the same time cannot be the same as the market prices resulting from occasional sales of small blocks.

If all the land valued for Undeveloped Land Duty were offered for sale in one day the theoretical prices placed thereon could not be obtained; in fact, there would not be sufficient unemployed capital available, and the sale would be abortive.

16.—There seems to be an impression that only ripe building land will be taxed, and in the speeches of the Prime Minister he has referred to this class of land only. The Committee feel they have shown that the question of “unripe” land is very much more important than the “ripe.”

17.—In conclusion, your Committee wish to lay special stress on the idea that the best possible use for land is to develop it for building. Originally, in the Bill this was assumed to be the

only proper end for bare land. In Committee it was conceded that there were other "best possible uses," which, put shortly, are:—

Parks, gardens or open spaces which are open to the public as a right.

Woodlands, parks, gardens or open spaces, where access is of public benefit.

Land kept free from buildings in the interest of the public.

Land occupied by glasshouses.

Land used for games and recreation under certain restrictions.

18.—The Chamber considers that the use of lands for intensive cultivation by market gardeners and allotment holders is the "best possible" use, and of greater good to the community than if forced into the market for building, thus displacing much labour at present employed in such intensive cultivation. The Chamber fails to see why golf courses, football grounds, and land occupied by glasshouses should be free from taxation, while allotments and market gardens are to be taxed.

The fact is perhaps not generally known that, before the Bill was introduced, the Cabinet had decided to treat agricultural land still more unfairly than was eventually the case; and it was only because of the strong opposition to this proposal by a section of their own followers that the Government agreed to make such exemptions in the case of agricultural land pure and simple as were made. Before the Bill passed in 1910 certain amendments were agreed to which met a few of the minor objections raised by the Chamber. Thus Sec. 69 of the Act gave some relief to landowners under Schedule A, not to the extent, but in the direction advocated in the Local Taxation Committee's Report (page 361). The proposed tax on cider was also dropped. Still the Act remains an incubus on agriculture, and an all the more mischievous incubus because in many ways its effects are indirect.

1910.

When the Old Age Pensions Bill was before Parliament in 1908, the Local Taxation Committee expressed pleasure that at last this long talked of measure was about to become law. Spokesmen for the Government did not forget to point out what a relief this would prove to the poor rate in a few years' time, but it was hinted more than once that in view

of this relief the Treasury ought to be recouped in some form or other—see, for instance, the Chancellor of the Exchequer's (Mr. Asquith) speech in introducing his Budget on 7th May, 1908.

In his Budget speech on 30th June, 1910, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. George) announced that Boards of Guardians would be expected to hand over to the Treasury the amount saved to the rates by this Act; this was estimated to amount to nearly £1,500,000. The Chamber presented a statement to the Government showing why, in their opinion, any saving which might accrue to local rates ought not to be taken away by the Treasury, for the following reasons:—

(a) Because, during the debates prior to the passing of the above Act, it was repeatedly insisted on by those in charge of the Bill that the granting to the individual by the State of an old age pension was a recognition of a national obligation, and the whole cost thereof should therefore be borne out of the National Exchequer and not out of local rates.

(b) Because at present, in the case of recipients of relief in any form, relatives within a certain degree are required to contribute according to their means. It does not appear how far Guardians will be expected to collect this contribution as heretofore, or, alternatively, to provide it out of the rates, when paying in the proposed subventions to the Treasury.

(c) Because at present, in the event of the financial circumstances of any pauper improving, permanently or temporarily, relief must legally cease automatically, while a claim on the part of the Guardians for a refund of the whole or part of the cost incurred by them on the pauper's behalf lies. It is not as yet clear what the position of Guardians under any contemplated Bill of the kind would be in this respect, either as regards the continuance of the subvention to the Treasury, or their powers of recovery against the pauper.

(d) Because the cost of poor relief was considered by the Royal Commission on Local Taxation to be a national service, and the contribution from Imperial sources under this head amounts now to only about one-twelfth of the total expenditure.

After negotiations the Government agreed to abide by the strict terms of Sec. 1 of their Old Age Pensions Act, and to defray the whole cost out of Treasury funds.

At their April meeting the Chamber reiterated their opinion—

“That owing to the enormous increase of mechanical traffic the whole cost of the maintenance of such roads as are in general

use for the purposes of through traffic should be borne by the Imperial Exchequer.”

1911.

One of the baits offered by the Government to help them to carry their Finance Act of 1909–10 was that half the proceeds of the duties on land values were to be allocated to local authorities in relief of the rates. In 1911, however, they introduced a Revenue Bill, which proposed to appropriate the whole to the Treasury. This Bill also provided that the sum to be paid in respect of the local taxation duties into the Local Taxation Account should be a sum equal to the amount of those duties for the year ending 31st March, 1909 (fixed grant), instead of the amount that those duties would actually realise year by year (assigned revenue). As 1909 showed a smaller amount than any one of the preceding fourteen years, the Chamber opposed this proposal, but the Government would not give way. With regard, however, to the alienation of the half proceeds of the land duties, the Chamber were more successful, thanks chiefly to the activity of Sir Luke White, and the Government agreed not to suspend the operation of Sec. 91 of the Finance Act, 1909–10 beyond the 31st March, 1914. Which meant that, after that date, the half proceeds would revert to the coffers of local authorities.*

The subject of local taxation was brought before Parliament on several occasions during this session, and members of the Chamber took a prominent part in the debates. On 13th and 14th February Amendments to the Address were moved respectively by Mr. Hayes Fisher and Lord Helmsley. On 20th February the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Hobhouse) announced that in future there would be a fixed subvention of £1,384,000 per annum for education instead of the fluctuating subsidy hitherto known as the Whiskey Money. The amount fixed on was the actual figure for the financial year 1908–9, which was a larger sum than

* By Section 16 of the Finance Act passed in November, 1914 (*i.e.*, the second Finance Act of 1914) this time limit was repealed, and this alienation of the half proceeds of the land duties is thus continued “until Parliament shall otherwise determine.”

had been granted under this head in any previous year. On 23rd February, a discussion arose on the relief of local rates on the financial resolutions relating to the Budget of 1910. On 15th August on Report of Supply, Mr. Charles Bathurst protested against the policy of the Road Board of making no grants for road improvements unless the local authorities concerned contributed a large percentage of the outlay. In their annual report for this year the Council said :—

“ . . . The Council report a certain measure of success under the head of Local Taxation, but they were only successful in retaining the position previously held, not in obtaining any fresh concessions. In fact, it is not strictly accurate to say that the position was held, for ratepayers have had the half proceeds of the land duties taken away from them for three years, contrary to the understanding when the Finance Act was passed.”

National Insurance Act.

Like the Finance Bill in 1909, this subject was referred to the Local Taxation Committee, although it only touched their field of work in one or two points. That Committee presented three reports from which the following extracts are taken :—

Your Committee consider that unless the Bill be materially altered in Committee in the interests of the agricultural labourers and their employers, Members of Parliament representing agricultural divisions be requested to vote against the Third Reading of the Bill.

That in view of the lower wages, smaller profits and better standard of health obtaining in agricultural districts, a uniform joint contribution will create an injustice to all engaged in agriculture as compared with other industries.

That the application of half the surplus standing to the credit of a rural branch of an approved society to wiping off the deficit of other and less healthy branches in the towns, involves the payment by agriculture of part of the benefit enjoyed by those engaged in more prosperous industries.

That it would be an injustice to call upon the employers of adult workmen whose wages and other remuneration do not exceed a certain amount for a larger proportion of the contributions payable than would be the case if the wages exceeded that amount ; inasmuch as a heavier burden would be imposed upon them in relation to their total labour expenditure than would be borne by employers of more highly paid workmen employed in more profitable industries.

That under no circumstances shall any part of the charges incurred under the Bill fall upon the ratepayers.

That Clause 51, as at present drafted, is wrong in principle and unworkable.

3.—The actuarial statistics upon which the Government relied, and upon which they based their estimates, were those of the Manchester Unity. These statistics clearly demonstrate that rural England possesses an excellent standard of health, unknown in the towns. Under present Friendly Society conditions the excessive sickness experience of the towns is, to a considerable extent, counterbalanced by the better health of the country districts. This, however, only applying to ages after 70. This will, in future, no longer be the case, as the Bill proposes that all benefits (except medical benefits) shall cease at the age of 70. Clearly the country districts will be heavily penalised in the event of the measure becoming law in its present form.

4.—No benefits under the scheme are payable after the age of 70 (except medical benefits). All men over the age of 65 at the passing of the Bill, whether previously insured or not, were debarred under the Bill as originally drafted from receiving benefits, although the employers had to pay contributions in respect of them. Under the Chancellor's proposed amendment they are to receive an amount equal to the employer's contribution, and 2d. from the State. Thus the benefit payable to a man over the age of 65 will be much greater if he reaches that age after the passing of the Bill than if he did so before. It is suggested that men over 65 at the passing of the Bill, who have been insured in a Friendly Society, should receive the same benefit as if they had been insured under the Bill, and thus be put in the same position as men who reach the age of 65 after the passing of the Bill.

5.—So far as your Committee can see, no provision appears to be made for an equitable treatment of employers of, and of those employed in, casual labour. This will be a great handicap on seasonal branches of agriculture. It will be especially hard on those who produce hops, fruit, vegetables and to a serious extent on all agricultural employers, while it will at the same time inflict grave injustice on all casual employés. The whole question of casual labour would seem urgently to require re-consideration.

6.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer has drafted a new Clause, and has asked the Council to express their opinion upon it. Your Committee have carefully considered this Clause, but find to their disappointment that it does not attempt to meet the objections to the Bill which were put forward in their last report, and which were debated at the last meeting of the Council on 11th July, and in the House of Commons on the 10th July. So far as a large part of Scotland, and to some extent parts of England, where annual hirings are customary, the new Clause may be beneficial, though even in these districts we consider that the reduction of the payments required from both employer and

employé is quite inadequate. The requirements, therefore, set out by your Committee in their last report remain unmet in any way.

7.—In view of the great disparity between the position of farm labourers earning, say, 15s. per week and artisans whose weekly wages would average quite double that sum, your Committee consider there are many important points connected with the industry of agriculture which should be pressed upon the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and they strongly advise the appointment of a deputation to urge upon him a more favourable consideration of the interests of agriculture than the Bill, even with its amendments, now discloses.

A deputation met Mr. McKinnon Wood (representing the Chancellor of the Exchequer) on 16th November, especially to lay before the Government the matter of the casual labourer. His reply was that the Government had decided to put down amendments which would largely meet the views of the deputation. No such amendments were ever moved. Eventually, the Insurance Commissioners asked representatives of the Chamber to meet them in conference, some six months after the Act had been passed, to discuss the position of the casual labourer, and some of the principal objections were removed by an order of the Commissioners. All the other suggestions made by the Chamber were completely ignored, except the clause (51 in the original Bill) affecting ejection and distraint, which was amended on more reasonable lines. Mr. Charles Bathurst, who endeavoured on behalf of the Chamber to move amendments to an early clause, with a view to improving the position of the agricultural labourer under the Bill, was promised by Mr. George that he should have an opportunity of discussing that point on the second Schedule of the Bill. This promise of the Chancellor's was only partially redeemed, for the Schedules, like the greater part of the Bill, were closed in Committee, and though some debate was allowed on the report stage, the division was on party lines, the Government Whips were put on as tellers, and Sir Luke White was about the only Member who voted against his party, and with the Opposition.

So far as agriculture is concerned, the Act, which has much promise of good in it, has been spoilt by the complete

ignorance, or utter disregard of rural conditions, displayed by those responsible for drafting the Bill.

1912.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer appointed a Departmental Committee in 1911 to "inquire into the changes which have taken place in the relations between Imperial and local taxation since the report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation in 1901."

The Council sent Mr. H. Trustram Eve and Mr. Wood Homer to give evidence on their behalf. The former occupied the witness chair for three days, and gave most important evidence. On 4th November the Council, while recognising the advantage that might accrue from the provision of sanatoria under the Insurance Act, protested against any part of their cost falling on local rates, as the provision of sanatoria was a matter of national welfare.

Mr. Hayes Fisher again moved an amendment to the Address regretting no announcement of measures to give effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation. In the debate which followed Mr. Bonar Law made a speech in support of the amendment, committing himself to views similar to those which the Chambers have always held.

1913.

In February a report from the Local Taxation Committee was presented, dealing with the effect of Increment Value Duty, and the method of ascertaining site values of agricultural land under the Finance Act of 1909-10. A copy of this report was shown to the Chancellor of the Exchequer by a political sympathiser, when Mr. Lloyd George stated that certain paragraphs were "based on an entire misapprehension of the provisions of the law." In consequence of the letter containing this statement being read to the meeting, the report was referred back. On 6th May the Committee again presented their report, supported by Counsels' opinion (Messrs. Walter Ryde, K.C., and E. M. Konstam). This

report was unanimously adopted and sent to the Chancellor, who, after some delay, said he would give the amendments suggested in the report his careful consideration.

On 1st April a resolution was carried protesting against the mutilation and destruction of the county government area that would result if the Cambridge Provisional Order were confirmed, as that Order proposed to convert the Quarter Sessions Borough of Cambridge into a County Borough, thus inflicting a gross injustice upon the rural ratepayers of the county. The Council also sent Mr. Charles Bathurst to support a deputation on this question to the Prime Minister, who said he was much impressed by the very real hardships that had been brought to his notice in this connection by the deputation. On 3rd July the Local Government Provisional Order (No. 21) Bill, which proposed to constitute Cambridge, Luton, and Wakefield county boroughs, obtained a second reading, and was referred to a Committee with an instruction that the effect of the confirmation of each Provisional Order would have on each County Council was to be considered. This Committee decided, but only by the casting vote of its Chairman, to agree to the constitution of Cambridge and Luton as county boroughs, while in the case of Wakefield the Committee came unanimously to the same conclusion. The Bill was reported to the House, but was then suspended until the next session. When it came up for third reading, on 26th March, 1914, it was rejected by 237 votes to 183. The opposition to this Bill, with such a satisfactory result, caused much perturbation in certain circles, and it is probable that the opinion which was becoming stereotyped that a population of fifty thousand warranted a district being constituted a county borough, without consideration of other circumstances, has received a very severe check.

During December and January Mr. Charles Bathurst put a series of questions to the Chancellor of the Exchequer with a view to eliciting the proportion of Imperial and local taxation borne by real and personal property respectively. On 13th January, 1914, Mr. Lloyd George stated that "the amount of tax paid in respect of any particular class of pro-

perty cannot be exactly stated." Other replies were extremely vague, and it was evident that some of the Chancellor's previous statements as to the way in which the land interest escaped paying their share of rates and taxes were mere platfôrm hyperbole.

In December, 1912, and in April, 1913, the Council sent resolutions to the Government asking for amendments to the National Insurance Act. In July the Council acknowledged the partial alleviation to workers which the Insurance Act Amendment Bill afforded, but regretted that it failed to deal with many of the grievances complained of by agriculturists, especially the flat rate of contribution, or the casual labourer. It further deplored the tendency so strongly shown in this Bill to legislate by Departmental Regulations instead of by Act of Parliament. The measure became an Act, but none of the amendments asked for by the Council were embodied.

1914.

Sir John Spear moved an amendment to the Address on 19th February, asking for a rearrangement of the basis of local taxation so as to provide larger sums from the Imperial Exchequer towards the cost of education and the maintenance of roads. The Chancellor of the Exchequer promised that the Government would, during the session, lay proposals before the House for the relief of local taxation by means of an increased State grant, the amount of which would vary in accordance with the needs of each district. The amendment was thereupon withdrawn.

In April a report from the Local Taxation Committee was adopted by the Council, giving a return from forty-three County Councils in England and Wales, showing the increase in the cost of main roads in the previous ten years, and other detailed information of county expenditure. On the same day the Council repeated the resolution passed on 3rd May, 1910, viz.:—

"That owing to the enormous increase of mechanical traction the whole cost of the maintenance of such roads as are in general use for the purposes of through traffic should be borne by the Imperial Exchequer."

In May the report of the Departmental Committee on Local Taxation was brought forward by the Local Taxation Committee, when the Council expressed satisfaction that the rating of land values in any shape is condemned in the Majority Report. The Minority Report favoured rating of site values, but the Council stated their opinion that as they have consistently withstood any proposals for rating on capital site value these fresh proposals should be strenuously opposed, as being unpractical, unfair and quite impossible as far as agricultural land was concerned, if regard was to be had to justice as between both areas and individuals. They further absolutely opposed the proposal contained in both the Majority and Minority Reports that assessments for all local rates should be transferred from local assessment committees and overseers to the Inland Revenue Department.

After one or two postponements the Budget statement was made on 4th May, precisely at the hour when the Business Committee was arranging the agenda for the Council on 5th. It had been anticipated that this statement would have been made at an earlier date, and with that view "The Budget as it affects Agriculture" was one of the subjects sent down to local Chambers at the previous meeting of the Council. The postponement, however, prevented the Committee putting a properly considered resolution on the agenda, but they printed a non-committal motion, which they requested Mr Charles Bathurst to propose, with the understanding that he should withdraw it after discussion. This Mr. Bathurst agreed to do, but his action was somewhat severely criticised by certain newspapers, especially some on the Ministerial side, who accused him of not having the courage of his convictions. The debate on this motion was unusually instructive, important speeches being made by Mr. Henry Chaplin and Sir Luke White. The request for leave to withdraw the motion was agreed to with only two dissentients.

On 9th June the Council had the Finance Bill before them. To the astonishment of everyone, it was found, when this Bill was printed, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had entirely disregarded the recommendation of the Departmental Com-

mittee, which he had himself appointed, and by Clause 13 proposed to grant certain sums in relief of local taxation conditionally upon Parliament making provision in some subsequent Act "for dividing the rateable value of land, so as to distinguish the value attributable to houses, buildings or other improvements, and the value attributable to the land without the houses, buildings or other improvements." In other words, if Parliament provided the machinery for imposing a tax on land values the Government would redeem its numerous promises to give grants to local authorities. The grants to which the Government were pledged were understood to be increases of grants in aid of rates, but so far as it was possible for anyone outside of certain Government Departments to ascertain, it was believed that, in many rural areas at any rate, the amount conditionally promised by the Finance Bill would be less even than under the old system. In order to be certain of the facts upon which this belief was based, numerous questions were asked by our members in the House, and several members moved for various returns, but the questions were answered evasively, and the returns were all refused.

The only step the Council were able to take on this date (9th June) was to adopt a report from their Committee, expressing surprise that the Government had published no figures showing the effect of their proposals on the rates in rural districts, and to take great exception to the conditions laid down in Clause 13. They agreed with the principle of abolishing the system of assigned revenues, but strongly dissented from the proposal to withdraw the grant that had been given under the Agricultural Rates Act of 1896.

The Local Taxation Committee presented a further report on 14th July, expressing great regret at the postponement of Part IV. of the Finance Bill, which involved the loss for the year 1914-15 of the grant which would have been given in aid of rates had that part of the Finance Bill stood. This postponement was due to the inability of the Government to carry out this part of their programme as well as their other political measures of Home Rule, &c. As up to this

date no figures had been published by the Government, the Committee were still unable to present any statement showing the effect of the proposals before the country. They announced their intention of collecting figures from local authorities and presenting a full report at the November meeting.

The foregoing pages show that apart from their other work the Chambers (with whom are, of course, included the old Local Taxation Committee) have saved ratepayers sums which, in the aggregate, amount to over 100 millions of money. They have fought for this on their own account, but in doing so they have fought the battle of all ratepayers—urban as well as rural. Whether they will succeed in the future as well as in the past is a question which only the future can answer; but if they are to succeed, they must, it would seem, fight with different weapons. To prove the justice of their case by logic or unanswerable facts is useless when dealing with modern politicians. Until some fifteen years ago this question of local taxation was made—against the wish of the Chamber—more or less a party issue, but the Royal Commission's report of 1901 showed incontestably that it is not a party question, and the leaders of both parties have frequently admitted the justice of the Chamber's contentions. But both parties are about equally guilty of adding enormously to the injustice they profess to deplore. Where they have given a subvention with one hand, they have taken it away with the other. There is no political credit to be gained by the passing of an Act which both parties admit to be necessary in equity, but there is a good deal of hard work in prospect, with the possibility of alienating some supporters, awaiting whichever party undertakes the responsibility. After serious thought on this matter for several years, the writer has come to the conclusion that there is but one course for agricultural and other ratepayers to take which will prove effective. That course is *not* individual "passive resistance." Such methods will never accomplish their end. The remedy will alone be found in a well-organised refusal by local authorities in combination to administer some two or three of the more expensive of the national services imposed

upon them by Parliament, and for which Parliament pays nothing, or only a meagre acknowledgment. An instance of this has already been given on page 134 in connection with the Destructive Insects and Pests Act, 1907. There are plenty of prominent members of local authorities, who are also members of the Chambers, capable of organising such a movement. If they will do so there can be no doubt as to the result.

CHAPTER VI.

LAND TENURE.

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS ACTS—GROUND-GAME ACTS—
 COMPENSATION FOR UNEXHAUSTED IMPROVEMENTS
 —LAW OF DISTRESS—PEASANT PROPRIETOR-
 SHIP—SMALL HOLDINGS.

THE subjects enumerated in the heading of this chapter are among the most important and most interesting dealt with in this history. They concern not only the various attempts at deciding by legislation what the relations between landlord and tenant shall be, but are responsible for revealing the existence of human feelings (one might almost say human passions) deeply rooted far back in feudal times. The modern Agricultural Holdings Acts represent the latest efforts at removing the final vestiges of conditions which prevailed through the Middle Ages ; but it should never be forgotten that it was during the evolution of those conditions that the foundations were laid which made British agriculture a model for the world.

The holding of land and the treatment of the soil are fundamental questions ; it is not surprising, therefore, that the personal equation becomes the dominating element when considering the problems they involve. They are favourite topics with a certain type of politician. They appeal to some natural instinct even in town-dwellers, and they can be easily used by unscrupulous speakers to excite greed and envy among that part of the community which is always ready to snatch property away from those who have it. If the subject be brought before untutored or unthinking minds, the appeal to prejudice, against the class which they are told is privileged, proves doubly strong.

This subject is not only fundamental to the individual; it marks the difference between the Chambers of Agriculture and various other societies which have been from time to time called into existence.* The founders of the Chambers started with the perfectly sound theory that the Association was necessary to the promotion of the welfare of agriculture. They declined to split up those engaged in that industry into sections, or to work for one section to the exclusion, or at any rate to the detriment, of others. They wisely assumed that the interests of all classes engaged in that industry were identical, and that their organisation must be weak and incomplete (a house divided against itself) unless membership were open to all concerned on equal terms. The result has been the harmonious association in one society of landlord and tenant for fifty years. The third section, the labourers, have been precluded, by insuperable economic circumstances, from taking an active part in the work; but they are not specifically barred from membership, and indeed some of the local societies do number labourers among their members.†

Other organisations proceed on the assumption that the interests of the different sections are antagonistic. They contend that the farmer wants to pay as low a rent as possible, while the owner wants to get as high a rent as he can. How, then, they ask, can their interests be identical? Those who originated the Chambers said:—"If any antagonism

* The National Agricultural Union was an exception. See page 379.

† For the information of those who are not acquainted with the machinery of the Chambers, it may be said that the Council is composed of deputies from local Chambers in addition to 24 members of Council nominated by the Central Chamber. Local Associations may elect one deputy for each fifty members by paying an association fee at the rate of £3 per annum for each deputy. The majority send one, but some send three or four each. At present the total membership of the Council is about 190. The average attendance at Council meetings is 90; a very high percentage, considering that some deputies have to travel two or three hundred miles each way. Exact figures cannot be given, but the Council now includes landowners, tenants, land agents, and professional men and retired farmers or agents. It will be seen from this note that the statement sometimes made—that the Central Chamber is a landlords' body—is demonstrably incorrect.

is possible it can be only under one head, and that is the question of land tenure. Let us work together in all other matters where there can be no friction, and let us thresh out this subject of tenure between ourselves, and see if we cannot arrive at a friendly settlement. We are certainly more likely to come to some satisfactory conclusions by openly debating the points of difference between us, than by holding aloof and discussing our differences in separate camps." That was the spirit which called the Chambers into existence, and that spirit has dominated the numerous and prolonged debates upon this subject on every occasion when it has arisen. It will be admitted everywhere that the various Agricultural Holdings Acts passed since 1875 have progressively strengthened the position of the tenant. (It will be found that almost all these Acts have been placed upon the Statute Book as a result of the action taken by the Chambers;) it does not, however, follow that all the provisions of these Acts were pressed for or were approved by the Chambers.

The question might well be asked why the time of Parliament should be taken up by interfering in the business relations between agricultural landlords and tenants. There is one, and only one, justification—but it suffices. The land is the primary element in producing the people's food, and those concerned in its cultivation ought to be induced to make their output as large as possible. This was recognised by Mr. Pusey's Select Committee in their report as quoted in the next paragraph but one. In the conditions prevailing generally before 1850, and very widely up to 1883, a tenant did not during the last year or two of his occupation, especially in the case of leases, think of his output; he only tried to get back from the land what he had previously put into it. This meant that the land was being "run out," and consequently that the next occupier did not get the best out of his farm for sometimes several years. Hence the meaning and importance of the words of the more recent Agricultural Holdings Acts:—"Such sum as fairly represents the value to the incoming tenant." This ensures, so far as words in an Act of Parliament can ensure anything,

continuity of good husbandry. And this is all that the Legislature has any right to recognise.

The first movement in the direction of legislation was in 1847, when Mr. Pusey, M.P., introduced a Tenant Right Bill.* He reintroduced it in 1848 and obtained the appointment of a Select Committee "to inquire into the law and custom of different parts of England and Wales, as between outgoing and incoming tenants, and also as between landlord and tenant, in reference to unexhausted improvements or deterioration of land and premises occupied for agricultural purposes."

This Committee reported in July of the same year, after hearing a great deal of very interesting evidence from most parts of England. After a brief statement on the growth of local custom, they expressed the opinion that improvements which are very generally required throughout the country in order to develop the full powers of the soil are greatly promoted by this system of compensation (*i.e.*, under local customs). They did not, however, recommend compulsion, but relied on the general adoption of the system by landlords and tenants. They did recommend that the law with respect to things affixed to the freehold should be amended, and that an outgoing tenant should be permitted to remove what he himself had set up.

The result of this report was that in 1851 an Act was passed by Lord John Russell which empowered a tenant who, with the landlord's consent in writing, put up farm buildings or machinery at his own cost, to remove them as his own property, subject to an option on the landlord's part to take them at a valuation.

Unfortunately the Select Committee gave no tabulated details of local custom, but in 1850 a book on "Agricultural Tenancies" was published by Mr. Wingrove Cooke, who had been engaged for some years on the Tithe Commission, and whose work had taken him into all parts of the country. This was the first publication on the question.

* Mr. Pusey's Bill twice passed the House of Commons, but was rejected by the House of Lords.

From 1851 onwards agriculture was voiceless on this subject until the Chambers came on the scene. The first mention of the matter appears on the minutes of 21st November, 1868, when compensation for unexhausted improvements was suggested by a local Chamber as a subject for discussion. It was, however, postponed owing to the urgency of matters relating to cattle disease and local taxation.

On 8th June, 1869, a debate took place on "The Over-preservation of Game," when the following resolution, moved by Major Craigie, was carried by a large majority :—

"That this Chamber regards the over-preservation of ground game as an unmitigated evil; but considers that it would be undesirable to introduce into this question legislative interference between landlord and tenant."

On 5th April, 1870, the following resolution was agreed to :—

"That in the opinion of this Council the application of capital to agriculture is discouraged by (1) the undue amount of local taxation upon capital invested in land and its improvement; (2) uncertainty of tenure and absence of compensation for unexhausted improvements; (3) unnecessary restrictions upon cropping; and (4) the over-preservation of ground game."

On 31st May a further resolution on ground game was agreed to.

On 4th June, 1872, the Council devoted almost a whole meeting to a discussion on compensation for unexhausted improvements, and adjourned the debate to 5th November, when another discussion of some hours took place, and the following resolutions were carried unanimously :—

"That this Council considers it necessary for the proper security of capital engaged in husbandry that, when such security is not given by a lease or agreement, the outgoing tenant should be entitled by law to compensation for the unexhausted value of his improvements, while at the same time the landlord should be paid for dilapidations and deterioration caused by default of the tenant, provided that such compensation is subject to previous consent of the owner in the case of buildings, drainage, reclamation, and other works of a permanent character."

"That this Council considers absolutely necessary a change in the law of tenancy, so that, in all yearly holdings, the letting and hiring of agricultural land, as well on entailed and ecclesiastical as on other estates, shall be subject to at least twelve months' notice to quit, cases of insolvency excepted."

It was during this debate that Mr. William Lipscomb first took an active part, and he, with Mr. Clare Sewell Read, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Bart., M.P. (afterwards Viscount St. Aldwyn), Mr. Albert Pell, Mr. James Howard, M.P., Mr. Carrington Smith, and Mr. G. F. Muntz, were the principal workers in this movement for many years.

A Select Committee on the Game Laws sat during the sessions of 1872-73, among its members being Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Mr. C. S. Read, Mr. Muntz, and Mr. Pell. Mr. Read gave evidence before the Committee at the request of the Council, expressing the opinion, as adopted by the Council, that hares and rabbits ought to be excluded from the fostering operation of the Game Laws; that the evil of excessive preservation of ground game would be satisfactorily remedied by legislation securing to occupiers the right of disposal of such game; and that such an alteration of the law should be accompanied by a provision of more summary powers against trespassers.

On 4th March, 1873, the Council appointed a Committee of nine members to collect and prepare information on compensation for unexhausted improvements. The Committee consisted of Sir M. Hicks-Beach, M.P. (Gloucestershire), Mr. G. F. Muntz (Warwickshire), Mr. E. Heneage (afterwards Lord Heneage) (Lincolnshire), Mr. C. S. Read, M.P. (Norfolk), Mr. R. Fowler (Dorset), Mr. Masfen (Staffordshire), Mr. W. C. Little (Cambridgeshire), Mr. J. R. Russon (Worcestershire), and Mr. W. Lipscomb (Yorkshire). Mr. Muntz was elected as their chairman by the Committee. This Committee presented three reports, dated 4th November, 1873, 3rd March, 1874, and 29th May, 1874, and with the last they included long tables showing for sixty-six districts in England what the established custom was in those districts. These reports and schedules have long been out of print, but they have so much historical interest that they deserve to be reprinted. No other copy of the original print is known to exist but the single specimen in the office of the Central Chamber, and requests to be allowed to examine this are still occasionally received from legal firms who have some

technical point to be decided. The principal paragraphs of these reports are given below :—

Your Committee desire to draw particular attention to the marked differences between customs prevailing to-day and those existing in the year 1848, when Mr. Pusey's Select Committee issued its report. For example, in Lincolnshire, at that time, no allowances were given for guano or other highly concentrated manures, which are now universally allowed for in that county. Compensation for draining was then only partially introduced, though it is now a general custom in Lincolnshire. At that time there was no allowance in Staffordshire for purchased oilcake, feeding stuffs, and artificial manure, or for marling, boning, liming, planting quickset hedges, or draining, all which are now subjects of compensation, in, at any rate, the southern division of that county. In Cambridgeshire, in that part called the Isle of Ely, allowance for oilcake, for artificial manures, and for claying, is new, since the date of Mr. Pusey's inquiry. In Nottinghamshire allowances for draining were only partially introduced at that time, but are now universally the custom, together with compensation for roadmaking, planting quickset hedges, executing irrigation works, and making main drains, watercourses, and reservoirs. In Cheshire there was at that period no allowance for either draining or planting quickset hedges, which, however, obtains in North Cheshire at the present time. In parts of Oxfordshire compensation for chalking and boning has been introduced since 1848. In South Wiltshire allowance for purchased manures is new. In parts of Gloucestershire artificial manures are now allowed for, and compensation is given for draining, though neither of these improvements was recognised by custom in 1848. And in parts of Dorsetshire a small allowance for oilcake, feeding stuffs, and purchased manures, and also for draining, has been introduced, though there was no custom of the kind mentioned in the House of Commons' report. This is sufficient to show that an inquiry and report of so early a date as 1848 is wholly insufficient to enable anyone to arrive at a correct conclusion regarding the established customs of the various counties in the present day.

Your Committee would direct attention to the absence of any uniform principle upon which customs might be supposed to have originated. Thus guano is allowed for in some counties when applied to corn crops, in other counties only when applied to root or green crops ; and in the latter case, some counties or districts pay for all, and some for only half the quantity used in the last year ; and while some counties pay for no guano used in the last year but one of the tenancy, other counties pay for one-third of what is applied in that year. For oilcake the allowances vary from half the value of cake used in the last year, with nothing for cake used in the year before that, to one-fourth of the last year's and one-eighth of the previous year's cake,

or two-thirds of the last year's and one-third of the previous year's consumption of oilcake. Compensation for tile draining ranges so diversely that improvement is calculated in some counties to extend over six years, and in other counties up to fourteen years. Planting quickset is spread over varying periods from three to ten years. Liming arable land is supposed to benefit the tenant from five years down to only two years; and liming pastures is taken as lasting three years in some counties up to six years in others.

Your Committee have experienced much difficulty in ascertaining what is understood to constitute an "established custom." According to the common acceptation of the term, a custom must have obtained from time immemorial; but your Committee find from the Returns received that customs affecting allowances to an outgoing tenant have been considerably changed by additions from time to time within living memory. This state of transition is especially remarkable at the present time. But it is to be observed that, while the process of gradually introducing, extending, and altering custom is going on in some districts, the greater portion of England still remains without any custom affording compensation for the tenant's capital expended in improvements.

Returns were received from sixty-six districts.

From the variations in practice occurring within comparatively limited districts it is evident that customs cannot be correctly defined as "county" customs, and that, so far from each county possessing a distinct and peculiar usage co-extensive with its area, a map of England in which the prevalence of each custom should be represented by a distinguishing colour would exhibit a series of most irregularly shaped and unequally distributed patches—the most conspicuous feature being the very small proportion of the surface of England enjoying any custom of adequate compensation even for purchased feeding stuffs and manures.

Schedule I., Form A, refers to nothing beyond the value of produce raised by the outgoing tenant and left for his successor, and the labour performed and seed sown on his behalf. The amount of payment to the outgoing tenant for growing crops is determined with reference either to the cost incurred by him or to the value of the resulting produce. Thus, in the case of Lady Day entries, the corn crops are most commonly paid for at the cost of seed and labour, while less prevalent is the system of taking the crops, or certain proportions of the crops, by their estimated value at the time of entry. The alternative usage of certain districts, where the outgoing tenant has a right to return and take the wheat crop when at maturity, is referred to under Schedule V., Form H. In Michaelmas entries bare fallows are, in the majority of cases, paid for according to the cost of the working, sometimes with a whole year's, sometimes with only half a year's rent, rates, and taxes; yet there are some localities

in which custom allows no payment at all for the expenditure of the outgoing tenant in bare fallowing. Roots and green crops for consumption are either paid for, in whole or in part, according to the value at time of entry, or the outlay in workings is allowed. But in some districts, in lieu of such payments, there is a right of the incoming tenant to enter in the summer for the purpose of sowing his turnip crop.

For farmyard manure and straw the payments by custom range from nil up to the market value of the straw and the full value of the manure. In some few districts—notably in Yorkshire West Riding—an outgoing tenant can claim by custom half the value of the farmyard manure applied to the corn crop which he himself has reaped, even though he has purchased no feeding stuffs whatever. For hay of the last year's growth the payments range from two-thirds up to the full value.

Schedule I., Form B, referring to allowances for "Purchased Feeding Stuff and Purchased Manures," includes items from twenty-one districts.

It must not be understood, however, that this signifies the existence in all these districts of allowances for both feeding stuffs and manures, for the allowances in either class extend to only a few articles, except in a very limited number of districts, namely, Dorset (Central), Lincolnshire, Lincolnshire (Marshes), Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire (South), Yorkshire West Riding (Wakefield), and Yorkshire West Riding (Barnsley); in which districts compensation is given for a considerable number of articles in both classes.

Compensation for feeding stuffs, with allowances for manures in some cases, prevails in Cambridgeshire (Isle of Ely, North). In Gloucestershire (Vale of the Severn) there is a partially introduced allowance for feeding stuffs with a fair extent of allowance for manures. In Surrey there is some compensation for manures, while feeding stuffs are considered in the valuation of the farmyard manure and the foldings of sheep; and in Yorkshire (Ripon), there are comprehensive allowances for manures and a partial compensation for feeding stuffs.

In Cheshire (North), Gloucestershire (Tetbury), Gloucestershire (East and North of Cheltenham), Gloucestershire (Cirencester), Gloucestershire (Cotswold Hills), Gloucestershire (Tewkesbury), Kent (the Weald), Oxfordshire (Henley-on-Thames), Wiltshire (North), and Wiltshire (South), there exist customs allowing payments for artificial manures, but nothing whatever for oilcake or other purchased feeding-stuffs. But this compensation for manures is in some districts very partial, as in Cheshire (North), where it applies only to bones on pasture land; in Gloucestershire (Tewkesbury), where it is confined to guano and superphosphate used for root or green crops; and in Wiltshire (North), where the same rule appears to obtain.

In Norfolk (Marshland) the custom gives a small compensation

for linseed oilcake and cotton cake, but nothing for purchased manures.

No compensation whatever for any purchased feeding-stuffs or purchased manures is allowed by custom in Berkshire (Newbury), Devonshire (Central), Devonshire (East), Dorset (Blandford), Dorset (Blackmoor Vale), Durham, Essex (North), Gloucestershire (West), (Ledbury), (Stow-on-the-Wold), (West of Cheltenham), (Forest of Dean), Hampshire (North), Hampshire (Andover), Herefordshire, Kent (East), Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Northamptonshire (Weedon), Northumberland (Tyneside), Shropshire, Somersetshire (North), Suffolk (Sudbury), Worcestershire, and Yorkshire North and East Ridings (Malton), Yorkshire East Riding.

On comparing Schedule I., Form B with Schedule V., Form H, it will be seen that in some few of these districts and counties which have by custom no money allowance for feeding-stuffs and manure, the outgoing tenant is entitled to an away-going crop. Thus in Forest of Dean the outgoing tenant is entitled to the wheat crop on one-third of the arable land. In Herefordshire a Candlemas or Lady-day outgoer may plant one-third of the arable land with wheat, return to harvest and thrash it, and for this purpose retain possession of the barn and granary-room until May-day following. In Durham the outgoer is entitled to sow half the arable land with wheat and retain possession of it till the harvest following. In Tyneside the outgoer is owner of the whole crop of corn allowed by his rotation, which he may return to reap and thrash, retaining barn-room until the May-day following; but in practice the incoming tenant generally buys the crops at harvest time. In Worcestershire also, in a Lady-day take, the whole of the wheat crop belongs to the outgoing tenant. And in Yorkshire, North and East Ridings, the outgoer has an away-going crop on one-third of the tillage land, upon which no corn crop has been grown in the previous year.

In looking through the items in Schedule I., Form B, it will be observed that those few districts which allow compensation on a comprehensive scale for purchased feeding-stuffs and manures vary to a very considerable extent as respects the proportion of value paid for those articles. Thus, in Lincolnshire, linseed oilcake, cotton cake and rape cake are paid for at half the value of the last year's consumption, which must not be excessive. In Isle of Ely North, linseed oilcake and cotton cake are paid for at one-fourth up to one-half of the last year's consumption. In Dorset (Central) the same articles are paid for at one-fifth the value of the last year's consumption. In Nottinghamshire they are paid for at one-fourth the value of the consumption in the last year, and one-eighth of that in the last year but one. The same proportions are customary in the West Riding of Yorkshire (Barnsley); but in the West Riding (Wakefield) the payment is for one-third the consumption in the last year, and one-fourth of the consumption in the last year but one.

And in Staffordshire (South) the allowance is for linseed cake and cotton cake two-thirds of the last year's consumption, and one-third of the consumption of the last year but one, while for other feeding-stuffs the allowance is one-fourth and one-eighth for the two years respectively.

Again, guano and all other artificial manures used for root or green crops are paid for in Lincolnshire at the full value of the articles applied in the last year of the tenancy ; but nothing is allowed for artificial manures applied to corn crops. In Nottinghamshire guano and other artificials used for a root or green crop are paid for at the value of all applied in the last year, and one-third of that applied in the last year but one ; and one-third of the value of guano applied in the last year of the tenancy to the first white-straw corn crop after a root crop or summer fallow. In Staffordshire (South) guano is paid for only upon root or green crops, and this at two-thirds the value of what is applied in the last year, and one-third of what is applied in the last year but one. In Dorset (Central) guano used either for roots or corn crops is allowed for at 15s. in the pound for the last year's application, 10s. in the pound for the last year but one, 5s. in the pound for that used in the last year but two, and 3s. in the pound for guano used the year before that. In Gloucestershire (Cirencester) guano used for roots or green crops is paid for at the whole value of the last year's application, and one-third for that of the last year but one ; and when used for corn crops the full value is allowed for that used in the last year only. In the West Riding of Yorkshire (Wakefield) guano used for root or green crops is allowed for at one-half the application in the last year, and one-third the application in the last year but one ; and nothing is paid for this fertiliser applied to corn. In the West Riding of Yorkshire (Barnsley) guano used for root or green crops is paid for at all the value of the last year's application, deducting two-thirds the value of the root crop if drawn off, and one-half the value of the same if on the ground ; and for guano applied to corn crops, one-third the value is allowed for that used, in the last year of the tenancy.

Schedule I., Form C, referring to allowances for " Farm Produce Consumed on the Holding," is a perfect blank—no district having made a return of any practice of paying a sum of money to the outgoing tenant for corn, meal, bran, hay, straw, roots or other produce, either grown on the farm or purchased and consumed in yards or buildings or upon the land. The return, however, from Barnsley remarks that a little extra price is sometimes given for farmyard manure, if more than the usual quantity of corn has been consumed ; and the value of the manure arising from hay consumed is paid for. And the Surrey return says that, in estimating the worth of farmyard manure, the valuers make some difference where corn, meal and other farm produce have been consumed, though it is not generally considered adequate to the real value of such enrichment of the manure.

Of the seventeen heads of improvements enumerated under Schedule II., Form D—"Unexhausted Durable Improvements"—a considerable number are subjects of allowance; but for the most part the most important are found in only a few counties. Thorn or wood draining carries compensation in Dorset (Central), where it is taken to last ten years; in Kent (Weald), where it is extended over four years; in Norfolk (Marshland), where the same rule obtains; and in Gloucestershire (Cotswold Hills) and Lincolnshire (Marshes), where all the outlay made in the last year is allowed. Subsoiling is not mentioned except in the Lincolnshire (Marshes) return. Paring and burning is paid for at all the outlay of the last year in Gloucestershire (Cotswold Hills), East and North of Cheltenham and Tewkesbury, but is not mentioned in any other returns. Marling is paid for in Lincolnshire and the Lincolnshire (Marshes), where it is taken to last seven years; in Nottinghamshire, where it is taken to last five years; and in Staffordshire (South), where it is spread over ten years. Chalking is allowed for in Dorset (Central) at the whole outlay in the last year and last year but one, and extended back over seven years; in Lincolnshire and the Lincolnshire (Marshes), where it is extended over seven years; in Oxfordshire (Henley) where all, or half the expenditure in the last year is repaid; and in Wiltshire (North), where three years are allowed for exhaustion. Claying is paid for in Isle of Ely North as lasting four years; in Lincolnshire, as lasting five years; in the Lincolnshire fens, as lasting seven years; in the Norfolk fens, as lasting four years, only three-fourths the expenditure of the last year, however, being allowed; and in Nottinghamshire, where it is extended over five years. Liming arable land is paid for in Cheshire (North), as lasting three years; in Dorset (Central), as lasting six years on heavy lands and three years on light land; in Kent (Weald), as lasting two years, unless there has been a crop taken, when only one year is allowed for; in Lincolnshire and the Lincolnshire (Marshes), as lasting five years; in Nottinghamshire, as lasting three years, when applied to a fallow; in Staffordshire (South), as lasting four years; while in Yorkshire, West Riding (Wakefield), half is allowed for the expenditure in the last year, and one-third of that in the last year but one; in Yorkshire, West Riding (Barnsley) the payment is for two-thirds of the outlay after one corn crop has been taken, and one-third after two corn crops have been taken; and in the Yorkshire, North and West Ridings (Ripon) the allowance is half the expenditure of the last year, and one-fourth of that in the last year but one. Liming pastures is allowed for in Cheshire (North) as lasting five years; in Kent (Weald), as lasting two years; in Lincolnshire and the Lincolnshire (Marshes), as lasting five years; in Nottinghamshire, as lasting three years; in Staffordshire (South), as lasting four years; and in Yorkshire, West Riding, the allowance is five-sixths of the outlay after one pasture, and one-sixth deducted for each successive pasture up to four. Boning pasture

land with undissolved bones is paid for in Cheshire (North) averaging over a period of seven years; in Gloucestershire (Cotswold Hills) the payment is for the whole of the outlay in the last year, two-fifths of that in the last year but one, and one-sixth of that in the year before; in Lincolnshire it is averaged over five years; in Nottinghamshire over six years; in Oxfordshire (Henley) it is all or half the outlay of the last year; in Staffordshire (South) it is averaged over seven years; and in Yorkshire, West Riding, five-sixths of the expenditure are allowed after one pasture, one-sixth being deducted for each of four successive pastures. For laying down new pasture, allowance generally including seed and labour is made in Isle of Ely, North, Gloucestershire (Cotswold Hills), Herefordshire, Kent (Weald), Northamptonshire, Northamptonshire (Weedon), Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire (South), Worcestershire and Yorkshire, West Riding. Underwood and pollards have allowances in Herefordshire, Kent (Weald) and Oxfordshire. Hop planting and hop poles in use are allowed for in Kent (Weald); hop poles are taken at a valuation in Gloucestershire (Ledbury), and in Herefordshire the tenant is bound to leave the same area of hop land as at the time of his entry. In Kent (East) while custom does not fix the proportion of original value to be paid for the various durable improvements, all done in the last year is allowed for if done by consent of the landlord.

The majority of the returns, however, are either blank or contain such entries as these: "Nothing allowed for any of the improvements named in this Schedule," "No established custom for any of these things," "No compensation except by special agreement," "If an outgoing tenant had made any of these improvements he would get no compensation by custom for any of them."

Under Schedule III., Form E, referring to "Unexhausted Permanent Improvements," sixteen returns of allowances have been received.

Tile drainage, where the tenant finds both labour, haulage and tiles, is paid for in Cambridgeshire (Isle of Ely, North) on a seven years' scale, that is, the claim extends over seven years; in Cheshire (North) on a fourteen years' scale; in Dorset (Central) on a ten years' scale, if with the consent of the landlord in writing; in Gloucestershire (Cotswolds) on a seven years' scale; in Kent (Weald) on a ten years' scale; in Lincolnshire on a ten years' scale; in the Lincolnshire (Marshes) on a seven years' scale; in Nottinghamshire on a six years' scale; in Staffordshire (South) on a ten years' scale; in Yorkshire, North and West Ridings (Ripon), on a seven years' scale; in Yorkshire, West Riding (Wakefield), on a six years' scale; and in Yorkshire, West Riding (Barnsley), on a ten years' scale. For labour and haulage only, when the landlord finds tiles, the allowance is extended over seven years in Cheshire (North); four years in Gloucestershire (Cotswolds); seven years in Lincolnshire; five years in the

Lincolnshire (Marshes); six years in Nottinghamshire; five years in Yorkshire, North and West Ridings (Ripon); and five years in Yorkshire, West Riding (Wakefield). In Yorkshire, West Riding (Barnsley), there is no allowance where the landlord finds tiles; and in Gloucestershire (East and North of Cheltenham) and in Kent (East) compensation is allowed for all the drainage done by the tenant in the last year, with the consent of the landlord.

Stone draining is allowed for in Nottinghamshire on a six years' scale, and in Yorkshire, West Riding, on a ten years' scale.

Reclaiming marsh land and peat bogs are mentioned in only a single return, West Riding (Barnsley), where the allowance is on a five or ten years' scale, according as the expenditure has been great or moderate. Filling up ponds, ditches and creeks is paid for in Cheshire (North) on a five years' scale, if done with the consent of the landlord; in Gloucestershire (Cotswolds) at all the cost incurred in the last year; in Lincolnshire (Marshes), Notts and West Riding (Wakefield), the same. Stocking and grubbing trees and fences is paid for in Gloucestershire (Cotswolds) at all the outlay of the last year; and in Nottinghamshire the same. Levelling ridge and furrow lands, and also planting trees, are heads under which no items of information have been received. Planting quick-set fences is paid for in Cheshire (North) on a seven years' scale; in Notts on a three years' scale; and in Staffordshire (South) on a ten years' scale. Erecting stone, wood or iron fencing is paid for in Cheshire (North) on a seven years' scale; in Lincolnshire and the Lincolnshire (Marshes) part of the cost is allowed; in Notts the payment is on a three years' scale; and in West Riding (Barnsley) on a ten years' scale in some cases. Making roads is allowed for in Notts, compensation extending over three years.

For making and improving water-courses the whole outlay of the last year is allowed in Lincolnshire (Marshes) and Notts on a three years' scale. For making covered main drains compensation is paid in Notts on a three years' scale, and in Yorkshire, West Riding, on a ten years' scale. For making wells, tanks and reservoirs, compensation in Cheshire (North) extends over fourteen years, and in Nottinghamshire over six years. For irrigation works, allowance is made in Dorset (Central) on a ten years' scale, and in Nottinghamshire on a six years' scale. For planting fruit trees all the outlay in the last year is allowed in Dorset (Central); and for planting orchards and making gardens, part of the outlay of the last year is allowed in Lincolnshire, and in Nottinghamshire the whole cost, the claim being taken as exhausted in seven years.

Warping, dry-warping and erecting bridges are not mentioned in any of the returns received.

Haulage of materials for building is allowed for in Nottinghamshire on a three years' scale. But for erecting or enlarging and improving buildings of brick, stone or other material attached

to the freehold, there is not a vestige of any custom for repaying the tenant any part of his outlay.

Schedule IV. refers to "Dilapidations, Deteriorations and Produce removed off the Farm." Under Form F, showing claims against the outgoing tenant for "Produce removed off the Farm," including hay, straw, roots and green crops, the majority of the returns afford information that the unauthorised sale of such produce subjects the tenant to a charge for waste. No custom is reported in Cheshire (North), Devon (Central and East), Durham, Essex (North), Gloucestershire (Tewkesbury), (Stow-on-the-Wold), (Forest of Dean), Kent (East), Kent (Weald), Norfolk Staffordshire (South), Suffolk (Sudbury), Yorkshire, North and West Ridings (Ripon), and Yorkshire, East Riding.

Schedule IV., Form G, referring to claims against the outgoing tenant for "Neglect of Repairs and Violations of Good Husbandry, &c.," includes the following heads, namely, mowing old pasture, mowing meadows other than water-meadows without manuring, over-cropping without manuring, over-cropping by taking successive white straw crops, deficient proportion of fallow, foul or neglected land, breaking up old grass land, neglect of gates, fences, roads, drains, outfalls and water-courses, damage to plantations and timber, neglect of ordinary repairs of buildings where the tenant is liable, &c.

Schedule V., Form H, showing the customs as to "Restrictions upon Management, Sale of Produce, &c., Privileges as to Entry, Liabilities of Tenants, &c.," includes the following heads, namely, prohibition of the growth of certain crops; conditions under which certain crops may be grown; minimum proportion of fallow or green crop prescribed as necessary for good husbandry; limitation of the proportion of corn crop; succession or frequency of crops forbidden; prohibition of the sale of certain kinds of produce; conditions under which the sale of certain kinds of produce is permitted; privileges of pre-entry to the incoming tenant; privileges of return or retaining possession for certain purposes allowed to the outgoing tenant; away-going or following crops; liability of the occupier for repairs of buildings; liability of the occupier for repairs of fences, gates, open drains and ditches.

While many of the returns show that damage for most of these deteriorations is determined by valuation, others report no custom for allowing the landlord's claim: and your Committee have received intimations that, as a rule, dilapidations are very inadequately compensated for.

Meanwhile Mr. C. S. Read and Mr. James Howard, assisted by a committee of the Farmers' Club, drafted a Landlord and Tenant Bill, which the latter introduced into Parliament. The Chamber had two long discussions upon it in April and June, and without pledging itself to the Bill approved of its

principle. There were expectations of a second reading debate in the House of Commons, but owing to the sudden illness of Mr. Howard the Bill was withdrawn.

The question of land tenure occupied a prominent position in 1874. When dissolving Parliament Mr. Gladstone said that laws relating to the occupation of land, as well as laws connected with the transfer and the descent of landed property, would require the prompt attention of the new House of Commons. Mr. Disraeli, in addressing the electors at Newport Pagnell, on 5th February, made the "Questions" issued by the Chamber a text for a statement of his views. He said :—

"I am asked if I will vote for the Landlord and Tenant Bill, or for a measure securing to occupiers compensation for the unexhausted value of their improvements. This is a subject the importance of which cannot be exaggerated. When Mr. Read gave notice of his Bill last year I called my friends together and expressed to them my views upon the subject, and I recommended my friends to support the principle of that measure. There was great unanimity upon the subject, we reserving to ourselves every suggestion which I think would improve or perfect it."

And when, on 19th June, Mr. Seely moved in the House to the effect that the Government should introduce with as little delay as possible a measure for giving security for tenants' capital, the Premier said :—

"The question is one which deserves the attention of a Ministry, and if we remain on these benches a sufficient time to afford us an opportunity of fulfilling our engagement, we shall give to this subject the consideration which I believe it merits. In fact, it is one which we have already considered. And this being a measure which much interested members, particularly on this side of the House, and which previously engaged our attention during the late Parliament, it is one which we neither wished to avoid considering, nor, had we wished, could have avoided considering. The question of compensation in the cultivation of the soil has now occupied the attention of the country for a considerable period. I am still of opinion that if we do not seek after the impossible—if we do not attempt to force men into agreements which human nature recoils from, such as have been embodied in the Bill which has been so often referred to—there are some grounds upon which a very general concurrence might be anticipated, and that the general principle that for unexhausted

improvements a *bona fide* compensation should be secured to the tenant may be practically attained."

During this debate Mr. Fawcett referred to Mr. Clare Sewell Read as "the most advanced and earnest reformer on the subject, and one in whom the Prime Minister has expressed great confidence." The Council during this year devoted two meetings to considering the essential provisions of a satisfactory measure. The second report of their own Committee, dated 3rd March, 1874, was discussed and adopted in March, and in June the Council authorised this Committee to draft a Bill embodying the principles of the resolutions passed by the Council.

1875.

At the February and March meetings the Council dealt clause by clause with the draft Bill, called the Agricultural Tenancies Bill, which their Committee had prepared, and after very long debates certain alterations were agreed to, and the Bill was sent to the Prime Minister and the Lord President of the Council.

At the opening of Parliament the Queen's Speech mentioned that a Bill for improving the law as to agricultural tenancies would be forthcoming, and in moving the Address Mr. E. Stanhope (member for Mid-Lincolnshire) laid special stress upon this paragraph. The Government introduced their Agricultural Holdings Bill in the House of Lords, and it was found to be based to a large degree on the Bill drafted by the Chamber. In May the Council cordially concurred in the main principle of this Bill, but regarded with grave doubt the principle of mainly testing the amount of compensation by increase or diminution of letting value of the holding. The Council also disapproved of Clause 37 unless the following words were added:—"Provided that in every agreement there shall be expressed some *bona fide* consideration for the improvements specified in the second and third classes of the Act."

An amendment to this effect was moved in the House of Commons by Mr. W. W. B. Beach (Vice-Chairman of the

Central Chamber), but it was defeated by 166 to 121 votes. Other amendments of a similar nature, moved by Mr. Pickering Phipps and Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen, were also negatived. The Act was consequently placed upon the statute book as an unconditionally permissive measure, and so became almost a dead letter, for the majority of farm agreements subsequently entered into contracted out of the Act. Mr. Lipscomb, however, in an article in *The Land Magazine* for September, 1898, asserted "That the whole agricultural community were benefited by this just recognition of the tenants' capital being among our statutes," since it gave a great impetus to the introduction of more equitable agreements upon large estates. As Mr. Lipscomb was one of the first to urge the necessity of legislation in this direction his words must carry weight, for—to use his own words in the article referred to—"When I undertook the management of a large estate and found the leases which had prevailed from the beginning of the century entirely silent on the subject of tenant right, I had my attention earnestly directed to supply the deficiency."

In 1879 the Council unanimously resolved that the power of distraint should be limited to a shorter time than the law then provided, and that provision should be made for the reasonable protection of owners of agistment stock.

In 1880 the Ground Game Act was passed. When introducing the Bill on behalf of the Government the Home Secretary (Sir Wm. Harcourt) claimed support for his measure on the faith of the resolutions of the Chamber passed in 1870. The Bill was unanimously approved by the Council on 8th June.

Dissatisfaction with the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1875 was growing apace, and this year four Bills were introduced by Mr. Chaplin, Mr. Samuelson, Mr. Staveley-Hill, and Sir Thomas Acland dealing with the subject. The Council, on 1st July, unanimously expressed their approval of the principle of all these four measures, namely, that compensation should be secured to outgoing tenants.

Bills were again introduced in 1881 by Mr. Chaplin and

Sir Thomas Acland, and these were considered by the Council on 8th March. The principle of both Bills was approved in so far as they secured compensation, but a preference was expressed for Mr. Chaplin's measure, as it established the principle originally laid down by the Council in their draft Bill of 1875, viz., that every tenant on quitting his holding should be compensated by law, by custom, or by agreement.

On 5th April, 1881, the Council debated two Bills introduced by Sir Henry Holland and Mr. Stuart Rendel dealing with distress for rent. They expressed approval of the principle of exempting agisted stock and hired machinery from distress, and suggested that the landlord's power to distrain for rent in all cases be limited to two years only.

1882.

The Royal Commission on Agriculture (the Richmond Commission) reported this year, and among their recommendations were:—Security for tenants' improvements unexhausted on quitting their holdings; amendment of the law of distress; and an improvement of the Land Law. With reference to the last-named subject, the Council had unanimously adopted the following resolution in May, 1880, on the motion of Earl Carrington (Vice-Chairman of the Chamber):—

“This Council desires to express a general approval of the measures introduced by the late Government for the reform of the Land Laws, and trusts that the present administration will give early attention to the question.”

Two Acts—the Settled Land Act and the Conveyancing Act—were passed this year. The Bills had been prepared by Earl Cairns in the last years of the Conservative Ministry and were taken up and passed with little alteration by the Liberal Government, so that both parties may be credited with passing two useful measures.*

Sir Hy. Holland's Bill to amend the law of distress, on the lines suggested by the Council's resolution in 1881, was reintroduced and approved by the Council in March. Later

* Sir F. Pollock, “The Land Laws of England.”

in the session a Select Committee was appointed by the House of Commons "to consider the whole subject of the law of distress, especially as regards agricultural landlords and tenants." This Committee reported in favour of amendments in the law similar to those suggested by the Council last year, as well as recommending other improvements in procedure. A report from the Parliamentary Committee, on the Select Committee's report, was received by the Council in November without comment.

Four Bills on Agricultural Tenants' Compensation were introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Chaplin, Sir Thomas Acland, Mr. Howard, and Mr. Staveley-Hill. The two former were read a second time on 5th July and referred to a Select Committee; but it was too late in the session for the Committee to fully consider them. They did, however, decide that Mr. Chaplin's Bill formed the best basis for legislation.

1883.

In February the Council requested that legislation should be proceeded with on the subject of compensation to tenants. This was complied with, and the Queen's Speech announced a proposal to this effect. The Agricultural Holdings (England) Bill was introduced by the Government, but not until the session was half over. To enable the Council to properly discuss this measure they devoted the 5th June to it and then adjourned it to a special meeting on 19th June. Four other Bills dealing with the same question had been introduced earlier in the session by members of the Central Chamber, viz., Mr. Chaplin, Mr. Heneage, Mr. Staveley-Hill, and Lord Vernon.

A general approval was accorded to the Government's Bill as a whole, but in taking the measure clause by clause very considerable diversity of opinion was expressed, and a number of amendments were ultimately suggested. As the Act reached the statute book it was considered a great improvement on the Act of 1875, as there could be no contracting out of the new measure. The schedules which defined the improve-

ments to be subjects for compensation were much the same as in the former Act, but were somewhat differently grouped. The main point was, however, that compensation must always be given, either under the Act or under a substituted agreement.

Three times during the year did the Council deal with the law of distress. In February and April resolutions were passed in favour of limiting the landlord's power of distress to two years. The Government included this question as part of the Agricultural Holdings Bill and, adopting the recommendation of their Select Committee, limited it to one year. In June the Council, after further discussion, reversed their previous decision and agreed to the one year limit, approving the mode in which this matter was dealt with by the Government.

At the annual meeting, 12th December, the following resolution was carried by 18 votes to 2, on the motion of Mr. Lipscomb :—

“That the provisions of the first section of the Act as to the said ‘*inherent capabilities of the soil*,’ need not in practice affect the improvements Nos. 22 and 23 in the Schedule.”*

The inclusion of these words in the Act was due to the insistence of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, but during this debate Mr. Lipscomb's resolution was supported by Mr. Clare Sewell Read and Mr. Thomas Duckham. A further resolution was then agreed to, appointing a Special Committee which was instructed to report “how far the proposals for a basis of valuation emanating from the Lincolnshire and West Riding Chambers are suitable for general application.” This Committee consisted of the Chairman, Mr. Duckham, M.P. (Herefordshire), the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Chaplin, M.P., Mr. C. S. Read (Norfolk), Mr. Bell (Northumberland), Mr. Bowen-Jones (Shropshire), Mr. Little (Cambs), Mr. Heneage and Mr. Finch-Hatton (afterwards Earl of Winchilsea and Nottingham) (both for Lincolnshire), Mr. Lipscomb (West Riding),

* No. 22.—Application of artificial or other purchased manure.

* No. 23.—Consumption on the holding of feeding stuffs not produced on the holding.

Mr. W. T. Scarth (Durham), Mr. W. Biddell, M.P. (West Suffolk), Mr. Thomas Wilson (Leicestershire), and Mr. Jabez Turner (Huntingdon). This Committee elected Mr. Lipscomb as their Chairman.

1884.

The report from this Committee was presented in June and adopted in November, after two long discussions. To enable them to draft their report the Committee invited local Chambers to report on local methods and conditions. The replies to this invitation made it clear that there was a general agreement with the idea of formulating a basis of compensation by way of schedules; but, while agreeing in principle with the proposals of the two Chambers named in the last paragraph, numerous proposals were elicited which varied somewhat in detail. The Newcastle-on-Tyne Farmers' Club and the Cheshire Chamber suggested an entirely different system of assessing unexhausted values, which the Committee could not classify with the others. These proposed that all farms should be classed under three heads, according to their general condition:—(i.) representing good management; (ii.) moderate; (iii.) bad. The Newcastle Club also proposed that the manorial value left by the consumption of purchased foods should be based on the results arrived at by the most eminent chemical authorities. The Committee said:—"While the experiments upon which the second suggestion rests are, in our opinion, of great value, they are not as yet sufficiently conclusive to warrant our advising a departure from the first method, which has been hitherto generally recognised and is more easily understood."

The foregoing quotation raised a question which is dealt with at length in subsequent paragraphs; but it shows how far this Club was in advance of the rest of the country at that time.

The Committee presented with this report tables showing the scales of compensation in vogue in the districts covered by the Chambers replying to the questions sent out, and recommended "as a fair and reasonable scale of compensa-

tion applicable to the country generally" a scale based on the *cost* of the various foods consumed and on the majority of the scales of allowances then in use. With regard to compensation for artificial manures the Committee thought "that a wide divergence in details resulting from differences of soil and other conditions is inevitable; we are therefore unable to report that any one scale is of general application."

In the meantime Mr. (afterwards Sir) John Bennet Lawes and Mr. (afterwards Sir) J. Henry Gilbert, of Rothamsted, had been for many years pursuing scientific investigations into this question. Mr. Lawes had an article in the *Journal* of the Royal Agricultural Society in 1847. In 1885 they published another article in the same *Journal*, in which appear the following paragraphs:—

"We published a table about twenty-five years ago showing the average composition per cent. and per ton of the chief feeding-stuffs and other agricultural products, and called attention to the fact that there must be a great difference in the value of the manure according to the composition of the food consumed. Soon after a table was published showing the estimated money value of the manure from the consumption of the ton of the various foods. The table of composition was founded partly on the results of analyses made at Rothamsted, but in great part on the results of others which had at that time been published; and having calculated the amounts of nitrogen, phosphoric acid, and potash contained in one ton of the respective foods, we deducted the quantities of phosphoric acid and potash which we estimated would be contained in the increase in live weight of the animal consuming it."

This article contained exhaustive tables showing the average composition per cent. and per ton of cattle foods, and the data, the method, and the results of the estimation of the original manure values after consumption. They published further articles in the same *Journal* in 1897 and 1898, but for the moment we are concerned with the earlier period.

Lawes and Gilbert were undoubtedly right in their theory, for the governing words of the Act of 1883 were:—"A tenant . . . shall . . . be entitled to obtain . . . as compensation . . . such sum as fairly represents *the value of the improvement to an incoming tenant.*" And the

value to an incoming tenant is the manurial value, not a percentage of the cost of the food consumed.

It might strike the casual reader that Mr. Lipscomb's ideas were rather antiquated, in that he signed a report advocating the system based on cost instead of the more scientific method. But he was hampered by several considerations. He was instructed to ascertain the views of local Chambers on the subject. Having carried out his instructions the Committee were practically bound to suggest the method advocated by the local Chambers. They, with the exception of the Newcastle Farmers' Club, had no idea of any method other than cost. Mr. Lipscomb knew, better than most people, the impossibility of carrying any proposal which involved too radical a departure from accepted custom, and after all his chief aim was to obtain as much uniformity in the method of valuing as possible. By adhering to a known system he secured unanimity among the Chambers, and it followed as a matter of course that in time the valuers' associations fell into line. Then again, although Lawes and Gilbert had every reason to know that their system was sound—for their tables were based on the results of careful investigation and experience—yet in those days even more than to-day, the agriculturist looked askance at the scientist: and Rothamsted was not then known or acknowledged by farmers as it is now. Their figures, too, were open to revision in certain details, and so could not be held up as promising any sort of finality. Mr. Lipscomb was well aware of what science was doing; he instanced this in the paragraph quoted on page 185; and in moving the adoption of the report he anticipated criticism from Rothamsted. He was not disappointed, for in his *Land Magazine* article (September, 1898) he quotes in full a letter he wrote in answer to Sir John Lawes. He concludes the letter thus:—

“ I will only add that for my part I am wedded to no one system, and am an earnest advocate for the more scientific education of our farmers' sons, so that they may intelligently observe ‘practice with science.’ As such knowledge extends, so will the fame of our somewhat severe commentator, Sir J. Lawes.”

Thirty years have passed since these words were written, and time has proved the wisdom and truth of Mr. Lipscomb's policy and letter.

1887.

On 1st March resolutions were received from eighteen local Chambers approving a private member's Bill proposing a close time for hares, and the Council endorsed this approval of the Bill. The measure did not pass, and in June, 1888, the Council again adopted a motion in favour of a new Bill by a considerable majority. A similar resolution was adopted in 1891 in favour of Colonel Dawnay's Bill, but none of these measures reached the Statute Book.

In 1892 Colonel Dawnay introduced a further Bill, which received the Royal Assent on 20th May. Of this a report from the Parliamentary Committee, presented on 5th April, said :—"The Bill was found to be so materially modified since last year that it aroused no opposition." It merely prohibited the sale or exposure for sale of any but foreign hares during the months March to July, both inclusive.

1889.

On 26th March the attention of the Council was called to a case where compensation to a tenant under the Act of 1883 was forfeited owing to the entrance of a mortgagee into possession of the land. It was unanimously resolved that the Act required such amendment as would make tenant's compensation a first charge on the holding.

At the June meeting the Council, with only one dissentient, expressed disapproval of an Agricultural Tenants' Improvement Bill, introduced by Mr. Seale Hayne, which proposed several amendments to the Act.

1890.

At the May meeting Colonel Cotton-Jodrell, M.P., raised the question of the position of tenants of mortgaged land, and a similar resolution to that of last year was passed. It was also urged that a Bill should be introduced into Parlia-

ment to give effect to this motion; Colonel Cotton-Jodrell therefore introduced a short Bill, which was given facilities for passing by the Government, and was placed on the Statute Book in this year.

At the same meeting a motion was agreed to that the counter-claims of landlords under the 1883 Act should be scheduled, while another motion urging that an occupier wishing to lay down permanent pasture should be entitled to do so on giving notice to the landlord, was negatived. In November the Council resolved that the Act needed amendment by establishing the relation of landlord and tenant for the purpose of compensation as between a tenant for life occupying his own land and the remainder man.

1891.

In May the Council resolved that home-grown corn, being now so very much consumed, should, under proper safeguards, be included in the third part of the schedule of the Agricultural Holdings Act.

In November it was agreed "That copyhold tenure has ceased to serve any useful purpose, is injurious to industry, and should be promptly extinguished or commuted on terms equitable to landlord and tenant."

1892.

Mr. F. A. Channing (afterwards Lord Channing) introduced a Bill to amend the Agricultural Holdings Act, 1883, which the Council considered in April; it resolved, after hearing Mr. Channing's explanation of the measure, that, while thinking it equitable in some of its provisions, they were unable to approve of it in its entirety.

In May it was resolved that it is desirable that every facility should be given for the voluntary sale and purchase of manorial rights.

At the great National Agricultural Conference, held in December, the following resolution was adopted:—

"That the laws regulating the tenure of land require amendment so as to provide (i.) an absolute and indefeasible right of

the tenant to the unexhausted value of any agricultural improvement executed by him on his holding ; (ii.) the abolition of the law of distress for rent ; (iii.) the equal division of all local rates between owners and occupiers.”

It may be recalled that this Conference, though arranged by the Central Chamber, was not a Chamber meeting. This motion, however, was moved by Mr. Carrington Smith, of Staffordshire, seconded by Mr. W. H. Lander, of Shropshire, both Chamber men, and was supported by Mr. C. S. Read. The three points were put separately, and each had a number of dissentient hands held up against it.

1894.

In February the Council appointed a new Committee to report what amendments to the Act of 1883 were desirable. This Committee consisted of the Chairman (Mr. F. A. Channing, M.P.), the Vice-Chairman (Mr. A. F. Jeffreys, M.P.), Mr. H. Chaplin, M.P., Mr. C. S. Read, Mr. Lipscomb, Mr. Bowen-Jones, Mr. W. Biddell, Mr. Rowlandson, Mr. Carrington Smith, Mr. John Treadwell, Mr. B. St. John Ackers, Mr. Jas. Kay, Mr. Thomas Latham, Mr. F. E. Muntz, and Mr. Samuel Kidner. Mr. Lipscomb was again elected Chairman of the Committee. Their report was presented in June and occupied the Council for two meetings. It contained several foolscap sheets of print of suggested amendments, which the Council adopted with some alterations.

1895.

The Market Gardeners' Compensation Act, introduced by Colonel Long (M.P. for Evesham) was passed this year before the General Election. It was intended to ensure that market gardeners should be entitled to compensation for their improvements, such as planting fruit trees and bushes ; but it was so badly worded that it was soon after decided in the Law Courts that the Act was not retrospective, and was therefore almost a failure.

The Council in April agreed their parliamentary programme, one item of which was that the report adopted in

1894 on the conditions of tenancies be embodied in a Bill and passed into law forthwith.

Mr. George Lambert (M.P. for South Molton) introduced a Land Tenure Bill. It was very crudely drafted, but on 28th May the Council approved the Bill in so far as it encouraged good farming. The Bill got a second reading, but proceeded no further.

1897.

The report of the second Royal Commission on Agriculture presented its final report in June of this year, and a statement was issued to local Chambers showing in parallel columns the various resolutions passed by the Council and the corresponding recommendations made by the Royal Commission. More than half this statement dealt with amendments to the Agricultural Holdings Act. In March, 1898, however, although so many of the Chamber's proposals were endorsed by the Royal Commission, the Council unanimously adopted a resolution stating that they preferred to adhere to their own proposals (of 1894) as the minimum which they would be prepared to accept.

Waxing impatient at the delay, the Council passed a resolution in December, 1898, urging the Government to announce in the next Queen's Speech their intention of amending the Act of 1883. It was mentioned at the opening of the session of 1899, and the Council re-appointed its Committee to consider the provisions of the Bill when introduced. As it was not brought in, a deputation from the Council waited upon the President of the Board of Agriculture (Mr. Walter Long) on 30th June, who said that he hoped to introduce a Bill next year.

1900.

The Government measure was introduced on 12th March, and on 3rd April the Council expressed their approval of several of its provisions, recognising a fair attempt to give effect to some of the principal recommendations put forward by the Chambers. On the other hand, they pointed out where it failed to satisfy their requirements. On 18th May a special

meeting was held in the Grand Committee room, Westminster Hall, to further consider the Bill, when previous resolutions were repeated. A second special meeting was held on 10th July to consider the Bill as it emerged from Committee, when resolutions were adopted, by a majority, asking for still further amendments. Some of these were accepted on the report stage, but when the Bill reached the Lords several amendments were made of a character adverse to the Chamber's recommendations. The Lords' amendments were agreed to by the Commons, and the Bill received the Royal Assent on 8th August. The chief points demanded by the Chambers which were not acceded to were as follows :—

1.—That the provision in Section 1 as to the "inherent capabilities of the soil" should be repealed.

2.—That it should provide for a record in scheduled form being made at the end of a tenancy, on the face of every award; or where there was no such award, that the landlord and tenant should make one.

3.—That the dilapidations for which a landlord may claim should be scheduled.

4.—That umpires should be nominated by County Councils.

5.—That the time of posting the registered letter should be deemed to be the time of serving notice of claim.

6.—That "twenty-eight days" be substituted for a "reasonable time" for removal of fixtures after determination of tenancy.

7.—Several suggested alterations in the Schedules.

In this instance only six years elapsed from the time the Chamber issued its statement of the amendments they desired to the passing of the amending Act. Although some of their minor suggestions were not adopted by Parliament, the new Act gave practically all the security that reasonable men should require. For it must be assumed that a tenant taking a farm has sufficient intelligence to manage his own affairs, and is able to understand the terms of the contract he is making with a prospective landlord.

1902.

On 3rd June the Council appointed a special Committee "to draw up a scale of compensation for unexhausted improvements, to be sent down for consideration by the local Chambers." The Committee consisted of Sir E. Strachey,

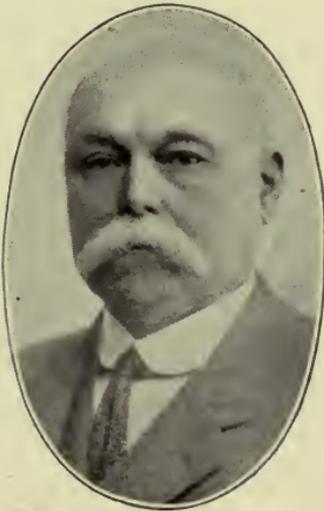


MR. WILLIAM STRATTON.
Chairman, Cattle Diseases Committee,
1872—1894.



Photo by Messrs. G. and J. Hall, Wakefield.

MR. CHARLES CLAY.
Treasurer, 1866—1897.



MR. CHRISTOPHER MIDDLETON.
Chairman of Valuations, Dairy Products, and
other Committees.



MR. SAMUEL KIDNER,
Chairman of several Committees.

Bt. (Chairman of the Central Chamber), Mr. B. St. J. Ackers, Mr. Bowen-Jones, Mr. C. B. Davies, Mr. T. Davies, Mr. T. A. Dickson, Dr. Bernard Dyer, Mr. H. Trustram Eve, Mr. W. Frankish, Mr. S. Kidner, Mr. Thomas Latham, Mr. E. J. Lloyd, Mr. Christopher Middleton, Mr. C. Harris Stratton, and Mr. Clare Sewell Read. This Committee elected Mr. Christopher Middleton as their Chairman. They presented their report to the Council and it was sent down to local Chambers. After a long discussion on 31st March, 1903, it was adopted unanimously, and a vote of thanks was accorded to Mr. Middleton for the exceptional trouble he had taken in drafting the report.

The Committee reported that they invited every known Valuers' Association to give evidence before the Committee, as well as many agriculturists, scientists, representative farmers, land agents, and valuers. They considered a number of scales in use by local associations, and they presented these in tabular form as an appendix. These scales, as well as others which the Committee were not allowed to publish, showed a great divergence of allowances, not merely for artificial manures, but even for cakes, corn, and other feeding stuffs.

Some of these scales appear to have been framed on the scale contained in the report adopted by the Council in June, 1884, which allowances were almost all calculated on some proportion of the cost of the feeding stuff in accordance with the provisions of the permissive Act of 1875.

On the other hand, some of these scales, more recently adopted, recognise the principle laid down in the Act of 1883, and reaffirmed in 1900 (a principle adopted by the Newcastle Farmers' Club and one or two other Chambers of Agriculture as far back as 1884), that the compensation shall be such sum as fairly represents the value of an improvement to an incoming tenant, and accordingly they take as the basis of compensation, not the cost of a feeding-stuff, but its residual manurial value based on Lawes' and Gilbert's tables.

Of the total number of witnesses not more than two definitely expressed themselves in favour of cost being the basis of compensation. Several witnesses who in practice adopted a cost basis admitted that it was not one they could defend, and expressed themselves ready to adopt one more in accordance with the Acts, 1883-1900, provided an equitable scale of compensation was formulated. All the other witnesses emphatically declared in favour of the unexhausted value of feeding stuffs being based on their residual manurial value.

On this most vital point of their inquiry, which the Committee regard as the crux of the whole question, they unanimously endorse

the views held by the majority of the witnesses, viz., that compensation for feeding stuffs should not be based on cost.

To show how little relation cost price bears to manurial value in the case of some of the purchased articles of food in most common use, they would instance example of this discrepancy which will arise in most valuations between outgoing and incoming tenants. Lawes' and Gilbert's tables fix the original manure values of linseed cake and undecorticated cotton cake at £2 11s. 11d. and £2 5s. 3d. per ton respectively, and the compensation value for one ton of each used in the last year at £1 6s. and £1 2s. 7d., or nearly the same for each; whereas on the average selling price at the present time of linseed cake and cotton cake, say, £8 and £4 10s. per ton, the allowance of one-third of the cost for the last year, which is what most scales that adopt cost basis allow, would work out to £2 13s. 4d. and £1 10s. per ton, or nearly double the allowance for linseed as against cotton cake.

Naturally, in considering the tables of Lawes and Gilbert, the question arises whether they were justified in making such a large deduction as 50 per cent. from the original manure value of the food used in the last year. Those who have carefully read the article in the *Journal* of the Royal Agricultural Society published in December, 1897, in which these tables appear, will probably have come to the conclusion that this deduction is not very wide of the mark. Many of those who may be called practical witnesses, and nearly all the scientific ones, considered that this deduction, taken all round, is approximately correct, and actual tests and analyses were submitted in support of this contention. One scientific witness contended that it was much too high in the case of food consumed directly on the land, though it might not be any too high where much of the food was consumed in open yards.

The scales which were submitted are mostly fixed ones, but several adopt the principle of division into two or three classes. There was also considerable divergence in the views expressed by the various witnesses on this point.

The Committee have very carefully considered this question in all its bearings, and whilst they recognise that there is much to be said in favour of a division into three classes, they are of opinion that such classification is too arbitrary and inelastic, and that it would not admit of that proper discrimination of every factor which should govern compensation; they have accordingly come to the conclusion that the object in view would be best attained by the adoption of a sliding scale applicable to average cases, with no fixed maximum or minimum, but working up and down according to the conditions, not only under which the food is consumed and the resulting manure preserved, but also every other condition which goes to make the improvement of value to an incoming tenant.

Lawes' and Gilbert's compensation tables for feeding stuffs go back for eight years, and are based on the assumption that a

regular quantity of each food referred to has been consumed each year during that period, and they have a fixed percentage deduction from year to year. It is obvious that in practice it would be quite impracticable to go back that number of years to assess compensation. Besides, the scientific witnesses examined were unanimous in their opinion that there is no actual case for compensation so far back, and they practically agreed that four years was the utmost limit of any appreciable residue. In fact, the Woburn and Rothamsted experiments proved conclusively that in the case of feeding stuffs consumed by sheep eating turnips on arable land, there was generally a large increase in the yield of corn in the next crop, only a very small increase in the following crop, and rarely, if ever, any at all in the third crop. It was only heavy dressings of dung which showed any appreciable result for longer periods.

Some witnesses were in favour of going back for three years, but a greater number expressed an opinion that it was neither practicable nor necessary to go back for more than two years, whilst a few suggested that rather higher allowances should be made for the last year but one, to make up for any residue there might be left from previous consumption. The Committee consider that they are not justified in limiting compensation to the last two years only, and to give effect to the last suggestion it would be necessary to have proof of the quantities consumed in previous years. Extending the compensation due over three years would entail but little extra labour on valuers, and from every other point of view is to be recommended.

MANURES.

As regards improvements which come under this heading, the varying conditions of all kinds in different parts of the country are such as to make any uniform scale of compensation in respect of them, for general application, impossible, and rather point to the desirability of such being dealt with by local custom and knowledge.

At the same time, the Committee feel it incumbent on them to emphasise the broad principle which should govern compensation for the unexhausted value of purchased manures, a principle which is not always kept in view, viz., that compensation should not depend upon what the outlay has cost the outgoing tenant, but what is its value to the incoming tenant. This is especially necessary in the case of undissolved bones, basic slag, and lime.

Probably most of the scales in operation, in their respective districts, when dealing with such manures as dissolved bones, superphosphate, potash salts, nitrogenous manures, and the mixtures of any of these, are fairly equitable; but they must not always be too rigidly adhered to. For instance, potash may have been applied to land which already contains as much as is needed, and consequently an incoming tenant may be called upon to pay for a supply of which his crops cannot make use. Or, on the

other hand, sulphate of ammonia and nitrate of soda may be too rigorously excluded from all compensation, even when utilised in growing a heavier crop of straw, which results in a larger dung heap, which may be the property of the landlord or incoming tenant.

In conclusion, your Committee recommend that in future valuations the compensation for the unexhausted value of food-stuffs consumed shall be fixed independently of what they may have cost, but shall be based on their residual manure values alone.

That as it is obviously impossible to fix any scale of compensation which shall apply all round and be equitable in all cases, it is imperative that valuers shall, in each case, take into account such matters as—

What proportion, respectively, has been fed direct on arable land, and on grass ?

What proportion, respectively, has been fed to milk cows, to young stock, and to fattening stock, or sheep, or pigs ?

Has the manure been made in covered yards and boxes, or in open yards ?

Has the manure been afterwards properly cared for, and has it been judiciously applied ?

Is the soil of a retentive nature ?

Is the land clean, well drained, and well cultivated ?

Is the course of cropping adopted of an exhaustive nature ?

Has the consumption of purchased feeding stuffs been of long continuance ?

What crops, if any, have been grown since the application of manurial constituents ?

That as a guide to compensation, after taking all these matters into consideration, they recommend that the table* of the compensation values of the foodstuffs in most common use, based on the last three years' consumption, shall be adopted as a fair average, to be increased or decreased according to the special circumstances of each case.

The figures in this table are substantially based on those given by Dr. Voelcker and Mr. A. D. Hall, in their paper published in the R.A.S.E. *Journal*, 1902.

That in the case of hay, straw, and roots sold off the farm, the figures in the preceding table shall be regarded as approximately the loss of manurial value only, varied, however, by such matters as are mentioned in this report.

That in respect to all other improvements, no uniform scale of compensation can be recommended ; but each one should be dealt with by the valuers on the broad lines set out in this report, viz., that whilst the outgoing tenant is entitled to be paid the full unexhausted value of such improvement, the incoming tenant

* The table was included in the report.

must be equally secured against having to pay for so-called improvements which have no value.

1905.

Expecting a General Election ere long, the Council discussed their usual parliamentary programme of agricultural legislation on 2nd May. This had always consisted of a list of questions which had been previously agreed to by the Council. It was suggested that the amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act should be added to the programme, but to this there was considerable opposition. The Council generally agreed to add "the consolidation of the various Acts," but after some discussion the matter was adjourned. At the June meeting a motion was agreed to "That the question of the consolidation and amendment of the Acts be sent down to local Chambers, as a subject for them to send up resolutions upon." At the October meeting only ten resolutions were received, and of these only three asked for any amendment; the others asking for consolidation only. A motion to this effect was accordingly put before the meeting, but an amendment to insert the words "and amendment" was, after some opposition, agreed to by 15 to 11 votes out of a meeting of over fifty. This is of interest in view of what happened the next year.

1906.

During the General Election, which took place in January, there had been a good deal of loose and wild talk about reforming the land laws if the Liberals were returned to power. The writer of this history was invited to read a paper before the Farmers' Club on 5th February, and he concluded this paper by the following paragraphs :—

Since I wrote this paper the election has taken place, and with it such alterations in the *personnel* of the House of Commons that the general perspective has considerably changed. I will take this opportunity of asking the Liberal Party to be somewhat guided in their course of action by the wishes of those most interested. I submit for their consideration the fact that agriculturists are not quite ignorant of what they need, and it may be well to consult them in formulating legislation.



In saying this I do not forget that there are many among that Party who have agricultural interests, and many others who view the industry with every feeling of sympathy and friendship ; but neither do I forget that we have recently heard many statements as to what the Government are going to do to resuscitate agriculture. Some of these statements have been ill-considered and, I trust, unauthorised. We have been told, for instance, that the Diseases of Animals Act of 1896 will be repealed,* that great and only safeguard to our flocks and herds against disease, and in this connection I cannot too highly commend the statesmanlike effort made by the President of the Board of Agriculture, in his recent reply to a deputation, to prevent such a serious question being turned to base Party use.

We have also been treated to numerous dissertations upon the necessity of a great reform in the laws of land tenure. I have already said that certain amendments of existing Acts are wanted, but they are nothing more than nine-tenths of the landowners are ready to agree to. But if the Government think they will earn the lasting gratitude of tenant farmers by any radical alterations of our present system, they will be grievously disappointed.

I will venture to offer one word of warning to agriculturists in connection with this question. It occurs to me that some of those who are trying to make so much of the antipathy of the interests of landlords and tenants may have a much deeper object in view than a mere attempt to benefit the latter at the expense of the former, and that is to create a distinct political cleavage between these two classes in order that they may the more easily effect their ulterior aim. I would therefore urge both classes to rather look for those matters in which their interests are identical and to keep their eyes fixed on them. Do not let us weaken our ranks, which are already scattered and weak enough, but refuse to be led aside by questions which will only land us on the rocks of Party indifference and class hatred.

Among the men successful in the ballot for private members' Bills was Mr. T. C. Agar-Robartes (M.P. for St. Austell), and he was prevailed upon to introduce a Land Tenure Bill, which was framed much on the lines of Mr. Lambert's Bill of 1895. This measure got a second reading on 9th March, by 334 to 81 votes. On 3rd April the Council devoted the greater part of a meeting to the Bill and suggested numerous amendments. Most of these were embodied while the Bill was in Committee. On 29th May the Council again gave some hours to the Bill as it emerged from Committee, approving it generally, but suggesting further amendments. The Bill, after being con-

* See page 52.

siderably altered on report and in the Lords, eventually received the Royal Assent on 21st December.

It was the events of 1905-6 which were in mind when the opening paragraphs of this chapter were written. Here we find the same body of men grudgingly allowing the question of amending the Acts to go on the parliamentary programme one year, yet the next year eagerly debating further amendments. But this changed attitude was due, not to any fickleness on the part of members of the Chambers, but to the uncertain and haphazard methods of the politicians. Though it was true that—as stated on page 197—fifteen members of the Council had been found to vote for an abstract motion in that direction, yet the Chambers were not asking for any specific amendments. When, however, Parliament decides that agriculturists are to be stirred up, it becomes a matter of duty for them to be watchful.

This Act of 1906 gave effect to some of the requests preferred by the Council in 1900. Thus it repealed the words in Section 1 as to the “inherent capabilities of the soil.” It permitted a record of the holding to be scheduled at the commencement of every tenancy if required; and it revised the arrangement of the First Schedule (*i.e.*, improvements for which compensation may be claimed). On the other hand, it interfered with freedom of contract; permitted absolute freedom of cropping and disposal of produce, which with a bad tenant may mean ruination of the land; and opened the door to endless litigation by its bad drafting, and by such vague, almost meaningless phrases as make up the first part of Section 11 in the Consolidated Act of 1908. This section, moreover, by giving compensation for disturbance is contrary to the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Agriculture which reported in 1897, and is a long step towards the introduction of dual ownership in land.

1908.

Twice in 1906, once in 1907, and again on 28th January, 1908, the Council urged the Board to pass a Bill consolidating the Agricultural Holdings Acts, and in the course of this Session

the Board did get such a measure passed through Parliament in a satisfactory manner.

The Valuations Committee, of which Mr. Christopher Middleton was Chairman in 1903, was re-appointed to examine the various scales of compensation then in force, and to report to what extent the recommendations of the 1903 Committee had been adopted throughout the country. The Committee presented their report on 14th July, and stated

“ that in a considerable number of counties it has become the practice to base compensation for the unexhausted value of feeding stuffs on the scale set out in the report above referred to, or on Voelcker and Hall’s Tables on which it was founded, and which are practically the same, or else on some modification of Lawes’ and Gilbert’s Tables, and that there is a growing tendency to adopt one or the other of these tables. Your Committee regret, however, that some Valuers’ Associations still continue to adopt a ‘cost’ basis. This is more particularly the case with the older Associations, and, as a rule, it is principally the older members of these Associations who most strongly oppose any reform.

“ Whatever opinion valuers may have as to what system should form the basis of compensation, the fact remains that the tables of Voelcker and Hall still hold the field, have never been seriously controverted, and are generally admitted to be as accurate as any figures demonstrating facts which cannot be actually weighed and measured can be.

“ One serious objection which was taken at the time to the adoption of either of these scales was that they would be in need of frequent, if not annual, revision. Till now this has not proved to be the case, as both Dr. Voelcker and Mr. Hall consider that up to the present there is no need for any revision.”

The Committee further reported that out of twenty-six scales known to be in use in different localities in 1908, thirteen were based on manorial values, while the basis of three others was not known. This compared with twenty-one scales in use in 1903, of which only six were based on manorial values, while three others were on that occasion also withheld from the Committee.

1911.

Towards the end of this year a case, known as *Kedwell versus Flint*, showed that the Agricultural Holdings Acts of 1895, 1906, and 1908 failed to give security for the compensation

to market gardeners which those Acts were intended to secure. Mr. Courthope at once drafted a Bill which was introduced to remedy this, but it was too near the end of the Session for any progress to be made with it. It was re-introduced in 1912, and along with another Bill introduced by Mr. Rowlands was referred to a Standing Committee. The second Bill contained several contentious clauses dealing with other matters. The Market Gardening Committee of the Chambers presented a report, in which they urged the opposing parties to drop the contentious points and to unite in getting a short Bill through dealing only with the point raised in *Kedwell v. Flint*. A few days after the Standing Committee reported that both Bills had been withdrawn, and the President of the Board (Mr. Runciman) introduced a fresh Bill, in almost identical terms with the first one drafted by Mr. Courthope, which he carried through Parliament, and which received the Royal Assent on 14th February, 1913, under the name of the Agricultural Holdings Act, 1913.

1912.

The Central Association of Tenant Right Valuers called a conference of representatives of several agricultural societies to consult expert chemists as to the desirability of revising the tables of manurial values, and on the practicability of drawing up a scale for artificial manures. On 14th July the Valuations Committee presented a report of this conference to the Council containing the following :—

Since the date of the last report of your Committee of June 3rd, 1908, practically every Valuers' Association has abandoned cost basis, and has adopted manurial values as the basis of their scales of compensation.

As was only to be expected, during the ten years that have elapsed since Messrs. Voelcker and Hall issued their tables of manurial and compensation values in 1903, the prices of manurial ingredients have undergone some change, the price of nitrogen being now 25 per cent. higher than in 1903. This means a considerable increase in the compensation value of each ton of food consumed, especially in the case of the more concentrated foods. Various articles which have come into general use since 1903 have been added to the scale, whilst others of very varying composition are recommended to be dealt with on their analysis,

and others in common use are declared to possess no manorial value of any account.

Messrs. Voelcker and Hall now recommend that compensation shall only be paid for feeding stuffs consumed during the last *two* years of the tenancy, instead of the *four* years of the tables of 1903. This recommendation, however, will make but little change in actual practice, for whilst some few Valuers' Associations are paying on the last three years' consumption, the great majority which have adopted the manorial basis of compensation only pay on the last two years. In connection with this, however, they make one very important recommendation which is an entirely new departure, viz., fixing a very much higher scale of compensation for food consumed direct on the land than for what is made into dung. This recommendation only applies to foods consumed during the last year of the tenancy.

It is certainly sound in principle, and is quite in accord with the recommendations contained in the report of your Committee issued in January, 1903, as are the deductions now recommended to be made where the dung has been improperly made and taken care of.

Messrs. Voelcker and Hall's recommendations as to what deductions should be made from the compensation payable in respect of food consumed by milk cows and young stock are also very much in accord with those of your Committee's report of 1903.

With regard to hay and straw sold off the farm, Messrs. Voelcker and Hall declare that straw has a mechanical value in addition to a manorial value, and recommend that when straw is sold, the manorial value, 7s. per ton only, should be allowed on the proportion that would have been fed (as there is no mechanical value attaching to straw when fed to stock); and that an additional allowance of 7s. per ton (making 14s. per ton altogether) for the mechanical value should be made from the proportion that would have been used for litter. In practice, your Committee consider that it will be difficult to allocate the proportion which would have been used for each of these purposes, and as a general rule a sum representing the average of these figures would be approximately correct.

The selling off or bringing hay on to a farm they recommend should be dealt with on a manorial basis only.

Messrs. Voelcker and Hall recognise the difficulty of formulating any scale for artificial manures suitable for all districts and conditions, but subject to reservations recommend a certain scale. Your Committee adhere to the recommendation contained in their report of 1903, that this is a matter that can best be dealt with by local Valuers' Associations.

So far as this part of the question (the method of assessing compensation for unexhausted improvements) is concerned, it may justly be claimed that the Chambers have accomplished

what they first set out to do in 1872, viz., to obtain uniformity in the method and scale of compensation for unexhausted improvements.

Compensation for Disturbance.

A previous paragraph (page 199) referred to the bad drafting and vague phrasing of Section 11 of the Act of 1908. Everyone who knew anything about the management of land foresaw a crop of litigation in this section, and foretold it while the Act was still a Bill in 1906. In 1910 the sentence "not inconsistent with good estate management" was deemed in the Shrewsbury County Court (*Clewlow v. Briscoe*) to cover disturbance of a sitting tenant for the purpose of sale by the executors of an agricultural estate. There was no appeal against this decision, and consequently it was accepted as law that, although a tenant disturbed by a landlord could claim compensation for such disturbance (unless it was due to bad farming, non-payment of rent, or similar cause), a tenant dispossessed by the sale of an estate could not establish any such claim.

The Small Holdings Act, 1908, had been the cause of a number of tenants being turned out of or partially dispossessed of their holdings, and in December, 1909, the Council unanimously resolved that the Act required amending: (i.) in the event of land being taken compulsorily for small holdings or allotments the occupier to be entitled to compensation for disturbance; (ii.) that a right of appeal should be granted from the decisions of the Board of Agriculture; (iii.) that parties should have the right to employ expert assistance. The following January members of Parliament were asked to ballot for a Bill to give effect to this resolution, and although none of our members were successful in the ballot two Bills were introduced by Mr. Lane-Fox and Sir Courtenay Warner. The Government, however, introduced a Bill of their own, which, after amendment in Committee, became law in 1910. This Bill dealt satisfactorily with the first point of the resolution, but disregarded the other two points.

The passing of the Finance (1909-10) Act, 1910, which resulted in many owners selling part or the whole of their estates, had been the means of disturbing hundreds of tenants, and had created a feeling of insecurity among all.

These various factors aroused a deeper feeling of apprehension among farmers than anything else that has occurred in recent years. The question of disturbance was before the Council on four occasions in 1911. In February a resolution was carried with one dissentient (reiterating previous resolutions of February, 1904, and December, 1906) approving Mr. Jesse Collings' Land Purchase Bill. A further resolution on disturbance was adjourned *sine die* on 2nd May, in view of the appointment of a Departmental Committee by the President of the Board of Agriculture, to inquire into the position of sitting tenants in England and Wales on the occasion of any change in the ownership of their holdings, whether by reason of the death of their landlord or otherwise, and to consider whether any legislation on the subject is desirable. The Chairman of the Chamber (Lord Clinton), Mr. Trustram Eve, and Mr. Abel H. Smith were among the members of the Committee, and Mr. Samuel Kidner and Mr. R. G. Patterson were deputed as witnesses to give evidence on behalf of the Council.

This Committee reported early in 1912. The result of their deliberations was disappointing, though probably not surprising in view of its composition. There were nearly as many reports as members of the Committee. The Majority Report was inconclusive and was studded with qualifications, which, though giving evidence of the skill of its official members and officers, did little towards solving the problem of disturbed tenant farmers.

This report came before the Council on 7th May, 1912, when it was agreed with some five or six dissentients:—

“That this Council, while unable to accept the recommendations of the Departmental Committee as in any sense solving the difficulties created by the breaking up of agricultural estates, is yet of opinion that certain of them might in some degree alleviate the position.

“This Council is opposed to State ownership of land, and with

regard to State assistance to enable tenants to purchase their farms, they consider that the proposals embodied in Mr. Collings' Land Purchase Bill and Mr. Trustram Eve's Minority Report are preferable to recommendation No. 7* of the Majority Report ; but regret that no adequate amendment of certain clauses of the Agricultural Holdings Act, 1908, as advocated by tenant farmer witnesses, has been recommended."

The only step the Government were able to take was to introduce a Bill in the House of Lords, and this Bill was considered by the Council on 4th June, 1912, when the following resolution was carried with one dissentient :—

"This Council regrets to have to express its extreme disappointment that the only remedy proposed by the Government to meet the serious position of tenant farmers created by the break up of agricultural estates is the totally inadequate Agricultural Holdings Bill now before the House of Lords ; and urges (i.) that that Bill should be withdrawn ; (ii.) that the Act of 1908 should be so amended as to secure full compensation for those compelled to leave their holdings ; and (iii.) that legislation to provide a loan from the State for those tenants who have the opportunity of purchasing their holdings should be introduced forthwith."

In consequence of the adoption of this resolution the Council appointed a Special Committee to report on the necessary amendments to the Agricultural Holdings Act. Mr. Samuel Kidner was elected Chairman of the Committee. Its first report, presented on 5th November, 1912, was, after two debates, referred back. The second report was adopted by the Council on 4th November, 1913, after a motion to refer it back had been negatived by 34 to 23. Its adoption, therefore, was by no means unanimous. The report was divided into three parts : (a) explaining the reasons for objecting to the House of Lords' Bill ; (b) proposing amendments to the Act considered necessary to safeguard tenants ; and (c) on the purchase of their farms by sitting tenants. The following are some of the principal paragraphs :—

IN PART II.

Under Sec. 6 (2) the tenant cannot recover compensation unless he has give a statutory notice ; your Committee think that the

* Recommendation No. 7 proposed to institute a scheme of State-aided purchase on lines suggested by Sir Edward Holden, a member of the Committee.

landlord and tenant should stand on equal terms as to claims, without notice, up to the hearing of the arbitration. Your Committee therefore consider that Sec. 6 (2) should be amended so as to secure equal rights as above.

We advise that where an arbitrator states a case for the opinion of a County Court on a point of law, he shall give an interim award upon such items of the claims of landlord and tenant as are not affected by the point of law, and the money represented by such interim award, notwithstanding that the point of law is not settled, shall be paid on the demand of either party as provided by Sec. 14, less any amount that is necessary to cover any liabilities.

We are of opinion that the law should be altered in this respect, and in the meantime the point can be covered by an arbitrator awarding a payment on account of an amount named by him.

Where the landlord for no sufficient fault or default of the tenant terminates or refuses to grant a renewal of the tenancy, or unreasonably requires more onerous conditions as terms of such renewal (including notice to quit for purposes of sale), the tenant, upon quitting the holding, shall be entitled to compensation for disturbance, which shall mean, in addition to any compensation due to the tenant for the improvements under any Act or agreement, a further compensation in respect to the loss which the arbitrator, in default of agreement, shall find to be sustained by the tenant by reason of quitting the holding.

IN PART III.

It is a matter of common agreement that any scheme of occupying ownership as between the sitting tenant and the owner should be on a voluntary basis. The underlying principle is that the owner as a willing seller offers the farm to the tenant as a willing buyer at the same price as (or less than) would be obtained by auction in the open market.

Any scheme which contains provisions that would put the owner in a worse position than would result from auction will defeat the object in view.

Everyone agrees that the former system of landlord and tenant, with no likelihood of sale of the estate, is best for the country, for owner, tenant, and labourer. But, given the fact that these ideal conditions are no longer possible, it is necessary to consider the effect on the tenant.

Your Committee are of opinion that there is an urgent necessity for immediate legislation by which approved tenants, large and small, will be able to purchase their holdings under voluntary arrangements, under the principle of reducible mortgages to be arranged by the State, and, further, that it is imperative that the whole of the purchase money should be advanced.

The only way in which the wealth of the country can be added to in connection with farming is to make the occupier feel that he will never be turned out of his farm, and your Committee are

of opinion that, failing satisfactory tenancy conditions, occupying ownership presents the only adequate alternative.

The Bill reached the report stage in the House of Lords, but was then allowed to die, unregretted by all, rumour hinting that even its parents were ashamed of it.

In December, 1913, the President of the Board of Agriculture (Mr. Runciman) received a deputation from the Council on the subject, when this report was fully discussed with him.

In the ballot for private member's Bills in 1914 Sir Luke White obtained the fifth place, and at the request of the Parliamentary Committee introduced a Bill to counteract the effect of the judgment given in the Shrewsbury County Court and to secure to tenants compensation for disturbance if dispossessed for purposes of sale. Sir Luke White succeeded in carrying this measure through the House of Commons. It was then taken in charge by Lord Barnard, who saw it through the House of Lords, and it received the Royal Assent on 31st July.

The position, therefore, now is that a condition of insecurity and great anxiety has been created by the Government, who are unable to provide—or even to suggest—an antidote acceptable to the victims. Agricultural opinion is overwhelmingly in favour of the proposals contained in Mr. Collings' Land Purchase Bill, but the Government, driven by a Socialist section of their followers, refuse to admit that the sufferers understand their own case. The Unionist party have taken up the subject of "purchase" as their own, and the question of ownership for either large or small holdings has become the shuttlecock of the politicians. There is small hope, therefore, of any rational solution being arrived at until it has ceased to have value as a party asset. Meantime, the unfortunate farmer is left to try and get out of a difficult situation made for him by other people.

There are other expressions in Section 11 of the Act of 1908 which will require amendment either by litigation or legislation to construe or simplify them, and other points will be raised

as to "good estate management;" but if one dare venture to express a hope it is that beyond this clearing up there should be no more legislation; no further interference between landlord and tenant; no further advance towards fixity of tenure or dual ownership. It is certain that any group of politicians attempting further legislation of this kind will find hearty support from those who favour nationalisation of the land, for if fixity of tenure be carried to its ultimate conclusion nothing short of nationalisation can result. Perhaps it may not be altogether out of place to put on record a few remarks from men, some of whom have been looked upon as infallible, and all of whom were of acknowledged ability:—

Mr. Gladstone opposed a Land Bill brought in by Mr. Butt "because," he said, ". . . perpetuity of tenure on the part of the occupier is virtually expropriation of the landlord, and as a mere readjustment of rent according to prices can by no means dispose of all the contingencies the future may produce in his favour, compensation would have to be paid to the landlord for the rights of which he would be deprived. . . . The effect of such provision will be that the landlord will become a pensioner and a rentcharger on what had been his own estate. The Legislature has, no doubt, the perfect right to reduce him to that condition, giving him proper compensation for any loss he may sustain in money." (Hansard, vol. cxcix., 320.)

Another quotation of Mr. Gladstone's which, though perhaps not exactly germane, still bears on what would be the result if fixity of tenure were carried to its logical conclusion, will not be out of place. Speaking at Hawarden in 1889, he said:—"I think nationalisation of the land, if it means the simple plunder of the proprietors and sending them to the workhouse, that, I consider, is robbery. I think nationalisation of the land with compensation, as far as I can understand it, would be folly, because the State is not qualified to exercise the functions of a landlord . . . and the State could not become the landlord. It would overburden and break down the State."

Somewhere about the early 'sixties Lord Palmerston



THE LORD BARNARD.
Chairman, 1913.



SIR LUKE WHITE, M.P.
Chairman, 1912.



L'ayette, Manchester, Photo. Copyright.

SIR J. BOWEN BOWEN-JONES, BART.
Treasurer, 1897—1914.

exclaimed, when an Irish Land Bill was brought before the House :—“Tenant right is landlord wrong.”

Mr. A. J. Balfour said in 1881 :—“Free sale must end either in rack renting or in robbery.”

Sir Roundell Palmer (afterwards created Lord Selborne), a member of Mr. Gladstone’s Cabinet, said :—“Fixity of tenure means taking away the property of one man and giving it to another.” (Hansard, vol. excix., 1663.)

Mr. Bright suggested in 1870 that if fixity of tenure were given to Irish tenants, landlords should be bought out at a price 20 per cent. above the market value of their properties.

Peasant Proprietors.

The session of 1885 saw Mr. Jesse Collings’ *Peasant Proprietary and Acquisition of Land by Occupiers* Bill introduced for the first time. It was opposed by the Local Taxation Committee because of the new charges it proposed to lay upon ratepayers, and was denounced by an unanimous resolution by the Council on 3rd March, which declared that while they would gladly welcome any measure that would benefit agricultural labourers, they regarded the Bill as impracticable and prejudicial to all parties.

Four Bills dealing with Peasant Proprietary and Allotments were introduced in the first session of 1886, viz., the Allotment and Small Holdings (Mr. Jesse Collings); the Allotments Bill (Mr. Finch-Hatton); the Cottagers’ Allotment Gardens Bill (Mr. H. Chaplin); and the Glebe Lands Bill (Sir Richard Cross). Naturally, in this year of General Elections, none of these Bills were discussed in the House of Commons, but the Council on 4th May carried the following resolution relating to small holdings :—

“That this Council, whilst fully recognising the importance of securing as large a number as possible of persons directly interested in the cultivation of the soil, is of opinion that experience proves, where mixed husbandry prevails, the size of holdings must be regulated by the following circumstances :—

“First, large farms are most suitable where the conformation of the country allows of large, evenly shaped enclosures, and

where the soil and climate are especially adapted to the growth of cereals and the rearing of sheep.

“Second, small farms are preferable in hilly or rugged districts where fields are necessarily small and where the soil and climate are especially favourable to permanent grass; consequently where a large proportion of pasture prevails and dairy produce forms a main source of income.

“Third, market gardens, as well as allotments generally, can only be successfully established where the soil is good enough and the situation closely adjoins the houses of the cultivators, and where good roads afford an easy access for the transport of manure and produce.”

Another resolution objecting to Mr. Collings' Bill was carried unanimously, while a further motion in favour of Mr. Finch-Hatton's Bill, proposed by Mr. Wm. Lipscomb, was negatived by a majority.

In 1887 six Small Holdings or Allotments Bills were introduced. Those introduced by private members were before the Council on 29th March; but, in view of the promised introduction of a Government measure, the Council declined to pronounce any opinion upon them. The Government Bill was introduced and passed after the last meeting of the Council, so they had no opportunity of criticising it. The useful little Bill introduced by Sir E. Birkbeck (Allotments and Cottage Gardens Compensation for Crops) passed through the House of Commons and was taken up and carried through the House of Lords by Lord Winchilsea, who succeeded to the peerage this year, and who, as Mr. Finch-Hatton, had taken much interest in the question for some time.

The Government Small Holdings Bill was considered at the March and April meetings of the Council in 1892, when a resolution welcomed the Bill as an experiment to prevent the evil of the migration of the rural population into the towns. It expressed opposition to any charge being made upon the rates, and as the question was of national concern, the Government was urged to provide the requisite funds from Imperial sources. The Council further resolved to strongly oppose the introduction of compulsion into the Bill. This measure received the Royal Assent on 27th June. It left the cost of administration on the rates, and the element of compulsion

was by no means absent ; but the Council did not meet again to further consider it.

For several years after this the subject of small holdings and peasant proprietary was not raised at any meeting of the Council. Mr. Jesse Collings' Purchase of Land Bill developed its provisions as time passed, and became a potential instrument intended to help, not only to create peasant proprietors, but to enable comparatively large farmers to purchase their holdings where they so desired, if the owners were ready to sell. This proposal, naturally, began to attract a wider circle of men, and an occasional resolution, more or less in support of the Bill, was received by the Central Chamber. In December, 1903, Mr. Collings' Bill was one of the subjects sent down for local Chambers to consider. The majority of the resolutions sent up in response were rather antipathetic to its provisions, and this compelled the Business Committee to place a motion on the agenda for 2nd February, 1904, expressing the view that there was no necessity for the Bill. Mr. Collings attended this meeting himself, and after a full explanation from him an amendment expressing approval of the measure was moved by Mr. Henry Williams, of Monmouthshire, and carried by a considerable majority.

From that date until now there has been a rapidly growing public opinion in its favour, and several hundred agricultural associations of different kinds have passed resolutions asking for legislation on the lines of this Bill.

The Government introduced their Small Holdings Bill in 1907, and it was hailed with delight by a section of Fleet Street agriculturists as a charter of freedom for the labourer ; it was to mark the end of " Land Monopoly ; " it was, in fact, to be epoch-making. With every intention of making this measure thorough, it was put into the charge of a member of the Cabinet, who, though a large landowner, was chiefly known as a great game preserver. Meanwhile " Red Vans " were sent round the country to explain to the rural voter " That this Bill was to make the land into a treasure house for the poor, instead of a pleasure ground for the rich."

On 2nd July the Council put on record the following as their opinion :—

“ That the measure should not be passed unless the alterations recommended by the Local Taxation Committee be incorporated in the Bill.*

“ And, while approving the formation of small holdings on sound economic lines, this Council strongly protests against the hurried manner in which a measure of such importance is being forced through Parliament, without an opportunity having been given to consult the agriculturists and ratepayers of the country, whose interests are so vitally affected.”

The Annual Report for this year, referring to this Act, said :—

“ This must be considered more of a sociological experiment than as a measure likely to prove of benefit to agriculturists generally. Its introduction met with general sympathy from landowners and farmers, but the financial proposals in the original Bill were widely condemned.”

This Act was repealed, but its provisions were re-enacted in the Small Holdings and Allotments Act, 1908, which consolidated the small holdings legislation previously on the Statute Book.†

On 4th April, 1911, the Council carried a resolution with one dissentient urging such an amendment of the Small Holdings Act, 1908, as would render the compulsory powers inoperative except in cases of changes of ownership.

* Page 134 *ante*.

† Page 203 *ante*.

CHAPTER VII.

RAILWAY RATES AND CONDITIONS.

THIS subject has caused the Chambers considerable expenditure of both time and money, for which they have seen but little return. The result of their work has not been so disastrous as that of their campaign for the repeal of the Malt Tax, but with that exception the Chambers have been less successful in this than in any other direction. This has been, and still is, due to a number of causes, many of which have not been thoroughly recognised, and consequently a spasmodic—and at times a weak—policy has been pursued. In the light of experience gained as a result of many fruitless struggles, some of these factors may here be alluded to, although some digression will be involved.

That part of the transport industry of this country which comes under the administration of the railway companies is often spoken of as the "Railway Interest," but it is submitted that this is a wrong term to apply to it. The "Railway Interest" in the most complete sense of the term includes the joint interests of the shareholders, the directors and general managers, the staff of all grades, and the consignors and consignees of traffic. A rational policy would be one which studied the welfare of all these sections of the community, all of whom alike are directly concerned in our chief transport arteries being worked to the best advantage. As generally interpreted, the term "Railway Interest" has come to mean the interests of the directors and general managers in the first place, and of the shareholders in the second, while those of the other classes are disregarded unless and until they can enforce their claims, whether for lower rates, greater facilities or higher wages. This high-handed

policy has been made possible, first, by the large number of directors or large holders of railway shares occupying seats in both Houses of Parliament, and, secondly, by the policy of amalgamation and the elimination of competition between the several companies. The latter was perhaps a necessary corollary of over-representation in Parliament, and one policy helped forward and re-acted on the other. The elimination of competition does not necessarily imply the direct increase of rates, but it has always meant the withdrawal or reduction of other facilities, and thus increased the cost of carriage to freighters.

It is an interesting fact that railway questions cut across the ordinary divisions of party, and whichever Government may be in power, leaders cannot control their followers to the extent of driving them into their own lobby. On a critical division Front Bench members will urge their Front Bench policy, but they will use the whip most sparingly, and disobedience to the whip is not recorded against backsliders. It is doubtful if any other "Interest" can show as much cohesion in both Houses of Parliament as can the so-called "Railway Interest." This fact alone renders it well-nigh impossible to obtain fair or reasonable legislation, since it enables those who direct the general policy of the railway companies to defeat every amendment to measures of which the general managers disapprove. If it be a private Bill and the battle be fought out in the Committee-rooms upstairs, the railway companies, with their practically unlimited resources, retain most of the counsel who are authorities on railway law, or who have made a reputation in this branch of legal work, and consequently the traders, or the employees, stand very little chance of seeing a really fair measure placed on the Statute Book.

Another factor has been the attitude of the Board of Trade. That Department has been endowed with a variety of powers for dealing with railway matters. One of their functions is to act as conciliators between traders and the railways, with a view to reducing litigation. It is probable that a certain amount of litigation has been thus averted, but incidentally

the Conciliation Clause (Section 31, Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888) has, in the opinion of many, caused greater evils than it has obviated.

In giving effect to this section, the officials of the Department are brought into constant personal touch with the principal officials of the railway companies. When a trader feels himself aggrieved and goes to the Board of Trade, he probably does not clearly understand his position. The cause of his complaint may be a perfectly legal proceeding on the part of the railway company, but this body knows the law and the individual trader does not. The latter is, more often than not, quite ignorant of technicalities ; he only knows that (for instance) some facility which he has been accustomed to enjoy has been withdrawn. The arguments on both sides are heard, it is found that the railway company is within its legal right, and the Department points this out to the trader. This probably happens four times out of five, and consequently the Board of Trade officials gradually come to the conclusion that, speaking generally, one party knows its business, while the other does not. Human nature being what it is, it cannot be long before they, unintentionally but inevitably, acquire a bias in favour of the parties whom they have got to know, and who they find understand the questions brought before them, and against the stranger whom they do not know, who does not.

The railway companies are encouraged by the existence of this conciliation clause to be ever scheming to reduce services rendered in consideration of rates charged. For example, some trader complains to the Board of Trade, negotiations take place, and ultimately the railway companies accept a suggestion from the Department that they should only go half as far as they had intended. The traders accept this as a partial victory, and the companies obtain, in greater or less degree, more than a Court would have given them had its intervention been sought. Incidentally, the Board of Trade claims credit for the Department. Again, the trader may bring grievances before the Department ; the officials point out to him the difficulties of the situation, but make no

suggestion of assistance : the trader drops the matter, preferring to endure his grievances rather than to incur the heavy legal costs which a law case would involve. In its annual report to Parliament such cases figure as instances in which the traders are apparently satisfied with the Board's intervention.

The Board of Trade may take a case into Court itself, if they think that a railway company is acting illegally. They have, however, never used this power. On the contrary, when asked by Mr. Barnston, M.P., to do so,* the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. S. Buxton) evaded the question. Further, when the question of preferential rates was being considered by the Departmental Committee in 1906, Sir Herbert Jekyll said (Q. 3134, Cd. 2960) :—

“ What the Board of Trade understand by preferential treatment is the treatment which is expressly prohibited by Sec. 27 of the Act of 1888 ; therefore preferential treatment of that description is a breach of the law which can only be dealt with by a Court of Law, and cannot be dealt with here. All that we can do under Sec. 31 here is conciliation in which points of law are not involved.”

This was quite alien to the point upon which the witness was being examined. The Conciliation Clause was not under discussion, preferential rates were ; yet the Board of Trade representative dragged in the former, ignoring the fact that the Board of Trade could take a case into court if they wished to do so.†

In spite of the close combination known to exist among railway representatives, there has been comparatively little counteracting cohesion on the part of the traders. The only recognised body is the Mansion House Association on Railway and Canal Traffic, which has done some excellent work. There are also Chambers of Commerce as well as Chambers of Agriculture ; but these are by no means homogeneous bodies on this question, any more than are the individual members of any other industry. Thus, the market gardener in Middlesex

* 15th July, 1913.

† The Board of Trade are empowered by Sec. 17 of the Act of 1844 and Sec. 6 of the Regulation of Railways Act, 1873, to take legal action.

will hear quite unmoved by anger that his competitor fifty miles away cannot meet him on approximately level terms in Covent Garden Market because of railway charges or railway delays. All are opposed on principle to preferential rates being given to foreign produce, but a preference given to one locality over another arouses neither enthusiasm nor regret among agricultural consignors.

The agricultural consignor of traffic seldom pays railway rates himself; these are paid by the dealer to whom his produce is consigned. Milk traffic is a general exception to this practice, and any change in the charges for carrying milk is felt at once by the farmer; but with regard to most other commodities it is almost impossible to make him realise the importance of the question, owing to the existence of the custom above mentioned, and it is most difficult to get from agriculturists any definite information as to rates and conditions, when the same is required for official purposes.

The railway companies have an immense advantage over the traders in regard to legal matters. Not only do they secure a hostage against ill-fortune by retaining the majority of the principal legal experts, but each of the larger companies also maintains as part of its equipment a legal staff who are necessarily fully conversant with every branch of railway law. If, therefore, a case is taken into court, it is not unfair to assume that the matter of cost is largely one of indifference to them; their legal staff is merely earning their pay. Naturally a railway company is always prepared to appeal to a higher court, and thus to wear down its opponents. The companies' costs do not, except indirectly, include money out of pocket to anything like the same extent as do the traders'.

Largely owing to their indifference to the cost of litigation, the railways make illegal charges, trusting that their strong position will prevent their action being challenged. If any trader, greatly daring, does challenge them as to the legality of a charge and wins his case, he has not established any principle applicable to his traffic. He must bring one action after another on every illegal charge made against him.

When a question of principle is decided against a trader the railway companies apply the decision rigidly wherever it is possible to do so. But when a decision on such a question is in favour of a trader, railway companies confine its application strictly to his particular case. No trader, or body of traders, can fight against such methods.

The companies often put forward as a reason for not meeting traders' demands the plea that the competition of other companies compels them to adhere to whatever charges or methods happen to be under discussion. There has been very little competition in rates between the companies during the last thirty years; to-day, there is none at all. Every question of importance is settled in conclave by the railway managers at the Clearing House or by the directors at the Railway Association.

These are some of the reasons why the Chambers have but a poor record to show in this matter.*

The first reference made to railway matters was at a meeting of the Council on 5th October, 1869,† during a discussion on Cattle Diseases, when resolutions were carried unanimously urging that animals travelling by rail ought to have an opportunity of drinking at least once every twelve hours; that water should be available at all loading places of railway stations; that cattle trucks should be constructed with spring buffers and be roofed over; and that animals should not be overcrowded in the trucks. Some amelioration of conditions was ultimately obtained.

The second mention of the subject was on 8th November, 1870, when attention was called to the exorbitant charges made by railway companies for the conveyance of dead meat, and they were asked to facilitate the supply of meat to populous districts by a reasonable reduction of their rates. The Great Eastern Company replied that they had reduced their rates the previous April from 20 to 25 per cent., and

* For a full and clear statement of the traders' case, see *Traders and Railways*, by the late Thomas Waghorn, published by Effingham Wilson, in 1907.

† Page 17 *ante*.

were not prepared to reduce them further. Other companies merely sent formal replies.

The question was not raised again until 4th May, 1880, when Mr. Hodges, of Maidstone, got a resolution carried urging that the unequal charges for the carriage of English and foreign produce acted unfairly on the home producer, and was a matter to which the Royal Commission on Agriculture then sitting should direct special attention. The Royal Commission agreed to embrace the subject in their inquiry, and called as witnesses from the Council Lord Huntly and Mr. Hodges. The East Kent Chamber of Agriculture (now the Canterbury Farmers' Club) assisted in promoting a suit to determine the legality of charges made by certain railways, but the decision given was to the effect that the companies were within their strict legal rights.* Early in 1881 the Government appointed a Select Committee to inquire into the charges made by railway and canal companies for the conveyance of merchandise, minerals, agricultural produce and parcels on railways and canals, into the laws and other conditions affecting such charges, and into the working of the Railway Commission of 1873. A few days later an instruction to the Committee was added that they do inquire into the passenger fares charged by the railway companies. Among others on this Committee of twenty-three members were Lord Randolph Churchill, Mr. Richard Paget, Mr. A. Pell and Mr. Samuelson. Later, four others were added, including Sir Baldwyn Leighton and Mr. Phipps.

On 8th March the Council appointed a Committee of its own to watch the proceedings of this Select Committee, particularly as its constitution seemed to them eminently unsatisfactory. The Council further requested that Sir Baldwyn Leighton and Mr. Phipps might be added to the Select Committee, and this recommendation was acted on by the Government on 14th March. The Chamber's Committee included the Marquis of Huntly, Mr. Basil Hodges, Mr. Charles Clay, Mr. Henry Chaplin, M.P., Mr. Duckham,

* London, Chatham and Dover Railway Company v. R. J. Sankey. County Court

M.P., Mr. Phipps, M.P., Mr. Paget, M.P., and Mr. Heneage, M.P. (afterwards Lord Heneage). This Committee, acting in communication with the Royal Agricultural Society (which also appointed a Special Committee on this subject) and the Chambers of Commerce, prepared evidence and sent witnesses to represent their views. The Select Committee presented a brief report, and recommended that they should be reappointed the following session.

1882.

The House of Commons acted on this suggestion, and the Select Committee reported in July. The report dealt mainly with the powers of the Railway Commission, but among the recommendations were :—

That Chambers of Commerce and Agriculture should have a *locus standi* before the Railway Commission, on a certificate of the Board of Trade that they are a *bona fide* association.

That one uniform classification of goods be adopted over the whole railway system.

“Terminal” charges to be recognised, but subject to publication by companies, and in case of challenge, to sanction by the Railway Commission.

That Parliament do not sanction any further control, direct or indirect, of canal navigation by a railway company.

Special complaint was made on behalf of the Chamber in the evidence of their witnesses of preferential rates given to foreign produce, and though the Select Committee admitted the existence of this preference, they made no recommendation with regard to it. The Council, in their Annual Report for 1882, expressed themselves dissatisfied with the report of the Select Committee, but they memorialised the Board of Trade to confer the *status* on duly recognised Chambers as recommended. The President of that Department promised to bear this request in mind if the Government attempted any legislation on the subject.

1883.

On 4th May, the Government formally assented to Chambers of Agriculture having a *locus standi* before Parliamentary

Committees. During this session some private railway Bills were opposed in order to prevent higher charges being levied on artificial manures than on ordinary manure. A new Standing Order was procured which required the Board of Trade to direct the attention of Parliamentary Committees to new rates, and this sufficed in some cases to obtain a reduction of the attempted charges. In February of this year the Council endorsed a recommendation of the Royal Commission on Agriculture by passing the following resolution :—

“ That legislation is required for securing equality in railway rates for the carriage of similar goods under similar conditions.”

It was during this year, too, that the Central Chamber first joined hands with the Mansion House Association on Railway and Canal Traffic, then known as the Railway and Canal Traders' Association, a body with whom close association has been maintained ever since.

1884.

In February a new Committee was appointed by the Council to deal with railway matters, and Mr. Richard Paget was elected as its Chairman. On 6th May the Council passed a resolution asking the Government to give effect to the recommendations of their Select Committee by extending the powers of the Railway and Canal Commission. On 22nd May the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Chamberlain) introduced a Bill to amend the Regulations of Railways Acts. On 17th June the Council adopted a report from their Railway Committee, strongly objecting to several of its provisions, nominating delegates to join a deputation to Mr. Chamberlain, arranged by the Railway Traders' Association, to explain the reasons for their objections. Two of the principal points were (a) the proposal to legalise charges in excess of maximum rates in respect of “ station terminals,” and (b) the proposal to allow appeals from the Railway Commissioners on questions of fact. The Bill was not proceeded with by the Government.

Although in 1883 the Government had assented to Chambers of Agriculture being given a *locus standi* before Parliamentary Committees, they did not give effect to their assent until, on 9th July, 1884, Sir Bernhard Samuelson carried a motion in the House of Commons by 94 votes to 84 to amend the Standing Orders in this direction. Although Sir Bernhard sat on their side of the House, the Government opposed the motion, and it was, of course, also objected to by various defenders of the then existing practice of private Bill legislation.

At the instance of Lord Henniker, a somewhat similar Standing Order was agreed to by the House of Lords, but it differed from that of the Commons in that it applied only to opposition to any proposed *new* rates.

1885.

The Railway Committee instituted this year a regular campaign against a number of private railway Bills which proposed to legalise new charges beyond the fixed maximum rates in respect of "station terminals." Every local Chamber was advised to petition Parliament to reject these proposals, and to request their respective members to vote against the second reading of the Bills. Other Associations took alarm, and a general Committee of Members of both Houses of Parliament was formed by Lord Henniker in order to concentrate opposition from all parties to the railway proposals, and three of the Chamber's representatives were put on the Executive of this Committee. On 31st March the Railway Committee reported to the Council that the action taken in opposition to the railway Bills had resulted in a statement being made in the House of Commons by the President of the Board of Trade, in which he suggested that the Bills should not be proceeded with, but that a Commission should be appointed to inquire how far the Bills provided a satisfactory settlement, and if they did not, in what way they should be modified. At the same time, Mr. Chamberlain was asked by Mr. Paget if the question of preferential rates would be included in this inquiry, when the former

replied that the Government already possessed sufficient information to enable them to legislate, as soon as they could find time to do so, on a question which they admitted to be ripe for legislation.

At the suggestion of their Committee, the Council objected to any reference of these private Bills to a Commission, as suggested by Mr. Chamberlain, and expressed the opinion that negotiations should not be carried further until these Bills had been either formally withdrawn or rejected by the House of Commons. They were ultimately withdrawn. A decision by a court of law,* on appeal from the Railway Commission, however, upset previous decisions on the question of terminals, this seriously prejudicing the position of traders generally, and conferring upon the companies most of the powers which they had unsuccessfully endeavoured to obtain from Parliament.

In June, 1885, a new Government under Lord Salisbury came into office, and Mr. Stanhope (President of the Board of Trade) announced his intention to propose legislation on railway questions; the Chamber accordingly prepared to lay their views before him by deputation.

1886.

In February, however, there was another change, Mr. Mundella, under Mr. Gladstone, taking up this office. He announced that owing to the preparations made by his predecessor in office, he was in a position to submit to the House of Commons, as a Government measure, a Bill to settle the powers of the Railway Commission and other matters pending between the companies and the public. This announcement was made to the deputation from the various bodies which had intended to wait upon Mr. Stanhope.

This measure was introduced in the House of Commons on 8th March. On 6th April the Council adopted, and sent to the President of the Board of Trade, a detailed report, pointing out the particulars in which they desired its amend-

* Queen's Bench. *Hall v. London, Brighton and South Coast Railway.*

ment, at the same time unanimously passing a resolution welcoming the Bill and according full support to the second reading, but expressing the hope that in Committee the clause empowering the companies to give undue preference to foreign produce would be omitted. A whip was sent out in support of the second reading, and that stage was passed without a division. Sir Richard Paget then put down motions to give effect to the requirements of the Chambers, and preparations were made to oppose strongly the preference clause. Owing to the defeat of the Government, however, the Bill was not proceeded with.

1887.

This year the Bill was introduced in the House of Lords, on 11th March, and on 6th April the Council submitted a statement to the Government showing in detail their objections to certain proposals of the measure, and declaring their resolve to offer the most strenuous opposition to the subsection dealing with undue preference. They also suggested that the duty of requiring railway companies to carry out the provisions of their various Acts should be undertaken by some Government Department. The Bill passed the Lords, where every effort to introduce amendments was unsuccessful. A further report was therefore adopted by the Council and sent to the Government. This expressed regret that not only had their suggestions been ignored, but that changes had been made largely in favour of the companies. Sir R. Paget (on behalf of the Chambers of Agriculture) and Sir Bernhard Samuelson (on behalf of the Chambers of Commerce) gave notice of the necessary amendments, and every possible step was taken to secure the fullest support to them. Such strong opposition to the measure became manifest that the Government withdrew their Bill.

1888.

The Bill was re-introduced in the Lords, and obtained a second reading in the Commons on 10th May. The Earl of Jersey, who was Chairman of the Chamber this year, succeeded

in inserting a proviso, by 69 votes to 63, forbidding any difference of treatment as between British and foreign goods.*

Several amendments proposed by the Chambers were incorporated, and the Council adopted a report from their Committee, on 17th July, stating that although the traders had not got all they wanted, yet their position must be considered more favourable than heretofore. Votes of thanks to Lord Jersey, Sir R. Paget and to the Railway Committee for their services were passed, and the Government was urged to pass the Bill into law. The Bill became an Act this year, and the Chambers felt some degree of satisfaction at the result of their work. It was not long before they discovered that the prohibition of "preference" was practically worthless as a safeguard to the traders.

1889.

The Railway Committee had a busy year in 1889, presenting five reports to the Council. These dealt almost entirely with the revision of railway rates under the Act passed in the previous year. The work involved several letters to local Chambers, and the collection from them of an extraordinary mass of information as to rates and facilities.

A public inquiry was held on behalf of the Board of Trade by Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Mr. (afterwards Sir Courtenay) Boyle for the purpose of hearing objections to the proposed classifications and schedules of the railway companies. Several conferences were arranged between some of the larger objecting agricultural associations and railway managers, and some concessions on points of classification were thus secured, the most important of these being the transfer of stable manure and stones for road repair to the lowest class.

The Board of Trade inquiry took place during 1889-90; evidence was heard from 211 witnesses, of whom 178 were

* Unfortunately when the Bill was before the Standing Committee on Trade in the House of Commons this proviso was rendered ambiguous, and almost worthless by the railway interest insisting upon adding at the end the words, "in respect of the same or similar services."

traders' witnesses ; and the proceedings occupied 85 days. The report was presented to Parliament on 18th August, 1890, and stated that the Board had been unable to come to an agreement with the railway companies, and had consequently determined the classification of traffic which the companies ought to adopt, and the schedule of maximum rates and charges, including terminal charges, which they thought just and reasonable.

1890.

The Railway Committee of the Chamber reported in November that they cordially recognised the evident desire of the Board of Trade to arrive at conclusions which should be just between the companies and the traders ; they, however, recorded their detailed objections to the classification.

Further communications from local Chambers necessitated further criticisms of the proposed classification, and the Railway Committee presented reports in December, 1890, and to practically every Council meeting in 1891 on the subject.

In February it was reported that on 23rd January a small deputation had waited upon Sir Michael Hicks-Beach to present a memorial setting out their objections, particularly those relating to station terminals, animal rates and Milk and Dairy Produce rates. The President of the Board of Trade said that he intended to accept the principle of their contention with regard to terminals, and that some of the other rates should be revised.

The Provisional Order Bills to give effect to the classification were read a second time, and referred to a Joint Select Committee of Lords and Commons. This Committee spent forty-eight days in a minute examination of the Bills, and their proceedings were closely watched by the Chamber. In November the Chamber's Committee reported that the Bills had been somewhat improved by the Joint Committee, and that though the traders had failed to secure some amendments which they considered reasonable, yet that the amend-

ments which they had succeeded in carrying amply justified their efforts and the expense incurred. They still, however, especially objected to some of the rates in Clause C, governing the cost of carriage of home-grown grain, as well as to the powers as to station terminals conceded to the companies generally, although no such charges had previously been authorised, except in a few instances. The effect of the addition of the sum for terminals, whatever the length of the journey, combined with the principle of diminishing rates for increasing distances, caused the sanctioned maxima to be practically of no protection whatever to short-distance traffic.

The passing into law of these Provisional Order Bills* completed the scheme of railway legislation initiated in 1888. In their report for November, the Railway Committee summarised as follows some of the chief points gained by the passing of this legislation, and by the revised classification provided under Sec. 24 of the Act of 1888 :—

(1) The codification and simplification of the charging powers of railway companies, so that any trader may readily discover the maximum rates which he can be legally charged.

(2) The prohibition of preferential rates for, or treatment of, foreign merchandise.

(3) The extension of the powers of the Railway Commission.

(4) The strict limitation of charges for station terminals, which otherwise (under the decision of the Court of Appeal, *Hall v. the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway*) were practically unlimited over a large part of the railway system of the country.

(5) The prohibition of charges for terminal services unless actually performed, and the recognition of the right of the trader—under certain conditions—to perform such services himself.

(6) The exhaustive classification of merchandise—2327 articles appearing therein, instead of 1391 as proposed by the railway companies—and the provision that unenumerated articles are to be charged at Class 3 rates, instead of at Class 5 rates as heretofore.

(7) The legal obligation placed, for the first time, upon the railway companies to carry milk and other perishable merchandise by passenger train, and the settlement of maxima for its conveyance.

(8) The legalisation of truck rates for animals.

(9) The right of all traders to have reasonable through rates fixed.

* Known as the Rates and Charges Confirmation Acts, 1891.

Events have since shown that as regards Nos. 1 and 2 the Railway Committee were over-sanguine, for, notwithstanding the legal prohibition of preferential treatment of foreign merchandise, such preference is generally given; and traders find very considerable difficulty in ascertaining the maximum rates that they can legally be charged.

The Railway and Canal Traders' Association formed in 1885 amalgamated in 1892 with an association known as the Mansion House Committee, because it was formed by Sir James Whitehead during the year he was Lord Mayor (1889), and the combined bodies have since been called the Mansion House Association on Railway and Canal Traffic.

The Railway Committee presented a report in April, 1892, pointing out the excellent work which this body had done, and recommending the Council to give an annual subscription to their funds; a recommendation which has ever since been acted upon. The Committee of Members of the two Houses of Parliament formed by Lord Henniker became formally merged in the larger body in 1902, though it held no meeting later than 1891.

1893.

The revised rates under the recently passed Acts came into operation on 1st January, and it was at once found that these had been materially and generally increased. The railway Committee reported on 31st January that the extreme use to which, in so many cases, the companies were attempting to put their new powers, made it necessary that some ready method should be provided by Parliament for the review of rates and charges imposed. In May the Committee further reported that the companies had materially reduced many of the rates which had been raised on 1st January, in consequence of the pressure brought to bear upon them in the House of Commons and by the Board of Trade. The companies, however, still claimed and enforced an all-round increase of 5 per cent. on the old rates, which the Committee considered to be unwarranted.

A Select Committee of the House of Commons was soon afterwards appointed to inquire into the manner in which the companies had exercised the new powers conferred upon them by the Rates and Charges Order Confirmation Acts, 1891 and 1892, and to consider whether it was desirable to adopt any other means of settling differences arising between the companies and the public with respect to the rates and conditions of charge for the conveyance of goods. The Chamber took steps, in conjunction with the Mansion House Association, to lay evidence before this Select Committee, as to the effect of the new rates and conditions on agricultural produce and animals. The Select Committee reported to Parliament on 4th December, and their report was found by the Railway Committee of the Chamber to be satisfactory in so far as it condemned emphatically the general rise in rates made on the previous 1st January, and it recommended a method for dealing with such increases. The Chamber's suggestion—that the Board of Trade should be empowered to reduce any rate if found to be unreasonable, notwithstanding that it did not exceed the statutory powers of the company—was not adopted by the Select Committee. They recommended instead that traders should be at liberty to go to the Railway Commission, and that the Commission should be empowered to decide whether the increase was reasonable or not; but this was only to apply to rates raised since 1892. The Chamber much objected to this limitation of the power of appeal to rates raised since 1892, as they considered that it involved the presumption that all rates existing in 1892 were reasonable, and this the Chamber strongly disputed.

Evidence was laid before the Select Committee of the continued existence of preferential treatment of foreign produce, and it was distinctly alleged, and the companies did not contradict the statement, that while the rates on grain from inland towns were all raised on 1st January, 1892, the rates on grain from seaport towns were in no case increased. The Select Committee, however, made no reference to this question in their report.

1894.

In February the Council urged the President of the Board of Trade to bring in a Bill to give effect to the report of the Select Committee. In May the Railway Committee reported to the Council that such a Bill had been introduced, and protested against the proposal therein contained to limit the power of appeal by traders to increased rates. The Bill was carried through late in the session, in a form which provided for a right of appeal only in respect of any increase made in a rate since 1892.

In December the Railway Committee reported that inasmuch as they considered the new Act unsatisfactory, owing to the inability of the Government to give time for the discussion of the Bill in the Commons, and the consequent necessity of their either accepting what the companies would concede or losing the Bill altogether, they urged all members of associated bodies to continue to send in complaints of rates increased since 1892. In this report they also called attention to the preferential rates given by the London and South-Western Railway Company to various commodities.

1895.

The chief event of this year was the case brought against the London and South-Western Railway Company by the Mansion House Association, in order to test the legality of the preferential treatment given to foreign produce. The case was before the Railway Commission on 7th, 8th, 9th, 11th, 14th, 15th and 16th March, and judgment was delivered on 10th April. The question of law involved was the proper construction of the proviso of Sec. 27 of the Act of 1888. The Association (supported by the Central Chamber) contended that this proviso forbade the differentiation of rates in favour of imported goods, and precluded the company from justifying any such difference by considerations which might avail in a case relating solely to merchandise of British origin. The question of fact for determination was, whether, subject to the determination of the legal point, the rates

complained of constituted an undue preference to the imported goods.

The company attempted to justify the preference on the ground that the low rate on the imported goods was (1) an apportioned amount of a through rate; (2) that it had to be maintained at the low figure to enable them to compete successfully with the water route; and (3) that it was justified by a difference in circumstances, such as volume of traffic, method of packing, &c., in favour of the foreign goods. The Commission decided that the proviso could not be held to operate as desired by the applicants, although it might prevent justification of preferences on the grounds mainly relied upon by the company and their general manager, and afterwards, to quote the words of Mr. Justice Collins, vehemently repudiated" and abandoned by their counsel; that the applicants were nevertheless entitled to relief if they could establish undue preference, and that, in regard to three of the articles in question—hops, hay and fresh meat—undue preference had, in fact, been established, and some modification must be made.

These three articles comprised all the traffic of importance in home produce which was the subject of complaint.*

In April the Railway Committee reported to the Chamber upon this case, and expressed their opinion that the law was unsatisfactory and ought to be made unmistakeably clear. They refused to accept the view that the words "in respect of the same or similar services" could be held to cover differences of charges so enormous as were shown in the Southampton case. They therefore urged the President of the Board of Trade to introduce a Bill defining the law on the subject, and to give powers to the Board of Trade to carry the law into effect.

In November the Railway Committee reported that the revised rates under the order of the Railway Commission had been put into operation, and that they still left possibilities of preferential treatment, especially with regard to hay;

* Annual Report of Mansion House Association, 1894 and 1895.

that the other revised rates, however, showed a considerable advance towards equality of treatment, if impartially applied by the company.

1896.

Sir Richard Paget resigned the chairmanship of the Committee in March, and Mr. A. F. Jefferys, M.P., was elected in his place.

The Committee presented two reports this year, both dealing with increases in rates. After much correspondence with the companies some reductions were effected, but they were mostly local and not of great importance.

Light Railways.

During 1894 the Council nominated as representatives to a conference on the subject of light railways, arranged by the Board of Trade, Mr. F. A. Channing, M.P., Mr. A. F. Jefferys, M.P., and the Secretary (Mr. R. H. Rew). In December, after a general debate on the subject, it was agreed to collect information for the use of their representatives on the conference, as to the need of light railways. Replies were received from twenty-one local Chambers, and these were laid before the conference. In February, 1895, the representatives presented a report of the proceedings of the conference, and the Council unanimously adopted the following resolution:—

“That the provision of light railways would in certain districts be advantageous to agriculturists, provided that no additional burden be thrown upon ratepayers by their construction, and that protection be given against unreasonable or unfair charges and conditions being made for the conveyance of agricultural produce upon them.”

On 30th April the Council further resolved:—

“That as long as light railways are constructed and maintained by Imperial subvention in Scotland and Ireland, no Bill for the construction of light railways in England will be satisfactory which does not provide for like assistance from the Treasury.”

Mr. Ritchie, on behalf of the Government, introduced the Light Railways Bill on 20th February, 1896. On 3rd March

the Council after some debate unanimously expressed its satisfaction at the introduction of the measure, though its provisions were somewhat criticised. Thus the late Mr. Lloyd Wharton, M.P., said, "there was too much Board of Trade in the Bill"; while Colonel Le Roy-Lewis protested against a charge of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest for the Government subvention when Consols were standing at 110. The Bill received the Royal Assent on 14th August this year.

Sparks from Railway Engines.

From this date until February, 1904, this Committee held no meetings, although it was re-elected in each year. In 1899, however, many complaints were made of losses by fires caused by sparks from railway engines, and in 1900 a Bill on this subject was drafted and ballotted for. The result of the ballot was unfavourable, but on 8th May, 1900, Mr. Jeffreys asked the First Lord of the Treasury "for facilities," when the latter replied that there was a "curious discrepancy between the law which applied to road locomotives and that which applied to railway engines," adding that the Board of Agriculture had "no detailed information as to the damage done by sparks from railway engines." A mass of detailed information was soon collected and sent on to that Department. In 1901 the Bill got a place in the ballot, and was introduced by Mr. Hudson (M.P. for North Herts); it was read a second time by 307 votes to 80, and progress in Committee was reported, but the Government declined to find time for its further progress. The chance of the ballot gave no opportunity for this little measure until 1905, when Mr. W. A. Mount (M.P. for Newbury) obtained a fairly good place, and at the request of the Parliamentary Committee introduced the Bill again. In the debate on second reading the railway party intimated that they were willing to make a compromise, and if it were accepted they would not further oppose the Bill. As this was the only chance of getting it through Parliament, this compromise was accepted, and the Bill became The Railway Fires Act, 1905, in due course. It was, of course, shorn of much of its usefulness, and its coming

into operation was delayed until 1908 ; still, it has been of some service, if only in that it has induced railway companies to be more careful. Certainly fewer fires have occurred from this cause since that date.

1904.

The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company promoted a private Bill this year, and on its second reading Sir Wm. Tomlinson (on behalf of the Mansion House Association) moved an instruction to the Committee with the object of enabling traders to ascertain how "through" rates from foreign places are made up. He pointed out that these "through" rates often included in one charge the foreign rate, all dock, harbour and shipping charges, carriage by sea and the home railway rate ; but that, if this total were divided under the five heads specified, it would be at once evident whether or no preference was being given to foreign produce. The Chamber issued a whip to their members in support of this instruction, but as usual the railway interest was too strong, and the instruction was lost by 103 votes to 79. Eighteen members of the Chamber voted against and fifteen for it, Sir Courtenay Warner seconding it on behalf of the Chamber.

In May the Earl of Onslow appointed a Departmental Committee of the Board of Agriculture to inquire into the rates charged by railway companies in Great Britain, in respect of the carriage of foreign and colonial produce, and to report whether there was evidence of preferential treatment accorded to such produce. It was a badly constituted Committee, for the railway interest was much too strongly represented upon it. Lord Jersey was nominated as Chairman and Mr. E. G. Haygarth Brown was appointed to represent the Board of Agriculture. The Chamber made an effort to get one or two more agriculturists added to it, and after some pressure from Sir Edward Strachey, the name of Mr. George Lambert, M.P., was added. He, however, soon retired from the position, on becoming a Junior Lord of the Admiralty.

The Private Sidings on Railways Act was passed this year. It requires railway companies to give all reasonable facilities for the junction of such sidings with the railway and working of private sidings or private branch railways.

1905.

The principal witness for the Chamber before the Departmental Committee was Mr. Thomas Waghorn, who confined his attention to two points, viz., (a) the meat rates from Birkenhead and Liverpool to London, as compared with the rates from North Devon to London, and (b) fruit rates from several stations in Kent, as compared with Kent port rates. His remedies were summarised in the Railway Committee's report, which the Council adopted on 4th April, 1905, viz.:—

“Your Committee therefore suggest that the Railway and Canal Traffic Acts, 1854–1904, be amended in the sense of substituting the Board of Agriculture for the Board of Trade in such sections of the Acts as regulate the settlement of differences on disputes arising in respect of the conveyance of agricultural, dairy or market garden produce, and, in particular, that the Board of Agriculture should be empowered to prosecute in cases of general importance to agriculturists before the Railway Commissioners in accordance with the provisions of Sec. 6 of the Regulations of Railways Act, 1873.”

Mr. Edwin Clements, who was a witness on behalf of the Mansion House Association, also spoke for the Central Chamber, and he, too, put forward the second part of the foregoing proposal. There were logical grounds for this contention, inasmuch as the Department of Agriculture for Ireland was given similar powers by Sec. 17 of the Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act, 1899.

1906.

The Departmental Committee presented its report in April, and on 29th May the Council adopted a report from its Committee, from which the following are extracts:—

“The fears expressed when the composition of the Committee was made known are shown by the report to have been well

founded. The Committee, unfortunately, failed to appreciate the grievances which the witnesses of the Chamber brought forward.

“The greater part of the Majority Report consists merely of a summary of the assertions of the railway managers, and on page 2 the Committee interpret ‘preferential treatment’ as ‘undue preference,’ and assume all the onerous duties of the Railway Commission without either their experience or the powers given to that body for arriving at a correct judicial conclusion.

“The Minority Report (presented by Mr. Haygarth Brown) not only recognises to a greater extent the agricultural side of the question, but seems also more clearly to have grasped the meaning of the terms of reference.

“The greater part of the railway cross-examination was open to refutation (*vide* comments by Mr. Edwin Clements and Mr. Waghorn, in Appendix IX., pages 295–315 of Cd. 2960), but whereas the agricultural witnesses were cross-examined by members of the Committee who were experts in railway technicalities, there were no similar railway experts to cross-examine railway witnesses on behalf of the agriculturists.”

In order to present the Chamber’s views, Mr. Waghorn was instructed to prepare a memorandum on the report of the Departmental Committee, for submission to the President of the Board of Agriculture, and this report, after it had been approved by the Railway Committee, was published in pamphlet form.*

On 6th March the Council instructed the Parliamentary Committee to support the Mansion House Association in opposing several railway Bills, in which power was sought to enable the promoters to act as carriers on highways, apart from their business as railway companies, without proper restrictions as to the rates to be taken for the carriage of goods. Satisfactory modifications of the clauses were obtained in all the Bills of this session.

On 23rd October the Council sent representatives to a conference arranged by the Mansion House Association on “Owner’s Risk.” On this occasion a resolution was unanimously passed approving of a Bill, prepared by the Association, entitled the “Railways (Contracts) Bill,” for amending the law relating to railway and canal companies’ rates and

* Published by the Central Chamber of Agriculture.

conditions of conveyance, and for safeguarding the position of traders who consign goods at owner's risk rates.

On 13th December the Council sent delegates to a deputation arranged by the Mansion House Association to the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Lloyd George), to ask him to introduce the Railways (Contracts) Bill as a Government measure. The President said: "I think you have made out a grievance, and you have also made out a case for something being done at the earliest possible moment to redress it. You may depend upon it that I will use all the influence I can with the Government in order to induce them to deal effectively with this matter."

1907.

The above-mentioned Bill was introduced by Mr. F. W. Lambton at the request of the Darlington Chamber of Agriculture, and a resolution approving of it was passed by the Council on 29th January. It was read a second time, referred to the Standing Committee on Trade without a division, and reported without amendment, but made no further progress. It was down as the third order for 14th June, but, as certain railway representatives developed a sudden interest in the measures which preceded it, this Bill was talked out. The sympathy expressed by Mr. Lloyd George in the previous December did not therefore materialise into active help.

The Mansion House Association arranged a conference on 18th February between Chambers of Commerce, of Agriculture and other Traders' Associations. The Council were represented by the Secretary. Resolutions were unanimously carried calling attention to the fact that the combination into which the railways had entered violated the conditions on which such companies had acquired their statutory powers and was contrary to public policy, inasmuch as it tended to destroy competition, while calculated to invest the companies with an uncontrolled monopoly of the carriage of merchandise. The resolutions further affirmed that these combinations and arrangements demanded the immediate consideration of

Parliament, and requested the President of the Board of Trade to call for the publication of the terms of all joint arrangements made by any of the companies with reference to merchandise. Another resolution dealt with the preferential treatment accorded to foreign imports, and asked the President of the Board of Trade to receive a deputation on these points.

This deputation was received on 21st March, when the Council were again represented. Mr. Lloyd George's reply was considered to be not unsatisfactory, and taken in conjunction with subsequent replies given to questions put to him in the House of Commons, by Sir Francis Channing and others, it appeared that he had grasped the importance of the subject, and that his sympathies were with the traders.

At the request of the Leicestershire Chamber, the Council opposed the Midland Railway Bill, which sought for power to close the Butterley Tunnel on the Cromford Canal. Sir Francis Channing moved an instruction to the Committee to which this Bill was referred to the effect that "all references in the Bill to the abandonment of this tunnel be omitted." A whip was issued by the Parliamentary Committee, and when the Bill was committed the instruction was agreed to.

1908.

A report from the Railway Committee which the Council adopted on 28th January announced that they had filed an objection to the Working Agreement between the Great Northern and Great Eastern Railway Companies, which was to be submitted to the Railway Commission. Objections were also filed by other agricultural associations, by the Board of Trade, and by other railway companies. The Commission sat on 26th February, taking the objection of the Midland Company first. The ground of their objection was that under their Act the Great Northern was acting *ultra vires*. The Court agreed, and the case was dismissed. The two companies appealed, but on 10th March the Court of Appeal upheld the previous decision. It was later

announced that the companies concerned would promote a Bill in the next session in order to obtain the powers which the Courts held they did not possess.

The attitude of the Central Chamber was that they would not oppose, on principle, amalgamations between railway companies, but that in every case they would oppose proposals which did not carry with them clauses safeguarding the public interest with regard to rates, charges and conditions.

On 11th February, Mr. G. A. Hardy moved a resolution in the House of Commons, as follows :—

“That, in view of the widespread complaints on the part of traders, agriculturists and the general public with regard to railway charges and facilities, and particularly with regard to preferential treatment of foreign goods, the time has come to consider how far these evils could be remedied by State purchase of the railways, as foreshadowed by the Railway Regulation Act, 1914.”

The debate was adjourned, but during the evening Mr. Lloyd George made a somewhat important speech. He agreed that a case had been made out for inquiry, and thought that it would be a mistake not to inquire also into the question of the State purchase of Railways. He agreed to accept the motion if all words were left out after “by” and inserting “any change in the existing relations between the railways and the State.” He expressed his conviction that preferential treatment *was* accorded to foreign produce, and thought further inquiry into that matter was also needed.

In March the President of the Board of Trade appointed what was vaguely termed a “Conference,” to consider the whole railway question. Its *personnel* included representatives of the railways, the traders and the travelling public. Its sittings were held *in camera*, and no notes were taken of its proceedings. It presented a report to parliament in June, 1909, but this showed very little knowledge of the requirements of the trading community. Among the recommendations made was one dealing with owner's risk, but such conditions were attached to this that but little advantage was anticipated from it. None of the other complaints put

forward by the Council were touched upon. The Railway Committee were requested to name suitable representatives of agriculture to sit on it, but none of the gentlemen suggested were asked to serve.

1909.

The Bill foreshadowed the previous year to amalgamate the Great Northern and Great Central Railways was introduced early this year, but now the Great Eastern Company was included in it. The Railway Committee took active steps to secure a *locus standi* to appear before the Committee to which the Bill was to be referred, but this proved to be unnecessary, as practically everyone was empowered to file petitions. An Instruction was put on the paper by Sir Francis Channing, among others, on behalf of the Council, and a whip was sent to Members of Parliament asking them to support it. The terms of this Instruction were :—

“ . . . To consider, and if deemed desirable to insert, clauses requiring that the companies shall not give preference in rates or conditions where agricultural produce or requisites are concerned, between different parts of the area served by the companies. That no existing rates shall be raised nor facilities withdrawn where agricultural traffic is concerned, and that complaints of unreasonable or preferential rates or conditions in respect of agricultural traffic in the area served by the companies shall be submitted to the Board of Agriculture, and authorising that Board to make such orders thereon as shall to them appear to be reasonable.”

There was, however, no opportunity of moving this, as when the Bill was read a second time, on 5th April, by a majority of fourteen, the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Churchill) moved its committal to a Select Committee with an Instruction in much wider terms than the foregoing. On 26th April the companies withdrew their Bill, giving as their reasons the wide terms of the Instruction to the Committee and the granting of a *locus standi* to practically everybody, and that these conditions would have so prolonged the inquiry that the expense involved would have been greater than the companies felt justified in incurring.

Other Combination Bills introduced in this same session included the London and North-Western and Midland Railway Companies pooling agreement, the London and North-Western, Midland and Lancashire and Yorkshire Companies pooling agreement, and two Welsh Railway Agreement Bills, but as they did not threaten the same far-reaching influence over rates and conditions, the Council did not take any action in regard to them ; the Mansion House Association, however, opposed them, and the amalgamating clauses were struck out of the Taff Vale - Cardiff Bill, while the Taff Vale (Rhymney) Bill was withdrawn.

The foregoing paragraphs would almost make it appear as if the traders had won a victory, but this was in reality very far from being the case. The astute railway managers and their legal advisers had found a way which would be as effectual from their point of view, would cost them much less than parliamentary inquiries and would entail much less publicity. They at once began to make "working agreements" between themselves, and within a few months such "working agreements" were announced between the London and North-Western, Midland, and Lancashire and Yorkshire companies, and the Great Western and South-Western companies, among others.

On 6th May Mr. Churchill announced his intention in the House of Commons of appointing a Departmental Committee to inquire into the question of railway amalgamations or working unions. The composition of this Committee was deemed to be so unfair that, when the Central Chamber were invited to send witnesses, their Railway Committee declined to nominate representatives. The Council, however, instructed the Committee to try and secure competent witnesses, but on 21st September the Council adopted a further report from their Committee in which it was stated that they were unable to find any. At a later stage, in view of certain important points which other witnesses had brought out, and after a further invitation from the Departmental Committee, the Council nominated Mr. Thomas Waghorn to appear on their behalf.

1910.

Colonel C. W. Long, M.P., for the Evesham Division of Worcester, who had been Chairman of the Chamber's Railway Committee for several years, was compelled by ill-health to retire this year. The Council expressed their great appreciation of his services and hopes for his early recovery, but he was never able to take up the work again, and his loss was a very grave one to the Committee.

In view of proposals for working agreements, meetings were arranged between members of the Railway Committee and the Boards of the Great Western and South-Western Companies, when numerous questions were discussed.

The Dairy Products Committee tabulated a list of causes of complaint in connection with the railway transit of milk, and requested the Board of Agriculture to arrange a general conference on this subject with railway managers. The Board, however, found this impracticable.

For many years the Council had been asking that a Bill consolidating all the Railway Traffic Acts might be carried through Parliament, and on one occasion an official at the Board of Trade, when asked to do so, replied that that Department could not undertake such a gigantic task. The Council therefore, at very considerable expense, instructed Mr. Waghorn to draft a Bill which should consolidate the existing law and include certain amendments. No suitable occasion, however, presented itself for the introduction of such an important Bill in this year.

1911.

On 21st February the Dairy Products Committee's report on Milk Traffic was adopted, which authorised the Committee to confer with various railway companies with a view to obtaining modifications of the regulations controlling this traffic. Lord Clinton, who was Chairman of the Chamber this year, and who was also a Director of the South-Western Railway Company, arranged an interview with the Traffic Superintendent of that company (Mr. Holmes) on 3rd May.

Mr. Holmes pointed out that all the questions brought forward must come before the Railway Clearing House, so that he was unable to deal with them. He offered to arrange a meeting with the Clearing House on 25th October. This interview took place, when all the companies were represented. A long debate took place, with the result that some small modifications were agreed upon, the principal one being that ordinary strong parchment address labels with the consignee's name printed thereon would in future be accepted by the companies in the case of milk cans.

The Departmental Committee on 1st May presented its report.

On 30th May the Council adopted a report from its Committee giving a summary of Mr. Waghorn's evidence, and especially approving one suggestion made by the Departmental Committee, viz.:—

“That the whole question of the law and practice affecting throughout charges made on traffic exported from or imported into the country is one that requires investigation.”

The tenor of the Departmental report was in favour of the substitution of a policy of combination for that of competition, and of giving the companies freedom to enter into agreements with one another. The report itself, however, was very ambiguously worded, and the recommendations were “conditioned and limited” by the Committee's general conclusions.

The Bill to consolidate and amend the Railway Traffic Acts was introduced in the House of Lords by Lord Barnard on 30th May, but was not given any opportunity of proceeding further.

A Sub-Committee, consisting of Mr. Harry Barnston, M.P. (Chairman of the Railway Committee), Mr. Waghorn and the Secretary, was appointed by the Council to confer with the Railway Association in order to discuss with them any modifications in this Bill which they might desire, and with a view of arriving at some understanding, in the hope that the Bill might be allowed to go forward as an agreed measure.

The Railway Association, however, with scant courtesy, declined to arrange any meeting.

On 6th November it was announced that the Government intended to introduce a Railway Bill in the following year to give effect to some of the recommendations of the Departmental Committee of 1911, and of the Railway Conference of 1909, so the Chamber's Bill then before the House of Lords was withdrawn.

The railway strike of this year was responsible for a statement by the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Buxton) on 24th October, in reply to a question from Mr. Charles Bathurst, to the effect that in the Bill he intended to introduce in 1912 it was proposed to make it clear that "an increase in the cost of labour owing to improved conditions for the staff would, if established, be a valid justification for a reasonable increase of charges." This caused considerable apprehension among traders, which events showed was amply justified.

The London, Brighton and South Coast Railway (Steam Vessels) Bill was opposed by the Chamber and by the Mansion House Association, on the ground that it contained clauses authorising the company to enter into arrangements with steamship companies respecting the carriage of goods. The possession of such powers was calculated to facilitate the giving of undue preference to foreign merchandise; hence the opposition, which was successful.

1912.

The Government introduced their promised Bill on 1st April. The Railway Committee reported at length on this measure on 7th May, concluding with the statement that although certain advantages were conferred by some of the clauses, yet the principle of Clause 2 made it imperative to oppose the Bill uncompromisingly, unless it were drastically amended. Other Associations and individuals came to the same conclusion, and an unwontedly strong opposition was organised in the Commons, largely on the Government side

of the House. On 7th November the Prime Minister (Mr. Asquith) announced that the Bill could not be further proceeded with owing to lack of time. On 4th December an amended Bill was introduced, which only dealt with the question of increased cost of working due to improved labour conditions being held to be a justification of increased rates. The new Bill (unlike the first) left the onus of proving the reasonableness of an increase of rates upon the company. So far it was an improvement on the original Bill, but as it also contained unsatisfactory features, the Committee advised that the second reading be opposed. Mr. Charles Bathurst, supported by Mr. Basil Peto (M.P. for Devizes), made strenuous efforts to amend it in Committee, but it was forced through, and received the Royal Assent on 7th March, 1913.

1913.

The railway companies in May gave notice of a general increase of rates, equal on an average to a rise of 4 per cent., except in the case of coal and coke, the reason for this exemption being fairly obvious. Many complaints of the increased rates were made to the Board of Trade, and several cases are now pending before the Railway Commission.

A Memorandum on Agricultural Grievances in relation to railways was drawn up by the Secretary, and approved by the Council, for the use of Mr. Charles Bathurst, who attended as a member of a parliamentary deputation, which waited upon the Prime Minister in reference to future relations between the railways and the State.

Towards the end of 1913 the Government appointed a Royal Commission, with Lord Loreburn as Chairman, to inquire into the relationship between the railway companies and the State in respect of matters other than safety of working and conditions of employment. The Commission is composed of prominent business men, and is the first impartial tribunal which has inquired into railway matters for a great many years.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE.

On 9th December, 1868, Mr. Jasper More gave notice that at the next Council meeting he should move that a deputation wait upon the President of the Board of Trade on the subject of a Government Department for Agriculture. This was moved on 2nd February, 1869, but after some discussion was adjourned for further consideration. On 2nd March, 1869, a resolution in favour of the establishment of a separate Government Department was carried unanimously, but a further motion proposing that the deputation should wait upon the Board of Trade was not carried, and the question was deferred indefinitely.

This was not quite the first time that this matter had been raised, for a paper had been read before the Farmers' Club on 1st April, 1867, by Mr. J. A. Nockolds, of Bishop Stortford, entitled "The Desirability of a Board of Agriculture as a Government Department."

The next reference in the minutes is on 14th April, 1874, when, in response to a communication from the Association of Chambers of Commerce, resolutions were unanimously carried again expressing the desire of the Council for the establishment of a separate Agricultural Department, and appointing a committee to confer with the Associated Chambers of Commerce with respect to their proposal for a Minister of Commerce and Agriculture. The Committee consisted of Mr. George Storer, M.P., Mr. Pickering Phipps, M.P., Captain Craigie, Mr. Thomas Willson, Mr. Jabez Turner, Mr. William Stratton, Mr. H. P. Price, M.P., and Mr. John Ford.

This Committee presented their report on 3rd November, 1874, in which they expressed the following opinions:—

That the duties of a separate and consolidated Agricultural Department of the Government should embrace all matters specially affecting agriculture, now dealt with by various Government offices, and that they should specially include:—

(a) All supervision connected with the importation, transit, traffic, and diseases of live stock.

(b) All supervision necessary for arterial land drainage and in connection with commissions of sewers and embankments.

(c) The duties now discharged by the Copyhold, Tithe, and Enclosure Commission.

(d) The collection, tabulation, and publication of agricultural statistics and corn returns.

Your Committee consider that a separate Department charged with these duties should be presided over by a Parliamentary Secretary.

Your Committee met representatives (Mr. Sampson Lloyd, M.P., Chairman, Mr. H. W. Ripley, M.P., Mr. Moore, of Plymouth, and Mr. Hawkes, of Birmingham) of the Chambers of Commerce, and as a result of that conference are of opinion that the combined interests of agriculture and commerce would be materially advanced by the creation of a new Ministry embracing two separate and distinct Departments, each presided over by a Parliamentary Secretary, and each possessing separate and permanent official staffs, the one Department dealing exclusively with agricultural and the other with commercial matters. In such a case the duties now belonging to the Board of Trade might conveniently devolve on the new commercial Department.

This report was unanimously adopted by the Council on 4th December, 1874, and Mr. Storer, M.P., was “requested to concert with the Chairman of the Association of Chambers of Commerce with a view to bringing the question before Parliament at an early date.”

In the discussion on the motion to adopt this report Sir George Jenkinson, M.P., who became Chairman of the Chamber in 1878, voiced an opinion which has probably since found an echo in the minds of many. He said that he

“was not sure whether it was advantageous to any interest to have a new Minister appointed specially to look after it. It sometimes happened that a good friend was spoiled by making him a Minister, and this was the burden of a couplet which he had lately noticed:—

‘As bees, on flowers alighting, cease to hum,
So, once in office, farmers’ friends are dumb.’

Without any personal application of that expression of opinion, he thought they were very well off as they were. They had a good Department presided over by Mr. Sclater-Booth, their friend Mr. Read being second in office, and agricultural interests could be well looked after by those gentlemen and their Department."

On 2nd March, 1875, the Council nominated representatives to join a deputation to Mr. Disraeli from the Chambers of Commerce, but there is no further reference to this deputation so apparently it fell through.

In 1879 Mr. Sampson Lloyd carried a resolution in the House of Commons in favour of the establishment of the new Department, and at the November meeting the Council re-adopted the report of 1874 on this subject. Major Craigie (Secretary of the Chamber of Agriculture) attended the autumn meeting of the Chambers of Commerce at Belfast, when the matter was discussed and a cordial understanding between the two Associations was arrived at.

On 4th March, 1880, the Council adopted a form of petition to the House of Commons, praying that such measures might be adopted as would give effect to the resolution approved by the last Parliament. At this meeting the Council again appointed representatives to join a deputation to the Prime Minister to ask for the appointment of a Minister of Agriculture and Commerce.

On 3rd May, 1881, the Council warmly approved the terms of a motion of which Sir Massey Lopes had given notice in the House of Commons. This resolution was moved on 13th May and was accepted by the Government, and on 31st May the Council expressed its gratification at this success of the proposal which they had been advocating.

The Royal Commission on Agriculture (known as the Richmond Commission) issued its report in 1882, and among its recommendations was one in favour of the appointment of a Minister of Agriculture.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Gladstone) was asked to receive a deputation from the Chambers, as no action had been taken in the direction of establishing the new Department; but, although declining to receive the deputation, he asked that

any further views of the Chambers might be submitted in writing. A further resolution was accordingly passed in November, which Mr. Richard Paget (Chairman) conveyed to the Prime Minister, and explained to him the general opinions of the Central Chamber on the subject.

In February, 1883, cordial support was given to the proposal of the Royal Commission for a Minister of Agriculture. At the April meeting much interest was aroused by the announcement that the Government gave official recognition to the Lord President of the Council as the Minister for Agriculture, and that they proposed to appoint a special committee of the Privy Council, consisting of Lord Carlingford, Lord Spencer, Lord Kimberley, Lord Rosebery, Lord Carrington, Mr. Dodson, and Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, to act as a Committee for Agriculture.

The appointment of this Committee gave but little satisfaction, and in February, 1887, a resolution was unanimously adopted urging the Prime Minister to form a fully equipped Department of Agriculture without further delay. Mr. Paget had given notice of an amendment to the Address in the House of Commons, but he was prevented from moving it by a blocking motion put down by a Liberal member much in sympathy with the Irish party. This was apparently done in retaliation for another blocking motion which had prevented an Irish member moving some resolution on "jury-packing."

In March, 1888, the Council repeated its request for the speedy formation of the Department. In the debate on the motion Mr. James Lowther made one of his typical speeches. He "entirely endorsed the resolution, but they should not attach too much importance to the institution of the Department. He had never attached the slightest importance to it at all. He thought it would do no harm, and possibly circumstances might arise under which it might do a slight amount of good." However, the resolution was carried with some enthusiasm and with unanimity. During the summer the question was raised in the House of Lords by the Chairman (Lord Jersey) and in the House of Commons by Mr.

C. W. Gray (Vice-Chairman), expressing the anxiety felt at the non-appearance of any measure for creating the new Department. The Council, at meetings in June, July, and November, pressed the matter, but although a Bill was introduced just before the autumn recess, the Government found themselves unable to proceed with it. They promised, however, that it should be one of the earliest measures in the next session, and with this the Chambers had to rest content for the time being, after expressing their approval of the Bill.

At the February meeting in 1889 the Council asked the Prime Minister (Lord Salisbury) to receive a deputation on the question, and he did so on 5th March, when he acknowledged the unanimity with which agriculturists supported this proposal, and promised to give effect to their request. A Bill was shortly after introduced, and at the June meeting the Council gave its unanimous approval to the measure, on the understanding that it created a responsible Minister sitting in the House of Commons. The Bill received the Royal Assent on 12th August, and thus one more of the original objects of the Chambers was accomplished. At the first meeting of the Council after the establishment of the Board of Agriculture, the congratulations of the Chambers of Agriculture were formally tendered to Mr. Henry Chaplin on his appointment as its first President. It was felt to be a subject for special congratulation that an ex-Chairman of the Central Chamber, and one who had taken such an active part in the work of the Chambers for so many years should have been selected.

In January, 1908, the Council passed a resolution in favour of an amendment to the Address being moved, urging that the Board of Agriculture should be made a first class Department. On 6th February Sir Wm. Holland moved an amendment urging that the status of the Board of Trade should be raised, and to this an amendment was moved by Mr. E. B. Barnard proposing that the Board of Agriculture should be similarly treated. On the Chancellor of the Exchequer promising that the matter should form the subject of a

Government inquiry, both amendments were withdrawn. A strange feature of the debate on these amendments was that Mr. Henry Chaplin and Mr. Walter Long, two ex-Presidents of the Board of Agriculture, should both have urged that the Local Government Board should have its position improved, but that neither of them said a word in favour of the Board of Agriculture.

On 5th May the Council passed another resolution, urging the Government to give effect to the proposals they had put forward for improving the position of the Board of Agriculture in a Memorial drawn up by the Parliamentary Committee, and presented to the Prime Minister. This was signed by 41 members of Parliament and was as follows :—

1. That the time has arrived when the Board of Agriculture should be placed upon a more satisfactory basis.

2. That the Board of Agriculture is the only Government Department which has not a second representative in either House of Parliament.

3. That the work imposed on this Department has continually increased both in quantity and importance ever since its creation in 1889, but that the amount voted by Parliament is inadequate to enable the Department to efficiently carry out its duties.

4. That very great loss of time and inconvenience occurs both to its officials and to the public, and it is a great hindrance to the efficiency of the Department that the various sub-departments are scattered about in so many different offices.

Your Memorialists therefore humbly pray :—

That immediate steps may be taken to improve the position of the Board of Agriculture.

That a Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Agriculture may be appointed, and that he shall not be a member of the same House of Parliament as the President.

That an increased grant may be voted for the Department.

That offices may be allotted which will house all the various branches of the Board of Agriculture in one building.

In December the Council sent members to support a deputation to the Prime Minister, arranged by the Central Land Association (of which Mr. Charles Bathurst was then Secretary), to urge this matter, and Mr. Asquith promised that the Government would pass a Bill providing for a Parliamentary Secretary to the Board, and during the session of 1909 this Bill was passed, and Sir Edward Strachey, Bart.,

was appointed as the first Parliamentary Secretary. The Bill did not pass without some opposition, for although the Prime Minister, in a telling speech on the second reading, pointed out the necessity of this appointment, Mr. Munro-Ferguson opposed it, with a view to urging the establishment of a separate Board of Agriculture for Scotland, and Sir Charles Dilke similarly, because he objected to the continual increase of Ministers and officials ; they did not, however, press their views to a division.

In 1908 the Government introduced a Bill entitled the Small Land-Holders (Scotland) Bill. Among other things, this Bill proposed to set up a separate Department for Agriculture in Scotland, and to this the Cattle Diseases Committee, in a report to the Council, objected so far as the administration of the Diseases of Animals Acts was concerned. That Bill did not make much progress, but it was reintroduced in 1911, and again proposed to set up a separate Department. This was opposed by the Scottish Chambers of Agriculture, and the Central Chamber raised their objections in sympathy. The Government were very determined to carry their proposals, and, notwithstanding a number of very strong resolutions, carried at large meetings, especially in the North of England and in Scotland, the Prime Minister, in reply to a question put by Mr. Charles Bathurst in the House of Commons, on 26th October, curtly declined to modify the Bill in any way. The Council therefore appealed to the House of Lords either to insert and insist upon a clause which would give effect to the wishes of agriculturists in both England and Scotland, or to reject the Bill altogether. The House of Lords acceded to this request, and although the separate Department was established, the administration of these Acts was left in the hands of the English Board of Agriculture. Mr. Walter Runciman was appointed President of the Board of Agriculture after the Bill had passed the report stage, and he was strongly urged by the Chambers to use his influence to prevent the proposed division of administration. Whether he was in a position to press this point, having only just come into his new office, is not known ; but he was credited with

having done so, and this belief largely helped him to earn the popularity which he quickly acquired among agriculturists. During the progress of the Bill Mr. Bathurst moved to re-commit the Bill in respect of Clause 4 (the clause which proposed the separate Department), and this was seconded by Sir Courtenay Warner; it should be mentioned that Sir Courtenay never let any opportunity slip for opposing any proposal which might throw difficulties in the way of combating animal diseases. On this question he always made party allegiance a secondary consideration.

The last words to be said on this subject are, that a definite promise has been made, in reply to questions put in the House of Commons, that the Board of Agriculture shall be suitably housed as soon as the new buildings are completed in Whitehall Place, and that Welsh agriculturists are endeavouring still further to weaken the Board of Agriculture by asking that a separate Department may be established for Wales. So far they have not made much progress.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MALT TAX.

BARLEY AND HOPS—PURE BEER—BEER DUTIES.

THE first three sections of this book dealt with the three subjects that occupied the earliest attention of the Chambers, and in the case of each of which they attained a considerable measure of success. This one has a different record, telling of a series of misfortunes; these due, firstly, to an error in judgment, and, secondly, to failure to accomplish where judgment was sound. It should be added that this failure was due, not to lack of energy nor to unsound argument, but to the fact that the Chambers were opposed by a comparatively small, but very wealthy and highly organised industry, whose financial interests were thought to be in danger if the views of the Chambers were given effect to. Another factor which has prevented success, more in this matter than in most, has been the political element. Both political parties have used the agriculturist for their own ends when this question has come to the front.

The Malt Tax.

“This tax was first levied in the reign of Charles II. (1660), but no account of the revenue received has been preserved of an earlier date than the year 1697, when a duty of 6d. per bushel was imposed.

“The tax has been collected uninterruptedly in England since 1697, in Scotland since 1713, and in Ireland since 1785. The law affecting the three countries was consolidated in 1827.

“The rate of duty was increased to 9d. in 1760, 1s. 4d. in 1780. 2s. 5d. in 1802, and 4s. 5d. in 1804. It was reduced to 2s. 5d. again in 1816, raised for two years to 3s. 7d., and made 2s. 7d. in 1822. To this last-mentioned rate 5 per cent. was added in 1840, and at this, with the exception of a temporary charge of

50 per cent. additional during the Crimean War, it remained until repealed on the 30th September, 1880."

At the time it was repealed "It was a tax on malt at the rate of 2s. 7d. per bushel, and 5 per cent. (a small addition made in 1840) when produced from barley, and at the rate of 2s. and 5 per cent. when produced from the inferior kind of barley grown in Scotland or Ireland called bear or bigg.

"The regulations for securing the duty on malt must at one time have been very vexatious to the trade ; but the numerous attempts at fraud prove that the Tax was much evaded and required strict supervision. In 1825 the prosecutions of maltsters numbered 3467 ; but in 1834 they had fallen to 690.

"There can be no doubt that the double tax of a Malt and Beer Duty, which was in force till the latter was repealed in 1830, was felt to be oppressive, and led brewers to resort to unmalted grain and cheap saccharine substances to escape the tax on malt. The maltster had thus to work at a disadvantage, and resorted to fraud that he might sell his malt more cheaply to the brewer.

"The former Beer Duty being 10s., the Malt Duty brought the tax up to 15s. 4d. per barrel on beer at the strength of 1057° which is now charged 6s. 3d., and there was also the tax on hops and a high Licence Duty."*

There had been many objections raised to the tax before the Chambers were founded. Thus, a Select Committee of the House of Lords sat in 1846. A deputation of agriculturists waited upon Lord John Russell in 1847. Papers advocating its repeal were read before the Farmers' Club in January, 1847, in February, 1849, and February, 1863. A non-party Anti-Malt Tax Association was established in 1860 in the Eastern Counties, and this example was followed in some twenty others. A working-men's Anti-Malt Tax Association was started in Manchester about the same time. In debates on the Corn Laws the tax was often referred to. Thus (Hansard, 1839, page 685), Sir James Graham said : "He was convinced that if they repealed the Corn Laws the malt tax would not survive a single year." Sir Robert Peel (page 774) : "As a farmer, to the Free Traders, I would say, let me manufacture and consume my own malt untaxed. Can you deny the justice of this appeal?" Mr. Villiers (page 357) : "Of this he was sure, that all those who were now injured by the existence of the Corn Laws, would

* Report of Inland Revenue Commissioners (C. 4474), 1885, page 20.

be ready, nay be anxious, to get rid of the malt tax." Lord John Russell (Hansard, 1846): "If I were Prime Minister when protection to agriculture were abolished, the first tax I would repeal would be the malt tax."

In Scotland more drastic action was taken. In 1695 efforts to establish this duty were so strongly opposed that the Union was seriously threatened. The Scottish Peers tried every means, and the Earl of Findlater moved in the House of Commons for leave to bring in a Bill to dissolve the Union in consequence. Despite all opposition, the tax was imposed, and intense dissatisfaction resulted. Maltsters everywhere refused to be surveyed, and no proceedings at law by the Excise were of the slightest avail, as in no county of Scotland would the justices act. This state of affairs continued until 1725, during which year the duty north of the border yielded exactly £11 2s. The Government determined to enforce payment, and sent two companies of soldiers to Glasgow to assist the officers of the Excise in their work, and to protect them. But so great a riot followed that the military were completely intimidated by the mob, who, flushed with their victory, repaired to the house of Mr. D. Campbell, then member for Glasgow, and completely sacked and ruined it. Next day the rioters drove the soldiers to Dumbarton Castle with the loss of six men and all their baggage. So great was the hatred to this tax that the whole country was prepared to do the same thing, and it was not accepted, nor was order restored, until an arrangement was come to that all the money raised by it in excess of £20,000 should be devoted to the encouragement of Scotch manufacturers and industries, particularly the ports and fisheries. For a whole century the duty was kept considerably less in Scotland than in England and Wales.

In 1863 a Select Committee was appointed "to consider whether compatibly with the interests of the revenue, the laws relating to the Excise Duty upon malt can be amended so as to operate more advantageously with reference to the cultivation and price of barley, to the manufacture and price of malt and malt liquor, and to the use of malt in the feeding

of cattle and sheep." This Committee only met once, and reported that it was too late in the session to receive evidence upon these matters.

In 1867 another Select Committee was appointed "to inquire into the operation of the malt tax." This Committee sat through 1867 and again in 1868, hearing many witnesses and reporting on 13th July. Among others on this Committee were Mr. Clare Sewell Read, Mr. Jasper More, Mr. (afterwards Lord) Goschen, Mr. Shaw Lefevre (afterwards Lord Eversley) and Mr. Ayrton. From the brief minutes of this Committee it is not easy to ascertain exactly what were the views of its members. The report presented to Parliament concluded as follows:—

"Your Committee consider that the result of the evidence taken by them is, that the Malt Tax prevents the farmer from cultivating his land to the greatest advantage; that it obstructs him in the use of a valuable article of food for cattle; that, by making it necessary to employ a large additional amount of capital in the important trade of malting and brewing, it has created and tends to foster two large monopolies; and that, by materially increasing the price of beer, it encourages adulteration and prevents to a great extent the habit of brewing amongst the labouring people.

"Your Committee, carefully reviewing the whole of the evidence before them, are of opinion that the Malt Tax might be repealed, provided some means for raising the same amount of revenue, if required, be substituted either in the shape of a brewer's licence or some other form."

But there were five divisions before this report was carried, and each division showed six voting on either side, the Chairman's casting vote deciding in each case. Mr. Dent presented another report, which said that—

"having regard to the increasing expenditure and the large amount it has now reached, and the present deficient state of income, your Committee are unwilling to incur the responsibility of disturbing so important a branch of the revenue as the Malt Tax."

The first division taken was that Mr. Dent's report should be the report of the Committee, and Mr. Read and Mr. More both voted for Mr. Dent, thus opposing the repeal of the tax, but like the other divisions, the Chairman's casting vote

decided against it. The majority of the witnesses appear to have been in favour of repealing the tax, but were unable to suggest anything in substitution for it. Others said, thus showing much foresight, that if it meant substituting a beer duty or heavy licence duties for the Malt Tax, they failed to see what advantage agriculturists would gain.

The first mention of this subject among our papers is a notice to local Chambers, dated 10th October, 1867, asking them to send in resolutions on the Malt Tax, and informing them that a Select Committee was taking evidence. On 5th November, 1867, a resolution was carried pledging the Council to endeavour to get the tax repealed. In March, 1868, a resolution was received from the East Kent Chamber urging the Council to take action lest the public should think the agitation had been abandoned. The Council thereupon expressed regret that the Select Committee had not presented their report before the Chancellor of the Exchequer made his Budget speech. In May, 1868, the local Chambers were asked to suggest names of suitable men to give evidence before the Select Committee. On 22nd September the Secretary was instructed to send a copy of the Select Committee's report to every local Chamber. The Address to Candidates at the general election (referred to on page 79) issued on 22nd September, contained the resolution passed on 5th November, 1867.

On 4th May, 1869, the following resolution was carried in the Council by a considerable majority :—

“ Considering the oppressive operation of the excise restrictions upon the manufacture of malt and beer, the loss to consumers occasioned by the cumulative incidence of the Malt Duty and the consequent discouragement given to the production of sound and wholesome beer and to the growth of barley, this Chamber supports the recommendation of the Select Committee, and is of opinion that, until the amount of the Malt Duty can be spared from the revenue, considerable benefit would ensue from repealing the tax on malt and obtaining an equivalent in the least objectionable manner from beer.”

This acquiescence in an equivalent Beer Duty was their first great mistake.

On 4th August the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. R. Lowe) said in the House of Commons that "the remission of the tax would benefit partly landowners and partly consumers of beer." The theory, previously held, that the tax was paid entirely by consumers, being thus abandoned.

1870.

A deputation attended by representatives of thirty-two Chambers and fifty-seven Members of Parliament interviewed the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 8th March, and presented a memorial praying for unrestricted permission to sprout and prepare grain for feeding purposes, and for a repeal or reduction of the Malt Tax, or for its transference to beer. The arguments in the memorial were repeated in a condensed form* in a petition to which local Chambers were asked to get signatures, and which were sent out on 15th March. But one point is brought out so well in the memorial that it is given here *in extenso*, because it shows one of the arguments which misled the Chambers into asking for a transference of the duty to beer. The guileless innocence which engendered the belief that any relief from the duty would be given by maltsters and brewers to the producers is touching in its simplicity. An increase in taxation is passed on at once,

* That the Malt Duty, as at present levied, interferes with the most remunerative rotations of crops and limits the growth of barley.

That the prohibition of the use of sprouted grain as food for animals deprives farmers of a source of profit in their business and of a means of protecting themselves against adulterated feeding-stuffs.

That the Malt for Cattle Act (1863), 27 & 28 Vic. c. 9, is inoperative by reason of the expensive and wasteful character of the feeding mixtures which alone it permits to be used, and by reason of the obstructive and vexatious conditions which it imposes.

That the incidence of the Malt Tax falls with peculiar pressure upon the labouring classes—artificially enhancing the price of beer, thereby encouraging the practice of adulteration and interfering with cottage brewing, and with the comforts, habits and morals of poorer families.

That an excessive loss falls upon consumers owing to the duty being levied upon the raw material, malt, instead of on the manufactured article, beer.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray your Honourable House to repeal or reduce the Excise Duty upon malt, or, in the absence of such relief, to adjust the burden so that it may be less oppressive upon agriculture and less costly to the public.

either to the producer or consumer, whichever may be the readiest victim, but a reduction in taxation (especially when an Excise Duty is in question) is usually a gift to the middleman.

“ It further appears, from a calculation of Mr. Joshua Fielden, M.P.—which the Select Committee reported to be, in their opinion, based upon a correct principle—that the pressure of the duty increases at every stage of the trade and manufacture in about the following proportions:—The maltster, paying the tax of 21s. 8d., requires 5 per cent. interest and 10 per cent. profit for this portion of his capital invested, and charges the brewer 24s. 11d.; the brewer, requiring also 15 per cent. upon this expenditure, charges the retailer 28s. 8d.; and the retailer recovers from the consumer this amount with 10 per cent. added for his profit—making the total tax paid by the consumer 31s. 6d., for 21s. 8d. actually accruing to the revenue. Thus, according to this estimate, the amount of Malt Duty paid by consumers is £9,425,000, for £6,500,000 received by the revenue—showing an absolute loss of £2,925,000, or 45 per cent. upon the duty collected.

“ It appears, moreover, that the payment of the Malt Duty by brewers in the same way that the commuted Hop Duty is now charged, namely, by a Licence Duty, calculated according to the quantity of malt or the equivalent of malt used, would be *a positive gain to the brewers*; for, according to these figures, which are approximately, though not strictly, correct, they would buy malt 24s. 11d. per quarter cheaper, owing to the abolition of the Malt Duty and of the maltster’s interest and profit upon it, and would pay 21s. 8d. per quarter in Licence Duty, showing a saving of 3s. 3d. per quarter.

“ *The gain to the consumer* is made apparent by following out Mr. Fielden’s illustration of the principle upon which the Malt Tax operates. The retailer, having henceforth to repay the brewers’ interest and profit upon 21s. 8d., instead of upon the larger sum, would charge his 10 per cent. profit upon 24s. 11d. instead of upon 28s. 8d., making the total tax paid by the consumer 27s. 5d. instead of 31s. 6d. This is a gain to the consumer of 4s. 1d. per quarter of malt, from transferring the incidence of the taxation from the stage of malting to that of brewing, while still leaving the amount of revenue from this source at its present heavy figure.”

The deputation also made out a good case so far as showing that the duty discouraged the growth of barley. Quoting from the same memorial:—

“ *In particular, the operation of the duty discourages the growth of second-class and medium quality barleys.* Taking high-class

barley as worth 40s. per quarter, barley that will produce one-fifth less strength and quality in beer should be worth 32s. per quarter; but owing to the payment of a heavy duty, which is not on an *ad valorem* scale, the maltster cannot afford to give for that barley anything like so much. The better barley at 40s., together with the duty, 21s. 8d., costs 61s. 8d. per quarter, and the lower class barley, being of one-fifth less merit, is worth as malt 49s. 4d. per quarter. Of this sum 21s. 8d. goes for duty, leaving, therefore, only 27s. 8d. as the price given to the farmer for barley worth, according to its intrinsic value, 4s. 4d. more."

In reply, Mr. Lowe said :—

"I will make one admission to you: that it is quite impossible to levy a revenue approaching £7,000,000 upon a single article of agricultural produce without very much interfering with the cultivation of the land, and with the business of those who are engaged in it. It would be useless to attempt to conceal that state of things. It is absolutely impossible that the tax should not have a very great and a very embarrassing effect. That cannot be doubted for a moment. I will make another admission: I think it is exceedingly undesirable that a large, most important, most respectable, and respected class like yourselves should live in a state of chronic discontent, thinking itself ill-treated; and I am bound to say that if we can find any means of putting whatever duty we collect upon a later stage of the manufacture—upon beer instead of malt—nothing would give me greater satisfaction than to propose that."

In February, 1871, and February, 1872, the Council passed resolutions urging that agriculture was entitled to relief in the matter of the Malt Tax. On 13th January, 1873, a second deputation interviewed Mr. Lowe, but (to quote from the Annual Report for that year):—

"instead of returning any favourable response to the appeals for either a reduction of the burden or its commutation for a tax levied nearer to the consumer, the Chancellor coolly charged the gentlemen before him with having been put forward to fight battles which were not their own, and treated them to a homily on political economy, instructing them that they had no grievance because the consumer pays the tax, and that if farmers were really to get any benefit from an increased demand for barley the landowners would promptly take it all out of them in the shape of higher rent."

At the February meeting following the Council unanimously resolved that the reply of the Chancellor was singularly fallacious and unsatisfactory, and requested Colonel Barttelot

and Mr. Joshua Fielden to raise the question in the House of Commons. No favourable opportunity occurring for this during the session, the Council appointed a small deputation in November to wait upon Mr. Gladstone to lay their case before him.

Mr. Gladstone declined to meet this deputation, but on the accession of the new ministry (February, 1874), they interviewed Sir Stafford Northcote. They handed in a statement repeating to a large extent that handed to Mr. Lowe in 1870, but adding figures to show the amount of taxation on land this duty represented. The Chancellor promised to devote attention to the arguments laid before him, but, notwithstanding the favourable opportunity created by the existence of an unprecedented surplus in the revenue, no part of the disposable balance was accorded in acknowledgment of this longstanding grievance.*

Nothing further seems to have been done until April, 1879, when the Council passed another resolution urging the transference of the duty to beer. On 2nd March, 1880, a similar resolution was carried with one dissentient. Mr. Chaplin gave notice of a motion in the House of Commons on this subject, but Parliament was dissolved before it came forward.

1880.

The general election took place on April, 1880, and Mr. Gladstone was returned to power. In his Inland Revenue Act for this year he gave effect to the wishes of the Chamber by transferring the duty to beer, and at their meeting on 1st July, the Council unanimously expressed their satisfaction at the action thus taken by the Government.

This date is the turning point in the history of this question, for although the Chambers had achieved their desire, the changes brought about by the transference of the duty proved to be very far-reaching, and agriculturists had not long to wait before they realised their mistake. When the fact dawned upon them, the subject had entered on a new

* Annual Report, 1874.

phase, and they had to take up arms in a much more difficult struggle than any in which they had hitherto been engaged in the hope of obtaining even a qualified measure of justice.

There may be two opinions as to whether the demand of agriculturists for "pure beer" has any worthy justification; whether beer brewed from one set of ingredients has any more claim to be considered "pure" than a liquor brewed from another set; whether there is any legal definition of what "beer" is; and whether the brewer is not justified in selling whatever he likes as "beer," so long as the consumer is not absolutely killed by poison. In order to make the position clear, a brief history of the question must be given.

There are certain premises, however, which must not be forgotten. If an industry be built up under conditions, legal or otherwise, which prevail during the earlier years of its existence; if a commodity acquire a reputation on its merits; if it obtain a hold on the taste and habits of a people under one name, and under these conditions—then any arbitrary change of those conditions must bring about results which will react hardly on some parties. No such arbitrary change is justified unless very strong reasons in support can be given.

Brewing of beer is a very ancient industry in Britain. "William of Malmesbury asserts that as far back as Henry II. many monasteries were celebrated for their pure and strong ales brewed from malt with skill and care. The monks of Wetmore discovered the brewing qualities of the Burton water in the thirteenth century."* In 1315 (9 Edward II.) Stow says the City of London forbade malt to be made of wheat, and fixed the price of a gallon of better ale at three half-pence and small ale at a penny.

17 Richard II., c. 4, 1394, placed restrictions on the sale of malt from some country places to London unless "duly cleaned from all dust and combs." This law was repealed by 19 & 20 Vic. c. 24.

* Stopes *Malting*. 1885.

2 & 3 Edward VI. c. 10, 1548—an Act passed regulating the manufacture of malt—continued with alterations by subsequent Acts, and repealed by 26 & 27 Vic. c. 125*

In 1714 an Act was passed to meet the fraudulent practices of maltsters. In 1860 (23 & 24 Vic. c. 110) foreign malt was allowed to be imported on paying 25s. per quarter duty.

The Statutes at Large. By Danby Pickering. 1762. Vol. I., page 47.

51 Henry III., 1266. (*Repealed.*)

Judicium Pillorie.

A Statute of the Pillory and Tumbrel, and of the Assize of Bread and Ale. Cotton MS. Claudius D2.

If a baker or a brewer be convicted because he has not observed the assize of bread and ale—the first, second, and third time he

* The Bill for the true making of malt.

Where divers and sundry persons taking upon them the art and mystery of malt making, and sundry other persons tending more their own private lucre, gain, and profit than the wholsom victualling of the King's Majesty, the Nobility of this realm, and other his Grace's subjects, have now of late by their unsatiable, covetous, and greedy minds, accustomed and commonly made much malt unpure and unseasonable: for that they have made the same malt in eight and nine days, where indeed the same cannot be well and perfectly made unless it have the time and space of twenty-one days in the making thereof.

(2) AND where also divers and sundry of the said makers of malt commonly have and do slackly and deceitfully dry the malt so by them made: for that they would have an inordinate increase thereof by the swelling of the said malt not being sufficiently dried cannot be kept any long time or space but it will be musty and full of weavels, whereby no wholsom drinks for man's body can by any means be thereof made, which is not only to the great peril and danger of the Nobility and other the King's Highness' subjects within this realm, and also to the great loss and decay of the common wealth of the same, but also an utter impoverishment of the Brewers of this said realm, for that the said brewers (over and besides the unwholsomness of the drink which is commonly made thereof) cannot make so much drink of 50 quarters of malt, being so evil dried and made, as they might and can of 40 quarters being well and truly made.

(3) AND also forasmuch as divers and sundry persons minding and seeking their own private and excessive gain and profit, forgetting thereby their duty: and the order of charity towards the common wealth and their neighbours in this behalf, do commonly use to put and mix good malt and evil malt together and after put the same malt to sale as good malt whereby many of the King's subjects have been and are like to be very often deceived to their great loss and hindrance contrary to the honest, seemly and good buying, selling, and commutation, that should or ought to be amongst Christian people specially in things concerning the sustentation of man's body.

BE IT ENACTED, &c. &c.

shall be amerced according to his offence—if it be not over grievous. But if the offence be grievous and often and will not be corrected then he shall suffer punishment of the body. That is to wit, a baker to the pillory and a brewer to the tumbrel, or some other correction.

Also of the assize of ale in the court of the town how it is, and whether it be observed; and if not, how much brewers have sold contrary to the assize; and they shall present their names distinctly and openly, and that they be amerced for every default or to be judged to the tumbrel, if they sell contrary to the assize.

Ale shall be sold according to the price of barley. When a quarter of barley is sold for two shillings then four quarts of ale shall be sold for a penny; when for two shillings sixpence then seven quarts of ale shall be sold for twopence.

42 *George III. cap. 38, 1802. (Repealed.)*

Sec. XXI.—AND be it further enacted that no brewer or brewers of, or dealers or sellers of beer or ale shall receive or take into his, her or their custody or possession any stale beer or beer grounds, or shall mix or mingle with any beer or ale any liquor compounded, fabricated, or prepared from beer grounds, stale beer, sugar-water, distillers' spent wash, sugar molasses, vitriol, quassia, coculus-indice, grains of paradise, guinea pepper, opium, or any other materials or ingredient (except malt and hops) or in the fabrication, manufacture, or preparation whereof any beer grounds, stale beer, sugar worts, &c., is or shall be mixed, employed or made use of, nor shall have, receive, or take into his, her, or their custody or possession, any liquor compounded, fabricated, or prepared as aforesaid, on pain of forfeiting for every such offence the sum of £100.

Sec. XXV.—AND be it further enacted that if any question shall arise whether any liquor which shall be seized as and for liquor mixed, compounded, fabricated, manufactured, or prepared from any other material or ingredient as aforesaid (other than malt and hops) the liquor so mixed, the proof of such liquors not being liquors mixed, compounded, &c., from other materials or ingredients than malt and hops shall be upon the owner or claimant thereof.

This Act was repealed in 1861 by 24 & 25 Vic. c. 101, Lord Palmerston and Mr. Gladstone being then in office.

56 *George III. (1816), c. 58.* An Act to repeal an Act made in the fifty-first year of *George III.*, intituled an Act for allowing the manufacture and use of a liquor prepared from sugar for colouring porter.

WHEREAS, &c., liquor commonly called or known by the name of beer colouring, and whereas great frauds have been and are committed upon the Revenue and also upon the brewers and the public under pretence of using such colouring, &c.

This Act forbade absolutely the use of any article or preparation whatsoever for or as a substitute for malt or hops. Penalty, forfeiture of articles and vessels and £200 fine.

Repealed by the Inland Revenue Act, 1880.

10 & 11 Vic., cap. V. (Feb., 1847). An Act to allow the use of sugar in the brewing of beer.

Sec. VI.—For the purpose of brewing and regulating the amount of duty to be paid by such brewer for the licence to be taken out under 6 George IV., c. 81., the brewer shall be deemed to have brewed one barrel of beer for every fifty pounds' weight avoirdupois of sugar used.

Repealed by the Inland Revenue Act, 1880.

The last-named Act was passed with a view to placing colonial produce on the same footing as British in the home market. When the Bill was introduced it was stigmatised by Mr. Baring as "false pretences." "In the Queen's Speech," he said, "it was alluded to as a measure to be productive of relief to Ireland, whilst the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir C. Wood), in introducing it, touched very lightly on that point and recommended it mainly as a boon to the colonial interest." The West Indian planters at that time were a powerful political party. With the large incomes they were then making it was not difficult for them to secure seats in the House of Commons for their adherents and cadets, and some of these (for instance, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, son of Sir John Gladstone, owner of the sugar estate of Vreeden Hoop, in Demerara) were men of more than ordinary capacity. The West Indian planters, however, in this matter were not quite strong enough, or not clever enough, to get all they wanted, for a blunder was made in arranging the respective quantities of malt and sugar upon which duty was to be charged, with the result that the brewer found it as profitable to use malt as sugar. It, however, breached the wall which had hitherto guarded to some extent the malt and hop producers.

In 1862 the Hop Duties were repealed, and by thus removing the watchful eye of the Inland Revenue officials the door was opened to adulteration by all kinds of hop substitutes. In fact, the use of hop substitutes was expressly permitted, so long as they were not substitutes for malt.

To complete this survey extracts from the report of the Select Committee on Adulteration of Food, of 1856, are given below.* There is every reason for believing that, notwith-

* "As regards foreign products, some arrive in this country in an adulterated condition, while others are adulterated by the English dealer.

"Not only is the public health thus exposed to danger, and pecuniary fraud committed on the whole community, but the public morality is tainted and the high commercial character of this country seriously lowered, both at home and in the eyes of foreign countries.

"Though happily very many refuse under every temptation to falsify the quality of their wares, there are, unfortunately large numbers who, though reluctantly practising deception, yield to the pernicious contagion of example or to the hard pressure of competition forced upon them by their less scrupulous neighbours.

"The adulteration of drinks deserves also special notice because your Committee cannot but conclude that the intoxication so deplorably prevalent is in many cases less due to the natural properties of the drinks themselves, than to the admixture of narcotics or other noxious substances intended to supply the properties lost by dilution.

"Though adulteration prevails more or less in all districts, it may be assumed as a rule that the poorer the district the greater is the amount of adulteration, nor have the poor the same power to protect themselves as their richer neighbours.

"These adulterations may be classed under three heads: those of which the object is to lower the price of the article adulterated by the admixture of a substance of a cheaper kind; those which are intended to improve the appearance of the adulterated article, and thus in many cases to deceive the public as to its quality; and those which are practised for the purpose of simulating some property injured or destroyed in the process of adulteration.

"It is necessary to distinguish between the pecuniary fraud practised on the public and the injury to public health.

"Whenever an article is so adulterated as to involve pecuniary fraud or injury to health, it appears to your Committee to be the duty of the Legislature to provide some efficient remedy.

"One great difficulty of legislating on this subject lies in putting an end to the liberty of fraud without effecting the liberty of commerce. In England the law affords redress to consumers in cases of adulteration by action: if the injury be individual in its character, by indictment: if the injury be general, by summary charge before a magistrate and by proceedings instituted by the Excise.

"Mixtures of an innocuous character made known by the seller or used for the preservation of the article cannot be forbidden without danger to the needful freedom of commerce, and ought not to be interpreted as coming within the provisions of the penal law.

"The law should be clear and positive in forbidding adulteration and by punishing those who practise it.

"Hitherto the progress of legislation has not kept pace with the ingenuity of fraud, which has not scrupled to avail itself of every improvement in chemistry or the arts which could subserve its purpose."

Definition of adulteration by Dr. Hassel, Food Adulteration Committee, 1856, Question No. 4424: "Adulteration may be defined to consist in the intentional addition to an article for purposes of gain or

standing several more recent Acts, adulteration is as rampant to-day as it was when this report was drawn up.

It is true that a later Select Committee of both Houses reported in 1874 that the Adulteration Act of 1872 had done much good, but they also said that the Acts of 1860 and 1872 should be consolidated and amended. The last paragraph of this 1874 report runs :—

“In conclusion, your Committee believe it will afford some consolation to the public to know that in the matter of adulteration they are *cheated* rather than *poisoned* . . . and that if deleterious substances are occasionally employed for the purposes of adulteration they are used in such minute quantities as to be comparatively harmless. Your Committee believe that it is the intention of Parliament that consumers should be protected from frauds, and that they should be enabled to procure the articles they ask for and require. . . .”

An attempt was made in the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1875, to give effect to this paragraph by the words of Sec. 6 :
 “No person shall sell to the prejudice of the purchaser any article of food* or any drug which is not of the nature, substance and quality of the article demanded by such purchaser. . . .”

In 1855 Lord Tennyson wrote in “Maud”—

“But these are the days of advance, the works of the men of mind,
 When who but a fool would have faith in a tradesman’s ware or his word ?
 Is it peace or war ? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind
 The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword.

“And the vitriol madness flushes up in the ruffian’s head,
 And the filthy by-lane rings to the yell of the trampled wife,
 And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for bread,
 And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life.

“And sleep must lie down arm’d, for the villainous centre-bits
 Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush of the moonless nights,
 While another is cheating the sick of a few last gasps, as he sits
 To pestle a poison’d poison behind his crimson lights.”

In introducing the Inland Revenue Bill in 1880 Mr. Gladstone dilated at length on the pitiable condition to which

deception—of any substance or substances—the presence of which is not acknowledged in the name under which the article is sold.”

* The word “food” in this Act included “drink.”

agriculture had been reduced. Their most valuable asset—the home market—had been taken from them without compensation, and their heavily taxed agricultural land had been reduced to the level of value of the prairie land of America; they had been exposed defenceless to the cold wind of the competition of the whole world. He made no definite promises, but by suggestion his audience were led to believe that in Mr. Gladstone agriculture had found a deliverer from bondage. Actually, their dream was to become a reality, and the oppressive Malt Tax was to be repealed. Then, with that adroitness of language of which the speaker was a past-master, the adulteration of beer was alluded to as an extension of the liberty of trade; as the breaking of fetters which never ought to have been imposed; and the listening legislators applauded, in the belief that they were taking part in some splendid legislative effort, instead of helping to write one of the most disastrous pages of agricultural history. The brewers were to be allowed a "Free Mash Tun." In other words, it was no longer to be part of the revenue officials' duty to protect the public health. The brewers were to be allowed to put in whatever materials they pleased. All the careful legislation which for centuries had endeavoured to provide the public with pure drink was to be repealed; the quality and strength of the liquor they sold was disregarded, and the extra profit which this liberty was calculated to put into the pockets of the brewers was some £2,000,000 per annum. As their share for all these concessions the Government was to get some half a million more revenue, and the brewers were not to shriek if and when the Government thought proper to give another turn of the "Beer Tax" screw.

This duty is levied, not as is popularly supposed in one way only on beer, but in alternative ways; by the first way the Malt Tax is levied as of old; by the second, the tax is levied on the beer product.*

**Inland Revenue Act, 1880. Chap. 20, 43 & 44 Vic.*

SEC. 11.—On and after 1st October, 1880, there shall be charged, collected, levied and paid for the use of Her Majesty, her heirs and successors, in respect of beer brewed in the United Kingdom, a duty

The late Mr. Shackleton Hallett was asked by the Pure Beer Committee, in 1901, to write a short history of the brewing industry, including the political-financial side of the question. The next two paragraphs are condensed from his manuscript notes, and although not necessarily expressing the views of the author of this book, they give a summary of the case which many people think is approximately the correct one.

The politicians who were responsible for drafting and passing this Revenue Bill appear to have reasoned as follows :—The small brewers, the maltsters, and the farmer who brews for his labourers, are a nuisance, and must be discouraged.

calculated according to the specific gravity of the worts thereof ; that is to say—

Upon every thirty-six gallons of worts of a specific gravity of 1057 degrees, the duty of six shillings and threepence : and so in proportion for any difference in quantity or gravity.

SEC. 12.—Forty-two pounds weight of malt or corn of any description or twenty-eight pounds weight of sugar shall be deemed the equivalent of a bushel of malt ; and the expression “ bushel of malt ” shall include either of its equivalents, or any quantities of malt, corn and sugar, or any two of those materials, as by relation to such equivalents shall be equal to a bushel of malt.

SEC. 13.—(1) Every brewer shall be deemed to have brewed thirty-six gallons of worts of the gravity of 1057 degrees for every two bushels of malt entered or used by him in brewing.

(2) The duty on beer brewed by a brewer other than a brewer for sale shall be charged on the quantity of worts by relation to materials as aforesaid.

(3) The duty on beer brewed by a brewer for sale shall be charged in respect of every thirty-six gallons of worts produced of the gravity or original gravity of 1057 degrees, and so in proportion for any difference in quantity or gravity as entered in the book by the brewer, or as ascertained by the officer, whichever is higher

(a) If the amount of worts deemed to have been brewed by relation to materials exceeds in quantity and gravity by more than four per centum the worts produced from such materials, the duty shall be charged in respect of the excess over and above the four per centum.

(b) In respect of such accidental loss and waste as arises in the brewing of beer, a deduction of six per centum shall be made from the quantity of worts produced.

(4) Where the materials used in brewing by a brewer for sale are proved to the satisfaction of the Commissioners to be of such a description or nature that some deduction from the quantity chargeable by relation to materials should be made, they shall make such a deduction from that quantity as shall, in their opinion, afford just relief to the brewer.

The large brewers are men of wealth, who will support us, and are therefore deserving fellows; it will be to their and our advantage if we make brewing an impossible business for the small men. Owing, however, to the absurd scruples of some of our less enlightened followers, it is impracticable to forbid any person except he be wealthy to engage in brewing, so it must be done indirectly. We will therefore put what we will call a "deemed duty" on the malt which shall be paid by the brewer in any event, and upon any extract made over and above the amount covered by the "deemed duty" we will (after allowing a 4 per cent. free) charge a *pro rata* duty. The large brewers, with their plant and skill, can always produce more extract from a bushel of malt than the small man with inferior plant, and so he will be unable to compete with the wealthier brewer, who will get the full deemed amount of extract and enjoy the 4 per cent. allowance, which the small brewer will not get. The small brewer, not being able to get extract up to the deemed amount per bushel, will pay duty upon extract he has not produced. This will drive out the small men. Further, the friendly relations which have hitherto existed between the brewing trade and the agriculturist constitute a formidable interest which must be destroyed. At present the brewer buys the product of the British farmers. If the brewers can be made to purchase their raw material from the foreigner those who once were friends will become foes. Then having broken up this powerful combination, and incidentally given the farmers a heavy blow, we will confiscate the property of the brewers by raising the banner of "no tied houses." In doing this, we shall only have to direct attention to the way in which beer has been adulterated to cause the brewers to lose all popular support.

Whether this reasoning was at the back of their minds or not, that is what has happened. When the curious alternative method of levying the duty (as set out in Sections 11, 12, 13) is considered, and the fact is recalled that the regulations made under this and later Acts by the Inland Revenue Authorities are not available to the public, it is difficult to

believe that these views were quite absent from the minds of those who passed this legislation.

The foregoing pages show that (1) for something like two centuries (during the period in which the brewing industry was acquiring its present methods and reputation) "beer" was a liquor brewed from malt and hops only; (2) that every law passed during that period dealing with brewing endeavoured to secure a purity of beer by insisting that only those two articles were used; (3) that by the Food and Drugs Act in operation to-day every customer is entitled to obtain articles "of the nature, substance, and quality demanded by him;" (4) that beer was known for so many generations to be made of nothing but malt and hops that it had become a fixed belief in the minds of all consumers that beer contained nothing else but those articles; (5) that by having something sold to him which was not of the nature, substance, and quality he demanded the consumer was defrauded; (6) that during the debates in Parliament, and for several years afterwards, nothing was said to enlighten the consumer as to the change that was made by some brewers in the liquor called beer. Bearing these circumstances in mind, it may be fairly urged that, although "beer" has no legal definition to-day, any liquor that has been brewed from substitutes for malt or hops has no right to the name "beer," and that a mixture is not "pure" beer.

1882.

Colonel F. St. John Barne, M.P. (a member of the Chamber) introduced a Pure Beer Bill this year. In May two resolutions which Mr. Chaplin and Mr. Heneage intended to move on the second reading of the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill were put before the Council. These expressed the opinion that the repeal of the Malt Tax encouraged the use of rice, maize, and other substitutes, and so proved to be injurious to the farmer; also that the use of these substitutes was injurious to the health of the consumer.

In February, 1884, the Council passed a resolution asking for a readjustment of the Beer Duty, and again in February,

1885, a similar one was agreed to. Mr. Childers's Budget proposed to increase the Beer Duty, and in May the Council unanimously opposed the proposed increase as detrimental to agriculture. After the defeat and resignation of Mr. Gladstone's Government on 8th June the attempt to increase the Beer Duty was abandoned.

The Customs and Inland Revenue Act, 1885, repealed the Act, cap. 58 of 56 George III., and Section 8 prohibited the adulteration of beer, or the addition to beer of anything whatever (except finings for purposes of clarification); but, while repealing a measure which gave a definition of what "beer" was, the new Act made no attempt to define the mixture legalised by the Act of 1880. Nor did it try to prevent the use of any deleterious substitutes in its manufacture. The sole object of this section was to prevent frauds on the Revenue.

In 1886 three Pure Beer Bills were introduced by the following three members of the Chamber: Baron Dimsdale, Mr. (afterwards Sir E.) Birkbeck, and Mr. (afterwards Sir) Cuthbert Quilter. In March the Council discussed these Bills and unanimously asked for early legislation to secure the purity of beer.

In December the Council again discussed the question, and after rejecting an amendment deprecating further interference with freedom in the manufacture of beer, for which only two votes were given, resolved that beer brewed from other ingredients than malt and hops should not be sold without a written notice to that effect.

In March, 1887, the Council passed a resolution approving the two Pure Beer Bills introduced by Mr. Quilter and Sir E. Birkbeck.

In 1888 the three Bills of 1886 were merged into one, which was introduced by Mr. Quilter, and in June the Council again expressed their approval of it. Mr. Quilter introduced his Bill in every session until 1896.

In 1889 a proposal was made in the Budget to increase the Beer Duty, and on 30th April the Council protested against any increase; asking for such a readjustment as would reduce

the charge on beer brewed from malt and hops only to that charged before the abolition of the Malt Tax. The increase was, however, insisted upon and given effect to in the Customs and Inland Revenue Act by reduction of the standard gravity from 1057 degrees to 1055 degrees. This raised the sum of about £300,000.

In 1890, by the Customs and Inland Revenue Act, another threepence per barrel was put on beer and devoted to the Local Taxation Account (see page 108). At the same time the extra duty imposed in 1889 was remitted.

This same year the Government appointed a Select Committee to inquire into the conditions of the hop industry.

In 1892-3-4 Colonel Brookfield introduced a Hop Substitutes Bill, which the Council approved of. The Beer Duty was further increased sixpence per barrel by the Finance Act of 1894. In March of this year the Council resolved that brewers should be compelled to declare the constituents of their beer.

In 1895 the Chamber's Parliamentary Programme included amongst its items :—

“ That the Beer Duty be readjusted by a reduction in the duty charged on beer brewed only from barley malt and hops ; and a like amount to be added to beer containing any substitute for barley-malt and hops. That brewers and publicans be compelled to declare the ingredients of their beer.”

By the Finance Act of this year the Beer Duty was increased by a further sixpence per barrel, and in May of this year the Council expressed their disapproval of the fact that the only additional burden of the fiscal year was thrown upon British barley growers.

1896.

Mr. Quilter was lucky enough to get a good place in the ballot, and his Pure Beer Bill came on for second reading on 25th March. During the debate Sir Wm. Harcourt said that the country should be protected against that monopoly over wide districts which enabled brewers to force upon the inhabi-

tants whatever quality or kind of drink they cared to produce.* The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir M. Hicks-Beach) disapproved of the provision in the Bill limiting the use of the term "beer" to the product brewed from malt and hops only. He expressed himself willing to grant an expert inquiry into the use of deleterious substances in the manufacture of beer. Unfortunately, Mr. Quilter accepted this statement, in good faith, and withdrew the Bill, instead of getting a second reading, and then ascertaining the Chancellor's suggestions as to the *personnel* of the inquiry. The result was that a Departmental Committee was appointed in November, called the Beer Materials Committee, to inquire

"Whether legislation is required to prevent the use of deleterious substances in the manufacture of beer; and whether the materials of which beer may be composed can be defined by law without undue interference with the liberty of brewers to use any wholesome materials in brewing."

The reference to the Committee was fairly good, but the Committee was not fairly constituted. It consisted of the Earl of Pembroke (Chairman), Dr. James Bell (ex-Principal of the Inland Revenue Laboratory), Professor W. Odling (Professor of Chemistry), Mr. H. W. Primrose (Chairman of the Board of Customs), Sir J. H. Gilbert (Rothamsted), and Mr. Clare Sewell Read. Lord Pembroke was a Lord of the Treasury, and two other members were connected with the Inland Revenue Department. The two Secretaries of the Committee were both from the Treasury. This gave too much weight to the views of officials, and it is nearly always the case that Government officials are opposed to changes in the routine to which they have become accustomed. Two witnesses from the Inland Revenue Department were examined and one of them put in a memorandum which shows a very decided bias in favour of the *status quo*.

This Committee did not issue its report until January, 1899. All the Committee signed it except Mr. Read, who issued a Minority Report. The Chamber sent as witnesses

* He was a member of the Cabinet which created this monopoly in 1880, and gave the brewers their "free mash tun."

to give evidence before the Committee on their behalf: Colonel Le Roy-Lewis (Hants), Mr. B. B. Sapwell (Norfolk), Mr. O. D. Johnson (Suffolk), Mr. H. W. Wells (Berks), Mr. A. E. Mansell (Shropshire), Mr. Chris. Middleton (Yorkshire), Mr. C. F. Paddison (Lincolnshire) and Mr. Henry Stopes.

In May, 1899, the Council unanimously passed a resolution strongly approving the Minority Report, and requesting the Government to give effect to the suggestions made in both reports as to the form of publication of Returns of Brewers for Sale, and of the use of hop substitutes. This request has since been given effect to in the Annual Licensing Return issued early in each session.

In view of what took place in 1900, extracts from the two reports are given in parallel columns.

EXTRACTS FROM MAJORITY
REPORT.

“It is fairly certain that no ingredients whatever are used on any considerable scale without the cognisance of the Revenue officers.”

“We believe all impurities which might be injurious to health are eliminated from glucoses used in brewing. We may trust to the vigilance of the Inland Revenue Authorities who have full power to prohibit the use of

EXTRACTS FROM MINORITY
REPORT (MR. READ'S).

It has been shown that in the past, certain ingredients (such as cocculus indicus, quillaia bark, grains of paradise, capsicum, tobacco, copperas, &c.), which are commonly known to be of a poisonous nature, have been used; and *there is strong ground for stating that, at the present time, materials which are possibly of an injurious nature are still employed.* For instance, *sulphuric acid is largely employed for inverting sugar, and the use of salicylic acid as a preservative is open to grave objections. It is significant that it is forbidden in Germany, except in beers destined for exportation.*

It is certain that hardly any of the glucoses used are pure, particularly those made from potatoes, which Dr. Schidrowitz told us he knew to be still imported from Germany and sold in this country for brewing purposes.

EXTRACTS FROM MAJORITY
REPORT.

noxious or detrimental materials."

"The Treasury are empowered to prohibit the use in the manufacture of beer of any substance or liquor of a noxious or detrimental character. *It is the duty of the chemists in the Government Laboratory to keep a vigilant watch over all beer brewed and sold, and they have ample opportunities for so doing.*"

"No materials used in the manufacture of beer are deleterious, at all events in the quantities in which they are actually employed. We believe that the exceptions to this rule, if any, are so infrequent and unim-

EXTRACTS FROM MINORITY
REPORT (MR. READ'S).

And he stated further that the results of experiments upon cats made by Dr. Tunncliffe had been sufficiently striking to suggest that *certain glucoses may have deleterious effects, and that further investigation is certainly desirable in the public interest.* Although a glass or bottle of beer may contain but a small quantity of an injurious substance, if these small quantities are constantly taken, very harmful results are likely to follow.

A list of over one hundred substances, which have been advertised for years in brewing papers, was handed to the Committee, and it is reasonable to conclude that a number of these contain deleterious matter, for even the authorities of Somerset House failed to furnish information of what many of these substances were composed.

I do not gather that there is any body or official at Somerset House competent to decide what is, and what is not, "deleterious" to health. *The Treasury may be "empowered" to prohibit the use of anything "noxious or detrimental," but I am not aware that they have ever done so, save in the case of saccharin, which was to prevent a fraud upon the revenue.*

My opinion, based upon a careful consideration of the evidence, is that *legislation or other provision is necessary to prevent the use of deleterious substances.*

There is undoubtedly a large

EXTRACTS FROM MAJORITY
REPORT.

portant that *legislation is not required to deal with them.*"*

* The Deputy Principal of the Inland Revenue Laboratory (Mr. Banister) stated in his evidence that "*as the Revenue Authorities protect the public against the use of hurtful materials, there does not appear to be any necessity for altering the present system under which beer is brewed and sent into consumption!*"

EXTRACTS FROM MINORITY
REPORT (MR. READ'S).

number of preservatives and antiseptics in the market, the action of which on the human system is, in the majority of cases very little understood, and this number is increasing every year. *As long as the brewer is allowed to use whatever he pleases, this, to my mind, constitutes a real and grave danger.*

At present the public have no adequate protection against the use of deleterious substances in the manufacture of beer.

It would be neither difficult nor vexatious to enforce such legislation as would ensure to the purchaser his right, when he asks for beer—the National beverage—to obtain a beer brewed entirely from malt and hops.

One of the arguments frequently used by the brewers' party during the period that this inquiry was going on was: That no substitutes were used. This fiction was effectually disposed of by directing attention to the thousands of pounds spent by the manufacturers of substitutes in advertising their goods in the brewing journals. Another argument was: That without the use of substitutes they could not brew a liquor that the public demanded. But it was pointed out that the largest brewer in the country brewed from malt and hops only, and that in 1895 4893 small brewers used no substitutes.* As to the view that they could not sell what they wished to sell, Sir William Harcourt stated the position exactly (page 274) in the debate on the second reading of the Bill.† These arguments with effective replies might be reproduced for many pages, but they are all contained in the Minutes of Evidence given before this inquiry, and no one can carefully read this Blue Book without coming to the con-

* Stopes' replies to Questions 3259, 3801, Beer Materials Committee.

† Stopes' replies to Questions 3291, 3749, Beer Materials Committee.

clusion that the report was not in accordance with the weight of evidence laid before the Committee.

By the Finance Act of 1900 the Beer Duty was increased by another shilling per barrel for one year, and by successive Finance Acts this was continued until 1907, when it was made permanent. The Finance Act, 1901, put an import duty on sugar, glucose, saccharin and all other forms of sugar. This duty was imposed to help pay the cost of the South African War, but incidentally it gave a slight benefit to malting barley. It was the first time that barley and hop growers had had anything to thank any Government for, and the benefit conferred was unintentional. It was reduced by one-half in 1908.

1900-1901.

Towards the end of 1900 a terrible epidemic, which caused many deaths and much serious sickness, occurred, chiefly in the North of England, especially in Manchester and the surrounding district. Nearly 4000 cases were reported, but the number of fatalities directly and indirectly due to it was never definitely stated. It was soon found to be due to the presence of arsenic in beer, thus giving an early and sinister emphasis to Mr. Read's Minority Report.

It is seldom that when a minority of one takes up such an uncompromising attitude he so soon becomes justified.

In December, 1900, the Council appointed a Special Committee to inquire into the beer question, and to ascertain what legislative changes it was practicable to suggest for the benefit of agriculture and the general community. Mr. Read was elected Chairman of this Committee, which proceeded without loss of time to arrange for a number of special public meetings in all parts of the country with the object of urging the Government to deal with the subject in the next session. The Government was asked to receive a deputation, but on 11th January, 1901, the Cabinet appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the circumstances of arsenical poisoning, and, incidentally, to put off the demand for legislation while

public feeling was strong on the subject. On 19th January Lord Salisbury replied, declining to receive the deputation.

At the beginning of 1901 an independent body was formed called "The Committee to Promote the Purity of Beer," with Mr. Henry Chaplin as President, and Sir Cuthbert Quilter as Chairman of the Executive Committee. A strong body of Members of Parliament (drawn from both sides of the House) and other influential men joined this Committee, and, working in close touch with the Central Chamber, every effort was made to introduce and carry through a Bill to prevent the fraudulent sale of substitutes for beer and the use of all deleterious materials.

Mr. Robert Purvis obtained a good place in the ballot, and introduced the Pure Beer Bill, on behalf of Sir Cuthbert Quilter. Subject to certain amendments, this Bill was strongly supported by the Chambers, and it got a second reading by 245 votes to 133. It was referred to a Standing Committee, but by this time public feeling had subsided, and in spite of all that the Chambers and the Committee to Promote the Purity of Beer could do, the Government refused to give facilities for its further progress, and consequently the Bill died a natural death. The appointment of the Royal Commission had served its purpose, and cemented the partnership between the Government and the users of substitutes.

All that was accomplished was that an alteration was made in the Brewers' Licensing Returns, which for the future divided brewers into two classes—those that used malt only and those that used malt with substitutes—*and under the powers given by the Inland Revenue Act of 1888 the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury issued an order prohibiting the use of any

* The relative proportions of malt and malt substitutes, and hops and hop substitutes, are shown in the following table.—

	1911-12.		1912-13.			1911-12.		1912-13.	
	P.c.	P.c.	P.c.	P.c.		P.c.	P.c.		
Malt	74.88	73.50	Hops	99.976	99.970				
Unmalted corn	0.09	0.13	Hop substitutes	0.024	0.030				
Rice, maize, &c.	7.22	7.92							
Sugar, &c. ...	17.81	18.45							
	100.00	100.00		100.00	100.00				

sugar or glucose containing arsenic, imposing a fine of £50 for any breach of this prohibition.

The Council sent Mr. Read and Mr. Stopes as witnesses to give evidence before the Royal Commission, and in their Annual Report they recorded their appreciation of the ability and persistence with which these two gentlemen represented the interests of agriculture.

Although nothing of more definite importance was actually accomplished, there were one or two occasions when the Government were very nearly giving the needed facilities for the Bill to pass. The writer has vivid recollections of telegrams sent to the Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. Balfour) on 23rd May, from the middle of a hotly contested bye-election in East Anglia, which almost led him to believe that the result largely hung upon this question. There is little doubt that it had much to do with it, and at any rate the Government refused to let the Bill through, and they lost the election. One man who very largely managed the campaign on behalf of pure beer especially deserves mention for the skilful part he took, and that is Mr. F. H. Payne; he remained in the background, and very few knew how much agriculture was indebted to him for the energy and tact he displayed during this fight.

1902.

Sir Wm. Tomlinson obtained a place in the ballot, and introduced what was called a "Beer" Bill this year, which was backed by Sir Cuthbert Quilter, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, and Mr. Corrie Grant. This Bill contained several new provisions; thus, it allowed the use of 15 per cent. of substitutes in a liquor which still might be called "beer." It also laid the onus of enforcing the provisions of the Bill upon the Inland Revenue officials; and it required imported beer to be sold under a distinguishing name. The Committee of the Chamber reported that they generally approved of the Bill, but suggested some amendments. On second reading it was rejected by 212 votes to 140. On the whole, agriculture may be congratulated that this Bill was rejected, for it

would have given a legal definition as "beer" to a liquor which was a mixture. Such a compromise would have been of very little, if any, advantage to barley growers.

In 1903 Mr. Henry Stopes died, and in recognition of his untiring endeavours to secure "pure beer" the Council raised a Memorial Fund, amounting to £153, which was presented to his family. Mr. Clare Sewell Read died in 1905, Mr. A. F. Jeffreys in 1906, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney in 1908, and Sir Cuthbert Quilter in 1911, so that our most active helpers in this particular question, and those who knew most about it, have been irretrievably lost to us.

1906.

Mr. G. L. Courthope got a place in the ballot, and at the request of the Council introduced a Beer Bill, framed much on the lines of that introduced by Sir Wm. Tomlinson. Like its predecessor, it was also rejected, by 163 votes to 90. On this occasion there was a notable absence of those members who were usually looked upon as supporters of agricultural measures, and this accounted for the small numbers in the division.

1908.

In January the Council passed a resolution calling the attention of the Government to the serious condition of the hop industry, and on 6th February Mr. Laurence Hardy moved, and Mr. Courthope seconded an amendment to the Address on the same lines. The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Asquith), having promised to appoint a Select Committee on the subject, the amendment was withdrawn. This Committee presented its report on 10th July, but its conclusions were so contrary to the great bulk of the evidence laid before it, that Mr. Courthope and Mr. Gretton both presented Minority Reports, which showed a wide divergence from the views expressed by the Majority. In November the Council considered a report from a Special Committee which they had appointed upon the Select Committee's report, from which the following extracts are taken. The Council agreed with

their Committee, and adopted the report with three dissentients.

“(1) Your Committee are of opinion that the majority, in failing to recommend in their report that a duty should be placed upon imported foreign hops, acted against the weight of evidence placed before them, and thereby failed to deal with the only proposals which, in the opinion of your Committee, offer any prospect of substantial recovery from the prevailing depression in the hop industry.

“(2) They note with satisfaction the recommendations made by the Select Committee that the use of hop substitutes should be prohibited, and are strongly of opinion that the word “substitutes” should be so defined as to include all chemical preservatives.

“(3) Your Committee further approve of the proposal that the provisions of the Hop (Prevention of Fraud) Act, 1866, should be extended to foreign hops.”

In December the Government introduced a Bill to give effect to some of the proposals of their Committee, but almost immediately withdrew it under the pretext that there was no time to deal with an opposed Bill. Such opposition as there was came wholly from some twelve followers of the Government. A few Members representing hop-growing constituencies had amendments on the paper, but they withdrew these in the hope that the Government would thereby be encouraged to proceed with their Bill.

1909.

Viscount Hardinge introduced a Bill in the House of Lords, which met with the unanimous approval of the Hop-Growers' Association. It passed through Committee, but was not allowed to proceed further owing to the Government having introduced another Bill—Hops (No. 2)—in the Lords drawn up on almost the same lines. Amendments to this latter Bill were carried which made them practically identical, but when the Bill passed through Committee the Government withdrew it, in spite of every protest that was made against their doing so. The Council on 21st September passed a resolution regretting this action of the Government and asking them to re-introduce it at the earliest opportunity.

1910.

This year three Bills were introduced in the Commons, two of them by Mr. Courthope. Neither proceeded further than first reading.

1913.

Mr. Courthope introduced a fresh Bill this year, but as he did not obtain a place in the ballot he had no chance of pressing it. On 11th June Mr. Runciman, on behalf of the Government, introduced Hops (No. 2) Bill, which provided for prohibiting the use of hop substitutes, and leaving other, and more contentious matters alone. It was hoped that this innocuous little measure might have been allowed to pass, but the large "party" questions intervened, and it was crowded out. History repeated itself, and though two Bills were introduced by Mr. Courthope and Mr. Runciman in 1914 neither was allowed to make any progress.

The final incident in this connection which has to be noted here is the second Finance Act of 1914, which imposed a very heavy war tax on beer. It is estimated that the increased duty will cause a decrease in consumption of from 30 to 40 per cent. If this proves to be the case, barley and hop growers will be able to claim that they paid their share towards the cost of the great European War.

CHAPTER X.

FRAUDULENT COMPETITION.

ADULTERATION—SALE OF SEEDS—FERTILISERS AND FEEDING
STUFFS ACTS—ADULTERATION OF BUTTER—SALE OF
FOOD AND DRUGS ACTS—PRESERVATIVES—
SALE OF MILK REGULATIONS—
FOREIGN MEAT.

It was John Bright who advanced the theory that adulteration was merely an exaggerated form of competition. Though many have been glad to shelter themselves under this dictum, the putting it into practice has been one of the greatest handicaps to British agriculture, and it has had a most detrimental effect on the health and pocket of the consumer. Adulteration is such a resourceful foe. No sooner is some malpractice discovered, and more or less put a stop to, than another is started. If the ingenuity displayed in robbing the public by these methods of fraud were only devoted to legitimate production, everyone would have benefited, except perhaps a certain number of traders in spurious articles.

Some early Acts dealing with the adulteration of beer are referred to in the chapter on the Malt Tax, so that part of the subject is not repeated here ; but the extract from the report of the Select Committee on Adulteration of 1856* should be referred to.

This was followed by an Adulteration of Food Act in 1860. An amending Act was passed in 1872, and in April, 1874, a Select Committee—of which Mr. Clare Sewell Read was Chairman—was appointed to inquire into the operation of the Act of 1872. This was followed by the passing of the

* Page 267 *et seq.*

Sale of Food and Drugs Act in 1875, and a further amending Act in 1879, this latter being rendered necessary by the conflicting decisions given in England and Scotland in regard to the meaning and effect of Sec. 6 of the Act of 1875.

Up to this point the Chambers were either too occupied with other matters to pay attention to this subject or they had not realised its importance.

Adulteration of Seeds.

In the session of 1869, however, Mr. Welby, M.P., introduced the Adulteration of Seeds Bill, and on 4th May the Council agreed to a petition to the House of Commons, setting forth that great losses were sustained by agriculturists from the fraudulent doctoring or colouring of seeds, and from adulteration by means of killed seeds, and praying the House to pass the Bill into law. The Bill became an Act, and renders liable to a fine of £5 for a first offence and to a fine not exceeding £50 for a second or subsequent offence, every person who—with intent to defraud—dyes or kills any seeds. In the case of a second or subsequent offence the Court may, besides inflicting a fine, order the offender's name, occupation, place of abode and place of business, and particulars of his punishment under this Act to be published, at the expense of the offender, in any manner the Court may prescribe.

The Adulteration of Seeds Act, 1878, defines the term "to dye seeds" in the earlier Act, as meaning the application to seeds of any process of colouring, dyeing or sulphur smoking.*

In 1900 the Board of Agriculture appointed a Departmental Committee to inquire into the conditions under which agricultural seeds were sold. The Council nominated the Secretary (Mr. Godfrey) to give evidence on their behalf, which he did, after collecting information from members. This Committee reported in October, 1900, and recommended the establishment of one central Seed-testing Station under Government auspices; and that every encouragement should be given

* *Common Weeds of the Farm and Garden.* By Harold Long. 1910.

to seed merchants to give a guarantee with the seeds they sold.

On 4th June, 1901, the Council approved these recommendations, but no further action was taken in the matter until 1913, when the Council sent representatives to support a deputation to the President of the Board of Agriculture (Mr. Runciman), which had been arranged by the London Chamber of Commerce, to urge the establishment of such a Central Testing Station. On this occasion Mr. Runciman gave a very encouraging reply.

The Weeds and Agricultural Seeds Act, 1909, only applies to Ireland.

In 1911 the Prevention of Fraud Committee of the Central Chamber drafted a Bill to amend the Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act, 1906, which, having been approved by the Council, was introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Clinton, under the title of the "Sales for Agricultural Purposes Bill." It contained clauses providing for the testing of seeds offered for sale on somewhat similar lines to the Irish Act of 1909; but although reported for third reading in the Upper House, it did not proceed further.

Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs.

In December, 1890, the Council unanimously passed a resolution, as follows:—

"That legislation to prevent the sale of adulterated manures and feeding stuffs is urgently needed; that the extension of the principle and the improvement of the administration of the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, or legislation on similar lines, appear to afford a convenient method of effecting the desired reform; and that the Board of Agriculture be requested to take steps to protect the British farmer in this matter."

This was a subject which Mr. F. A. Channing (afterwards Lord Channing of Wellingborough) made particularly his own, and he was already engaged in preparing a Bill to deal with it, but he was not able to be present at this meeting. Among the speakers in this debate were Mr. Clare Sewell Read; Sir Richard Paget; Major Craigie (then an official of the Board of Agriculture); Mr. Herman Voss (Chairman of the

Manure Manufacturers' Association), who welcomed the proposal; Mr. T. Brown (Managing Director of the West Norfolk Farmers' Manure Company, at King's Lynn), who also welcomed the proposal; and Dr. Bernard Dyer, who criticised it.

In March, 1891, the Council passed another resolution thanking Mr. Channing for having drafted and introduced his Bill, which they approved; they further expressed satisfaction at an announcement that the Government intended to introduce a measure of their own to deal with this subject, and urged that it should be proceeded with at once. The Government did introduce a Bill, but only at the very close of the session. The following February the Council gave their general approval to the Bill, introduced in 1891 by the President of the Board of Agriculture (Mr. Chaplin), and appointed a Committee, with Mr. Christopher Middleton as Chairman, to consider in detail what amendments were necessary. In March, Mr. Chaplin appointed a Departmental Committee "to inquire into and to report upon the representations made by the Chambers of Agriculture and other bodies with reference to the adulteration of artificial manures and fertilisers and feeding stuffs used in agriculture." Mr. F. A. Channing and Mr. Albert Pell were members of this Committee. The Council nominated Mr. Middleton as their witness, and he was examined at considerable length. The Departmental Committee reported in October, 1892, in favour of legislation, all the members of the Committee signing the report, but Mr. Channing presented a supplementary report, expressing the opinion that a guaranteed analysis was necessary with the sale of feeding stuffs, whereas the other members thought it was unnecessary. In 1893 the Government introduced a fresh Bill, which received the Royal Assent during that session.

No more was heard of this matter until December, 1902, when a series of resolutions asking for amendments to the Act of 1893 came before the Council from the Ripon Agricultural Association. The Council thereupon appointed a new Committee to go fully into the subject, consisting of



THE LORD STRACHIE.
Chairman, 1902.



THE LORD CHANNING OF
WELLINGBOROUGH.
Chairman, 1894.



MR. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Chairman, 1884.



CAPTAIN G. L. COURTHOPE, M.P.
Chairman, 1909.

Sir Edward Strachey, Mr. Bowen-Jones, Mr. C. Middleton, Mr. F. J. Lloyd and Mr. Trustram Eve. This Committee reported on 3rd March, 1903, recommending a number of amendments to the Act, and the Council adopted their report. Mr. Lloyd then drafted a Bill for the Council, which Viscount Templetown introduced in the House of Lords. This Bill was read a second time on 4th August, and was referred to a Departmental Committee which Lord Onslow (President of the Board of Agriculture) had meantime appointed. The Council sent Mr. C. Middleton and Mr. F. J. Lloyd to give evidence before this Committee, which reported in January, 1905. Their report made it quite evident that an amending Act was required, and in May, 1905, the Council requested the Government to pass a measure giving effect to the recommendations of the Departmental Committee. Nearly all the amendments of the Act asked for by the Committee of the Chamber were adopted as the conclusions of the Departmental Committee, and this, of course, was a cause of much satisfaction.

Early in 1906 Sir Edward Strachey introduced, on behalf of the Government, a Bill giving effect to the conclusions of the Committee, which, while repealing the Act of 1893, re-enacted all its essential provisions, thus avoiding in this one instance all legislation by reference. On 1st May the Council adopted a report from their Committee, which proposed certain amendments to the Bill, but generally expressed approval of it. Most of these amendments were adopted during the Bill's passage through Parliament, and it became an Act in August of that year.

The "Sales for Agricultural Purposes" Bill, already referred to (page 287), proposed further amendments to the Act of 1906, but as stated, it did not pass through the House of Lords.

Adulteration of Butter.

In February, 1883, when considering the report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, the Council approved the recommendation of that Commission for the prevention of adulteration.

In April, 1886, on the motion of Mr. Carrington Smith (Staffordshire Chamber), the Council unanimously resolved that the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts required amending, as a large quantity of imitation butter was then being sold as butter, and asking that every parcel of this imitation butter should be delivered with the word "butterine" distinctly marked upon it.

In March, 1887, the Council considered two Bills which had been introduced that year, one, the Oleomargarine (Fraudulent Sale) Bill by Sir Richard Paget, the other, the Butter Substitutes Bill by Mr. Mayne. After some discussion the Council expressed their preference for the former. Sir Richard Paget said that in 1886 the importation of butter substitutes amounted to 800,000 cwt., of a declared value of about two millions sterling; so even at that date it was a considerable industry, though it is doubtful if much was made in this country. In spite of the quantity imported, it was said to be impossible to find a shop that sold any of this commodity except as butter.

The Bill was referred to a Select Committee, who altered its title to the "Butter Substitutes Bill," and reported favourably upon it. On 7th June the Council discussed the Bill further, and strongly urged the Government to press forward the measure; they also urged individual Members of Parliament to give it their support. The Bill ultimately passed under the title of the "Margarine Act, 1887."

In April, 1892, the Council passed a resolution asking for further legislation, as the Margarine Act had proved a failure. Next month the Council set up a Special Committee, called the Margarine Committee, among its members being Sir Richard Paget (Chairman), Mr. Carrington Smith, Mr. Middleton and Mr. F. J. Lloyd. They presented a report to the Council the following month, but it contained no definite suggestions, so Mr. James Lowther (Vice-Chairman of the Chamber) objected to copies being sent to Ministers, and his objection was upheld by the meeting.

The following November this Committee presented a further report, stating that a return, moved for by Sir Richard

Paget, showed a total of 1694 prosecutions and 1464 convictions during the years 1888-91, under the Margarine Act. Attention was called to the laxity of local authorities in enforcing existing enactments against the sale of margarine as butter, and gave a list of places in which no samples of butter had been taken for analysis during 1890. The report went on to recommend that travelling inspectors should be appointed by the Local Government Board or the Board of Trade, whose duty it should be to enforce the Acts, and to institute prosecutions in cases of adulteration or fraud; that the artificial colouring of margarine in imitation of butter should be prohibited; and that the Committee should be empowered to draft a Bill to amend the Margarine Act.

During 1893 the Committee met several times, and sketched in outline a Bill to amend that Act. Hearing, however, that Mr. (afterwards the Right Hon. Sir Horace) Plunkett was drafting a Bill to deal with this question, they deferred making any report to the Council until March, 1894, when they reported that all the points they had agreed upon had been incorporated by Mr. Plunkett in his Bill, which he introduced in the House of Commons in 1893. This Bill making no progress, the Council asked for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the whole question of the adulteration of dairy products. In May, 1894, the Chairman (Mr. F. A. Channing, M.P.) reported to the Council that he had moved for the appointment of such a Committee, that his motion had been accepted by the President of the Local Government Board, that the Select Committee had been appointed and included himself, Mr. A. F. Jeffreys, M.P., and Mr. Plunkett among its members. This Committee called several witnesses, including Mr. Christopher Middleton and Mr. Carrington Smith from the Central Chamber, and recommended that they be re-appointed the next session to carry their inquiry further.

This Select Committee was re-appointed in 1895, and again in 1896, and issued its report during the autumn of the latter year. This report was a most important document. It dealt with many articles of food other than dairy products,

and made a number of definite recommendations, chief among these being the prohibition of the colouring of margarine in imitation of butter, and the mixing of margarine with butter. The Council considered this report in November, 1896, warmly approved its recommendations and requested the Government to legislate in the direction indicated as early as possible.

1897.

In 1897 the Royal Commission on Agriculture issued its report, and among many other recommendations was one in favour of the proposals of the Select Committee of 1896 being given effect to by legislation. In February the Council expressed regret that this subject was not referred to in the Queen's Speech, and asked the President of the Board of Agriculture to receive a deputation. Mr. Walter Long interviewed this deputation on 2nd March, when he said that he was much impressed by the views put before him "by gentlemen representing such totally different interests," and that a Bill on the subject was "on the stocks."

In November the Dairy Products (late the Margarine) Committee reported that the Government had introduced their Bill on 2nd August and withdrawn it on 5th August. They added that this Bill only partially embodied the recommendations of the Select Committee, and was totally inadequate; that a new Bill should at least give effect to the following recommendations of the Select Committee:—

The establishment of a Court of Reference.

The examination of dairy produce at the ports.

Prohibition of artificial colouring.

Prohibition of mixing margarine with butter for sale.

The Dairy Products Committee said that they failed to find any justification for the disregard shown for the recommendations of the Select Committee, and again urged that effect should be given to them.

Speaking at a meeting of the National Agricultural Union in December of this year, Mr. Kearley, M.P. (afterwards Lord Devonport) said:—

“ Adulteration in these days was conducted on scientific lines—it was not a mere vulgar sanding of the sugar—but something far more able than that. . . . We must set up a scientific body to counteract the skill of these frauds. The struggle that was going on between the inventors of armour plates and the inventors of armour-piercing projectiles was illustrative of what ought to go on between adulterators and their detectives.”

1898.

The Parliamentary Committee met the day that Parliament opened, and passed a resolution expressing satisfaction that this subject was referred to in the Queen's Speech, and members of this Committee impressed its importance upon Ministers. On 4th April the Council regretted that no Bill was yet forthcoming, and arranged for local Chambers to send up petitions to the Government urging prompt action in the matter. On 3rd May a deputation from the Council, supported by other agricultural associations, waited upon Mr. Chaplin (President of the Local Government Board), but they had to report to the Council that, while Mr. Chaplin gave consideration to their views, his reply was disappointing.

On 22nd July Mr. Chaplin introduced his Agricultural Products (Adulteration) Bill, but it was almost immediately withdrawn. It was confined to dairy products, but fell short of the demands made by the deputation in May, and only embodied a few of the recommendations of the Select Committee. In November the Dairy Products Committee examined the provisions of the Bill at some length, objecting to some of them and emphasising their previously stated demand for the prohibition of the colouring of margarine.

1899.

The Government introduced their Sale of Food and Drugs Bill on 23rd February. On 28th March the Council adopted a report from their Committee approving generally of the Bill, but setting out in detail certain amendments which they required. Most of these were embodied in the Bill while it was in Committee, but, in spite of every effort the Government refused to prohibit the artificial colouring of margarine

in imitation of butter. With this exception, the Council felt that on the whole it was a satisfactory measure, provided that it was properly administered. The Act received the Royal Assent on 9th August, 1899.

Sale of Butter Regulations.

Under the same Sec. 4 of the Act of 1899 Mr. Hanbury appointed another Departmental Committee to determine what deficiency of normal constituents or what addition of extraneous matter or water should raise a presumption that butter was not genuine. Like the last-named, this, too, was an excellent Committee. Chiefly owing to the fact that this Committee sat through the summer, when the Council holds no meetings, the Central Chamber did not send a witness to give evidence. An interim report was presented in January, 1902, recommending a limit of 16 per cent. as the proportion of water which should be allowed in butter. The report added that this proposal was made on the assumption that butter containing a larger proportion than 16 per cent. would escape the operation of this limit if a sufficient disclosure was made to the purchaser. The Council, on 4th March, 1902, strongly dissented from the last portion of the interim report, urged the Board to fix a definite standard of moisture, and to provide that no substance should be sold as butter which did not comply with that standard.

This view of the Council was the result of information laid before them, that as much as 35 per cent. of water could be left in butter, and that large quantities of water-logged butter were, in fact, then on the market. They therefore asked the Government to legislate at once to put a stop to the sale of such substances as butter. The Central Chamber sent a deputation to Mr. Hanbury on 2nd June to urge the importance of this question; he entirely agreed with the views put before him, and said he already had a Bill in draft to deal with the matter. This Bill was found to be of little use, and, though progress in Committee was reported, the Bill was withdrawn in November without much regret on the part of the Council.

1903.

A stronger Bill was introduced this year which included some of the proposals put forward as amendments in 1902, but the much-regretted death of Mr. Hanbury delayed its progress, and though it passed through Committee, and at that stage was approved by the Council, it got no further.

In 1904 and 1905 the Bill was re-introduced, but the Government gave no opportunity for its progress. Meanwhile, public opinion was growing, and agriculturists, grocers' associations and those Colonies which sent pure butter to this country were all united in demanding the attention of Parliament. The Government, however, were impervious to all appeals, and went out of office at the end of 1905, having made no sincere attempt to deal with this question since Mr. Hanbury's death.

1906.

The Council in February passed a resolution calling the attention of the new Government to the adulteration of butter in various ways, and on 5th March a Select Committee was appointed to consider what further legislation was required. The Council sent Dr. Bernard Dyer as their witness to give evidence on the lines of a report from the Dairy Products Committee, adopted by the Council on 3rd April.

The Select Committee reported in the autumn, and in November the Council adopted a further report from their Committee stating that they were in accord with the recommendations of the Select Committee.

In 1907 the Butter and Margarine Act was passed. The measure was very generally approved by the Council as the Bill emerged from Committee, and most, though not quite all, of the amendments suggested by the Council were incorporated in it. Events have proved that, on the whole this Act has been more effective than any previous measure dealing with butter adulteration, but its effectiveness is largely due to the energy and common sense displayed by the officers of the Board of Agriculture who have to administer it. Every credit must be given, however, to Sir Edward

Strachey, who for several years had been Chairman of the Dairy Products Committee and of the Parliamentary Committee while the Chambers had been agitating for legislation. When Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman took office, Sir Edward became a member of the Government, and it was very largely due to his representations that the Select Committee was appointed, that a Bill was introduced to give effect to its recommendations, and that this was afterwards amended in the directions desired by the Council. Sir Edward had thoroughly realised the mischief caused by this fraudulent competition, and made the best use of this knowledge as soon as he had the opportunity.

The last move in connection with the adulteration of butter was taken by the Governments of the Dominions of Australia and New Zealand. Finding that their dairy produce was being severely hit by this unfair competition, they endeavoured to persuade the Home Government to pass more stringent legislation against adulteration. Meeting with no enthusiastic response, they enlisted the support of the Chambers of England and Scotland, of the English and Irish Agricultural Organisation Societies, and of other bodies, and after one or two conferences a joint deputation met Mr. Runciman on 3rd March, 1914, who, after hearing the views of several delegates, gave a sympathetic, but not very hopeful reply.

Preservatives and Colouring Matters.

The Local Government Board appointed a Departmental Committee on Preservatives and Colouring Matters in Food, and invited the Council to send two witnesses to give evidence. Mr. Carrington Smith and Professor J. Long were nominated. To enable them to give representative evidence, the Secretary circulated a series of questions to a large number of dairy farmers in all parts of the country, with a view to ascertaining whether the custom of using preservatives or colouring was much in vogue. One hundred and ten replies were received, tabulated and handed in by Mr. Carrington Smith, and printed as an appendix to the report of the Departmental

Committee. This report was issued in November, 1901, and it recommended that the use of any preservative or colouring matter in milk be an offence under the Sale of Food and Drugs Act; that only boric acid or borax should be allowed to be used in cream, in amount not exceeding 0.25 per cent.; that only boric acid or borax should be allowed in butter and margarine, in amount not exceeding 0.5 per cent.; that the use of formaldehyde or formalin or preparations thereof in foods or drinks be absolutely prohibited; and that a Court of Reference be established. There were other points of less importance, but the above, coming from a Committee of such experts, deserve the greatest consideration.

In December, 1901, the Council adopted a report from the Dairy Products Committee, agreeing with the report of the Departmental Committee, but regretting that the use of preservatives in cream and butter were not entirely prohibited.

No legislative action was taken in this connection until in 1907 Mr. John Burns (President of the Local Government Board) passed a short measure—the Public Health (Regulations as to Food) Act—which empowered that Department to issue orders and regulations regarding the importation, preparation, storage and distribution of articles of food and drink. Practically it gave almost unlimited powers to the President of that Board. Nothing was done, however, to give effect to the recommendations of the Committee of 1901, until in 1912 an Order was issued by the Local Government Board requiring that all preserved cream shall be sold in receptacles bearing a label, which declares the amount of preservative it contains. This regulation was approved by the Council in May, 1912.

The more important proposal regarding formalin and formaldehyde has been ignored, and these most injurious chemicals are very commonly used in many articles of food, and sometimes in milk. There is little doubt that many invalids have been killed by taking food containing some form of this preservative.

Very little use has been made of this Regulations as to Food Act, for on 17th February, 1914, Mr. Herbert Samuel said, in reply to a question by Mr. Barnston, that only four Regulations had been issued under it, viz., Foreign Meat in 1908; Unsound Food, 1908; Foreign Meat (Amending Regulations), 1909; and Milk and Cream, 1912.

Condensed Milk.

In February, 1910, the Council expressed the opinion that every tin of condensed *machine-skimmed* milk should have printed in large type upon its label: "Unfit for infants and invalids." This was sent to Mr. Burns (President of the Local Government Board), who at once directed Dr. Coutts to conduct an inquiry into the sale of condensed milk, with special reference to its use as infants' food. Dr. Coutts' report was issued in September, 1911, entirely corroborating the view expressed by the Council the previous year. The Department has taken no further action in the matter, although questions have been asked about it in the House of Commons several times, the last occasion being by Mr. Harry Barnston on 24th February, 1914.

In 1913 Mr. Burns introduced a new Sale of Food and Drugs Bill, which proposed to give even more unlimited powers to his Department than the Act of 1907, but this the Central Chamber, together with the London Chamber of Commerce, strongly opposed, and it has not been re-introduced.

The report of the Prevention of Fraud Committee upon which the Council based its opposition to the Bill was instructive, and is worth repeating. The following are its principal paragraphs:—

1.—The Bill fundamentally alters the present law, giving power to a Government Department to make regulations repealing existing provisions of law; it provides no safeguards for traders, nor is there any appeal against any conditions which may be contained in such regulations.

2.—The Bill gives the Local Government Board power to make regulations defining all kinds of food, including agricultural produce, and provides that if anyone sells an article to a purchaser demanding any particular article of food which does not

correspond with such definition, he shall be guilty of an offence against the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts, 1875 to 1907.

3.—The Board might make regulations in the supposed interest of the consumer which would entirely alter the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts in a manner disastrous to important branches of agriculture. The following examples illustrate the grave danger of such legislation :—

MILK.

If the Bill becomes law the Local Government Board may make a regulation defining milk as a fluid containing, *inter alia*, 3 per cent. of butter fat. The seller of genuine milk will then be liable to a penalty of £20 every time he sells milk which happens to contain less than 3 per cent. of fat, and it will be no defence to prove that the milk is genuine. If the Local Government Board decided to fix the limit at 3.25 per cent. of butter fat, or even higher, there is nothing in the Bill to prevent them doing so.

4.—Such a regulation would be contrary to the principle for which the farmers of Great Britain have been contending for many years past—that milk which is of poor quality as regards butter fat, but still is as it comes from a healthy cow, shall not be treated as adulterated. It would displace the Sale of Milk Regulations, 1901, issued by the Board of Agriculture, and undo all the efforts made by the Chambers and agriculturists generally to induce local authorities to work under the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts and the Milk Regulations, with the object of preventing adulteration, instead of using these Acts to prevent the sale of milk of poor quality. The number of prosecutions and convictions of perfectly innocent farmers under such a regulation would be most alarming.

BUTTER.

5.—The Local Government Board may also define butter as an article containing not more than 16 per cent. of moisture. Butter blended or re-worked in factories can be kept well under the standard of 16 per cent., and, accordingly, under the Butter Act, 1907, a butter factory is liable to conviction if butter in that factory is found to contain more than the 16 per cent. of water. But the case of butter made in farm dairies is quite different. Under the existing law farmers' butter containing more than 16 per cent. (as it often does) is presumed to be adulterated, but he still has the chance of contesting the presumption by showing that he used proper precautions to prevent an excess of water in his butter. The fact that a farmer has this defence prevents officials of local authorities from instituting proceedings recklessly in cases of excess water in farmers' butter. Under such a regulation as it is open for the Local Government Board to make, the farmers will have no such opportunity.

6.—Such a regulation would make it dangerous for farmers to make any butter for sale. It would also annul many provisions of the Butter Act, 1907, which were purposely introduced into

that Act in order that a proper distinction might be maintained as regards excess of water between factory and farmhouse butter.

7.—It will be remembered that during several years previously to the passing of the Butter Act in 1907, many efforts were made to pass legislation through Parliament fixing a limit for water in all butter. All these attempts failed. This Bill now proposes to give power to a Government Department to do by regulation what Parliament refused to do by legislation.

AN OFFICIAL INQUIRY.

8.—Your Committee consider that the time has arrived when the general question of how best to prevent fraudulent sales should be thoroughly investigated by the Government, with a view to more general legislation than at present exists, and to the consolidation of existing Acts.

CHRIS. MIDDLETON, *Chairman.*

27th November, 1913.

Sale of Milk Regulations.

Sec. 4 of the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1899, empowered the Board of Agriculture to make regulations determining what deficiency in any of the normal constituents of milk, cream, butter or cheese, or what addition of extraneous matter or water shall for the purposes of that Act raise a presumption that the articles are not genuine or are injurious to health. In January, 1900, therefore, Mr. Walter Long appointed a Departmental Committee to report what regulations, if any, should be made by the Board for determining what should be the quality of milk or cream. It was a good Committee, and Mr. R. H. Rew acted as its Secretary. Mr. C. Middleton was sent by the Council to give evidence on their behalf. They issued their report in January, 1901, recommending that a presumptive limit should be set up, viz., 12 per cent. of total milk solids, with 3.25 of butter fat, and that if any milk fell below these limits it might be presumed to be adulterated. The Council considered this report in April, 1901, and as they had so long recommended that a standard of 3 per cent. fat, with 12 per cent. total solids should be fixed, they, of course, approved this report of the Departmental Committee. On 5th August, 1901, the Board issued their Milk Regulations prescribing separate limits of 3 per cent. fat and 8.5 per cent. of solids other than fat ;

thus differing from both the Departmental Committee and the Chamber. The Regulations also prescribed that skimmed or separated milk (not being condensed milk) must not contain less than 9 per cent. of milk solids. These prescribed limits are what are commonly, but erroneously, called "the Milk Standard."

On 1st and 29th May, 1906, these Milk Regulations were criticised somewhat severely, as it had been found that farmers were being prosecuted, and sometimes convicted, of selling adulterated milk, though, as a matter of fact, the conviction was not infrequently due either to prejudice on the part of the magistrate's clerk or to the inability of the bench of magistrates to understand the regulations. The Board was now asked to amend their Order, by providing for "an appeal to the cow" whenever a sample of milk was found to be below the 3 per cent. limit, but the Board replied that they had no power to alter the regulations in the manner suggested. On the following 12th December a deputation waited upon Sir Edward Strachey to urge upon the Board the desirability of their obtaining powers to alter their regulations in the direction indicated. Sir Edward, while quite appreciating the unhappy position of the milk producer, pointed out the danger that might be incurred in this appeal to the cow, and suggested that the Chambers should consider whether the safer remedy would not be to determine that responsibility for the condition of milk should cease when it left the owner's control.

This suggestion of Sir Edward Strachey's was duly taken into consideration by the Council, and after full discussion it was unanimously agreed that the liability of consignors of milk should cease when the milk reached the consignee's hands, which means (in the case of delivery by road) on arrival at consignee's premises, and (in the case of delivery by rail) on arrival at the station to which it is consigned. This point has frequently been put forward since, but has not yet (in 1914) become law, and the farmer is still liable to conviction for fraud, if it is found that his milk has been manipulated even after it has passed out of his control.

From 1907 onwards there has been much confusion in the minds of many people when the need for milk legislation has been under discussion. There is first this question of the "Sale of Milk Regulations," dealing with the *quality* of the milk sold, and cases in this connection are sometimes dealt with under the Sale of Milk Regulations and sometimes under the Sale of Food and Drugs Acts. The second point is the question of diseased or dirty milk. This has been regulated hitherto by the insertion of clauses in private Acts or by the Infectious Diseases Act of 1890, and it is in this connection that the Government have been urged for so many years to pass a public general Act controlling the production and distribution of milk. This second point has already been touched upon in the chapter on "Cattle Diseases,"* and the final episode is dealt with in the next paragraph. The first point will remain practically untouched by the Milk and Dairies Act, 1914, and will require separate legislation.

The Milk Bill referred to on page 69 did not get a second reading, as Mr. Burns could not see his way to accept the amendments suggested by the Council, and the Government could not find time for an opposed measure. The same Minister introduced a fresh measure in March, 1913, however, which did embody practically all that the Chambers asked for, except the somewhat vital point which provided for regulations under the Act becoming operative under the Rules Publication Act, whereas the Chambers insisted upon them being laid upon the table in both Houses of Parliament for a stated period. Neither party would give way, and consequently this Bill also failed to make any progress.

Early in 1914 Mr. Samuel succeeded Mr. Burns as President of the Local Government Board. Recognising that the only chance of a measure becoming law in the then state of business in the House of Commons was the introduction of a practically agreed Bill, Mr. Samuel conferred previously with representatives of the various interests concerned, and as far as possible met the reasonable objections of all parties,

* Pp. 63, 69, 70.

with the result that the Bill received the Royal Assent on 10th August. Mr. Middleton and Mr. Sadler were the two representatives deputed by the Dairy Products Committee to lay their views before Mr. Samuel. On the invitation of the latter the Vice-Chairman (Mr. Charles Bathurst) accompanied them. The effect of the Act upon the production of milk and the industry generally will largely depend upon the character of the Milk and Dairies Orders to be made under the Act, which orders are to be made by the Local Government Board in concurrence with the Board of Agriculture, and it is to be hoped that the same reasonableness and moderation which was shown in framing the Act will also be shown in framing these Orders. The Act comes into operation on 1st October, 1915. At the expiration of one year after this Act is put into operation so much of all local Acts as deal with any of the matters dealt with by this Act are repealed. Section 9 of the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act, 1886 (under which the Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops Orders are issued), is also repealed directly this Act comes into operation, as are also Section 28 of the Public Health (London) Act, 1891, and that part of the second schedule of the London Government Act, 1899. It was in 1898 that the Council first asked for a general Act dealing with this subject, since which date it has been continuously pressed upon the Government of the day.

A deputation which met the President of the Board of Agriculture on 26th January, 1915, asked, *inter alia*, that Orders under this Act might be circulated sufficiently early to enable the Chambers to consider them. Lord Lucas replied that it was a very reasonable request, that he would do what he could to get an early publication of the Orders, and that he quite agreed with the suggestion.

Marking Foreign Meat.

The whole question of adulteration is, of course, included under the heading "Fraudulent Competition," but it is a hydra-headed monster, and we must now turn to another phase of it—the sale of foreign goods as British produce.

The chief commodities about which complaint is made are meat, dairy produce, eggs, poultry, game, fruit and vegetables. The Chamber has mainly confined its attention to meat. Probably no single factor has done more harm to the British farmer than this particular form of fraud. In this case, however, he has not suffered alone, for the consumer has for at least twenty-five years been robbed in a wholesale way by the impudence with which a class of meat purveyors (many of them can make no claim to be called butchers) have sold foreign meat as British, at double and treble the price that should justly have been charged for it. One other class has also suffered from this fraudulent trading, and that is the genuine butcher, who has sought to do, and sometimes has succeeded in doing, an honest trade ; but most of those who have tried to do this have either been ruined by the unfair competition they have had to meet or have been compelled to follow the dishonest example of the majority. All honour is due to the courage, honesty and patriotism of the few who have insisted on selling an article on its merits at a fair price.

This form of competition, though carried on to some extent, did not become acute until about 1887 or 1888, and even then the mischief was not realised for some time. It was not until November, 1890, that the attention of the Council was called to it, and on that occasion a resolution was passed urging that all imported meat should be labelled when sold in this country.

In 1893 two Bills were introduced early in the session, by Mr. Coningsby Disraeli and Mr. George Lambert respectively, providing for the labelling of foreign meat. In April the Council approved the principle of legislation in this direction. A Select Committee of the House of Lords was appointed to inquire whether legislation was desirable, and the Council sent Mr. Rew (Secretary) to give evidence on the subject on their behalf. This Committee reported later in the session, and Mr. R. A. Yerburgh at once drafted and introduced a Bill to give effect to their recommendations, but it was then too late to proceed with the measure.

In April, 1894, this report came before the Council, when general approval of its proposals was expressed, and the President of the Board of Agriculture was asked to introduce a Bill to give effect to its proposals. In 1895 this subject was added to the Parliamentary Programme of the Chambers by an unanimous resolution. In 1896 Mr. F. B. Mildmay introduced his Agricultural Produce (Marks) Bill. It was read a second time, but the Government gave no opportunity for it to be proceeded with. On 31st March the Council unanimously approved this Bill, and urged progress being made with it, but without avail. In 1897 Mr. Wingfield-Digby introduced an almost identical Bill, and at the April meeting the Council approved its provisions. It was read a second time and referred to a Select Committee on 7th April. This Committee reported the Bill without amendment, and said that they were of opinion—

“That the identification of foreign meat and cheese is desirable, and that there would be no great difficulty in carrying this out in the case of foreign carcasses and cheeses.”

The report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture issued this year recommended that every person dealing in imported meat should register as such, and that the inspection of retail butchers' shops be made in the same way as under the Food and Drugs Act by duly qualified inspectors.

No Member interested in this subject got any place in the ballot in subsequent years, and so no further Bill was introduced until 1909, although the Council passed resolutions in favour of legislation in October, 1899, March, 1904, and March, 1909. After the last-named discussion, a new Bill was drafted by the Secretary and introduced in the House of Lords on behalf of the Chamber by Lord Clifford of Chudleigh, but it was opposed by Lord Carrington and Lord Salisbury; and as there were not enough Peers present to go to a division, the Bill was withdrawn.

A new Bill with extended provisions has since been drafted, has been widely approved by the Central and local Chambers, and has been introduced in the House of Commons by Mr. Harry Barnston for several years, but, as he has had no luck

in the ballot, there has been no opportunity of proceeding with it. This last-named measure meets with much opposition and criticism from certain Meat Purveyors' Societies, but it is difficult to understand why they should object to a measure which aims merely at the suppression of nefarious practices.

It is perhaps worth noting that although Mr. William Field (M.P. for Dublin) has since 1901 introduced several Bills to provide for marking meat in Ireland, in 1914 he blocked the Chamber's Bill which applied to the United Kingdom.

Substitutes for Wool.

One other form of fraud which hits the British farmer and robs the consumer is the sale of goods which are wholly or partially made of substitutes for wool. Mr. Alfred Mansell (Secretary of the Shropshire Chamber) called public attention to this question in 1902, at a series of meetings of various societies, and in November of that year the Council resolved, with one dissentient, that legislation was needed to stop this practice. Mr. Mansell estimated that in the United Kingdom some 428,000,000 lb. of wool were displaced by the use of shoddy in the year 1900. A very large proportion of this was sold without any notification to customers that it was not "pure wool."

In this connection it should be stated that whenever these questions of fraudulent competition have been discussed by the Chambers it has always been clearly pointed out that no objection was being taken to the sale of shoddy, of foreign meat, of margarine or of any other substitute, so long as it is sold under a distinctive name and on its merits. The British producer can hold his own against most competitors on equal terms, but he cannot compete against fraud.

CHAPTER XI.

EDUCATION.

THE proceedings of the Chambers in connection with National Education somewhat overlap that of the subject of Local Taxation, and inasmuch as the cost of education in rural and semi-rural districts has fallen more heavily on agriculturists than on any other class of the community, it is not remarkable that education has not been an altogether popular subject with farmers; the wonder is that they have not been actively hostile to it.

The very earliest discussions which took place show the overlapping mentioned above, and the attitude which has been generally taken up by members of the Chambers.

The first debate took place on 18th June, 1867, and the Annual Report for that year contains the following paragraph :

*“ The Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture, and Proposed Legislation connected therewith.—*After a practical discussion a resolution was passed sympathising with efforts for an improved education of the labouring classes, but declaring Mr. Fawcett’s Bill to be impracticable and inadequate to the requirements of rural districts, and recommending a postponement of legislation on the subject until the Royal Commission shall have published their report. It is not arrogating any achievement to the Central Chamber to say that such a strong expression of opinion by representatives of large bodies of agriculturists in so many parts of the kingdom contributed to the withdrawal of Mr. Fawcett’s Bill, and that the able and outspoken debates in various provincial Chambers upon the subject of agricultural gangs did much toward securing a mild and wise measure for the suppression of the evils complained of.”

The next discussion was on 3rd March, 1868, when resolutions were passed sympathising with efforts for improving the education of the labouring classes; approving the exclu-

sion from field labour of children under nine years of age ; but disapproving of compulsory attendance at school, and declaring that the outlay for national education ought not to fall on the rates.

On 8th March, 1870, the Council unanimously resolved that the Elementary Education Bill then before the country merited the support of the Chambers, declared against the compulsory attendance of children up to twelve years of age as a hardship to the labouring classes, but favoured regular attendance up to the age of ten years, supplemented by partial attendance after that age. The Council also resolved that the proposed education rate was an increased injustice upon owners and occupiers of rateable property, and that national education ought to be paid for out of national taxation, at least until there had been a complete revision of the present system of rating.

On 5th April, 1870, the Council resolved that compulsory attendance ought not to be required after ten years of age, nor after a certificate of proficiency in reading and elementary writing at any age ; and on 31st May the Council further resolved that the limit of distance determining the exemption of a child from liability to attend school should be two miles instead of one.

It has been said by some that this opposition by farmers to compulsory attendance up to twelve years of age was merely an underhanded protest against their being deprived of cheap child labour. Whether there was any truth in this imputation or not, the present writer is not old enough to be able to pronounce ; but this compulsory attendance most certainly did inflict considerable hardship on the working classes, for in those days wages were lower, and the price of many commodities higher, than they have since become ; so that the earnings of children, however small, were a welcome addition to the family exchequer. Moreover, parents had then to pay a weekly contribution towards the cost of education, and thus it made a considerable difference whether a child between ten and twelve was earning a small wage or was costing them so many pence per week for school fees.

The above Bill, introduced by the Right Hon. W. E. Forster, Vice-President of the Committee on Education, received the Royal Assent on 9th August, 1870. It provided that children must attend school between the ages of five and thirteen; but school authorities were empowered to make by-laws for a shorter attendance than that of the full period. The obtaining of a certificate of having "passed" a certain standard allowed for total or partial exemption from attendance between ten and thirteen years of age; and residence at a distance of three miles from the nearest school (variable by local by-laws) was considered "a reasonable excuse" for non-attendance.

On 16th April, 1872, on the motion of Mr. Pell, M.P., the Council resolved in favour of limiting the advantages connected with endowments applicable to the education of the working classes to the locality intended to be benefited by the founder, and declared their opinion that to appropriate to secondary or middle-class education endowments intended for elementary education would be contrary to the intention of the Endowed Schools Act, 1869. At the same time it was agreed that to remedy the prevalent stagnation appertaining to endowments for secondary education and applicable for providing schools for farmers' sons, a county organisation, as recommended by the Schools Inquiry Commission, was desirable and should be provided for by the Legislature.

The Agricultural Children's Bill, introduced by Mr. C. S. Read, was unanimously approved by the Council on 8th May, 1872, after assurances that the prescribed minimum number of school attendances in a year would be so arranged as to allow every possible facility for juvenile labour in hop-picking, fruit gathering and other exceptional operations of husbandry,

In 1873 Mr. Read again brought forward his measure, but it was so amended in Committee that the Council considered it at their June meeting. It was then unanimously resolved "that the substitution of thirteen for twelve, as carried in Committee of the House of Commons, was subversive of the principles of Mr. Read's Bill. A petition from the Council was presented to the Lords praying their Lord-

ships to restore the measure to the form in which it had passed its second reading in the Lower House. This was done; the Bill became law, and thus there was introduced into rural districts the principle of indirect compulsion which it was hoped would save agriculture from the application of rigid compulsion, when that may hereafter become a feature of national education." (Annual Report, 1873.)

At the May meeting, in 1873, the Council appointed a Committee to consider the question of Middle-class Education in Rural Districts, and to report to the Council. The Committee presented their report in the following November, signed by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach (now Viscount St. Aldwyn), who was Chairman of the Committee, as well as of the Central Chamber for that year. The report was as follows:—

"The views which have been expressed by various Chambers of Agriculture on the urgent need of further provision for middle class education in rural districts testify to a want which has long been felt, and has been recently brought into more prominent notice by the extension of the system of elementary education. For the result of this extension may very shortly be to provide, mainly at the public expense, a better education for the children of labourers than can be claimed even at considerable cost to their parents, by the children of the middle classes.

"It is no answer to this to urge that the national elementary schools are open to all classes, and that farmers' children may avail themselves of their advantages at will. It is impossible in this country to ignore the existence of social distinctions, and the reluctance with which many parents look on any system proposing to associate their children with those beneath them in position.

"Your Committee are therefore of opinion that the time has fully come for the adoption of a system for the education of the middle classes as complete as that already provided for the children of those above and below them; but they believe that such a system may be better and more cheaply provided and more effectively carried on by a provincial organisation based on the county area, than by any direct aid and control from the central Government.

"It has been suggested that the means for the establishment of an organisation of this kind might be found within the limits of each county, by a combination of voluntary subscriptions and the existing endowments for secondary education.

"Examples already in existence show that middle-class schools, if properly conducted, would pay a commercial interest on the capital and endowments thus applied to them, and under such an arrangement the interest of an endowment would not

only continue to be enjoyed by the locality which the founder intended to benefit, but might be greater than that at present realised.

“The whole might be confided to the joint management of representatives of the subscribers and of the trustees of endowments, and some ultimate control might form one of the many useful functions to be conferred upon a county board in the direction suggested in the report of the Schools Inquiry Commission.

“The regulation of examinations might properly be provided by the Universities and certificated masters might be obtained from the same source.

“Your Committee, without expressing any final opinion upon the suggestions or attempting at present to deal with points of detail, would recommend them to the careful consideration of the Council, and submit the desirability of circulating this preliminary report through the Associated Chambers, with a view of eliciting their opinions on the main principles contained in it.”

This was presented to the Council with the motion: “That the report be received and circulated,” but no further reference to it can be found in the records of the Council or in the Minute Books of the Committee.

In 1876 the Council unanimously resolved at its April meeting that the Elementary Education Acts, 1870 and 1873, ought to be so amended that the powers of School Boards to enforce attendance of children at school and to pay the fees in cases of poverty should be conferred on every sanitary authority not in a School Board district. At the May meeting the Council urged that where School Boards existed and any part of their expenses were defrayed out of rates, such rates should be levied on the basis of special sanitary rates, and should be equally divided between landlord and tenant. They further thought it desirable that the inhabitants of any parish in which a School Board did not exist should be empowered in vestry assembled to levy a rate on the basis of a special sanitary rate for the support of a public elementary school for such parish.

The Government's Elementary Education Bill, 1876, was considered by the Council in June. The main principles of this Bill were unanimously approved on two grounds, first, because the making of education a condition of employment in the case of young children is a sound and efficacious mode of

insuring their general attendance, and, secondly, because the entrusting of compulsory powers to Town Councils and Boards of Guardians would render existing schools of greater utility, with the least cost to ratepayers. The Council expressed its opinion that the provisions of the Bill should be relaxed in order to allow a child of nine years of age who has made 250 attendances to go to work during the same year; and that all restrictions as to the payment of grants fairly earned in efficient public elementary schools should be removed, and payment by results be thus secured. The amendment to the Bill giving power to localities to dissolve School Boards was approved. This amendment was retained in the Bill as it reached the Statute Book, but some of the other proposals of the Council were not adopted.

In December, 1877, a Committee was appointed to confer with Professor Tanner, of the Science and Art Department, respecting the advantages offered by the Government for the instruction of farmers' sons in agricultural science. The Chairman of this Committee was Mr. Pickering Phipps, M.P. They presented their report to the Council in March, 1878, in which they stated—

That for upwards of twenty years previous to 1876 the advantages of the Government grant in aid of science teaching, amounting in the year 1876 to £44,000, was exclusively enjoyed by urban and manufacturing interests. A very large number of schools have been established in towns, at which art and science instruction has been obtained at a very small cost by young persons preparing to engage in manufacturing and other industrial pursuits. In 1876 the number of schools having science classes under qualified teachers was 1426, having 58,000 pupils and students, and 33,000 were examined.

The money grant was expended (1) in fees to the teachers at certain sums per head for the pupils and students who passed the examinations of the Department; (2) in sums in aid of local exhibitions and scholarships held by pupils for a term of years; (3) in sums paid in aid of travelling expenses of teachers attending lectures; (4) in grants toward the purchase of apparatus; and (5) in grants in aid of the erection or adaptation of buildings for the purpose of science schools.

Early in 1876 the Committee of Council on Education decided to place agriculture on an equal footing with the other great industries of the nation, and accordingly provided a section for the principles of agriculture, for encouraging and stimulating

instruction at a low cost, not in technical farming and grazing, but in the applications of science to husbandry. In the first year 150 candidates underwent examination in the principles of agriculture, Cirencester, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen contributing pupils and students, some of these being persons desirous of qualifying themselves to act as teachers. In 1877 no fewer than 800 candidates came up, and it is considered probable that in the present year there will be a still larger number. Of these, however, only a small proportion came from England—Scotland and Ireland supplying the large majority. According to the last official returns, the pupils under instruction in agriculture were as follows:—In England and Wales, 223; in Scotland and Ireland, 915; making a total of 1138. This probably arises from the fact that little has been done in England for enabling the advantages offered to be made use of for the sons of farmers.

Your Committee are aware that a most admirable course of study in the principles of agriculture is open to young men in the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester and elsewhere; and that the Royal Agricultural Society of England is accomplishing a valuable work by its annual examinations in scientific and practical agriculture. Nevertheless, a great need still exists for local classes, at which, by means of courses of lectures, boys in rural districts may receive some elementary instruction in the application of chemical, geological, botanical, and other sciences to the various branches of husbandry. With the help of the Government grant, and for fees not exceeding a few pounds, students could attend such lectures by qualified instructors at various rural centres.

In order to secure a share for agriculturists in the advantages offered by the Committee of Council on Education for science teaching it will be necessary in some localities to establish new centres, but in many cases it will suffice to provide new classes in connection with existing schools where these are already established in county or market towns.

The initiation in the matter consists in forming a small local Committee of gentlemen of recognised position, to obtain suitable rooms for classes, to make application to the Science and Art Department for a qualified instructor in the principles of agriculture, and to superintend the system of local examinations. In rural districts it might be desirable to arrange for a teacher to visit different towns and villages in rotation.

This report also was “received and circulated,” and the Committee was reappointed. In the following December their second report was presented and adopted. It was as follows:—

In accordance with the instructions of the Council on the 5th March last the Education Committee caused the report which

they then presented to be circulated throughout the Chambers of Agriculture, and in pursuance of the powers given to them to add to their numbers, they have obtained the co-operation of Mr. Bowen-Jones and Mr. William Stratton.

Your Committee have had opportunities during the past year for more fully considering the system for instruction in agricultural science recently introduced by the Government Department of Science and Art, and is more than ever convinced that this scheme enables science instruction to be brought within the reach of a considerable portion of farmers' sons at a very small cost.

They have to report that these science classes are now established in connection with some of our agricultural institutions, and are meeting with satisfactory support in their respective localities, and are largely attended by students whose privilege it thereby becomes to combine practice with science in their home training in agriculture. They would especially name the class formed in connection with the Newcastle Farmers' Club mainly through the instrumentality of Mr. Thos. Bell, a member of your Committee.

They find that the weakest point in the entire arrangements is the great difficulty of obtaining properly trained science teachers, and therefore recommend that your Council should make the following representations to the Department of Science and Art:—

1st. That it is of the utmost importance that instruction in the principles of agriculture should be forthwith given to those who are now in the Government Schools at South Kensington, undergoing preparation for acting as science masters.

2nd. That every assistance which the Department can render for giving instruction in the principles of agriculture to science masters now settled in the county as teachers should be afforded them.

3rd. That the study of the principles of agriculture should be encouraged in all training colleges in which masters are educated, by allowing them the option of taking this subject in common with other sciences, as one which will carry marks toward their certificate.

In submitting this report your Committee further venture to recommend that each of the local Chambers of Agriculture be invited to appoint an Education Committee for the purpose of co-operating with existing educational institutions in the promotion of agricultural education in their respective districts.

The Secretary of the Science and Art Department at South Kensington will, on application, furnish information as to the preliminaries necessary to start a class, and what assistance Government will render. And your Committee understand that an official representative of the Department will be sent, free of expense, to any locality where more detailed information is

required in view of the proposed formation of an agricultural science class.

This Committee was reappointed in February, 1879, and reported in the following April that a favourable reply to the memorial* presented by the Council asking for increased facilities in training teachers had been received from the Science and Art Department. The Department agreed to meet the suggestions offered as to the best means for increasing the number of teachers of agricultural science so far as to give a special course of lectures to intending teachers during the summer. In the House of Commons, in reply to a question put by Mr. Pickering Phipps, Chairman of the Committee, asking whether steps would be taken to give the necessary publicity to this intention, the Vice-President of Council of Education (Lord George Hamilton) invited the co-operation of the Committee of the Central Chamber in making widely known amongst teachers the proposal of the Government to offer the desired instruction. Measures were taken therefore through local Chambers to call the attention of Elementary Teachers' Unions and other educational agencies to the facilities to be offered in the following July. Teachers in some numbers attended the class formed by Professor Tanner, and this encouraged a hope that the number of available instructors would thereby be considerably increased. Suggestions made to the Royal Agricultural Society were adopted by that body, and the examinations for their junior scholarships were thrown open to students passing the primary examination in the principles of agriculture under the Government scheme. The Cirencester College diploma and the first-class certificate of the Royal Agricultural Society were also accepted by the Government as a qualification for the position of science teachers. Various efforts were then made to extend the working of the Government scheme, and classes, which owed their origin to the initiative of the Chambers, were started in several districts; while in at least one instance (the Newcastle-on-Tyne Farmers' Club) a local exhibition

* Dated 28th January, 1879, embodying 1, 2, 3 of paragraph 4 of the above report.

was founded with the assistance of the Science and Art Department.

In December, 1879, the Committee presented a further report which showed that satisfactory progress had been made in extending the system of local classes. The Council expressed their pleasure in finding that the scheme of the Science and Art Department was meeting with increased approval in the country. The Committee having learned in June, 1880, that it was not the intention of the Department to repeat the course of lectures to teachers at South Kensington, advised the Council to urge the desirability of repeating this course. The Marquis of Huntly, who had been Chairman of the Chamber in 1879, pressed the matter in the House of Lords; ultimately, Earl Spencer acceded to the request, and full advantage was taken of the lectures.

In April, 1881, the Council invited the attention of the Science and Art Department to the advantages of giving still further facilities for scientific instruction, especially recommending the technical training of teachers desirous of establishing classes in rural districts for the giving of instruction in the principles of agriculture. The two University Commissions were also memorialised, with a view to securing if possible the application of funds to the founding of Chairs of Agriculture at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and schools for agricultural instruction. In the following December the Committee presented a report showing the progress made by means of classes at South Kensington, from which it appeared that the number of pupils examined had increased from 150 in 1876 to 4353 in 1881, while in the whole nearly 5000 students had been under instruction during the year. The further extension of scientific as well as practical instruction in agriculture was declared to be desirable by the Royal Commission on Agriculture, which presented its report this year.

The Education Committee had its powers enlarged in February, 1882, and was asked to examine the proposed new Code for elementary education in its bearing on the smaller schools of rural districts; apprehension being felt that the

new regulations, as originally drafted, would increase the expenditure on this class of schools to an extent that could be justified only by larger Imperial grants.

On 4th April the Committee reported that the Code, as actually laid before Parliament, was less open to objection than the proposals which had been issued the previous autumn, but that, nevertheless, it might still injuriously affect the finances of the smaller schools, while it left a large and variable discretion in the hands of her Majesty's Inspectors. At this meeting the Council objected to the proposal in the new Code to give secondary instruction in primary schools, and an urgent request was addressed to the Education Department to provide in their instructions to Inspectors for the special case of schools in poor, scattered and hilly districts. Some such instructions were issued to Inspectors during this year, but the time allowed for their trial was too short to permit a definite judgment of their effectiveness to be formed.

The Committee reported in June, 1884, specially referring to the report of the Royal Commission which had been considering the state of technical education in this country, and calling attention to the report of one of the Sub-Commissioners (Mr. H. M. Jenkins, Secretary to the Royal Agricultural Society), in which he compared the position of agricultural education in this country with that on the Continent of Europe. In the International Conference on Education held in connection with and at the Health Exhibition on 4th August, the defects of our English system of agricultural education were illustrated, and papers were read by members of this Committee.

In 1886 the Committee was specially reappointed to arrange as to laying evidence before the Education Commission, but apparently they did not send any witnesses, as there is no record of the appointment of such.

In March, 1888, the Council considered the recommendations made to the Government in favour of State aid to agricultural education by the Departmental Committee on Agricultural and Dairy Schools, of which Sir Richard Paget

was Chairman. The proposals made for giving grants to agricultural and dairy schools in Great Britain were approved. Practical effect was given to some of the recommendations in question by a sum of £5000 being placed on the Estimates for the current financial year. Grants were made to several institutions, after inspection by officers of the Government, and proposals for further aid to others were alluded to in the Annual Report of the Chamber for 1888, as being still under consideration by the Agricultural Department of the Privy Council. The report added :—

“Inquiries are being conducted by the Government into the most practicable methods of stimulating local efforts by means of State aid; and, at the request of the Lord President of the Council, Major Craigie (Secretary of the Central Chamber) has been engaged in investigating the system of official assistance to agricultural schools in France.”

At the meeting in June, 1889, a resolution was unanimously carried urging the Government to postpone for one year the proposals contained in the new Elementary Education Code. These proposals gave effect to several of the recommendations of the Royal Commission which involved additional expenditure, without making provision for defraying the same. The Government eventually agreed to postpone the Code for a year.

In February, 1890, after a discussion on recent legislation for promoting technical education in agriculture, the Council appointed a new Education Committee, consisting of Mr. Clare Sewell Read, Mr. Jasper More, M.P., Sir Richard Paget, M.P., Mr. S. B. L. Druce, Mr. Ramsden (Warwickshire), Mr. Rigby (Cheshire), Mr. Bell (Newcastle), Colonel Legard (York), Mr. W. Nethersole (Canterbury) and Mr. Whitehouse Griffin (Bucks). Its reference was to report how far technical education and the Technical Instruction Act, 1889, could benefit agriculture. The Farmers' Club having appointed a Committee with a similar object about the same time, the two Committees amalgamated, and elected Sir Richard Paget as their Chairman. This Committee presented their report on 6th May, 1890, when it was sent down to local Chambers for their consideration. On 3rd June it was formally adopted

by the Council, and a majority of the Council expressed disapproval of the minority report sent out with it. As it gives a good summary of the facilities for agricultural education then existing in this country, the report is reproduced here, merely omitting the preliminary and historical parts :—

Approaching this matter from the farmers' point of view, we have not to deal with higher agricultural education, as carried on at Cirencester, Downton, and Hollesley Bay; as, however excellent the teaching of agriculture both in theory and practice at these colleges, the expense of education is so high as to absolutely preclude them from being of any value to the ordinary farming class.

There remain for consideration—

I. *Examining bodies, dealing with Principles of Agriculture, and offering Diplomas, Certificates, Scholarships, &c.*

II. *Teaching bodies, affording instruction in the Practice or Theory of Agriculture.*

III. *Bodies engaged in Systematic Experimental Scientific Agricultural Research.*

(1) EXAMINING BODIES.

I. Dealing with the first of these heads, we find that a considerable work is now being done by the Science and Art Department; the latest published returns, viz., for 1888, exhibiting the following results :—

Students Presenting Themselves for Examination, in Year 1888, in the Principles of Agriculture at various Local Schools in the United Kingdom.

	Passed.	Failed.	Total examined.
For elementary stage	3816	1431	5247
For advanced stage	1136	390	1526
Total	4952	1821	6773

In addition to the above, a large number of students qualifying at English Training Colleges to become teachers at public elementary schools are annually examined in the principles of agriculture by the Science and Art Department.

The Committee have to emphasise the fact that these examinations are entirely of a theoretical character, are conducted generally by examiners having no practical knowledge of farming, and passed by persons who are in the main connected with the large centres of population, and who do not as a rule follow the pursuit of agriculture in after life.

Since the year 1868 the Royal Agricultural Society has held annual examinations, of admitted stringency, dealing with the science and theory of agriculture, at which rewards of money

prizes, certificates of merit, and the life membership of the Society have been offered, and since 1873 the Society has annually offered ten scholarships of £20 each to youths who could pass an examination in agricultural subjects, and who should then proceed to a farmer or land agent, or continue at school for another year.

Examinations are, the Committee understand, now conducted by the Surveyors' Institution, which are specially designed to test theoretical knowledge of agriculture, and by the British Dairy Farmers' Association in respect of technical instruction in Dairy Work.

(2) TEACHING BODIES.

II. Coming to the second head above mentioned—the *Teaching Bodies*—so far as we know, *Aspatria* remains the only existing permanent agricultural school. It has largely benefited by getting a Government grant of £300—out of the £5000 previously mentioned—and appears to be affording, at a cost of about £50 per annum, complete teaching in the practice and theory of agriculture.

The *College of Bangor* has recently undertaken the teaching of agriculture by means of classes and lectures given throughout North Wales.

The *Bath and West of England Society* has, during the past year, successfully conducted a migratory Butter School, which has already visited some twelve different places, remaining three or more weeks at each town visited. The same Society has just extended its operations, and is opening a Cheddar Cheese School to be in operation for six months.

The *British Dairy Institute*, the *Cheshire Dairy School*, the *Eastern Counties Dairy Institute*, and the *Scotch Dairy Schools* continue their useful classes, and other schools of a similar character are gradually springing up in different parts of the country, all of these local efforts being aided and stimulated by receipt of modest contributions from the Government grant of £5000.

(3) AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH.

III. Turning to the third head—*Scientific Agricultural Research*—as to the value of various manures for corn, root, and grass crops, and feeding stuffs for cattle, the admirable work so long carried on at Rothamsted, by Sir John Lawes, deserves special mention; as also the Experimental Farm at Woburn, conducted at the sole expense of the Duke of Bedford, under the auspices of the Royal Agricultural Society. For neither of these has Government aid been sought.

In addition to these, the Bath and West of England, the Royal Manchester, Liverpool and North Lancashire, the Norfolk, the Sussex, and other Agricultural Societies, are all engaged in scientific research and aided by Government grants.

RESULTS OF PRESENT POLICY.

In short, the evidence is complete that the recent and very moderate development of a policy of affording State aid to technical agricultural teaching and Scientific research has already produced most gratifying results, and there can be no doubt that, if these Government grants were administered under regulations which would ensure their annual continuance, provided that certain necessary conditions, to be laid down by the Board of Agriculture, were observed, a considerable development of technical agricultural instruction would soon take place.

FARMERS' REQUIREMENTS AS TO PERMANENT SCHOOLS.

The want of technical agricultural instruction at permanent schools, the cost of which shall be within the means of farmers, still remains to be supplied. This matter has received the special consideration of your Committee.

They are convinced that a thorough knowledge of farming must be obtained upon a farm, and that it cannot be acquired elsewhere.

The Committee have had to examine the question, "For what class of farmers is this technical teaching most urgently required?" In an Agricultural Return for 1886 presented to Parliament, statistics are given of the number and size of agricultural holdings. Omitting the holdings under 50 acres as being either held in many cases by persons engaged in other pursuits, or by small farmers whose means would be insufficient to pay for anything beyond elementary education for their sons, we find that there are stated to be in England and Wales—

Farm holdings above 50 acres and under 100 acres...	...	54,937
Farm holdings above 100 acres and under 300 acres	...	67,024
		121,961
Farm holdings above 300 acres and under 500 acres	...	11,841
Farm holdings above 500 acres and under 1000 acres	...	4,194
Farm holdings above 1000 acres	... ..	573
		16,608

The Committee come to the conclusion that the more immediate want of agricultural technical training is for the large number of farmers whose holdings are under 300 acres.

It may be taken as a general rule that the sons of these farmers would not be likely to remain at school after sixteen years of age, and that in order to provide them with some useful knowledge of farming they must have opportunities of acquiring instruction in the theory and practice of agriculture during their school years.

ENDOWED SCHOOLS MIGHT SET UP AGRICULTURAL SIDE.

After careful consideration the Committee have come to the conclusion that by far the easiest way of providing the necessary teaching would be to utilise a certain number of the endowed

and county schools which are pretty generally to be found scattered about the country. The Committee are disposed to believe that, by the offer of liberal Government grants to provide the necessary equipment of the school—of annual payments for the use of land, for salaries of special teaching staff or other expenses—and, if possible, by the establishment of exhibitions, scholarships, or free places, the governing bodies of many of these schools would readily agree to establish an agricultural side, and accept Government inspection, which would be naturally demanded to secure that the instruction given was sufficiently thorough and effective to justify the receipt of State aid.

EDUCATION OF FARM LABOURERS.

The Committee are strongly of opinion that, whilst more scientific knowledge is absolutely required for the management of a farm, it is equally necessary that the labourer of the farm should certainly be afforded opportunities of improvement in skill, intelligence, and knowledge.

THE NEW EDUCATION CODE, 1890.

They gladly recognise the alterations in the proposed new code for public elementary schools, and would urge on the Government that every facility should be given in rural elementary schools to enable those likely to become agricultural labourers to acquire the special knowledge which will induce them to take an active and intelligent interest in their future work.

NEED OF A STATE-PROVIDED SCHOOL.

Thus far the recommendations of the Committee have been based on the principle that State aid should be liberally forthcoming to stimulate and assist local effort, but there remains a much-needed class of school—of national importance—which they claim should be established and maintained solely at the cost of the State.

CENTRAL NORMAL SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE.

As at South Kensington the "*Normal School of Science*" has been built, equipped, and maintained entirely out of State funds and for the national benefit in reference to trade and manufacture, so the Committee contend should a "*Central Normal School of Agriculture*" be established and fully equipped with land, buildings, and staff.

This school should act as a training college for teachers, but should take other pupils whose means admitted of an annual payment of, say, £50 to £60 per annum.

The teaching should be comprehensive and should include agriculture in all its branches.

Scientific agricultural research should form an important branch of its operations. All useful and practical agricultural

knowledge acquired in such research should be widely diffused for the national benefit.

This school should be freely open to the inspection of all interested in agriculture, and arrangements should be made to enable practical farmers to attend for short periods in order to study any particular branch of agriculture in which they were specially interested.

SUMMARY.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

The Committee beg to append the following summary of their recommendations :—

(1) That there should be established and maintained, at the cost of the State, a Central Normal School of Agriculture.

(2) That State aid should be liberally given to certain Endowed and County Schools, on condition of their establishing an agricultural side for the proper teaching of the theory and practice of agriculture—practical instruction being carried out on a farm, which might either be the property of the school, or rented by the school, or available by permission of neighbouring farmers. Arrangements should be made for the delivery of courses of lectures by the teaching staff or other lecturers open to farmers of the district.

(3) That grants should continue to be given by the State in aid of local effort to provide technical instruction in dairy or other branches of farm work.

(4) That aid should be similarly given to local Agricultural Associations or Chambers of Agriculture engaged in scientific research.

(5) That in all cases where State aid is afforded it should be of a permanent character, subject only to certain definite conditions laid down by the Board of Agriculture, and to the admission of annual inspection by an officer of the Board.

(6) That ample facilities should be afforded by the State to enable children in rural elementary schools to acquire knowledge of their future work, either as agricultural labourers or as tenants of small holdings.

In concluding their report the Committee desire to state that they are fully aware of the importance and difficulty of the subject with which they have had to deal.

They had hoped that the report to Parliament promised by the President of the Board of Agriculture on "the various Agricultural Schools and Associations which have been aided by Government grants during the past year" might have been in their hands before the termination of their labours. In the absence of the detailed information which would have been thus

afforded, they are conscious that many imperfections may possibly be discovered in their review of the work of agricultural education and research as now existing.

They have, however, to the best of their ability, carefully considered the various points included in their recommendations, and have arrived at their conclusions after full discussion.

In their opinion it is not easy to exaggerate or overstate the difficulties which—especially in the corn-growing districts—beset the great national industry of agriculture.

The very general and prolonged depression has had the effect of directing public attention to the necessity of providing scientific and practical agricultural education, in order to enable the farmers of the United Kingdom to meet the pressure of the present active competition with the markets of the world. Old methods may have to be abandoned, new methods may have to be introduced, in every nation of Europe provision, more or less complete, has been made to meet existing difficulties. In this country alone, up to the present time, but little has been done.

Universal experience clearly shows that without State aid it is practically impossible to establish any satisfactory system of agricultural teaching, and the Committee strongly urge that this assistance should no longer be denied to the farmers of the United Kingdom.

Signed on behalf of the Committee,

R. H. PAGET,

Chairman.

May 5th, 1890.

MINORITY REPORT.

We agree, generally, with the recommendations of the Committee, that increased aid should be given by the State for the provision of technical agricultural education.

We do not concur in the recommendation that money should be granted to Endowed or other Schools primarily existing for the purpose of general education, because :—

(a) As stated in the report, “ a thorough knowledge of farming must be obtained upon a farm, and cannot be acquired elsewhere.”

(b) The number of schools which it would be necessary, under such a scheme, to aid—if the grants from the State were to be of any appreciable benefit to the agricultural interest—would be so large that any sum which Parliament could reasonably be asked to vote would be utterly inadequate.

We agree with recommendation No. 1, so far as it asks for an educational farm, fully equipped for the teaching of agriculture in all its branches, and properly conducted by practical men with that view. We agree also that the careful carrying out on such a farm—in the best practical manner by qualified specialists—of useful experiments would be an advantage to agriculture.

But while endorsing in the main the lines which are suggested in the report for the establishment and maintenance of such an experimental and educational institution, we disagree with the assumption that its chief use should be for the training of teachers.

We consider that the great advantage of such an institution would be that it would enable persons already engaged in agricultural pursuits to attend for short periods for the purpose of studying special branches of agriculture; and we would suggest that the scale of payment for these "short courses" should be graduated so as to suit the means of ordinary farmers, small farmers, farm bailiffs, and men desirous of occupying positions of responsibility on a farm.

Holding these views of the object and utility of such institutions, it follows that, in our opinion, they should be multiplied so as to bring them within convenient reach of farmers and others in various parts of the country. We should like to see at least four or five such institutions established in England.

We wish especially to recognise the good work which is now being done by educational dairy farms, such as that recently established near Ipswich, and we cordially approve of State grants being given in aid of such institutions.

(Signed) C. W. GRAY,
W. MANFIELD,
W. NETHERSOLE.

In February, 1891, the Council passed the following resolutions, as setting out what, in their opinion, was the best means of utilising a fair proportion of the funds at the disposal of County Councils for technical education:—

"That County Councils be recommended to adopt such as may be in their opinion best suited to the circumstances of different districts:—

"(a) The engagement of qualified persons to deliver courses of lectures and conduct classes at various places in each county.

"(b) The encouragement, by means of regular grants, of dairy institutes and itinerant or temporary schools of butter or cheese making.

"(c) Assistance to teachers in rural elementary schools to attend lectures on agricultural subjects at convenient centres.

"(d) Assistance to scholars at elementary schools to proceed to secondary schools, by the institution of scholarships.

"(e) The assistance of the establishment of 'agricultural sides' to existing County and Endowed Schools.

"(f) The assistance of local agricultural bodies in conducting practical and scientific agricultural experiments.

“That County Councils should have the power to contribute to institutions for technical education situated outside their district.*

“That all future assistance afforded by the Government to technical education shall be as free from departmental restrictions and regulations as that for the present year.”

In December, 1895, the Council considered the report of the Royal Commission on Secondary Education, and in February, 1896, passed a resolution urging that while such a large proportion of the wealth of the country contributed nothing to local taxation, it was inexpedient to grant further powers for imposing additional burdens upon local rates, in order to give effect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission.

In May, 1896, the Council considered an Education Bill introduced by the Government, and objected to the alteration of the time limit for the employment of children proposed by the Bill. This Bill was read a second time, but was then dropped.

In the following December strong opposition was expressed to the proposal of Sir John Gorst (Minister for Education) to give rate aid to voluntary schools, as it would involve further burdens which in rural districts would fall mainly on agriculturists. It was urged that if any aid were given it should come from the State, and not from the rates.

In February, 1899, a resolution was carried objecting to any extension of the regulations for compulsory attendance at school, by which the sons of farm labourers might be prevented in all cases from obtaining employment up to the age of eleven, and in many cases up to thirteen years, unless it were accompanied by some system of half time.

The Education of Children Bill (known as the Robson Bill) proposed to raise from eleven to twelve years the age at which children might leave school. The Parliamentary Committee of the Chamber opposed this Bill on the ground that a distinction should be drawn between rural districts and large towns. As a result of this action, a provision was inserted

* This resolution was soon afterwards given effect to by the passing of the Technical Instruction Act, 1891.

empowering local authorities to make a by-law exempting children after a certain age, if employed in agriculture, from making more than 250 attendances in any year. This Bill became an Act under the name of the Elementary Education (School Attendance) Act, 1899.

The Board of Education Act was passed in 1899, and came into operation on 1st April, 1900.

In February, 1900, the Council resolved that the instruction given in rural elementary schools ought to be adapted to the requirements of country life, and that the attendance of children at school during certain months of the year should be dispensed with. At the same meeting a Committee was appointed "to consider the existing text-books, and whether simple lessons on the farm could be given at elementary schools." Mr. (afterwards Sir Grant) Lawson was Chairman of this Committee, which reported to the Council on 3rd April. They expressed the opinion that the text-books then in use were sufficient for the purpose for which they were intended, but that the readers and reading-books were more adapted for urban and populous centres than for rural districts. The Committee recommended that attractive readers, with coloured illustrations, costing not more than 4d. each, and dealing with the simple facts of rural life should be provided.

The principal result of this expression of opinion was that Mr. H. B. M. Buchanan, the squire of Hales, near Market Drayton, at once set to work to prepare a set of suitable readers. His first book, "A Country Reader," was published in 1901, and by the end of 1904 seven in all had been issued by Messrs. Macmillan and Co. They are admirably adapted to their purpose, and have been highly recommended for use in elementary schools by inspectors of the Board of Education, and other competent critics. The first six are most useful books to present to any child. The last was written in collaboration with Mr. R. R. C. Gregory, and was especially intended for the use of teachers.*

* I., *Senior Country Reader*, 1s. 6d.; II., *Senior Country Reader*, 1s. 6d.; III., *Senior Country Reader*, 2s.; IV., *Junior Country Reader*, 1s.; V., *Junior Country Reader*, 1s. 2d.; VI., *Junior Country Reader*, 1s. 4d.; VII., *Lessons in Country Life*, 3s. 6d.

In March, 1900, the new Education Code was issued, and this gave a wider latitude to local authorities in the choice of their curricula. In the following month the Board of Education issued a circular calling the attention of managers and teachers of rural elementary schools to the importance of making the education in the village school more consonant with the environment of the scholars than had been the case hitherto, and especially of encouraging the children to gain an intelligent knowledge of the common things which surrounded them in the country. The opinion to which the Council had given expression was thus soon endorsed by the new Department.

The Government Education Bill of 1902 gave rise to several discussions during the year, but the interest of the Chambers was mainly centred upon the question of cost, which is dealt with in the chapter on Local Taxation.

In 1902 the Council appointed a special committee to consider the question of rural depopulation, under the chairmanship of Mr. M. D'Arcy Wyvill. Their report was presented and adopted in May, 1903, and among other things recommended—

“instruction in schools of a more practical kind, which would interest the young in rural life, would tend to increase the number of skilled labourers, to retain on the land the brighter and more active young men of labouring families, and to keep up an adequate supply of the best type of labour for the large farms.”

This Committee had considerable difficulty in arriving at any conclusions acceptable to the whole of its members, and it was the draft submitted by Mr. F. A. Channing (afterwards Lord Channing of Wellingborough) which ultimately brought the Committee together.

In 1904 the Education Code for that year was the subject of debate by the Chambers, but this question is also dealt with under the head of Local Taxation.

In December, 1906, Lord Barnard raised in the House of Lords the question of agricultural education, and Earl Carrington (President of the Board of Agriculture) promised to appoint a Departmental Committee on the subject. In February,

1907, the Council carried the following resolution by 28 votes to 4 :—

“ This Council is strongly of opinion that the present system of education in elementary schools tends to unfit children for rural pursuits ; that education should be varied between country and town ; that children who are going to be employed in agriculture should be allowed to leave at an earlier age, but that such children should attend evening classes. This Council is also of opinion that education being a matter of national importance, a larger proportion of the cost should be paid out of Imperial funds.

“ That the Council should be allowed to nominate a member of the Departmental Committee to inquire into Agricultural Education, and that the inquiry be extended to elementary education in rural districts.”

The report of the Departmental Committee was issued in July, 1908, and in the following November the Council appointed a special Committee to digest this document and report upon it. This Committee, consisting of Sir F. A. Channing, Major Craigie, Professor P. McConnell, Mr. Christopher Turnor, Mr. W. A. Haviland, Mr. Trustram Eve, Mr. Martin J. Sutton, Mr. F. J. Lloyd, and Mr. Charles Bathurst, elected Mr. Lloyd as their Chairman and presented their report on 2nd February, 1909, when it was unanimously adopted.

This report recommended the Council to place on record its sincere appreciation of the Departmental Committee's report, and endorsed the appeal made therein for greatly increased funds from the National Exchequer to the Board of Agriculture for more substantial grants to universities, colleges, and other centres where scientific and practical training in agriculture is carried on or where research is combined with experiment and demonstration. It urged the Board of Education to ensure that elementary and secondary schools serving rural districts should be provided with gardens, and that nature study and the rudiments of agriculture and horticulture should be taught. It recommended local Chambers to appeal to local Education Authorities to see that there was an educational ladder in each locality by which bright boys might climb, with the help of scholarships, from the elementary

schools to the agricultural college. An earnest hope was expressed that the Boards of Agriculture and Education might arrive at an interdepartmental arrangement whereby a co-ordinated policy might be ensured. It concluded by hoping that the County Councils' Association would call a conference of Rural Education Authorities and practical agriculturists at which all might express their views on the whole subject of education in rural districts.

A deputation was then arranged to the Presidents of the two Departments concerned, and was received by these two Ministers on 9th March, when the various points dealt with in the report were enlarged upon by the different speakers. Their representations were very sympathetically received by Lord Carrington and Mr. Runciman, and effect was very soon given to at least one of the proposals, for in the following September a Memorandum (Cd. 4886) was issued, signed by the two Presidents, providing for the appointment of an Interdepartmental Committee and constituting a Rural Education Conference. The Memorandum also defined the functions of the Board of Agriculture for dealing with agricultural colleges, and pointed out the distinction between the functions of the two Departments more clearly than had hitherto been the case.

The County Councils' Association, acting on the suggestion made by the Central Chamber's Committee, called a conference which was attended by representatives of more than fifty county councils and educational institutions, when Mr. Henry Hobhouse presided, and a number of important resolutions were carried. The first of these, headed "How Rural Education can best be Promoted in Elementary Schools," aroused so much discussion that it was referred to a special Committee of the Conference, and the report of this Committee, taking the form of three resolutions, occupied the whole day on 14th July of this year. The Chamber nominated the Earl of Chichester, Lord Desborough, Mr. Courthope, M.P., Sir Francis Channing, M.P., Mr. Trustram Eve, Mr. Haviland, Mr. Lloyd, Mr. R. G. Patterson, Mr. Martin Sutton, and Mr. A. H. H. Matthews (Secretary) as

their delegates to these Conferences ; the following were the resolutions carried on 14th July :—

I.—CURRICULUM.

(1) That the curriculum of every elementary school should include provision for manual training in some one or more of its various forms, among which the following may be named, regard being had to the circumstances and industrial requirements of the districts and to the capacity of the teachers :—

(a) For boys—handicraft and gardening.

(b) For girls—needlework, cookery, laundry, housewifery, and gardening, and possibly dairy work, poultry, and bee-keeping.

(2) That apart from its practical utility, such manual instruction is of high educational value and a necessary factor in evoking mental activity and progress.

(3) That the teaching of the ordinary subjects should be allied to and correlated with the special subjects ; care, however, being taken that the general character of the ordinary instruction given shall not be impaired.

(4) That some form of manual training should be given throughout the school life of the child.

II.—TEACHERS AND TRAINING.

(1) That it is highly desirable that teaching in the “special subjects,” permitted by the Board of Education to be taught in public elementary schools, should be given by the permanent staff of the school, as well as by peripatetic teachers.

(2) That more provision should be made in normal training colleges for the training of teachers in special subjects.

(3) That teachers qualified for admission to training colleges should be permitted and encouraged by the Board to train partially in agricultural and horticultural colleges and in training schools for teachers of domestic science instead of wholly in the normal training colleges, equivalent grants being paid in respect of such training.

(4) That local authorities, wherever possible, should arrange such local training classes as will enable existing teachers to qualify to give instruction in nature study, gardening, handicraft, and housecraft, in rural elementary schools.

(5) That short continuous courses of instruction in “special subjects” should be provided in agricultural and horticultural colleges, farm institutes, schools of domestic science, or other institutions for teachers in elementary schools, leave of absence from school duties, with continuance of salary, being granted by the local Education Authorities to teachers attending, and

special grants being made by the Board of Education to the institutions providing such courses.

III.—BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT.

(1) That the requirements of the Board with regard to premises and equipment for teaching "special subjects" should for the present be relaxed, and that their regulations should recognise the essential difference between town and country schools in these matters.

(2) That the equipment should be simple and suited to the circumstances of the district.

(3) That, wherever possible, when new rural schools are planned, a room should be provided suitable for woodwork, cookery, &c., and that a plot of ground suitable for gardening should be secured.

In 1910 the Rural Education Conference was established, and Mr. Charles Bathurst and Mr. Christopher Turnor were nominated by the Council as their representatives on this Conference. That body issued eight very useful and instructive reports as follows :—

1. On County Staffs of Instructors in Agricultural Subjects.
2. On the Qualification of Teachers of Rural Subjects.
3. A suggested Type of Agricultural School.
4. The Consolidation of Rural Elementary Schools.
5. Courses in Agricultural Colleges.
6. Co-ordination of Agricultural Education.
7. Manual Instruction in Rural Elementary Schools, and the Individual Examination of Children in Rural Elementary Schools.
8. Manual Processes in Agriculture.

In 1914 the Conference was reconstituted and is now known as the Agricultural Education Conference. Lord Barnard was elected as its Chairman, while Mr. Turnor was again nominated by the Central Chamber as their representative and Mr. Bathurst was nominated by the Board of Agriculture.

On 20th February, 1911, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury announced that in future there would be a fixed subvention of £1,384,000 per annum for education instead of the fluctuating subsidy known as the Whiskey Money. Although he prophesied that this would mean an advantage, rather than otherwise, to local Education Authorities, some of these stated in a return made to the Central Chamber that

they would not be so well off under the new system as under the old.

The Education Committee of the Council, which has been annually re-elected since 1908 under the chairmanship of Mr. Christopher Turnor, has presented reports which the Council have adopted on 12th February, 1912, 16th July, 1912, and 15th July, 1913. These have chiefly dealt with the establishment of farm institutes, their equipment and administration, in order that a sound agricultural education may be brought more within the reach of the sons of the average farmer; and they have urged upon the Development Commission and the Board of Agriculture the necessity of more liberal treatment than has been given to local Education Authorities in the past.

The report dated 15th July, 1913, expressed satisfaction with the excellent work done by the Rural Education Conference, and contained the following paragraphs:—

If this system is to be effective in future the treatment by the Central Authorities must be very different from what it has been in the past (*vide* Cd. 4569). Ordinary elementary education earns approximately 50 per cent. grants from the Board of Education. Technical education beneficial to urban industries can earn still larger grants. But agricultural education, *i.e.*, education beneficial to agriculture and given after the elementary school, earns only 15 per cent. grants on the total expenditure. And in this 15 per cent. is included the Government grants to the agricultural colleges; so that the counties in reality only receive some 10 per cent. in grants towards their total expenditure on agricultural education.

The mere statement of the above facts is sufficient to show the very grave injustice that agriculturists have for years been suffering in respect of grants towards education beneficial to agriculture. Your Committee hope that the Council will unanimously express their opinion in regard to this injustice, and will insist, and continue to insist, that the authorities responsible for agricultural education shall receive grants from the National Exchequer at least equivalent to those earned by technical instruction beneficial to other industries.

On 23rd July, 1913, the Council sent representatives to support a deputation to the President of the Board of Agriculture to urge again that much larger grants should be given by the Central Authority for agricultural education, and in

his speech at the Central Chamber's annual dinner, in the following December, Mr. Runciman announced that he had succeeded in inducing the Treasury to treat Education Authorities a little more generously for the future as they "have agreed to increase the national grant for the older agricultural education work . . . in practically every county in England."

CHAPTER XII.

SUGAR BEET.

THE fact that sugar could be extracted from beetroots, similar to that produced from the sugar cane, was discovered by Marggraf about the year 1747, and Achard produced this sugar on a very small commercial scale, near Breslau, about 1799. The blockade of European ports by Napoleon I. gave a great impetus to the beet sugar industry on the Continent, and a trade was then established which has continuously increased, until in 1913 over 8,000,000 tons—almost half the world's total sugar crop—was produced in Europe. It was only natural that some intelligent observer in this country should have noticed the remarkable expansion of this industry, as well as its very beneficial effects on agriculture generally, and the *Chamber of Agriculture Journal* in December, 1869, makes a reference to a small factory for the production of beet sugar which was erected by a milling firm near Chelmsford about 1832. This appears to be the earliest recorded attempt to make a beginning in this country, and seems to have succumbed because the Government of the day put an excise duty of 30s. or 35s. per hundredweight on "indigenous sugar." This was approximately the Customs duty charged on unrefined sugar from the East and West Indies, and this action shows that they had no intention of nursing a new industry, although landowners predominated in the House of Commons in those days. The *Quarterly Magazine and Review* in 1832 contained a more detailed account of what was apparently the same undertaking.* The article in the *Chamber of Agriculture Journal*, already mentioned, refers to a factory

* *International Sugar Journal*, November, 1914.

erected at Mount Melick, in Ireland, in 1849-50, and in recording the failure of this enterprise it says: "The instances of mismanagement, cupidity, and downright robbery that have come to our knowledge were quite sufficient to sink any concern."

The issue for February, 1871, refers to a sugar factory at Lavenham, erected by Mr. James Duncan, and the following September issue quotes a balance sheet of his, showing that 10,000 tons of beets, at 20s. per ton, were dealt with at that factory, and that a profit was made of £4845, or 19½ per cent. on the capital invested in it. Mr. Duncan was satisfied with the success of his undertaking; but it is stated in the *Journal* of 6th April, 1874, that "Mr. Duncan has been obliged to inform growers in the neighbourhood of Lavenham that all operations at his factory have been suspended. The works are built on the banks of a little stream that is often no stream. The waste water, inoffensive in itself, was hot, and, getting mixed with the town sewage, became a nuisance to certain gentlemen who amused themselves fishing for the few jack to be found in the stream. Notice having been served on Mr. Duncan to abate the nuisance, he is relinquishing the business."

In 1884 Mr. Duncan and other capitalists resuscitated this factory in order to demonstrate the commercial value of a new process, known as the Le Play system. This venture came to grief* "in consequence of the cheery optimism of an inexperienced directorate, who settled contracts with farmers to grow nearly 650 acres of beets which to the tune of many thousands of tons, were duly sent by road and rail to the factory some months before there was any machinery ready to deal with them."

The *Journal* for 24th July, 1871, contained the prospectus of "Beet Root Sugar Company," with a capital of £200,000, and expressed their ability to extract 7 per cent. of sugar from the roots; but there is no further reference to this enterprise.

About 1870-75 Mr. Campbell, of Buscot Park, in Berkshire, developed beet growing for distilling alcohol. At one time he

* *Sugar Beet Growing in Britain*, by W. T. Chadwin, 1911.

arranged for as much as 1700 acres, but this business was discontinued for reasons quite apart from its intrinsic merits.

In 1870 it was reported that Mr. Ruck, of Cricklade, grew 16 tons per acre of white Silesian sugar beet, and that Professor Church, of Cirencester College, grew beets containing from 12 to 13½ per cent. of sugar.

This subject was not formally brought before the Council until 1890, when the Chairman (Mr. C. W. Gray, M.P.) reported upon a meeting which he had attended.

In March, 1898, Colonel Victor Milward, M.P., again raised the question, when he was supported by Mr. W. F. Lawrence, M.P., who was connected with the sugar industry both in England and the West Indies. A resolution was then passed requesting the Board of Agriculture to superintend the analysis and publish the results of experiments which the Central Chamber proposed to carry out. At the next meeting a sympathetic reply from the Board was reported, so a Committee was appointed to confer with the Board and to take the necessary steps to carry out the experiments. This Committee reported in May, 1899, giving information as to seventy-seven plots in thirty counties in the United Kingdom, and expressing satisfaction with the results. The following December the Committee were re-appointed "to watch the progress of sugar beet as a root crop in the United Kingdom and to report thereon from time to time." In June, 1901, an exhaustive report was presented, giving particulars of twenty-eight experiments on plots ranging from one to five acres. The weights per acre, without tops, varied from 10 to 31 tons, the average being 19 tons. The average sugar content was just over 16 per cent.

The Sugar Beet Committee sustained a severe loss in 1901 through the death of Colonel Milward, who was succeeded in the chair, early in 1902, by the Earl of Denbigh.

The Finance Act of 1901 imposed a Customs Duty of 4s. 2d. per hundredweight on sugar, and it was hoped that this would facilitate starting the new industry in this country. Lord Denbigh therefore addressed a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer asking if the Government intended to impose an

excise duty on beet sugar. Mr. Austen Chamberlain replied that "the Finance Act of 1901 did not provide for an excise duty on sugar grown and manufactured here, because there is no such industry in existence ; but if it should be attempted, he thought that for the protection of the Customs Revenue and in accordance with our general fiscal policy such a duty would be imposed." It was then proposed that a deputation should wait on the Chancellor of the Exchequer on this point, but this arrangement fell through. On 2nd April, 1904, Lord Denbigh raised the matter in the House of Lords, but Lord Denman, on behalf of the Government, gave a somewhat discouraging reply.

The Council next considered the subject in November, 1906, and continued the discussion in January, 1907, when the Government was again asked to meet a deputation ; but a reply was received stating that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would prefer to have a considered statement in writing. This was drawn up in the form of a report from the Committee to the Council, was approved by the Council in March, 1907, and sent to the Government. The principal suggestion in this report was that any excise duty imposed on home-grown sugar should be fixed at, say, 2s. per hundred-weight below the import duty, the limit allowed by the Brussels Convention being 2s. 6d. per hundredweight.

During 1907 the East Suffolk Chamber issued a report on a series of experiments carried out by them in 1906. This showed the cost of growing to be from £8 to £9 per acre, the weights produced to be from 9 to 25½ tons per acre, and the sugar content to range from 13.7 to 19.65 per cent.

The Customs Duty on sugar was reduced to 1s. 10d. per hundredweight by the Finance Act of 1908.

The *Times* of 13th November, 1909, contained the prospectus of the "Lincolnshire Beet Sugar Company," with a capital of £130,000, formed for the purpose of erecting a factory at Sleaford. This undertaking, however, did not proceed.

At the Council meeting in June, 1910, a resolution moved by Mr. G. L. Courthope, M.P., was carried, declaring that the cultivation of sugar beet and the manufacture of sugar from

beet in this country should be encouraged. The following September Mr. Courthope read a paper before the British Association dealing with the proposal to establish the industry in this country.

On 20th July, at a meeting of the Sugar Beet Committee of the Chamber, resolutions were passed under which the Committee was dissolved, the British Sugar Beet Council was formed as a separate body, and the Earl of Denbigh was elected Chairman. In accordance with a further resolution an application was made to the Development Commission for a grant to enable experiments on a larger scale to be carried out.

In February, 1911, Lord Denbigh, in the House of Lords, asked the Government what they proposed to do to encourage the sugar beet industry; Lord Carrington, in order to avoid having to say that they did not intend to do anything, announced that the Board of Agriculture would arrange to carry out some further growing experiments. Unfortunately, the conditions under which these experiments were conducted were such as to add practically nothing to previous knowledge. Later in the year the Development Commission declined to give any assistance, pleading as their reason that in the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown such assistance would contravene the Act of 1903, which ratified the Brussels Convention.

In 1912 a company, of which Mr. G. L. Courthope, M.P. was chairman, erected a factory at Cantley, in Norfolk, which dealt with 3400 acres of beet in that season, while in 1913 the same factory handled the crop of nearly 4500 acres. It has thus been demonstrated that sugar beet is a crop which can be grown on a commercial scale in this country. It has further been shown that where this crop has been grown properly its production has been profitable to the grower and beneficial to the farm upon which it was grown.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN AGRICULTURAL PARTY.

THE third and following paragraphs of the introduction to this book refer to the growing dissatisfaction among agriculturists at their lack of proper representation in Parliament. As the organisation of the Chambers developed this feeling became more pronounced, until in 1907 pointed expression was given to it by the reports of two Committees which were presented to the Council.

The first one was introduced on 5th November, and after a long and animated debate was referred to local Chambers. The resolutions sent up in response were so overwhelmingly favourable that on 11th December a new Committee was appointed (of which Mr. Samuel Kidner was Chairman) to consider further the proposals it contained. This new Committee presented its report on 5th May, 1908, but any good effect it might have had was completely destroyed by the obstruction of a small group of members, who succeeded in inducing the Council to strike out all those words printed in italics in paragraph 9. With these words deleted the report was adopted by 49 votes to 6.

No further steps were taken by the Representation Committee, and public attention has been too much occupied since by the acute controversies engendered by the large party political measures which the Government have brought forward to allow of the calm consideration necessary for constructing political machinery.

The two reports mentioned are printed here *in extenso*, and a pamphlet on the same subject is reproduced as Appendix No. 5.

REPORT OF THE ORGANISATION COMMITTEE.

NOVEMBER, 1907.

1.—The Staffordshire Chamber of Agriculture passed a resolution on 25th May urging the Central Chamber to take seriously into consideration the formation of a real, Independent Agricultural Parliamentary Party. This resolution was sent to all affiliated Chambers, and the principle it embodied has since been adopted by Canterbury, Lincolnshire, Monmouthshire, Totnes, Worcestershire Chambers, Chester, Holderness, Liverpool, Wadhurst Farmers' Clubs. This resolution formed the chief subject for discussion at the meeting of Secretaries at Lincoln on 26th June. This was attended by 14 Secretaries and several members of the Organisation Committee, and the following resolutions was unanimously carried :—

“ This meeting of Secretaries is strongly of opinion that an Independent Agricultural Party is *absolutely necessary and could be formed*, and asks the Central Chamber to devote a day to its discussion, and, if advisable, appoint a Committee to consider the best mode of creating and maintaining such a Party, and to send its suggestions to the local Chambers for consideration. Further, this meeting considers that to get as immediate results as possible much can be done by using the means already existing, by forming a joint Committee of Agricultural Members in the House composed of all political parties, which should be in close touch with the Central Chamber, its Business Committee, and Parliamentary Committee.”

2.—Any action in favour of the formation of an Agricultural Party in Parliament is quite within the province of the Chambers, Rule 1 providing that—

“ The object of the Chambers shall be . . . to take such action on all matters, both in and out of Parliament, as may seem desirable for the benefit of agriculture.”

3.—Your Committee are of opinion, and they believe it is one generally held, that the industry of agriculture is not represented in the Legislature in the degree that its relative importance, industrially and politically, demands, and therefore it does not receive the consideration that is necessary for its advancement that is so freely offered to it—with such marked results—in other countries. In making this statement your Committee desire to recall that there are about 150 parliamentary divisions in which the voters are chiefly agricultural, and it is therefore not through any lack of material that there has been this marked inactivity. The question your Committee are asked to consider is how can the present representation be shaped into a working party, and how can it be so effectively increased that agriculture can demand more attention from Parliament and from the Government of the day. On a matter of such importance it is necessary that

some definite line of action should be decided upon by those interested without loss of time.

4.—Your Committee have no hesitation in saying that the obvious answer to the question laid before them is by strengthening and consolidating existing agricultural organisations, and by the formation of others in unorganised districts. It is, however, unfortunately the case that the continued efforts of forty years have failed to bring more than a moderate percentage of agriculturists into line, and this forces your Committee to the conclusion that more attractive proposals are necessary to bring about the requisite combination than those hitherto laid before the farming community.

5.—The Lincoln resolution given above proposes the formation of a distinct Agricultural Party. Your Committee feel that this is the ideal for which to strive, despite the financial consideration such a policy would involve. It must be obvious that with a section of the House of Commons returned as agricultural members by agriculturists, pledged to promote beneficial measures and to resist injurious legislation, and quite independent of the Whips of other sections of the House, agriculture will receive more of its due share of attention than it does now or has ever done in the past. The need of such a section has especially been apparent during the past decade.

6.—One of the chief duties of an Agricultural Party was referred to in the last paragraph as “resistance to injurious legislation.” The necessity of unceasing vigilance in this connection hardly needs demonstration; but to show that this is not an idle figure of speech the fact may be mentioned that in the years 1869 to 1896 inclusive eighty-four separate Acts were passed authorising new or additional local taxation in England and Wales. (Appendix to Report of Local Taxation Commission, C. 8764, 1898, pp. X.—XII., 54, 76.) Forty more such Acts were passed between 1896 and 1903, and this policy of adding to the local burdens of agriculturists still continues, whichever party happens to be in power.

7.—For many years there have been a Conservative and a Liberal agricultural group in the House of Commons, which have met from time to time and elected chairmen and secretaries; but their activity as a rule has only become apparent when their respective parties have been in opposition. Such groups might as well be non-existent.

8.—It may be urged that an individual cannot sit in the Imperial Parliament simply as an agricultural member, since wider and more important matters than even British agriculture must claim the attention of Parliament. But there are numerous precedents of members who nominally represent particular divisions, but in reality represent particular interests which may or may not exist in their respective constituencies. Moreover, every parliamentary candidate will always have to give expression

to his views on Imperial and general questions, and unless those views commend themselves to the voters he will fail to be returned.

9.—The second part of this resolution suggests the formation of a Joint Committee, composed of members drawn from all parties. Your Committee would point out, however, that the Parliamentary Committee of the Central Chamber is potentially all that is required. It is composed of members drawn from the two great parties, and there is nothing to prevent other parties being represented upon it. The Parliamentary Committee has never been influenced by party considerations, and there are manifest objections to multiplying unattached committees. The one fault that can be found with the present Parliamentary Committee is that, collectively, it might show more activity, and that its individual members ought to attend its meetings more regularly. If this can be said of a Committee which has the stimulating force of the Central Chamber to stir it into action, there is no reason for supposing that one which has not this impetus behind it will be more active. There is also the danger that with two Committees—if the second one be formed—there would be overlapping, and therefore waste of time, possibly friction, and, more particularly, many things that are at present well done would be left undone, as they might fall between the two Committees in a well-intentioned endeavour not to interfere with each other's work.

10.—One proposal laid before your Committee is that agriculturists should select their own candidate, subject to the approval of the Central Chamber, and inform the "party" associations that they have done so, and claim their support. It is further suggested that in a division where the predominant vote is Liberal a candidate acceptable to the Liberals should be chosen, and conversely in the case of a Conservative constituency. It is claimed that this course would involve a minimum of expenditure, though it is pointed out that a central fund would, of course, be a necessity to fight a battle in some semi-rural districts, and in certain cases to aid suitable and successful candidates to bear the expenditure of Parliamentary life. Your Committee record this proposal without comment.

11.—Another method has been the old practice of putting questions to candidates at or before elections and endeavouring to hold them to their pledges; but in practice it is found impossible to state the needs of an industry in a sufficiently definite form to make a candidate's reply in any way binding.

12.—To give definite examples: At the General Election in 1905 the local Chambers put the following questions, among others, to all candidates:—

LOCAL TAXATION.

(a) that a permanent and comprehensive measure be passed, giving adequate relief from the excessive and unfair burdens at present imposed upon agriculture.

(b) That steps be taken to remedy the anomalies disclosed by the First Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation of December 16th, 1898, and especially to provide one uniform assessment for all purposes both Imperial and local.

The first four replies, taking them in alphabetical order, two of which were Unionist and two Liberal, were :—

(a) Strongly in favour. I have advocated this for the last 2½ years most keenly.

(b) Local taxation undoubtedly requires revision. Agricultural Rating Act gives temporary relief.

(c) Expressed approval of the programme of the Central Chamber.

(d) In favour of practically the whole of your proposals, and, if returned to Parliament, the agriculturists would find in me one ready to watch or to safeguard their interests whenever possible.

These replies had to be taken as satisfactory, but there is nothing in any one of them to prevent the writer voting against any Bill for revising local taxation, explaining his action with the greatest ease, and claiming that he kept within his pledge.

13.—As this report deals with a matter which affects so vitally the future of agriculture in this country, your Committee recommend that before any decision is recorded by the Council it should be referred to the local Chambers for their immediate consideration. With regard to the suggestions in the present report, your Committee desire to support the first part of the Lincoln resolution advocating the formation of an "Independent Agricultural Party." They are of opinion, however, that the second suggestion of the Secretaries would only end in disappointment and in waste of time and money. Your Committee consider that it is better boldly to face all the difficulties involved in the creation of a new parliamentary party, and recommend the formation at once of a central fund for electioneering purposes. This fund should be kept quite distinct from the current account of the Central Chamber, and should be administered by a Special Committee nominated by, and consisting of members of, the Central Chamber.

14.—Your Committee think that if care is taken much expense may be avoided by selecting constituencies where a Central Chamber candidate would be generally acceptable, and would, therefore, not be opposed.

15.—In conclusion, your Committee are strongly of opinion that the value of such a party as that proposed depends far more on its absolute independence and singleness of aim than on its numerical strength, and recommend that the efforts to establish it shall at first be concentrated on those constituencies whence it would be possible to secure a thoroughly compact and reliable body.

AGRICULTURAL REPRESENTATION COMMITTEE.

APRIL, 1908.

1.—At the Council meeting on 11th December the following resolution was carried with four dissentients, and the Special Committee was appointed :—

“ That in the opinion of this Council an Independent Agricultural Parliamentary Party should be formed, and other steps taken to strengthen the representation of agriculture in Parliament, and that with this object in view immediate steps should be taken to appoint a Committee to consider the matter and report to the Council.”

2.—Your Committee felt that their inquiries should follow the lines suggested by the report of the Organisation Committee adopted on 5th November last, since that report met with such warm approval by the local Chambers.

3.—The proposal to form an Independent Agricultural Party has, naturally, attracted a good deal of attention from the Press, from politicians, and from other quarters, and the statements made in the report just referred to have been subjected to much criticism, friendly and otherwise. As was expected, the unfriendly criticism came from strong party politicians, and this has, of course, been reflected in the columns of those local papers whose *raison d'être* is the advocacy of certain political views. These have, of course, been followed by those (who still exist, though in greatly diminished numbers) who hold that blind obedience to their party at all cost is the one redeeming virtue. On the other hand, a considerable section of the Press, a large number of individual agriculturists, and a few members of Parliament have expressed warm approval of the formation of such a party.

4.—The statement that “ there were 150 constituencies in which the voters were chiefly agricultural ” has been called in question ; but your Committee's inquiry shows that it was perfectly correct. They find, moreover, that in fully half of these the agricultural vote so largely predominates that (other circumstances being favourable) there is no reason why agricultural candidates should not be returned for that number of divisions. Assuming for a moment that a group of candidates standing for such divisions were returned as Independent Agricultural Members, your Committee wish to point out that this by no means represents the limit of the voting strength upon which agriculture might count, as there would still remain a large number of members representing divisions in which agriculture is a considerable factor, and in many of which the agricultural vote, if properly organised, would hold the balance of power. Moreover, there are some members whose sympathies are with agriculture, though they may sit for purely urban constituencies, and these members might often be relied upon to exercise a benevolent neutrality even if they would not support the Agricultural

Party. But it is not merely the number of possible votes that have to be looked at so much as the fact that a group of members existed to watch over and further agricultural interests; for your Committee are convinced that the mere knowledge of the existence of such a party would prevent agriculture being played with or neglected as has been the case in the past.

5.—Another statement which raised some comment was that two party agricultural groups already existed in the House of Commons, but that, in the opinion of the Organisation Committee, such party groups were useless. Our opponents have used the existence of these groups in an endeavour to show that an Agricultural Party is “unnecessary.” In this connection we quote the remarks of two well-known Unionist members of Parliament.

In the *Southern Daily News* of the 21st December, 1907, Lord Edmund Talbot, M.P., is reported as having said:—

“ . . . There was at this moment in the House an Agricultural Committee to which he had the honour to belong, and which met to consider every agricultural question which was brought forward in the House, and he believed it would be wisest to leave this question of the Agricultural Party in the hands of that Committee.”

But in the *Hampshire Chronicle* of 7th December, 1907, and in other local papers of that date, Mr. A. H. Lee, M.P., is reported to have said:—

“ He had been a member for several years, representing what was largely an agricultural constituency, but he had never been invited to the meeting of any such Committee, and he did not know until he read this report of the Central Chamber that there was supposed to be an Agricultural Committee of members of the House of Commons—it had never been brought to his notice, he had never been invited to it.”

In the opinion of your Committee, if these groups ever did anything to justify their existence their use has long since entirely vanished.

6.—Many critics have said that the agriculturists have not made out sufficient need for an Agricultural Party, and that we should remain satisfied with the present representation of agricultural constituencies. Your Committee, therefore, think it worth while to state a few recent facts connected with agriculture in Parliament which have come before them.

7.—In the last Parliament there were about 110 M.P.'s who were members of the Central Chamber; in the present Parliament there are about 80. Every year these members have been asked to ballot for private members' Bills at the beginning of each session. On an average barely twenty have replied at all, and of those only three or four have promised their ballot. Recently twelve members were asked to put their names on the back of a

certain Bill ; only one took the trouble to reply. The attendance of members at meetings of the Parliamentary Committee of the Central Chamber is deplorable—usually three or four out of fifteen ; yet these meetings are always held in the House of Commons in order to meet the convenience of members. The late Government allowed six hours for the discussion of agricultural questions in five sessions, but the only protest came from *outside* the House of Commons. Last session the Government gave a day to the vote for the Board of Agriculture ; only one agricultural member had any question to raise, and the day was occupied on matters outside agriculture, while scarcely a score of members representing agricultural divisions took the trouble to attend. There have been more than 100 Acts passed during the past thirty-eight years which increased the burden of local taxation ; but, with the exception of the action taken against the Education Bill of 1902, they have passed almost without protest. Nearly one hundred M.P.'s were specifically requested (during the session of 1907) to urge that the cost of administering the Destructive Insects Act should be defrayed by the National Exchequer instead of out of the rates ; not one single member raised the matter in the House. This sort of example can be multiplied indefinitely.

8.—One of the most important aspects of the whole question is the class of candidates brought forward and the way in which these candidates are forced upon some agricultural constituencies. In the course of their inquiry your Committee have come across several instances where the party organisations have selected carpet-baggers when they might have nominated a suitable candidate for an agricultural constituency.

9.—It will be found in practice that there is no one method which will bring about the formation of an Agricultural Party, nor must it be expected that a strong party will develop in a short time. There is much work to be done in many directions, and a considerable expenditure will be required. We are of opinion that the best way to carry out this will be by the appointment of a Special Standing Committee, *having a separate entity and yet working in accord with the Central Chamber, holding a position somewhat analogous to the late Local Taxation Committee. In order to ensure complete harmony prevailing between the Central Chamber and such Committee, we suggest that at least one-half of the Executive should be nominated annually by the Central Chamber.* For the purposes of this Committee a fund shall be started, which should be kept distinct from the current account of the Central Chamber, and local Chambers and others are now invited to subscribe to this fund without delay.

10.—Your Committee have in the course of several meetings considered the details of future action with a view to getting a better representation of agriculture in the House of Commons. They consider it would be unwise to set out in detail the methods

to be adopted ; but the Committee can see their way to materially improve the present position in several directions :—

(a) By putting forward absolutely independent agriculturists, standing as third candidates if necessary, and, though giving a general statement on current politics, making agriculture the paramount question.

(b) By approaching the " Party " organisations of both political parties with a view of selecting or approving candidates that will be acceptable to the parties.

(c) By local influence in each constituency, so that proper candidates are adopted by the executive of each " Party " organisation.

(d) By taking part in elections in agricultural constituencies and by questioning candidates on agricultural matters.

(e) By constant and active work among members of the House of Commons.

CHAPTER XIV.

MISCELLANEOUS.

CORN AVERAGES—WEIGHTS AND MEASURES—TITHE—INCOME TAX—LAND TAX—FOOD SUPPLY IN TIME OF WAR—RURAL WATER SUPPLIES—BOUNDARY FENCES—RIVERS CONSERVANCY AND PREVENTION OF FLOODS—THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL UNION—AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATION—SPECIAL FUNDS—SUNDRIES.

ALTHOUGH this last chapter is but a sweeping up of odds and ends, it deals with several important matters. Some of them have aroused great interest for a time, only to drop back into a forgotten corner, unless some chance circumstance has galvanised them into fresh activity; others have been of purely temporary interest. It is curious to observe, too, how particular subjects have thrust certain individuals into the limelight; what active members they have been for a short time; then how, when their pet subject has been settled or dropped, they have resigned their membership. Every organisation attracts enthusiasts and cranks. In this period of fifty years many attempts have been made to use the Chamber as an engine for furthering various theories. Champions of causes have frequently tried to capture it for their own ends; sometimes they have partially succeeded, sometimes they have failed; but if they have occupied many days of valuable time in fruitless discussion, this sacrifice has not been unmitigated loss. It has enabled members of the Council to acquire a degree of mental activity which otherwise they would not have attained. They have learned to hasten slowly before accepting new theories, or giving their blessing to every new prophet; and, though this

deliberation is often harrowing to the enthusiast, it tends to sound conclusions in the end.

The hurried survey which the number of topics has rendered necessary in this valedictory chapter will not be complete without a few words on the *personnel* of the Council.* In a body of this size there are, of course, constant changes taking place, and some local Chambers change their deputy so often that he gets no chance of becoming known by his colleagues on the Council. Some Chambers, on the other hand (especially those who send more than one deputy), re-elect one of them year after year, and it is surprising how many years some have held their seats. Our late Treasurer, Sir Bowen Bowen-Jones, Mr. James Round, Major Craigie, and Mr. Herman Biddell, have been with us since the very earliest years of the Chamber's history. Several others can show attendance for twenty or more years; but the record is held by Mr. Samuel Kidner, of the Taunton Farmers' Club, who has sat continuously for twenty-three years, and during the whole of that period has never missed one single meeting. Moreover, he is the only deputy for whom a double fee is paid, in order that he may have two votes. This continuity in a fair proportion of its membership is one of the reasons why the Chambers have met with so much success. It would be invidious to pick out individuals as especially deserving of honour from agriculturists where so many have done such good work; but readers of this book cannot fail to note the repetition of the names of many men who, outside their own immediate circle, are to-day hardly more than a memory, but who deserve a lasting memorial for the energy they have displayed, often in face of every discouragement, in doing their best for British agriculture.

Corn Averages and Official Statistics.

In 1869 the Council unanimously expressed the opinion that the corn averages as then taken were fallacious, and that the buyers' returns should be limited to purchases from

* See also note at foot of page 165.

growers only. On receiving this resolution, the Privy Council replied that the Government were ready to consider representations respecting the system of taking the averages, or any proposed change that might be deemed equitable by payers and receivers of tithe.

This subject next came before the Council in 1879, during discussions on weights and measures. General complaints were made as to the inaccuracies in the official returns collected for the purpose of determining the *Gazette* average prices of corn; the Weights and Measures Committee of the Chamber were therefore instructed to obtain detailed information from local Chambers and to communicate with the Government Departments concerned. During the year a mass of information was collected, which revealed many inaccuracies, in spite of the Government's defence of their figures, and in December the Government were asked by the Council to hold an official inquiry into the subject.

Early in the session of 1880 Colonel Ruggles-Brise, M.P. (Chairman), moved for the appointment of a Committee in the House of Commons, and the assent of the Government was indicated. The General Election intervened before the Committee was appointed, and the new Government proposed to legislate immediately. A Bill was drafted by the Board of Trade and introduced at once, but it was too late in the session for progress with it to be made. In November the Council expressed general approval of the amendments in the system of Corn Returns proposed by the Bill, but pointed out certain omissions. In 1881 two Bills were introduced by the Government and by Colonel St. John Barne respectively. In March the Council considered these Bills, and, while approving both to some extent, decided that neither was adequate, and that legislation was not advisable until a thorough inquiry into the question had been held. This the Government declined, and no legislation was effected; but a Return, moved for by Mr. Duckham, M.P., showing the distribution of the markets and the amount of corn returned at each, confirmed the opinions which had been expressed by the Council.

In 1882 Colonel Barne introduced a fresh Bill, but it did not meet with much approval, and Mr. Duckham was requested to move again for a Select Committee, which the Government again refused. Later in the session the Government introduced another Bill, which was passed, and which met several of the complaints made against the previously existing system, but which did not satisfy the Council, as they thought that only the first sale from the producer should be returned for purposes of the tithe rent charge.

In 1884 the Council expressed satisfaction at the announcement that the Government intended to enlarge the scope of the annual agricultural statistics, by procuring the yields of corn, and suggested that a census of live stock should be taken.

In 1887 Mr. (afterwards Sir James) Rankin introduced a Bill to make compulsory the sale of corn by weight, that weight to be the cental of 100 lb.; this Bill was approved by the Council, but the measure was withdrawn. In 1888 Mr. Jasper More introduced a Bill for altering the character of the returns of corn prices upon which depended the fluctuations of tithe rent charge. This came before the Council in May, but instead of approving the Bill, the Council asked the Government to investigate the whole subject by a Select Committee. To this the Government assented, and appointed a Committee with Mr. Jasper More as its Chairman; several of the Chamber's witnesses gave evidence before the Committee, but a report of the evidence was presented without any recommendations. In 1889 the Government introduced a Weights and Measures Bill, which Mr. Jasper More and Mr. Rankin thought would give an opportunity to introduce a provision making the sale of corn by weight compulsory, and these two members were put on the Grand Committee on Trade (to which the Bill was referred) to represent the agricultural view. The Council contented themselves with a resolution re-affirming the opinion they expressed in 1878, but without following it up in any way; the result was that, when the Bill became an Act, no reference to corn was included, although the sale of coal by weight was made compulsory.

In 1891 Mr. More, having obtained a good place in the ballot, introduced a fresh Bill dealing with corn sales. At the request of the Council this was referred to a fresh Select Committee, which sat in 1891, was re-appointed for 1892 and again in 1893, during which time several of the Chamber's witnesses were heard. They eventually reported in favour of the sale of corn by weight, that that weight should be the hundredweight of 112 lb., and that no other weight or measure of capacity should be referred to in any sale. In June of 1893 the Council expressed great satisfaction at this report of the Select Committee, and sent a deputation to wait upon the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Mundella) in December to ask him to give effect to the recommendations contained in it. Mr. Mundella confined himself to promising to consider the views laid before him, and to consult with the President of the Board of Agriculture.

In 1897 Mr. Rankin again introduced his Corn Sales Bill, and a resolution approving it was passed by the Council in April. Having no place, this Bill was dropped. Mr. Rankin re-introduced it in 1898, and it came on for second reading. Mr. Abel H. Smith moved the rejection of the Bill, and Mr. Walter Long, while admitting that the question of weights and measures needed reform, said that the proposal to make the 112 lb. hundredweight the unit met with so much opposition that he hoped the motion would not be pressed. The Bill was rejected by 150 votes to 76. In March this year a deputation from the Council met Mr. Walter Long, who said that, in the abstract, he agreed with their views, but that he did not think the question was ripe for legislation. From the debates which took place in the Chamber's meetings, it is evident that there was considerable difference of opinion on several points of detail. In 1900 the Council resolved that the publication of the highest and lowest prices of grain, in addition to the summaries then made in the weekly returns, would confer a great benefit on agriculturists. Since that date the subject has not been before the Council, except indirectly, as part of the question of weights and measures.

Weights and Measures.

This and the previous subject have overlapped on several occasions, but it may be useful to separate them as far as possible here. Students of human character will smile, and perhaps sigh, over this short section, for it shows more clearly than any other in this history the very restricted horizon which bounds the vision of most business men, and that agriculturists prove no exception to this rule. Practically everyone agrees as to the need of uniformity in weights and measures, and nearly everyone also agrees that the system which should be made compulsorily uniform is the system which he is used to. Here is a paradox. Unanimity of opinion, with almost as many variations as there are counties in England. But even the paradox does not hold good when details are discussed, for then unanimity becomes discord; while, to make confusion worse confounded, comparatively few men have yet grasped the difference between the metric and the decimal systems.* Some champions for uniformity expound learnedly in support of the legal standard system, but few of them remember that there are three systems of weights and measures in vogue in the United Kingdom, all of which are legal. These are (1) the Imperial weights and measures, which are those in general use; (2) the cental system with the Imperial pound as the unit; and (3) the metric system.

This matter first came before the Council in 1869, jointly with the question of "Corn Averages." It was then resolved "That all agricultural produce should be sold by weight only, and that the cental of 100 lb. should be the standard." This attracted the attention of the International Decimal Association, who proposed co-operation in obtaining a parliamentary inquiry into the best remedy for existing anomalies and disadvantages in our practice of weighing and measuring. On 5th April the Council agreed to a petition praying for such a Select Committee of Inquiry. In May the Council sent members to a conference, and later nominated six

* This may be partly due to the fact that the Decimal Association urge the adoption of the metric system.

members, including the Chairman and Secretary, to serve on a Joint Committee. The report of this Committee was sent down to local Chambers, and in February, 1871, the Council resolved that all agricultural produce, except liquids, should be sold by weight only, and added "that the Council, appreciating the advantages of the recommendations contained in the report of the Joint Committee (in favour of the ' quintal ' of 100 kilogrammes and the compulsory use of the metric weights after a defined period), was of opinion that it is desirable in the first place to introduce instruction in the metric system in public elementary schools." (Annual Report, 1871.)

In 1878 the Council re-affirmed its previous resolution in favour of sale by weight, but the cental of 100 lb. was now to be the standard. The Board of Trade was then memorialised to make the cental a new Imperial denomination of standard. This memorial was presented by a deputation in December, when the Chamber was supported by delegates from Corn Trade and Millers' Associations and Chambers of Commerce. The Government acceded to so much of the prayer of the memorial as to issue on 4th February, 1879, an Order in Council making a new denomination of standard, consisting of 100 Imperial pounds, thus legalising the cental.

From 1879 onwards until 1904 the Council confined its attention to that part of this question dealt with under " Corn Averages ; " but, in the last-named year, an abstract resolution was adopted in favour of an uniform system being made compulsory. In this year also Lord Kelvin introduced a Bill in the House of Lords which sought to make compulsory the use of the metric system. This measure was referred to a Select Committee, to which the Council sent two witnesses (Mr. Herman Biddell and Mr. F. J. Lloyd), who were charged to oppose the adoption of this system; it passed through the Lords, however, but made no progress in the Lower House. In 1907 a similar Bill was introduced in the House of Commons, but was rejected on second reading by 150 to 118.

In 1911 the Council appointed a Special Committee to

inquire into the desirability of the adoption of an uniform system of weights and measures, either for (1) the United Kingdom, or (2) for any part of the Kingdom, and the system upon which such weights and measures should be based. This Committee elected Mr. Samuel Kidner as Chairman; they examined a number of witnesses, and interviewed the Deputy-Warden of the Standards, who explained the methods of that Department. This Committee reported in October and concluded with the following recommendations:—

RECOMMENDATIONS.

(a) That the present legal standard pound be the unit of weight, and that the existing legal cental of 100 lb. be substituted for the 112 lb. hundredweight; twenty such centals to be the ton of 2000 lb.

(b) that transactions for sales or purchases of agricultural produce and requisites other than liquids, but including milk sold wholesale, shall be by weight under this standard and system.

(c) That all official quotations shall be given on the basis of the pound and cental, and that the Press be urged to adopt the same basis for all market quotations.

(d) That Section 8 of the Corn Returns Act, 1882, be repealed, and that the tithe average be adjusted in future upon the cental basis. (This Section 8 is printed below.)

(e) That a provisional period of two years be allowed before the new system shall be compulsory, after which all contracts under any other standards shall be unenforceable except for foreign trading.

SAML. KIDNER,
Chairman.

SECTION 8 OF CORN RETURNS ACT, 1882.

In the weekly summary of quantities and prices each sort of British corn shall be computed with reference to the Imperial bushel. An inspector of corn returns shall convert into such Imperial bushel all returns made to him in any other measure or by weight or by a weighed measure, and in the case of weight or weighed measure shall convert the same at the rate of sixty Imperial pounds for every bushel of wheat, fifty Imperial pounds for every bushel of barley, and thirty-nine Imperial pounds for every bushel of oats.

This report was sent down to local Chambers and came up for adoption in December, 1911, when it was generally approved, the motion being in fact carried unanimously, though two Chambers had objected to the report.

On 27th February, 1912, a small deputation was received by Mr. Runciman, which asked him to give legislative effect to the proposals contained in this report ; but the President of the Board of Agriculture would not do more than promise to give it his careful consideration.

The following January the Board replied to a letter from the Central Chamber, that " there still appears to be considerable divergence of view among agriculturists as to the lines upon which action is desired."

On 1st April, 1913, the Council gave instructions for a Bill to be drafted to give effect to the recommendations of their report, and to be submitted to local Chambers. This was done, and in the following December a motion was carried generally approving of the Bill, although an amendment opposing it met with a certain amount of support.

Tithe.

The Tithe Act, 1836, empowered the Commissioners to form lands or any portion on which hops had been grown, and market gardens, into districts, on which an extraordinary tithe charge might be levied. The Tithe Act, 1860, empowered the Commissioners to expand these districts beyond the limits originally formed, and subjected these new districts to the extraordinary charge imposed by the Act of 1836. In 1873 Mr. Vivian introduced his Tithe Commutation Acts Amendment Bill, and consideration of this measure brought this matter for the first time before the Chambers, at the May Council meeting. It was then resolved that the present law as to the chargeability of market gardens, &c., to tithe required amendment, so that while not acting unjustly to the tithe owner it should not discourage agriculture. This Bill became an Act and rescinded the power of the Commissioners to charge extraordinary tithe in future upon newly cultivated market gardens, when there was no extraordinary tithe on the parish at the time of commutation, but this limitation did not extend to hop gardens.

In 1882 two Bills in draft were submitted to the Council for consideration, viz., the Tithe Rent Charge Bill (Mr. Stanley

Leighton's) and the Tithe-Rent Charge (Extraordinary) Bill (Mr. Inderwick's). Neither of these Bills was introduced into Parliament, but the Council approved the principle of both measures. In 1883 the proposals of the Royal Commission on Agriculture regarding tithe were endorsed by the Council, and a suggestion was also approved that the right of distress should, like that for agricultural rents, be limited to one year instead of two.

In 1886 the Extraordinary Tithe Redemption Act was passed, but it was not considered at any stage by the Council.

In 1887 the matter was before the Council on three occasions. Lord Salisbury introduced a Bill providing that tithe should in all cases be paid by the landlord, and this proposal was approved by the Council in May. An amendment to the effect that the Bill was inadequate and that no settlement would be satisfactory which did not include as its primary condition a revaluation and readjustment of tithe, was negatived by 26 votes to 4. A further resolution in favour of Lord Salisbury's Bill was unanimously adopted in 1888. In 1889, after disposing of several amendments, the Council resolved with only two dissentients that no measure will afford a satisfactory settlement which does not provide on a fair basis for a general redemption of the tithe rent charge.

In 1890 the Government reintroduced their Tithe Rent-charge Recovery and Redemption Bill, which provided for collecting the charge from the owner instead of the occupier. In April the Council approved the Bill so far as it went, but called attention to several deficiencies. Numerous amendments having been proposed in the House of Commons, a special Council meeting was held on 20th June to consider them, when it was resolved that amendments were necessary to give the tithe payer relief proportioned to the new and increased power proposed to be conferred on the tithe owner. The Government withdrew the Bill while in the Committee stage, and introduced a fresh Bill in December, 1890, omitting the redemption clauses. This was generally approved by a resolution, and it received the Royal Assent on 26th March, 1891. The Government then appointed a Royal Commission

on the Redemption of Tithe, and the Chamber appointed a small Committee to watch the proceedings of the Commission. In May, 1892, this Committee reported that within the somewhat narrow limits of their reference the Commissioners had dealt fairly with the question, and that their suggestions, if carried into effect, would facilitate the redemption in certain cases. The Committee agreed that without advances of public money no early or rapid general redemption would be practicable; the Committee approved the proposal to abolish the existing term of 25 years' purchase of commutation value, and the fixing of the price in the case of compulsory redemption by the Board of Agriculture.

In February, 1896, the Council resolved that further facilities for redemption on an equitable basis should be at once provided, the Government to advance money at a low rate of interest. A Bill was introduced by Col. Lockwood, Mr. Jeffreys, and others, entitled the Tithe Redemption Bill, but it made no progress. This was reintroduced in 1897, and in April of that year the Council approved the measure; it, however, likewise made no progress. The Bill was introduced again in 1898, but did not advance, and the question has not since been brought forward.

Income Tax.

In April, 1871, the Council expressed the opinion "that the powers conferred upon surveyors in assessing the Property and Income Tax under Schedules A and B, and also the House Duty, are generally exercised in an arbitrary and unjust manner; that those powers give the surveyors of taxes inducements and facilities for making most excessive surcharges for which there are no reasonable grounds, thereby causing annoyance and inconvenience in obliging persons to appeal against such assessments; that the present mode of assessing is very unfair to many parties who make a true and just return; and that, in cases where parties are charged in excess, the expense of appealing should be borne by the person making the charge."

In 1885, during the discussion on the Ways and Means resolution in the House of Commons, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Childers), in response to a speech made by Mr. Clare Sewell Read, threw out a suggestion that the mode of charging Income Tax under Schedule B required consideration. On 5th May, therefore, a resolution moved by Mr. Bowen Bowen-Jones was adopted, which declared:—“That with reference to the present differential levy of the Income Tax on English and on Scottish and Irish farmers, they were of opinion that the Income Tax should be levied at a uniform rate throughout the United Kingdom; and further, that they strongly objected to the suggestion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to place farmers under Schedule D as wholly unsuitable to the conditions of their business.”

In November, 1886, the Council urged the desirability of a copy of the Treasury Minute regulating concessions under Schedule A being sent to local Chambers, and of an inquiry being held as to what facilities are afforded for securing relief. Acting on instructions then given, the Secretary sent a carefully worded statement to all the Associated Chambers, explaining the conditions under which relief in respect of both Schedules A and B might be secured.

In view of the admission that Income Tax, under Schedule B, appeared to have been paid frequently by farmers, even when no profits were earned, and acting on a suggestion made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as to the expediency of simplifying the process of appeal, the Council, in May, 1887, appointed a Committee with the Earl of Winchilsea as Chairman, to confer with the Inland Revenue Department, and to devise a form of account which might be officially recommended to local Income Tax Commissioners as sufficiently exact for the purpose of determining the liability or exemption of persons engaged in husbandry. In the following December the report from this Committee was adopted. It set out a simple form of account and declaration for substantiating appeals, and this form received the sanction of the Board of Inland Revenue, who had copies of the schedule

printed for use in those districts where the local Commissioners were willing to adopt it.

On several occasions the Local Taxation Committee had protested against the assessment of real property at its gross value under Schedule A, and the justice of their contention was admitted by the inclusion of Section 35 in the Finance Act, 1894, which allowed a deduction of one-eighth from the gross rental in the case of land (including in the case of farms the house and buildings) and of one-sixth in the case of house property. This deduction was, of course, entirely insufficient to meet the case of well-managed estates, where the cost of upkeep approximates more nearly to 40 per cent. of the gross income; but owners had to wait many years before further relief was given in this direction.

In its first report on the Finance Bill of 1909 the Local Taxation Committee said:—

“That the time has arrived when the income derived from the ownership of agricultural land should be assessed for Income Tax, like that derived from other forms of property and from commercial undertakings, at its net amount, and not, as now, under Schedule A, upon its gross amount less certain statutory deductions, which in no way represent the annual expenditure for purposes necessary to maintain such income.”

Mr. Charles Bathurst was especially active in pressing this point upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and, armed with a return from a large number of estates, collected by the Land Agents' Society, he succeeded in inducing Mr. Lloyd George to agree to set aside a sum of £500,000 per annum for the purpose of increasing the allowance made by Section 35 of the Finance Act, 1894. The Chancellor of the Exchequer admitted that to place income derived from real property on the same basis as other income would involve a sum of at least three millions per annum, and though he declared his inability to find this sum, he recognised the injustice of the existing basis. When the Bill passed, Section 69 provided that landowners who proved in any year that the cost of maintenance, repairs, insurance, and management, according to the average of the last five years, had exceeded in the case of land the statutory one-eighth, and in the case of

houses the statutory one-sixth, should be entitled to recover the tax on that excess up to and not exceeding a further one-eighth or one-twelfth. This reduction applied to any land or buildings the assessment on which was reduced under Sec. 35 of the Finance Act, 1894, and to any houses not exceeding £8 in annual value.

The Finance Act of 1914 (Section 8) removed the limit imposed by the Act of 1909-10, except that the abatement is not to apply to houses the annual value of which exceeds £12.

Land Tax.

In introducing his Budget in 1896, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sir M. Hicks-Beach) announced his intention of adopting the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Agriculture and remitting any unredeemed Land Tax in excess of one shilling in the pound on the rateable value of any parish. This he estimated would cost £100,000 per annum. At their May meeting the Council unanimously approved this proposal, and Sections 31-35 of the Finance Act, 1896, gave it permanent effect.

The immediate result was that in order to obtain as near the amount as in previous years the Land Tax Assessors were most zealous in assessing all new properties and in considerably raising the assessment on others. This aroused an outcry, and at the February meeting in 1897 the Council strongly protested against the new method of assessing this tax, while indignation meetings were held in various parts of the country, the National Agricultural Union being especially active in the matter. The cause of an increase in some parishes, instead of the expected decrease, was due to the fact that in 1798 a certain fixed quota was levied on every parish; but between 1798 and 1896 the annual rateable value of many parishes had greatly altered, and whereas so little as one penny in the pound, or even less, would suffice to raise the quota in some parishes, it was not infrequently found that it took as much as four shillings in the pound to raise it in others.

At the March meeting the Parliamentary Committee reported that they had interviewed the Chairman of the

Board of Inland Revenue (Sir Alfred Milner) and discussed the matter fully with him, and the result of this interview was given officially in the House of Commons by the Chancellor on 11th February. This statement explained how the unexpected had happened, and announced that fresh instructions would be issued to the Land Tax authorities before the next assessments were made. These "Instructions to Assessors" were circulated in the following April, and on the request of Mr. A. F. Jeffreys, M.P., the Board of Inland Revenue gave permission for copies of this circular to be sent to all local Chambers of Agriculture by the Central Chamber.

The Budget of 1898 proposed a further remission of Land Tax by exempting properties, the total income of whose owners did not exceed £160 per annum, from liability to this charge, and in May the Council expressed its approval of this exemption. On 16th June Mr. Laurence Hardy moved an amendment to the Finance Bill proposing the further exemption of one-half of the amount of Land Tax to owners whose incomes do not exceed £400; this was agreed to by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Finance Act of that year (Section 12) gave effect to both the Budget proposal and Mr. Hardy's amendment.

On 19th December, 1905, it was decided in the House of Lords, in the case of *Curtis v. Old Monkland Conservative Association*, that the above exemption did not apply to corporate bodies and legal persons. Since 1907, therefore, Land Tax has been levied in such cases, regardless of the total income of the corporate bodies or legal persons affected. In the case of village charities arising from land held in trust this decision has had the effect of inflicting considerable hardship on the beneficiaries. Attention was called to the matter by the Right Hon. Laurence Hardy, M.P., on 15th July, 1908, when he moved an amendment to the Finance Bill to exempt these small charities, but this was negatived.

Food Supply in Time of War.

In June, 1896, the Council passed a resolution asking the Government to institute an inquiry into the question of

national granaries. As this request met with no success, the Parliamentary Committee reported in April, 1897, that Mr. R. A. Yerburch, M.P., a member of that Committee, had proposed that a Committee of twelve agriculturists should be appointed "to inquire and report how far, and in what way, the proposed establishment of national stores of wheat would affect the interests of British farmers." He had requested the Parliamentary Committee to nominate six members of the Council to serve on the Committee, and they had accordingly nominated Mr. B. St. John Ackers, Mr. W. W. Berry, Mr. O. D. Johnson, Mr. Thomas Latham, Mr. Chris. Middleton, and Mr. James Stratton. This report was adopted by the Council.*

It has been said that, in taking up this question, agriculturists were actuated by purely selfish motives. Such an accusation cannot in fairness be maintained. It was only natural that, as the chief students of agricultural statistics, they should be the first to realise the growing danger to the country from its increased dependence on foreign food supplies. Having these statistics constantly before them, it was inevitable that they should call public attention to facts of which the public appeared to be ignorant. On the other hand, if the danger materialised and war with a naval Power broke out, agriculturists would be in less danger of starvation than any other class. The Chambers interested themselves in the scheme of national wheat stores as outlined by Mr. Yerburch, but had this scheme been adopted by the Government, agriculturists, as such, would have gained no benefit from it; they would only have enjoyed the same negative advantages as other sections of the community, viz., a safeguard against panics caused by a starving population.

* Recent publications on this question are *England's Foundation*, by J. Saxon Mills. Published in 1911 by King and Son. *To Avoid National Starvation*, by Charles Bathurst, M.P. Published in 1912 by Hugh Rees, Ltd. A pamphlet by Mr. C. H. Kenderdine, *Food Supply in War Time*, published in 1913. A report by a Special Committee on *Food Supplies in Time of War* appointed by the London Chamber of Commerce. This report was adopted by the London Chamber on 18th June, 1914, and contains an appendix by A. H. H. Matthews, who was a member of this Committee. (See Appendix No. 4.)

The Committee on Wheat Stores held an exhaustive inquiry, examined a number of expert witnesses, and issued their report in 1898. They favoured a system of national stores, and expressed the opinion that they would not have any material effect upon the interests of agriculture or the corn trade. Their only recommendation was to strongly urge the Government to obtain the appointment of a Royal Commission to conduct an exhaustive inquiry into the whole subject of the national food supply in time of war.

This report came before the Council in June, 1898, when a resolution was adopted supporting the Committee's recommendation. The Government, however, took the view that the matter was not one of sufficient importance to take any action upon.

The outbreak of the South African war again drew attention to the question of food supply, and on 6th March, 1900, the Council repeated their resolution of June, 1898, but the Government still refused to be impressed by the dangerous position occupied by the country in this connection.

The work of the Chambers, however, was not wasted. The report of the Special Committee on Wheat Stores was read by many who were not in any way connected with the Chambers, and the vital importance of the question began to be recognised by prominent men, including practically all our leading naval authorities. During 1902 an association was formed with the late Duke of Sutherland as President, and including among others Mr. A. Emmott (afterwards Lord Emmott), Mr. Henry Chaplin, Lord Desborough, Mr. R. A. Yerburch, Captain Stewart L. Murray, Mr. Henry McNeil, and forty-seven Admirals. This movement met with an astonishing amount of support, and the Association arranged a very large and representative deputation on 5th March, 1903, which met Mr. Balfour at the Foreign Office, to which the Central and many local Chambers sent delegates, and such arguments were used on that occasion that at last the Prime Minister felt compelled to appoint the Royal Commission which had been so often asked for. The Central Chamber sent three witnesses to give evidence on their

behalf before this Commission, whose report was issued in 1906. This was a most disappointing document, and its conclusions were certainly not supported by much of the evidence laid before the Commission ; in fact, the chief, and certainly the most useful, result was the collection of a mass of valuable material in the various appendices attached to the report.

Rural Water Supplies.

On several occasions prior to 1909 the Chamber had had to oppose private Bills dealing with the water supply of different areas. In many cases Bills were passed with practically no regard to the necessities of the areas from which the supply was drawn, and some districts have, as a result, been almost denuded of their natural supply, while others have had to pay rates for water which they had previously obtained from natural sources without payment. A particularly glaring attempt of this sort was the Portsmouth Water Bill in 1906, which the Chamber successfully opposed. On that occasion the Parliamentary Committee were instructed to block all objectionable Water Bills, with a view to securing the insertion of clauses protecting the interests of farmers and traders in rural areas.

In March, 1909, the Council instructed the Parliamentary Committee to draft and introduce a Bill dealing with the question of the underground supply of water, and to secure a proper service for agriculturists and others in the area affected at low rates. The Water Supplies Protection Bill was accordingly drafted by Sir Charles Longmore (Clerk to the Hertfordshire County Council) and introduced in the House of Lords by Lord Desborough. It was given a second reading, and after some pressure the Government agreed to send it to a Joint Committee of both Houses ; prorogation intervened, however, and the Bill was dropped. It was reintroduced in 1910, again got a second reading, and was referred to the Joint Committee.* This Committee reported in July, but

* Mr. Courthope gave evidence before this Committee on behalf of the Council.

unfavourably to that part of the Bill which the Council considered of importance, viz., the embodiment in a general Act of the principle which had been agreed to and set up in various forms in a number of private Acts, this principle being the inclusion of a clause protecting local consumers of water. It had long been felt a hardship, after the need of such a clause had been demonstrated time after time, that fresh companies (or new undertakings by old companies) could be promoted, threatening local consumers, who must again go to the expense of opposing a Bill in support of a principle already established.

The Joint Committee, however, made two important declarations: (i.) that a comprehensive inquiry into the whole subject of surface and underground water supplies should be held before any legislative action of the kind proposed by this Bill was taken; and (ii.) that the creation of an organisation was needed, empowered to inquire into the whole question of surface and underground water supplies, to supervise the future allocation of supplies, and to serve as an authoritative adviser to Parliament in the consideration of particular schemes.

Quite a number of Water Bills were blocked in 1909, and an immense amount of work fell upon Mr. Courthope, M.P. (Chairman of the Chamber), in consequence. In the course of several discussion and negotiations between promoters of Bills, the Local Government Board, and Mr. Courthope, Mr. Burns admitted to the latter the injustice of existing conditions, and expressed his desire to remedy them. Unfortunately, just at a critical juncture Mr. Courthope had a long and serious illness, and as the instructions to Committees on these Bills were all in his name they could not be moved, and an opportunity was thus lost. Beyond arousing public attention, therefore, little was accomplished this year.

In 1910 Mr. Courthope, assisted by Mr. Beville Stanier, again blocked a number of Water Bills, and carried an instruction to the Committees to inquire whether the promoters had made adequate provision by their Bills for the supply at reasonable rates to the agricultural community within their

areas. It was comparatively easy to get so far, but when an instruction came before a Committee there was no witness to put the case for agriculture, while the promoters were always represented by counsel; it was therefore easy to satisfy the Committee that everything necessary was being done, when only one side was given a hearing. Consequently, Committees always reported to the House that the provisions of the Bills were adequate to comply with the instruction. As the Central Chamber has no *locus standi* and local Chambers have seldom the financial means to engage counsel to appear, it is not easy to carry matters further; but the action taken did result in an alteration being made in the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, requiring every Committee sitting on a Water Bill to inquire into the question of adequate provision being made, and to report to the House accordingly.

Up to the present the Government have taken no further steps in the direction of holding a full inquiry into the question of water supply, as recommended by the Joint Committee in 1910.

Boundary Fences.

In June, 1883, the West Riding Chamber sent up a resolution complaining of the unsatisfactory state of the law on boundary fences, and, considering this a question of some importance, the Business Committee put it on the agenda for the following November. On that date Mr. Henry Williams, of Monmouthshire, introduced the question, and the following resolution was carried by 15 votes to 14:—"That the law with regard to fences requires to be more clearly defined and to be more conformable with the prevailing practice." In December, 1887, after an interesting debate, a Committee was appointed to inquire into the whole question of boundary fences and, if necessary, to draft a Bill on the subject. This Committee consisted of Lord Ebrington, M.P., Mr. S. Rowlandson (Chairman), Mr. Clare Sewell Read, Mr. Fletcher (Maidstone), Mr. S. B. L. Druce, Mr. W. Stratton, Mr. W. H. Gatty (Northamptonshire), and Mr. T. Colborne (Monmouthshire). The Committee's first report, adopted by the Council on 2nd May,

1888, briefly and lucidly stated the position, though it is doubtful if the expression "throughout the greater part of England," in the second paragraph, is correct. The report was as follows :—

That except so far as regards lands enclosed under general or special Enclosure Acts, in which cases the enclosure award specifies by whom any fence is to be made and maintained, the maintenance of boundary fences is regulated by common law. That law is that a man is bound to take care that his cattle do not wander from his own land and trespass on the land of others.

But, on the other hand, throughout the greater part of England there is a custom, *which, however, has not the force of law*, that the man on whose land any fence stands is bound to maintain that fence so as to be efficient not only against his own but also against his neighbour's stock.

The common law principle above mentioned had its origin in early times before enclosures were general. When the first enclosures were made the obligation imposed on the party enclosing was that he should keep his stock on the land withdrawn from the adjoining common field. Every person making an enclosure was thus obliged to fence his own close.

To avoid double fences, and the consequent outlay and waste of land, the custom that each man should maintain his fence against his neighbour's stock probably arose. This custom has proved of practical convenience as between neighbours.

Under these circumstances your Committee are of opinion that the law should be varied so as to give legal effect to the custom.

For this purpose it is necessary to obtain a statutory enactment, since no other means exist to give legal effect to the custom except in the very rare cases where direct prescription can be proved.

This was submitted to local Chambers, twenty of whom approved, two suggested trifling alterations in the report, and four preferred that matters should remain as they were; the latter were the Berks and Oxon, Gloucestershire, Cirencester, and West Suffolk Chambers. At the following June meeting the Committee were authorised to draft a Bill upon the lines indicated in the foregoing report. They proceeded to raise a special fund for this purpose, but in November, 1890, they reported that they thought that the fact of the recent establishment of the Board of Agriculture necessitated an alteration in the course which it had been proposed should be followed, and recommended that the Board be requested to introduce a Government measure dealing with this subject.

In this report the Committee drew attention to the Derby County Court case of *Fletcher v. Howe* (early in 1890), where the Judge laid down that if an occupier of land does not fence for himself he must take his chance of his neighbour's cattle straying on to his land, unless he can show by a long course of practice that the occupier of the neighbouring land has not only repaired the fence, but has repaired for his neighbour's advantage as well as for his own. The Committee claimed that as this was only a County Court judgment and applied to the particular case only, it did not make the necessity for an alteration of the law any less than before; that in fact it made their case stronger, as tending to show that what they would make the general law was held to be law in this particular case.

The Board were then formally requested to introduce a Bill, but as in May, 1891, no Bill was forthcoming, the Council sent a deputation to wait upon the President of the new Department, to ask him to introduce a measure. Mr. Chaplin met the deputation the following June, and later on wrote to say that the Board were not prepared to propose legislation on the matter. In February, 1892, the Council passed a resolution asking the House of Lords to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into the law, and the desirability of its amendment. As this request met with no success, nothing further was done until November, 1895, when another resolution was adopted asking the Government to appoint a Select Committee, but this also met with no success.

The Committee met twice in 1897, and having gained the support and interest of Mr. Walter Morrison, prepared a Bill which was laid before the Council in April, 1898. This was submitted to local Chambers, and in the following November a motion expressing general approval of the Bill was adopted. No further steps were taken, however, and the Bill was not even introduced into Parliament.

The question was next raised at a Council meeting on 9th June, 1903, when Colonel W. W. Maude carried a resolution on the unsatisfactory state of the law. A new Committee was then appointed, with Mr. Christopher Middleton as Chair-

man ; they presented their report in May, 1904, and after it had been referred to local Chambers it came before the Council in November, and was adopted by a small majority. As this is a question upon which opinion is very divided, this report is worth quoting at length, together with the reservations of four members of the Committee. It was as follows, the historical introduction being omitted :—

13. Most agreements between landlord and tenant expressly provide that fences shall be maintained by the tenant. In the absence of such an agreement the tenant is still bound by an implied covenant to do so.

14. As between adjoining owners the position is briefly this. By the common law of England “ no one is bound to fence against his neighbour’s cattle.” “ An owner or an occupier of lands, though bound to take care that his cattle do not wander from his own land and stray upon the land of another, is under no legal obligation to put up or maintain a fence so as to prevent the cattle of his neighbour straying upon his land ; such an obligation can only be founded upon a statutory obligation or some agreement or covenant.” (*Hilton v. Ankesson*, 27 L.T., N.S. 519 Exch., and *Boden v. Roscoe*, 1894, 1 Q.B. 608.)

15. Whilst such is understood to be the law, a custom has sprung up which is generally observed by farmers throughout the country, that where two fields are separated by a hedge and a ditch, both, as a rule, belong to the field in which the hedge is situated, the tenant of that field usually maintaining both, thus benefiting the occupier on the other side.

16. This custom has probably arisen through the fact that the tenant of the field in which is the hedge has maintained it in pursuance of his obligation to his landlord to do so, and in consequence thereof there was no necessity for the other party also to fence. But if the owner of the fence chose to remove it, then the owner of the adjoining field would be obliged to take means to prevent his cattle from trespassing, such as by erecting a fence, for he does not acquire any right to have the original fence kept up, merely because the owner or his tenant has repaired it for many years, simply for his own benefit, or in pursuance of his covenant.

17. If, on the other hand, it could be shown that the owner of the fence had habitually repaired it on the demand of the other party, or had repaired it obviously for the benefit of the other party, and not merely to restrain his own cattle, then it might be possible to establish a prescriptive right to have it so maintained in future.

18. In view of this conflict between law and custom, it can scarcely be contended that the present state of the law is altogether satisfactory. In fact, if it were universally acted upon it

would in many cases necessitate the erection of double fences, frequently with a strip of land between.

19. That such a necessity does not arise is in a great measure owing to the fact that fortunately farmers generally are forbearing and neighbourly, and ready, as a rule, to fulfil their recognised obligations.

20. In the comparatively few cases where a tenant seeks to evade his responsibilities in this respect, he does not thus get rid of his liability, as between his landlord and himself, and should be compelled to keep up the fences which belong to his holding.

21. Serious trouble through wilful neglect to maintain boundary fences most frequently arises in the case of small occupying owners, who have often only recently come into possession of their holdings.

22. No doubt it would be an advantage if some easy remedy for such cases could be provided.

23. Probably in many even of these cases a full investigation would show that a statutory obligation to repair already exists by award or otherwise; or if such were lost, the presumption that there had been such a lost grant might well be strong enough to give a prescriptive right.

24. The following are the main provisions of the Bill as drafted on behalf of Mr. Morrison, and subsequently revised:—

(1) That the Act should only apply to adjoining closes of land in different ownerships.

(2) Where under Enclosure Act or Award, or under an express grant or agreement, or under any implied grant arising by prescription, there is a duty to fence, such duty shall extend to maintaining the fence.

(3) Where a fence is wholly upon one of the adjoining closes the owner of that close shall be liable to maintain it.

(4) Where the duty to fence is by prescription only the duty shall be sufficiently proved if the party on whom the duty is said to devolve can be shown to have repaired the fence during the last twenty years, or to have prevented the other party repairing it.

(5) Where the legal duty to maintain an existing fence between two adjoining closes belonging to different owners is in dispute either party may refer the matter to the Board of Agriculture, who shall accept the reference, and whose decision shall be final.

(6) Where no legal duty to maintain a fence between adjoining owners exists provision is made for the maintenance of such fence at the joint expense, in such proportions as the Court shall order.

25. Whilst it is true that a measure somewhat on these lines would be heartily approved in parts of a number of counties in England, on the other hand, any change in the law in this direction would be strongly opposed in other parts of the country,

especially in the more arable counties, where such a radical change in the law of boundary fences might entail a very serious expenditure on fencing in respect of certain lands which might not benefit from nor need such fences.

26. It has been urged that to disarm this opposition any amendment of the law of boundary fences might be permissive, and should only be adopted in those areas where there was a desire for it.

27. This proposal does not commend itself to the Committee as practicable, or as a satisfactory solution of the difficulty.

28. They are of opinion that to obtain such a revision of the law it would be necessary that the whole country should be practically unanimous in the desire for the change.

29. It is with great reluctance they arrive at the conclusion that, though the existing state of the law in the matter cannot be regarded as satisfactory they are unable to suggest any form of legislation whereby doors will not be opened to litigation, which may prove a greater evil than any that exists at present.

30. The Committee wish to acknowledge their indebtedness to a handbook on the subject prepared by Mr. A. E. B. Soulbly, of Malton, Yorkshire.

CHRIS. MIDDLETON (Chairman).
 W. H. BARFOOT-SAUNT.
 W. FITZHERBERT-BROCKHOLES.
 RICHARD BROWN.
 H. TRUSTRAM EVE.
 R. L. EVERETT.
 JNO. KENDRICK.
 S. KIDNER.
 HENRY WILLIAMS.

29th March, 1904.

RESERVATION BY MR. HENRY WILLIAMS.

Whilst signing the report, for the sake of unanimity, I desire to make some remarks.

I think the inquiry of the Committee, and the legislation suggested, go much further than the desire or intentions of those who have been asking that the law should be brought into conformity with the prevailing custom. They do not wish to touch the question of the ownership of a fence where such is in dispute, nor the respective obligations of adjoining owners as to making new fences where none have previously existed. What has been asked for is that where a fence has existed for the purpose of restraining animals for a period of (it was suggested) twelve years, and is known to belong to one owner, such owner shall be obliged to keep that fence in such repair as will restrain all ordinary domestic animals (with exceptions—see below), whether his own or his neighbour's, and, in default of this, he shall not have

any claim for damage done by his neighbour's stock trespassing.

There should be in a schedule attached to the Act such exceptions to the term "domestic animals" as will readily suggest themselves to any practical man in drafting.

HENRY WILLIAMS.

REPORT BY COLONEL MAUDE.

I agree with so much of the Report as is stated in Clauses 1 to 25.

I cannot subscribe to Clauses 26 to 29.

From the discussions which I have heard in Committee, and also in Council, I feel sure that a great many of those members who are opposing any alteration of the law on this subject fail entirely to realise how objectionable the law is in its present state to the farming community in *grazing* districts; how it is in the power of one man, either of a slothful, untidy, impecunious, or cantankerous disposition, as the case may be, to stir up a state of strife and ill-feeling in a whole parish by refusing or neglecting to keep up the fences in the usual state of repair, which have been, by custom or award, so kept up by his predecessors for generations.

Fortunately, farmers as a rule are of a peaceful, law-abiding disposition, and will submit to a great deal to avoid going into the courts, and, consequently, few cases come before the public by means of the Press. But although this is so, the evil and injustice is there all the same and keeps cropping up, first in one place and then in another; therefore, I feel that every effort should be made to find a remedy while the matter is now before the Chambers, and not hang it up indefinitely, or abandon it altogether, as would be the case if Clauses 26 to 29 were adopted.

There have only been some three objections put forward, so far as I have gathered, to the Bill which has been under discussion. They are as follows:—

(a) The undesirability of dealing with fences, the ownership of which is unknown or in dispute.

(b) The burden or hardship which would be put upon arable farmers if they were compelled to make long lengths of fences into such as would turn stock, when previously they had only been nominal fences, because the occupier of the adjoining land chose to lay it down to pasture and graze it with stock.

(c) The difficulty in defining what are "unruly" stock and what are sufficient fences.

Taking these objections in the same order, with regard to (a), it might be advisable, for the sake of simplifying the Bill and avoiding what might be a very contentious subject, to drop this part of the Bill.

With regard to (b), the opposition under this head might be met by limiting the obligation to keep a fence in such a state of

repair as the field had required for a certain number of years back, say, fifteen or twenty.

With regard to (c), surely the Bill could be so amended as to fully cover these points, and if disputes did arise regarding them they could be referred to the County Council or the Board of Agriculture, or some other inexpensive tribunal.

The great point to be aimed at is to prevent a farmer being able to claim and recover damages for trespass by his neighbour's stock when that trespass has been caused solely by his own neglect and fault. If, however, the representatives of arable counties still object to give a helping hand to their fellow-farmers in grazing districts in promoting legislation which is necessary and desirable to the latter, then I would suggest that the Committee reconsider the subject with the idea of ascertaining whether powers could not be conferred on County Councils to make regulations on this matter which may be applicable and desirable for their respective counties.

Signed by,

W. W. MAUDE.
C. F. ROBERTS.

REPORT BY MR. THOS. B. BAINBRIDGE.

Whilst I agree with the report, with the exception of Clauses 27 and 28, I am of opinion that an Act might be passed providing that the owner of a fence which has been a boundary fence and answered that purpose for at least twenty years, and the owner or occupier deliberately neglects to repair or maintain the same in an efficient state, after due notice has been given by the adjoining occupier, should be debarred from obtaining compensation for any damage done to his crops by cattle straying through such neglected fence.

THOS. B. BAINBRIDGE.

Rivers Conservancy and Prevention of Floods.

In December, 1878, the Lincolnshire Chamber sent a deputation to the Home Secretary on this question, and asked the Central Chamber to support them. As, however, the subject had never been before the Council they were unable to do so. In the following April, after a very instructive debate in which the Marquess of Ripon, the Marquess of Huntly, and Mr. Clare Sewell Read took part, the Council expressed their approval that a Bill providing for the conservancy of rivers had been introduced in the House of Lords, but objected to the mode of constituting Conservancy Boards, to the incidence of the rates, and to the taxation of uplands. The Bill was

amended, but on 10th June the Council requested further amendments regarding the incidence of rates proposed to be charged, and urged that further inquiry by a Select Committee was needed before the measure was passed. The Bill was eventually withdrawn.

In 1881 two Bills were introduced, by the Government in the House of Lords, and by Mr. Magniac. At the February meeting another very useful discussion took place, when the Council expressed their satisfaction with the introduction of legislation, but declared it unjust that lands in no degree benefited by the expenditure should have to contribute to the cost of improving flooded lands. They also objected to a flood rate being levied on the basis of the poor rate, as in their opinion agricultural land should be charged an acreage rate. The request was renewed that both Bills should be referred to a Select Committee of the House of Commons. The Government measure passed the House of Lords, but on second reading in the Commons Mr. Pell moved its rejection on behalf of the Council; he was defeated by 118 votes to 42, after which both Bills were referred to a Select Committee. The first-named came back to the House in a form still open to the objections previously raised by the Council, so further resistance was offered, and the Government ultimately abandoned it.

In 1882 the Government reintroduced the Bill in practically the same form as it left the Select Committee in 1881, but the Council again strongly opposed it on the rating question, and again the President of the Local Government Board had to withdraw his Bill. A fresh one was introduced in 1883 in a somewhat amended form, but it still met with so much opposition on the same ground that it was withdrawn.

In 1892 Mr. Christopher Middleton raised the question in another form, by moving that the County Councils should be empowered to compel owners to cleanse watercourses and to maintain efficiently all outlets for drainage, or to do the work at the cost of such owners. This proposal was carried. Some correspondence then passed between the Central Chamber

and the County Councils' Association on the subject, and Lord Thring introduced a series of Bills in the House of Lords between 1893 and 1898, two of which passed the Upper House, but made no further progress. A Bill was introduced in the Commons in 1899, but did not get a second reading.

The subject was revived on 3rd May, 1904, when the Council reiterated their opinion of May, 1892, and the subject was referred to the Boundary Fences Committee. This Committee, having obtained leave from the Council, went as a deputation to the Board of Agriculture in order to discuss the whole question, and in May, 1905, they presented their report, which the Council adopted. The Committee said:—

(5) In case of rivers and the larger watercourses, which were more generally dealt with by private Acts of Parliament, or by Drainage Boards constituted under the Land Drainage Act of 1861, several members of the deputation alluded to the unsatisfactory nature of some of these Acts, and to the way in which their provisions were administered. With regard to the smaller watercourses which were not included in any drainage area, several speakers called Lord Onslow's attention to the fact that, whilst it was true that Sections 14 and 15 of the Land Drainage Act of 1847 provided means to remedy the default of persons who neglected to clean out streams or watercourses which either formed the boundary of, or ran through, their property, the unanimous opinion of the deputation was that these powers needed simplifying, and that it was desirable that some authority, preferably the Board of Agriculture, should be charged with their enforcement.

(6) It was also pointed out that the deputation approved generally of the provisions of the County Councils Bill, 1899, the chief difficulty with regard to which seemed to be the equitable apportionment of the expenses incurred under the Bill; but they also considered that the Board of Agriculture rather than the County Councils should be the authority to administer such an Act.

(7) As the provisions of the Act of 1847 were not very widely known, and as there appeared to be a great deal of uncertainty as to the state of the law on the subject generally, it was suggested that if the Board of Agriculture would prepare and issue a statement giving a summary of the existing laws dealing with the question, it might prepare the way for such further legislation as is needed.

(8) Lord Onslow, in his reply, intimated that the last suggestion was one which the Board might very well adopt. He agreed with many of the points that had been raised, and felt that the Board might with advantage make some further inquiry into present

conditions, but he could not hold out any hope that the Board of Agriculture, or any Government Department, should become public prosecutor or take in hand any prosecution which, under the existing law, any person who was aggrieved was in a position to undertake for himself.

(9) It does not appear to the Committee that they can carry the matter any further at present. If and when the statement of the law on the subject, foreshadowed by Lord Onslow, appears, it will naturally be considered by the Council, who may then see fit to take further steps, either by attempting legislation or otherwise, to remedy the very unsatisfactory state of affairs which admittedly prevails.

CHRIS. MIDDLETON,
Chairman.

The statement of the law promised by Lord Onslow was printed in the *Journal* of the Board of Agriculture for July 1905, and was as follows :—

“ For mere omission a man is not, generally speaking, answerable by law ; and, accordingly, at common law the occupier of land through which a watercourse runs is not, as a rule, under any obligation to neighbours whose lands drain into that watercourse to prevent or remove any obstruction of the outfall due to merely natural causes (such as silting up of the channel or growth of weeds), and not caused by any action on his part ; though, in exceptional cases, *e.g.*, under an enclosure award, such an obligation may sometimes exist.

“ A statutory remedy is, however, provided by the Land Drainage Act, 1847 (10 & 11 Vict., c. 38), irrespective of any existing legal obligation on the part of the occupier of the land ; but the statutory duty imposed by this Act arises only on notice given by the person injured, and the Act does not create any liability in damages for the injury caused by the occupier’s neglect.

“ Section 14 of the Act enacts that where, by the neglect of any occupier to maintain, or join in maintaining, the banks, or to cleanse and scour, or join in cleansing and scouring, the channels of existing drains, streams, or watercourses lying in or bounding the lands of such occupier, injury is caused to any other land, the proprietor or occupier of any land so injured may serve a notice on the neglecting occupier, requiring him to maintain the banks or cleanse or scour the channels in question. If he neglects so to do, the occupier of the land injured may, after one calendar month from the service of the notice, carry out the necessary work. The cost of the same, or a just proportion thereof, is to be paid by the neglecting occupier, and payment may be enforced by an order of justices.

“ Section 15 provides that, unless the drain, stream, or watercourse to be cleaned bounds or immediately adjoins the land of

the occupier injured by the neglect, a justice's warrant to enter on the defaulter's land, in order to carry out the necessary works, must be obtained. This warrant is to be granted if the justices are satisfied that the injury has been caused by the neglect of the occupier whose land is to be entered."

The National Agricultural Union.

Agricultural depression had become so acute, and the leaders of both political parties seemed so entirely heedless of its general conditions, that when, in November, 1892, the Lancashire Federation of Farmers' Associations suggested that a national conference should be convened, the proposal was warmly taken up. Invitations were issued to every known agricultural society to send delegates, and on 7th and 8th December of that year there was held what was probably the largest, and was certainly the most representative agricultural gathering that has ever been got together in this country. The Chairman of the Central Chamber (the Right Hon. James Lowther, M.P.) presided, and resolutions were adopted on the following subjects :—

(1) Pointing out that the extreme depression had become very critical ; that it was due to a continuous fall in prices ; that land was going out of cultivation ; and that it was a matter of the highest national concern that the progress of this calamity should be arrested.

(2) That all competing imports should pay a duty not less than the rates and taxes levied on home production.

(3) Supporting bimetallism.

(4) Local taxation.

(5) Compensation for unexhausted improvements ; abolition of the law of distress ; equal division of local rates between owners and occupiers.

(6) Approving the principle of co-operation.

(7) The extirpation of tuberculosis.

(8) The formation of an Agricultural Union to give effect to the foregoing resolutions, to frame measures needed in the agricultural interest, and to organise voters in every constituency, pledged to return, without distinction of party, candidates who agree to support such measures.

The last resolution aroused more enthusiasm than any of the others, although Lord Winchilsea's speech in introducing it was very brief. The Committee which arranged the conference were instructed to prepare a draft scheme to give effect to the proposal, and a special meeting of the Council was held in the following February to consider it. This was sent to local Chambers and came again before the Council on 28th February, when, after a long discussion in which considerable opposition was apparent, the debate was deferred. When the matter came again before the Council in April the National Agricultural Union (the N.A.U.) had been launched by Lord Winchilsea, and a provisional council formed; Mr. R. H. Rew holding an extremely delicate position as Secretary for both parties. In October, when the rules of the N.A.U. came for the last time before the Council, it was resolved that though regretting that the rules and organisation prevented the fusion of the two bodies, it was hoped that they would work harmoniously side by side. Mr. Rew then resigned his connection with the N.A.U. and Mr. A. T. Matthews (father of the present writer) was appointed Secretary of that body. Thereafter, until 1900, there were in existence two societies working for the same ends, having practically the same parliamentary programme, composed to a considerable extent of the same individuals, and, though not "associated" in any way, always maintaining harmonious relations with each other. In 1900 the N.A.U. came to an end, as described on page 384.

There was no fundamental difference in the organisation of the two societies. The N.A.U., in order to reach the labourers, went into the villages, while the Chambers seldom got further than the market towns. The Union insisted that its executive must consist of an equal number of landowners, tenant farmers, and labourers, so that each class should have its full voice in directing its policy, whereas the Chambers had no rule of the kind. The Union had a scale of subscriptions based on the acreage owned or occupied, with a nominal subscription of 1s. per annum for labourers, while local Chambers fixed their own scale in each case. The great

attraction possessed by the N.A.U. lay in the eloquence, the charm of manner, and the personality of its founder. There was, of course, the magic of a new name. There are to-day hundreds of fairly intelligent men who belong to no agricultural organisation. Yet if one with a new name, but still advocating the most ancient programme, were started to-morrow, many of them would come in, and they would be joined by numbers who would leave the old ones, believing that they had at last found salvation. This may not mean altogether wasted effort, though it is certainly a waste of money, and it sometimes enables the mere politician to make much of the want of unanimity among agriculturists. However, for good or ill, this peculiarity appears to be inherent in the human mind; perhaps especially in the agricultural mind.

The N.A.U. succeeded in starting some 500 local branches in England, many of which developed surprising activity. As the writer of this history was Organising Secretary to the Union for some years, and during that period visited every county in England and attended several hundreds of meetings of branches, he had an opportunity of knowing how effective the organisation was. *The Cable*, a weekly agricultural paper, which Lord Winchilsea started, was of great assistance in educating members and in keeping the branches informed of the work of the Union, and was a decided factor in spreading the movement. A sufficient number of branches were successful enough to prove the correctness of Lord Winchilsea's theory, viz., that "the threefold cord" *could* be twined, that harmony among the three sections was attainable and could be maintained, and that the organisation as a whole was not the Utopian idea which so many onlookers considered it. The only reason why the Association did not survive was that means were lacking. One of the main causes of its demise was the growing fear of its strength prevalent among the party political wirepullers.

The British Produce Supply Association was never connected in any way with the N.A.U., except that Lord Winchilsea and one or two others worked actively for both.

The one was purely commercial, the other political and educational. The work done by its founder was not wasted, for though the machine of which he was so proud eventually broke down, he had infused a spirit into agricultural combinations which has never died out. Many organisations have since sprung into existence as an indirect result of his efforts. The organisation of agriculture was the cause for which he eventually sacrificed his life.

Agricultural Co-operation.

On 3rd March, 1868, the pioneer of agricultural co-operation, Mr. E. O. Greening, suggested that this topic should form the subject for discussion at the next Council meeting. He found no seconder, and the matter does not appear to have been raised again at any meeting until 3rd November, 1891, when it was resolved that the co-operation of farmers for purchase is desirable. The following December a Committee was appointed to report as to the best means of utilising the local Chambers for promoting the co-operative principle for the benefit of members in purchasing farming requisites. This Committee consisted of Mr. W. Lipscomb (Chairman), Mr. Carrington Smith, Mr. Thomas Bell, Mr. Barfoot-Saunt, Mr. Ramsden, Mr. Rowlandson, Mr. Willson, and Mr. H. Liversedge. Mr. Greening attended two of the Committee's meetings and gave them considerable assistance. Their report was adopted without discussion on 28th February, 1893, but the recommendation of the Committee—that they should be re-appointed—was disregarded. The inquiries made among local Chambers and the issue of this report did, however, arouse a certain modified interest in the subject, and brought to light the fact that at least eight local agricultural co-operative societies were already at work in different parts of the country, the Cheshire and North Wales Society having been started in 1871 and the Northumberland Society in 1872. At the Agricultural Conference in December, 1892, a resolution was carried unanimously in favour of the principle of co-operation.*

* See page 379.

On 3rd November, 1896, a fresh Committee was appointed by the Council to consider the feasibility of extending co-operation for the sale of agricultural produce. This Committee examined a number of witnesses and arranged a conference on the various departments of agricultural co-operation, on 8th December, 1897. This gathering was well attended by representatives of agricultural co-operative societies, but as the object was to obtain information to enable the Committee to prepare its report no resolutions were submitted. The conference, however, adopted a motion asking the Central Chamber to endeavour to establish some form of communication between the British and Irish co-operative organisations.

The Committee presented its report on 3rd May, 1898, when it was sent down to local Chambers. It came before the Council on 7th June, when it was adopted without discussion. This report was a valuable document of over 100 pages. Its principal recommendation was contained in the following paragraphs :—

113. The Committee hesitate, however, to recommend an addition to the numerous agricultural associations already existing, the more so as they are of opinion that the end would be better attained by utilising to some extent the machinery of the Central Chamber of Agriculture, which, as previously indicated (paragraph 69), already stands in some respects in an analogous position to the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society.

114. The Committee recommend the Council of the Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture to constitute a "Co-operation Section of the Central Chamber of Agriculture," which should comprise all deputies and subscribing members of the Chamber desirous of joining it, and should have the power to take action, within defined limits and without committing the Chambers as a whole, for the promotion of the principle of co-operation in agriculture. Such a section would no doubt be able to obtain, by special contributions from Chambers interested and from individuals, sufficient funds to enable it in due course to get into touch with such co-operative associations as already exist, and perhaps to federate them for mutual assistance, and also to give sound advice and help in the formation of similar associations in suitable localities. Its connection with the general body of agriculturists would be a safeguard against the risk of acting upon mere theories or entering upon ill-considered enterprises ; while, on the other hand, the Central Chamber could not fail to be strengthened in influence by the support of any new associations of farmers, whose general interests it is its function

to watch over. It might be expected that by this means the Central Chamber might get more closely into touch with those smaller occupiers of land who are now, perhaps, not represented in the organisation of the Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture to that extent which their numbers would render desirable.

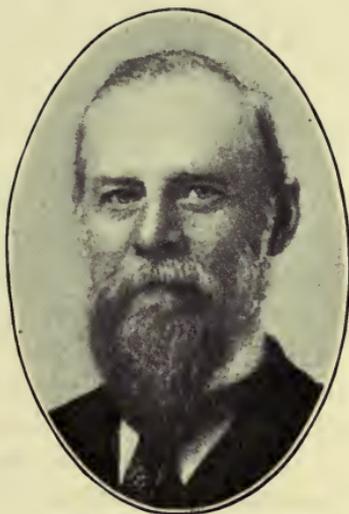
On 2nd May, 1899, this recommendation was submitted to the Council, but leave to set up the semi-independent body suggested was refused, and the regular and formal "association" with the Central Chamber was insisted upon. The result of this decision was that a new association was immediately started at Newark, called the British Agricultural Organisation Society, which for two years associated itself with the Central Chamber, and in February, 1900, the Co-operation Committee of the Chamber recommended the Council to support this new Society. The Committee only held one more meeting, in June, 1902, since when all matters relating to this subject have been referred to the other Society.

The foregoing notes show that although the Chamber did but little propagandist work in favour of co-operation, it was the first to direct attention to the subject, and its two reports on purchase and sale had a very wide circulation.

Other circumstances had also been leading up to a decided movement in the direction of co-operation. The National Agricultural Union had among its active members a number of co-operators, and they were so importunate that at last the President of that organisation (the late Lord Winchilsea), rather against his own judgment, started the British Produce Association in Long Acre, in 1896. From various causes, which need not be gone into here, this great enterprise failed, but it nevertheless spurred on the advocates of co-operation to greater energy. The death of Lord Winchilsea in 1898 removed the master mind, and, after a brief period during which time Viscount Templetown was President, the co-operators captured the N.A.U., dropped all its useful political work, and became the propagandist body for agricultural co-operation. The British Agricultural Organisation Society became merged in the larger body, the title "National Agricultural Union" was shed, and in 1901 it became the Agri-



MR. J. ALGERNON CLARKE.
Secretary, 1866—1879.



"The Foxhound," Photo. Copyright.
MAJOR P. G. CRAIGIE, C.B.
Secretary, 1879—1890.



F. Lawson-Taylor, Strand, Photo.
MR. A. H. H. MATTHEWS.
Secretary since 1901.

cultural Organisation Society (the A.O.S.). It is to-day a flourishing sister society to the Central Chamber, and if there is any competition between the two bodies it lies in the fact that a number of individuals serve both societies, and it occasionally happens that their services are required in two places at once.

Special Funds.

In 1871 the Chambers took part in collecting money, seed corn, and potatoes for French peasants and farmers, whose land had been devastated during the war.

This movement was started at a general meeting of the Smithfield Club, when the President (the Earl of Powis) mentioned with warm approval the correspondence between His Excellency M. Drouyn de Lhuys and Mr. James Howard, M.P., proposing to supply seed to small cultivators in the invaded region. Lord Vernon (President of the Royal Agricultural Society for 1871) presided at the first public meeting on 19th December, called by Mr. Brandreth-Gibbs (Hon. Secretary, Smithfield Club), Mr. Delano (Hon. Agent in England of the Société des Agriculteurs de France), and Mr. Jenkins (Secretary of the Royal Agricultural Society of England). Mr. Clare Sewell Read and Mr. J. Algernon Clarke (Secretary of the Central Chamber) were elected on the Executive Committee of the Fund.* Subscriptions amounting to about £42,000 were received, and a Swedish Fund of £6300 and a Limbourg Fund of £393 were added to this sum. Donations in kind included 180 qrs. of spring wheat, 600 qrs. of barley, 350 qrs. of oats, 300 sacks of potatoes, and quantities of small seeds of all kinds.

There was a separate Fund raised by the Society of Friends for the same object, which originated in the North of England.

In 1876 a testimonial fund was raised to Mr. Clare Sewell Read, when £5500 was collected; £200 of this Mr. Read handed to the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution.

In 1895 another testimonial fund was raised and presented to Mr. Thomas Duckham, in recognition of his services to

* *Journal*, R.A.S.E., 1872

agriculture, and especially his work in connection with cattle diseases.

In 1899 Mr. Rew was presented with a testimonial on his retirement from the Secretaryship.

In 1897 two funds were raised. The first was for the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution in celebration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, when £3600 was collected. The second was raised in connection with a Mansion House Fund for the relief of sufferers from an unprecedented tempest of wind and hail in Essex. For this purpose £642 was collected by the Chambers.

In 1903 a memorial fund of £153 was raised and presented to the family of the late Mr. Henry Stopes, in recognition of his services to agriculture and his untiring endeavours to secure "pure beer."

In 1910 the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution celebrated its jubilee, and as a recognition of the good work accomplished by that institution the Chambers collected a fund of about £700.

Sundries.

Of the many other questions that have occupied the attention of the Chamber time and space demand the briefest mention. The numerous debates on bimetallism which took place in the Council between 1886 and 1895 form a complete literature in themselves, while the speakers included most of the principal protagonists of both the bimetallists and the monometallists. The persistent efforts of a strong "protectionist" group of members—hailing mostly from East Anglia—and fighting under the banner of "Fair Trade," occupied many meetings between 1880 and 1889. Mr. C. W. Smith claimed a good deal of attention from the Central and local Chambers from 1894 to 1897, during which time he opened the eyes of many of our members to the evils arising from gambling in futures and options and the danger from "corners." Curiously enough, the world was given an object lesson in "corners" in 1898, when Mr. Leiter rendered himself famous by making his corner in American wheat. He suc-

ceeded in forcing up the price of that commodity to 48s. per quarter for a week or two, and some of our British farmers reaped a little advantage from the higher price, but the corner was made in the early summer, when few farmers had any wheat left to sell, and prices soon fell to an even lower level than they had stood at in 1897.

The development of motor traffic was the subject of several debates between 1896 and 1910, and strong animadversions were made on the damage caused by motors and the discourtesy shown by their drivers, while the extra cost of maintaining the roads necessitated by this new form of traffic has frequently been a legitimate ground of complaint. The question of trespass and the damage or annoyance caused by trespassers has, ever since 1894, been periodically raised, and although, as a result of the passing of several resolutions, Mr. Courthope, M.P., drafted and introduced a Bill in 1907 to amend the Larceny Act of 1867, with a view to amending the law of trespass, no opportunity has yet occurred of making any progress with it. Members representing urban constituencies, ignoring the damage caused by trespassers, are always on the alert to prevent the Bill from passing.

Measures like the Threshing Machines Bill, 1874 ; the Steam Engines Bills, in 1890 and 1895 ; Lights on Vehicles Bills, in 1896, 1901, and 1907 ; Locomotives on Roads Bills, in 1874, 1877, 1896, and 1897 ; Chaff Cutting Machines Act, 1897 ; Boilers Registration Bill, 1900 ; Poisons and Pharmacy Bills, in 1907 and 1908 ; Workmen's Compensation Acts of 1897 and 1900* ; Daylight Saving Bill, 1909 ; Dogs Bills, in 1900, 1902, 1905, 1906, and the Act of 1906, debated in 1908, all received due attention in the years mentioned. Injury by Birds was considered in 1897 and 1905, while in 1914 the Council sent Mr. Rouse Orlebar as a witness to the Departmental Committee appointed by the Home Office on the Wild Birds Protection Acts. Abolition of Private Slaughter Houses, in 1899 and 1907 ; the Provision of Weighbridges

* A resolution in favour of extending the provisions of the Act of 1897 to agricultural labourers was carried unanimously in December, 1899.

at Railway Stations, in 1902, 1904, and 1905 ; the Rehabilitation of Canals, in 1905 ; Rural Building By-laws, in 1905-6 ; Housing of Agricultural Labourers, in 1907 and 1913-14 ; the Period of Militia Training, in 1883 and 1901 (protesting against the Militia being called out at harvest time)* ; the Sale of Live Stock by Weight, in 1886, 1887, and 1891 ; Old Age Pensions, in 1886, 1887, and 1891, when Canon Lewery Blackley addressed the Council once or twice ; an Agricultural Parcels Post, in 1892 and 1893 ; the Abolition of Compounding for Rates, in 1893 and 1910 ; Agricultural Credit Banks, in 1894-5 ; various aspects of Horse Breeding and the Provision of Army Remounts, in 1896, 1897, 1904, 1906, and 1909, are other topics which have been dealt with as they have arisen from time to time.

* On the first occasion the War Office replied that the initiative in such matters lay with the Commanding Officers of Battalions ; it thus devolved upon local Chambers to take action in their several districts. In 1901, however, the Secretary for War (Mr. Brodrick) gave specific instructions to the effect that local labour requirements should be regarded.

APPENDIX No. I.

CLARE SEWELL READ.

From "Who's Who," 1904.

Read, Clare Sewell, J.P.; distinguished authority on farming; b. 1826; e.s. of George Read and Sarah Ann, d. of late Clare Sewell, Barton Bendish Hall; m., 1859, Sarah Maria, o.d. of J. Watson.

M.P., East Norfolk, 1865-68.

South Norfolk, 1868-80.

West Norfolk, 1884-85.

Parliamentary Secretary, Local Government Board, 1874-75; resigned as a protest against regulations for pleuro-pneumonia not being made uniform in England and Ireland, when the farmers of England presented him with £5500 and a service of plate.

He had four daughters—

Mary Elizabeth; m., 1887, Robert Anderson.

Katharine Frances; m., 1885, Harry Valentine Baker.

Clare Sybil; m., 1913, Canon Martin Buckle.

Margaret Sewell; unmarried.

He died 21st. August, 1905, at his London house, 91, Kensington Gardens Square.

Extract from a speech by Mr. Charles Howard, of Bideham, who presided at the presentation and banquet to Mr. Read, Cannon Street Hotel, London, 2nd May, 1876.

“Mr. Read, from early life, distinguished himself. I believe at school he was in the first and foremost rank, and after spending a few short years on his father's farm, he undertook the management of a property in a distant part, where, nearly some thirty years since, he made his first literary contribution in the shape of a prize report in the *Journal* of the Royal Agricultural Society of England. That was soon after followed by other prize reports—on the farming of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Norfolk—all written in that terse and practical style which has ever characterised Mr. Read's writings and speeches.

(First entered Parliament 1865, for East Norfolk). “He soon won for himself the respect of the House and even elicited from

his political opponents, Mr. Gladstone not excepted, the highest encomiums. But although Norfolk may claim Mr. Read as one of its members, he is looked upon as belonging to the nation at large. At all events, the farmers of England claim him to be their representative and their mouthpiece in Parliament, and they are proud of having one of their class who can so ably advocate their views.

"The subjects to which Mr. Read has given his especial attention since he has been in Parliament have been those of cattle legislation, local taxation, and tenant right.

"From Mr. Read's first introduction to Parliament he has ever manifested the greatest attention and devotion to the subject of cattle diseases, and has never for a moment lost sight of its importance. It was owing to his strong feeling in this matter that he was led to retire from the Government, and it was not until that retirement took place that the Government decided to take action; so that if any improvements should take place, it will be due to the stand taken by Mr. Read."

From "The Times," 13th December, 1875.

"The rumour of Mr. Read's withdrawal was received with universal regret. . . . He appears to be more sorry for the Government than for himself, and his only consolation is that justice is more likely to be done by his retirement than by anything he could have done in office. . . . As to the quarrel itself, if quarrel it can be called, Mr. Read is so entirely in the right, and the Government so entirely in the wrong, that there cannot be two honest opinions as to the propriety—the mathematical accuracy—of Mr. Read's conduct. He could not but do what he has done; and if it be asked why his superiors in the Administration have not been bound by the same inexorable logic, the only answer is that Cabinets have a way of holding themselves above all logic.

"The case is delightfully simple. . . . There is an Order in Council compelling the most rigorous measures for the detection, isolation, and extinction of pleuro-pneumonia in cattle. . . . But when we look in another direction we find a simple defiance of reason and justice. The Irish farmers will not have their animals inspected or condemned or slaughtered or interfered with, and insist on sending them by thousands, sound or diseased, into all our English markets. . . . The order was never extended to Ireland, and the Government had not the courage to extend it. . . . Now, Mr. Read had to represent the Board of Trade in the House of Commons, and also to meet all the tenant farmers in England face to face when called upon, and to maintain a reputation for courage, plain-speaking, and

truth. What, then, was he to do? . . . He insisted, therefore, that the Order in Council should be either rescinded or extended to Ireland. This was not conceded to him."

From "The Times," 16th March, 1876.

"The debate on Tuesday evening on the Contagious Diseases of Animals afforded Mr. Read a very legitimate triumph; and it is wonderful the Government should have been so perverse as to sacrifice the services of so useful a colleague from mere reluctance to adopt a course which, on his resignation, was immediately forced upon them by public opinion. Lord Sandon completely accepted the principle of Mr. Read's motion, and the Duke of Richmond had previously announced the intention of the Government to accede to the request which Mr. Read had chiefly urged, to the effect that the existing orders with respect to pleuropneumonia should be extended to Ireland."

MR. READ ON TARIFF REFORM.

Though he did rise on one subsequent occasion to formally second a motion, the last time Mr. Read spoke at a Council meeting was when the Tariff Reform proposals put forward by the late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain were under discussion. The debate lasted over two meetings, and it was near the close on 9th December, 1903, that Mr. Read rose. He made a short but telling speech, concluding with the following words:—

"I believe that our King—God bless him—has done more to establish friendly and kindly feelings with all the nations of Europe than Free Trade has ever done. As to the Colonies, it is said: 'What does it signify to you as farmers, if you are ruined, whether you are hurt by the Colonies or by the foreigner?' Well, 'blood is thicker than water,' and I must say that if a farmer has to be sacrificed at all, I would rather be sacrificed on the altar of my own kith and kin across the flood than be offered to the idols of the foreigner."

It is difficult for an enthusiast not to become a fanatic, but the man who keeps a level head and plods steadily towards the goal he has in view accomplishes more than the zealot. That was Mr. Clare Sewell Read's method. It requires a cool judgment to steer an even course between the two maxims on the title page of this book.

APPENDIX No. 2

THE ORIGIN OF THE CENTRAL AND ASSOCIATED
CHAMBERS OF AGRICULTURE, AND THE
EARLIEST DEMAND FOR A MINISTER OF
AGRICULTURE.

The first of the following letters was copied by some of the London Agricultural papers in 1865, and proved the origin of the Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture.

Walton, near Wakefield, December 5th, 1865.

PROPOSAL FOR A FARMERS' LEAGUE, OR CENTRAL
CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE.

SIR,—The idea of a general meeting in London of deputations from all the Farmers' Clubs and Agricultural Societies in the Kingdom, to consider the questions arising out of the Cattle Plague—which I had the pleasure of suggesting and proposing to the members of the Wakefield and West Riding Farmers' Club—having been so well received throughout the country, induces me (after mentioning it to a few friends) to venture upon another subject which has for some years appeared to my mind to be a great want, and which (if properly carried out) would tend greatly towards the efficient management of agricultural affairs. My present suggestion is embraced in the title of "A Farmers' League." The means of forming such an Association are so ready to hand that I almost wonder it has not been carried out long ago. I would adopt the same plan as suggested for the Cattle Plague Meeting, viz., forming the Chairman and Secretaries, for the time being, of every Farmers' Club and Society—with such other members as it may be found desirable to enrol—into one central "Farmers' League or Association," each Club paying, say, £5 5s. to the funds of the League annually, which (as there are some 400) would give at once about £2000 per annum. With such pecuniary means and such extensive influence capable of being exerted at any moment over the whole country, and brought to bear with all its force upon any and every measure affecting the farmer, it cannot but be evident, I think, that the agricultural interest would thereby have a power ready at command which it does not possess at present, simply because there is no organisation; each Club exhausts its influence locally—

with, I admit, corresponding local benefit—whilst the more exalted Societies devote their whole attention, in accordance with their rules, to the improvement of stock and agricultural machinery—a field sufficiently large for their useful labours. All these are specially excluded by their regulations from entering upon politico-economical subjects—whether wisely so it is not requisite to ask; therefore, the formation of a League could not possibly interfere with any existing Society, but would rather tend to stimulate their formation and action, as every one would have a claim to send their Chairman and Secretary to the League, on paying the subscriptions, and, of course, their own deputation's expenses.

As to the management of the League, that could easily be arranged if the idea itself should meet with approbation—say, by the election at the annual meeting, which might be held in the Smithfield Show week, of a Council consisting of 24 members, one-third retiring annually; with an efficient well-paid Secretary, resident in London, whose whole time should be given to the duties of his office, and with such legal assistance as may be required; and also the establishment of a comprehensive and expansive code of rules to enable the League to adapt itself to the various alterations necessitated by change of time and circumstances.

The special object of the League would be to undertake duties now much neglected and beyond the rules of all existing societies; viz., the charge of measures in the Houses of Parliament and before the Government, calculated to benefit agriculture, as well as to oppose or modify any movement detrimental to that important interest. It cannot be denied that more attention to such matters would result in some improvement, and might *eventually lead to the appointment of a Minister or Board of Agriculture*, which is much needed; for although the present House of Commons contains many members who are friendly to the farmer, yet the prominence with which his younger but more energetic brother, "The Manufacturer," has contrived to push forward his own measures seems to be obliterating the fact that there is such an interest in agriculture—which equally requires and fully deserves the application of those free trade and progressive principles which have been of so much benefit to commercial enterprise.

This state of things need not be, if agriculturists and their friends would make up their minds to set fairly about altering it; and if the idea of a "Farmers' League" as here proposed, appears to meet the case, and should find sufficient favour to lead to its formation, I shall be glad to assist, if requisite, in my humble way. But my object just at present in addressing this letter to you is to excite discussion in the first place, in the hope that, if worthy of notice, some more prominent member of society may be induced to take up the subject and carry it to the successful issue which, in my opinion, the importance of the interests more

directly concerned, as well as the general benefit to the country, seem fully to deserve.

I shall be glad to have your opinion on this subject, and remain,
Sir,

Yours very truly,

CHAS. CLAY.

Walton, Wakefield, *January 26th, 1866.*

SIR,—In December last I addressed a letter to you on this subject, which has since then found its way into almost all the agricultural papers in the kingdom, and has, apparently, been well received, at least I have numerous correspondents who request and even urge me to take steps for carrying out the scheme proposed for forming a “Farmers’ League” or “Central Chamber of Agriculture,” the latter title being perhaps more acceptable to the public than the former, I propose to adopt it in preference to the name of “League.”

This first question suggests itself—How shall a Central Chamber of Agriculture be formed? I confess my own influence is but very small for organising such a powerful body; but what I can do and what I now propose as a further step towards the end is—that if all those who are willing to meet in London on an early day (say, if possible, on the 6th of February next, the day after the great Anti-Malt Tax Meeting), will send me their names and full addresses immediately, I will, if sufficient support appears—of which there is not much doubt—convene a meeting, “for the purpose of considering the desirability of launching this or some other scheme for forming a ‘Central Chamber of Agriculture,’ whose duties shall be as already proposed—to take charge of measures in the Houses of Parliament, and before the Government, calculated to benefit agriculture, as well as to oppose or modify any movement detrimental to that important interest.”

If those favourable to this mode of proceeding will oblige me with their names as early as possible, I will, if the list is not too long, add them as supporters to the notice calling the meeting, that some idea may be obtained of the position of the movement by persons unavoidably prevented attending in London.

Yours very truly,

CHAS. CLAY.

NOTE.—The meeting above alluded to was held on the 6th of February, 1866, at the Salisbury Hotel, Fleet Street, London, when the Central Chamber of Agriculture was formally established.

APPENDIX No. 3.

THE WAR AND AGRICULTURE.

From the end of July until the end of October the Central Chamber of Agriculture ceases its activity, unless some extraordinarily urgent matter calls the Council together. Farmers are too busy with harvest to find time for meetings; the political world is quiescent in normal times; and this recess gives an opportunity to catch up with routine work, which is of necessity left to accumulate while meetings are constantly taking place. The sudden mobilisation of the military forces and the declaration of war on 4th August found the Central Chamber peculiarly unprepared to take any action, and discovered a weakness in its organisation which had never been realised because the situation was unprecedented in its history. The mobilisation withdrew from civil life, and in many cases sent abroad, many members who had taken the most active part in the work of the Chambers, among them being the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Central Chamber, the very individuals to whom the Secretary has to appeal for instruction and advice upon all questions of moment, when the Council is not in session.

Having passed the age limit for active service and, further, having no staff, holding a fiduciary position, to leave in charge of the Chambers' work in his absence, even had he been able to "take the shilling," the only thing left for the Secretary was to take such action as he could in a personal capacity to help to meet the national emergency.

On 6th August the following letter was sent to forty newspapers, most of them inserting it within a few days:—

WHOLE-MEAL BREAD.

SIR,—As one means of extending the bread supply and at the same time giving consumers a more nutritious article of food, may I suggest that all housekeepers should ask for whole-meal bread. Although the white flour turned out from roller mills has the most nutritious part of the grain removed in the milling process, it is a simple matter for millers to mix the germ, semolina, and the other nutritious parts of the wheat with the white flour before passing it on to bakers.—Yours, &c.,

A. H. H. MATTHEWS,
Secretary, Central Chamber of Agriculture.

The next day, at the request of Mr. Trustram Eve, the Secretary signed the following letter, which was also inserted in a number of papers :—

THE HARVEST AND THE OUTLOOK.

SIR,—We, the undersigned, being secretaries of two of the leading agricultural organisations (which are not in session during harvest), desire in our individual capacities to make one or two suggestions as to the action of agriculturists in the present emergency. The most urgent at the moment is to gather in the harvest into stack—we most earnestly pray for fine weather for the purpose. In places where labour is necessarily depleted we feel sure that farmers will gladly welcome assistance, both paid and voluntary, in this absolutely essential work. There must be thousands who, being robbed of their annual holiday and unable even to return to their ordinary work, are anxious to do something to help, but are debarred for sufficient reasons from active military service. To them we would suggest that a few days in the harvest field would afford a splendidly useful outlet for their energies. The machinery of the local Labour Exchanges can, we see from the Press, be used, or a bicycle journey to neighbouring farmers might be undertaken.

A word to farmers. "England expects every man to do his duty," and we feel sure that the country can rely on the farmers to "play the game" in the present crisis. There is any amount of corn in the country just now, and a very large amount on its way here. Some experts, indeed, say that there will be a drop in price. We would earnestly ask farmers who are now beginning to sell their corn to avoid asking absurd prices. No one will grudge farmers a reasonable profit, regard being had to the existence of war; but by attempting to reap a selfish advantage by exacting enormous prices farmers would (apart from all questions of duty and honour in a national emergency) be adopting the surest means of bringing about some form of State control and regulation of agricultural produce, which otherwise may not become necessary.

We have personally no doubt whatever that the great majority of farmers can be trusted to "play the game," and that with the help and organisation of millers and merchants prices will be reasonable. This is not a time, however, for any squeamishness in making an appeal. May we add how confident we feel that we are voicing the general opinion of agriculturists in expressing our admiration of the action of the Government in the steps which they have already taken in connection with the supply of food? It is hoped to be that by the patriotic methods of farmers and merchants the Government may be spared the necessity (whatever the

course of events) of regulating the supply and sale of farm produce.—Yours, &c.,

H. TRUSTRAM EVE, Secretary, the Farmers' Club.

A. H. H. MATTHEWS, Secretary, Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture.

Even before this appeared voluntary offers to assist in the harvest fields were received, and in order to find an outlet for this willing energy the letter which follows was sent to some 500 farmers within 100 miles of London. The Secretaries of all local Chambers within that radius were also asked to help make these offers known, and the letter was inserted in many local papers.

8th August, 1915.

HARVEST EMPLOYMENT.

DEAR SIR,—Many people are anxious to do anything that may be useful to the country in this time of crisis, and I am receiving applications from London people, asking where they can go and help in harvest work. Some of them will be prepared to work without pay, or for payment of railway fares, and perhaps some small sum towards board.

Can you find employment for some? If so, please let me know by return of post, saying how many you can do with, what you will pay, whether you can board them, and when you want them. Also, can you find employment for any women? If so, let me know what sort of work it will be.

I may say that many of these people are of the better class, and are offering their services purely out of patriotism.

Awaiting your early reply, I am, yours faithfully,

A. H. H. MATTHEWS,
Secretary.

The result was rather surprising. With the exception of a few who proposed unreasonable conditions, hardly any farmers wanted extra hands, and those who did expressed the view that Londoners, however willing, would be of little or no use. These discriminating farmers were referred to the Labour Exchanges and that Department made a special effort to be ready to meet any demand which might arise, but their effort met with very little appreciation. The few London volunteers that were employed, proved most helpful to the farmers who engaged them, and appeared quite to enjoy the fresh occupation.

Realising the potential danger and finding that a decided apprehension existed in the minds of many agriculturists, of the risk of wholesale stock firing by aliens in the country, an official at the Home-office was interviewed by the Secretary on 17th August. The risk was explained and a request preferred that a quiet and verbal warning should be given to farmers all over the country by the local police. As the shortage of horses, caused

by large numbers having been commandeered, would tempt farmers to build their stacks out in fields and scattered all over the farms, it was urged that this warning should be given at once, before the crops were harvested. These suggestions were treated with the supercilious disdain not uncommon at the Home Office. That Department saw no danger of the kind suggested, but it did fear danger from the alarm which they anticipated might ensue "if such a warning were published." If the Department "saw signs of stack firing it would take action." On it being pointed out that no suggestion had been made of *publishing* any warning, and that stack firing was not preceded by signs, the reply, curtly given, was—that the police had other things to do and the Department would follow its usual course.

A personal letter to the Home Secretary, stating the position, and calling attention to actual fires that had occurred, only elicited the usual formal acknowledgment, so the Department was left to enjoy its somnolence without further disturbance. That the danger was not imaginary was shown by the number of stack fires reported in the Press in the following weeks, and the numerous outbreaks in the North of England was commented upon at meetings of local Chambers in that part of the country, as well as in the local newspapers.

Apparently the Home Office altered their view, for in the following December the British Fire Prevention Committee, after consulting the Home Office and the Board of Agriculture, issued "Fire Warning" No. 14, entitled as follows: "Farmers' Fire Precautions." These were printed and circulated as widely as possible, and all the suggestions laid before the Home Office on 17th August were included in these Precautions.

HOME GROWN WHEAT.

The following questions were asked in the House of Commons on the 9th September:—

Mr. Charles Bathurst asked the Prime Minister whether, in the event of the Government deciding to provide, by legislation or otherwise, some financial inducement to farmers to retain upon their premises their stocks of wheat now being harvested, or sow this autumn a larger area than usual of their land with cereals, he will, without delay, make a public announcement to the above effect in order to avoid the premature marketing of this year's grain, and to encourage the early sowing of grain for next year's harvest, and the immediate preparation of the land for such purpose?

Mr. Charles Leach asked the Home Secretary what steps are being taken to secure a larger crop of grain during the war?

Mr. Hunt asked the Prime Minister whether, in view of the fact that on account of the war the wheat crop of the world must be short next year, he could give the farmers of the United Kingdom a guarantee that for all wheat suitable for making bread, reaped next year and sold in the United Kingdom after next year's harvest, the Government would, if necessary, make

the price up to 35s. a quarter ; and is he aware that the matter is urgent on account of the necessary preparation of the land ?

Sir H. Verney (Parliamentary Secretary to Board of Agriculture) : The Prime Minister has asked me to answer these questions. The retention of this year's wheat crop in stack until next summer would admittedly result in loss, through vermin and other causes, of a large percentage of the grain, besides depriving farmers of the use of the straw, and I am glad to be able to announce that the Government, after minute examination of the position, are satisfied that there is no necessity for them to take any action of the kind suggested in the first part of the question put by Mr. Bathurst. With regard to next year's cereal crop, the Government have carefully considered all the available information ; it is a highly technical question, and, after consulting expert opinion, they have arrived at the conclusion that they would not be justified in holding out a financial inducement to farmers to increase their acreage of cereals. At the same time the Board adhere to the advice which they issued to farmers recently, with the concurrence of the Consultative Committee, that wheat appears likely to be a profitable crop next year. And on 15th September

Mr. Bathurst asked whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer would consider the desirability of issuing negotiable wheat warrants or certificates upon which advances of money could be made on easy terms to those farmers who, in the national interest, were prepared to keep their wheat off the market until the spring or summer of next year, but whose financial resources did not admit of their locking up a substantial part of their capital for several months.

Sir H. Verney, who replied, said that the matter had been carefully considered, and it was felt that farmers would best serve the national interests by dealing with their wheat crops this year exactly as they would have done in normal circumstances. No action of the kind suggested by the hon. member was considered necessary.

The Government's replies to these questions aroused much discussion, especially among agriculturists, and many ill-considered statements were published in the Press. Having persistently advocated a bonus on wheat growing in the United Kingdom ever since 1896, solely with a view to safeguarding the nation's food supply, the present writer felt compelled to take the first opportunity of expressing his views on the position. The following report is extracted from the *Journal* of the Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture :—

ISLE OF WIGHT AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

ADDRESS BY MR. A. H. H. MATTHEWS.

A MEETING of the Royal Isle of Wight Agricultural Society was held at Newport, on 3rd October, when Mr. A. H. H.

Matthews (Secretary of the Central Chamber of Agriculture attended by invitation and gave an address.

After some remarks on the legislation of the past session which concerned agriculture, and having dealt with current farming topics, Mr. Matthews turned to that aspect of the war which chiefly concerns farmers, namely, the Home-Grown Food Supply. He said :—

I must preface the following remarks by stating that I am speaking, not as Secretary of the Central Chamber of Agriculture, but as a private individual. The Central Chamber has held no meeting since the war began, and I have therefore no means of knowing what official view they might express.

Agriculturists have received an immense amount of gratuitous advice during the last two months, advice which has even had a certain command about it, and which is summed up in the view that it is your duty to increase the area under wheat as much as possible. In my opinion, this is very bad advice to farmers, and I have come to this conclusion only after careful thought and inquiry. I would advise farmers not to plant a single acre more of wheat this autumn than they would have done had there been no war. I have arrived at this conclusion after much consideration of the Government's replies (quoted above), and after consulting various people.

On the other hand, it is no secret, that if the price of wheat should go up to any extent owing to the war, the Government have taken legislative power and have got their scheme of organisation all cut and dried, to commandeer all wheat or any other foodstuffs at any time and at their own price. I am not complaining of this. I think the Government would be neglecting an obvious duty if they did not prepare such a scheme, and in fact I sketched out and submitted the outlines of a scheme myself to the Board of Agriculture in the early days of the war. I do, however, object strongly to such an entirely one-sided arrangement, for if you carefully examine the two replies given by the Government you will see that they think "that they would not be justified in holding out financial inducements." Why not? I cannot imagine, unless indeed they anticipate a fall in price, and fear lest, having given an inducement in the shape of guaranteeing a minimum price, they might be called on to make their promise good. The minimum price that has been generally suggested is 40s. per quarter, and their refusal means that if the price falls below that figure the loss must be borne by the farmers. This attitude may be most reassuring to the public, but it is no reason why farmers should be expected to speculate in a one-sided gamble in wheat.

At what point the Government propose to step in I do not know, but it is rumoured that they will not allow wheat to reach a high figure before they take action.

In the first reply, the Board of Agriculture express the opinion that wheat is likely to be a profitable crop for next year. There

is apparently some difference of opinion here between the Government and the Board of Agriculture, as the former is responsible for the first part of the answer and the latter for the second part. If the opinion of the Board turns out to be correct, and wheat is a profitable crop, then the Government would not be called upon to pay anything, even if they did not guarantee a minimum price.

The reply to the second question seems to suggest that the Government see no necessity either for farmers to increase their wheat area or to hold this year's crop in stack, for they say emphatically "that farmers would best serve the national interests by dealing with their wheat crops this year exactly as they would have done in normal circumstances."

In face of this, and assuming, as we must do, that the Government are in a better position to judge than any individuals can be, my advice to farmers merely coincides with the opinion expressed by the Government—do not increase your wheat area, or, in other words, deal with your wheat crop as under normal circumstances.

Now, what are the probabilities of the price of wheat rising or falling next year? It is probable that Germany and Austria may be importers on a much larger scale than they have been in recent years. It is also possible that Russia, the Balkan States, and France may not be able to plant so much wheat as usual, but it is too early yet to express a definite opinion on this point. On the other hand, the Governments of our Dominions Overseas are all encouraging larger wheat areas in their respective countries, and it is probable that the United States will also expand their area.

The following appeared in *The Times* of the 26th September :—

"It is understood that the Russian Government has now withdrawn the prohibition of grain exports, so that a further source of supply is open to this country.

"Enormous supplies of grain are now in sight. Not only are there vast stocks in this country, augmented by cargoes diverted from Germany, but grain continues to come in large quantities from the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts of North America, India and Argentina. Only in Australia, following the action of the Government in seizing supplies, is the export business at a standstill."

We have often been told to "wait and see." I would suggest we act on this advice now. A great deal may happen between now and the period when it is time to begin spring planting, and farmers can then put in larger areas of barley, oats, and potatoes, all of which will be ready for consumption as early as wheat sown this autumn. Farmers can also plant spring wheat, if necessary, although my experience of spring wheat has been that it is very subject to blight and generally gives a poor yield. If the worst comes to the worst, if there be a shortage of food-

stuffs next summer, people may have to eat oat cakes and barley bread, but this would be but a trifling hardship after all.

It may be said that the view I have expressed is unpatriotic, but I maintain that the most patriotic line that farmers can take is to farm well, and to get the utmost they can out of the land. But you cannot go on farming at a loss, and any attempt to do so must result in diminished returns.

About a fortnight ago a leading London daily paper urged farmers to increase their wheat area, and said that, if the doing so resulted in a loss to growers, no doubt the townsman would remember the patriotic efforts that farmers had made during the war, and make it up to them later on. I have no confidence in any belated gratitude. If the Government, on behalf of the townsman, does not feel justified in holding out any inducement in time of stress, there is small chance of your receiving it when all danger (if any) has passed.

In conclusion, I should like to say that I do not think that this refusal by the Government has been actuated by party political considerations. I know, moreover, that some of those members of Parliament who sit on the Government side of the House are ready to support the giving of a guarantee of a minimum price. If the Government, after all, decides to give a satisfactory guarantee, then I would recommend you to get in every acre of wheat that is possible.

After a discussion the following resolution was carried unanimously:—"This meeting is of opinion that if the Government will undertake to guarantee a minimum price the wheat area of the United Kingdom would be largely and permanently increased."

This speech was very widely referred to in the Press, some half-dozen papers giving a very fair summary, while some two hundred others gave such extremely abbreviated extracts from it that no one could possibly draw any conclusions from them. This fact did not, however, prevent a number of individuals from expressing their views, and were it not that the nation's welfare rendered it so serious much amusement might have been drawn from these would-be critics.

The principal point in the argument was, (*a*) that without a guarantee of a minimum price by the Government farmers would be wise to follow the advice given by the Government (in their answers quoted above) and "deal with their wheat crops this year exactly as they would have done in normal circumstances," but (*b*) in order to increase the home-grown food supply they could increase the area of oats, barley, and potatoes. The critics all attacked the advice given by (*a*) and entirely ignored (*b*) This was due in some cases to a complete ignorance of all the conditions that govern agriculture, in some cases to a mere desire to make political capital out of the subject, and in others to the very general inability to read simple English. Every practical

farmer would have known that the reasons which lay behind the advice given were: (1) That either of the three crops named should produce a greater bulk of food per acre than wheat; (2) that an increase in the area of these crops could be effected with less disturbance to the rotation than a sudden increase in wheat; (3) that there was less risk of a loss on these crops than on wheat; and (4) that either of the four crops would be harvested about the same time, but wheat needed to be drilled within a month or six weeks of the date when this speech was delivered, whereas the other three would not be planted for six months, and farmers might be in a better position to judge of the country's need in March and April than in October and November.

Ignorance on these points may perhaps be excused, but there is no excuse for those—and, of course, they had the most to say—who complained of “this selfish advice,” of “interested advice,” or of “the unpatriotic and wicked advice of one who did not care to what extremity he might bring the country,” because they are the same people who in times of peace have constantly said “What does it matter about the farmer? He is always grumbling! If the English farmer cannot compete with the foreigner he must go! We can get all the wheat we want from abroad.” These, and similar statements, have been made in the hearing of the writer scores of times. They are made by the type of man who is the first to whine when he begins to fear, and if one may judge from their vapourings, some of them have been greatly fearing during the past few months. They have seen “the writing on the wall,” but have scoffed at the warnings so often given. The unfortunate part of it is that the punishment for their scoffings falls upon the poorer classes of consumers. Perhaps the penalty that has to be paid by this generation for relying on foreign food supply may be a warning to those who follow after.

FARM PRODUCE FOR THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES.

During September the Board of Agriculture appointed an Organising Committee, after consultation with the War Office, with the object of facilitating the purchase by the military authorities of farm produce, such as forage and vegetables direct from the farmer. The Secretary of the Central Chamber was appointed to serve on this Committee. Its first duty was to organise Farm Produce Committees in each county, or in certain cases for groups of counties. Purchasing officers were also appointed wherever a County Committee was set up, and it was the function of these officers, in consultation with their Committees, to supply the needs of His Majesty's forces with the commodities named. This organisation was completed during January, and the work which it is carrying out must be deemed eminently satisfactory, as well from the point of view of the taxpayer as from that of the producer.

REHABILITATION OF FARMERS IN DEVASTATED AREAS.

During January, 1915, Mr. Edward Brown, F.L.S., organised a Committee to arrange for the collection of funds, agricultural seeds, implements, &c., to help in the rehabilitation of farmers in the devastated areas of our allied countries on the Continent. The Chairman (Captain Bathurst) and the Secretary were both appointed to serve on this Committee, but at the end of February the Royal Agricultural Society started another committee having the same object in view, and the original Committee amalgamated with this. The Chairman and Secretary of the Central Chamber were added to the Executive of the combined Committee.

APPENDIX No. 4.

This was originally printed as an Appendix to the Report of a Committee of the London Chamber of Commerce on Food Supplies in Time of War, dated 28th May, 1914.

A BONUS ON HOME GROWN WHEAT.

By A. H. H. MATTHEWS.

IN considering any scheme for providing a secure food supply for this country the following points must be borne in mind :—

- (1) Which will be the most effective ?
- (2) Which will interfere least with the normal supply of food to consumers in normal times ?
- (3) Which will give the greatest incidental benefits to the community ?

Approximately the quantity of wheat grown in the United Kingdom is equal to from ten to twelve weeks' supply, after allowing a deduction of 15 to 20 per cent. for grain unfit for milling or required for seed. (Par. 36, Report of Royal Commission on Food Supply.)

In 1903 1,619,000 acres grew 6,102,000 quarters, and the price was 27s. per quarter. In 1912 1,970,000 acres grew 7,175,000 quarters, and the price was 34s. 9d. per quarter. (Cd. 6597 and Cd. 6906.) The acreage in 1913, however, dropped back to 1,790,000. The fluctuation of price, and the rise too uncertain, to encourage an appreciable increase.

A guarantee that growers would receive 40s. per quarter for all sound wheat sold after 1st February would double the home production. The Milborne Farmers' Club (Dorset) state that with such a guarantee they would gladly undertake to double their acreage under wheat on these terms. Their members occupy about 70,000 acres.

The amount of bonus to be paid must be decided at periodic intervals, and must be the difference between the average market price and 40s.; this bonus to be paid on all wheat threshed and sold after 1st February in each year. If the quality was below average the grower would—even with the bonus—obtain less than 40s. per quarter; he will, therefore, be encouraged to produce the highest quality. This is the chief reason why the bonus should be per quarter, and not per acre.

Practically the whole expenditure incurred in giving a bonus would be productive, and would directly increase, not merely the production of the United Kingdom, but the world's production. Beyond a small cost of administration there would be no expenditure for buildings, for interest on capital, to cover loss from deterioration, or to cover loss from market manipulations. It would be to the grower's interest to prevent damage by vermin or weather, as the more sound wheat he marketed the greater would be his return. These are other reasons for the bonus being paid per quarter, and not per acre.

Wheat improves in quality by keeping it in the stack for six months, whereas the most that can be said for keeping it under any other condition is that it may be prevented from deteriorating for a period, at a considerable cost.

A bonus would benefit consumers because it would increase the world's production, and so tend to prevent the price going too high.

There is only one thing to be said for the proposal to store wheat in granaries, viz., that it would give the Government that amount of visible stock, and so far would tend to allay panic for the first week or two. On the other hand, the public would be better informed when the stocks were depleted, and the panic might ultimately be greater.*

There are also the following considerations :—

Firstly, that there is no excess of wheat in the world, and it would take many years to accumulate a large enough stock to be of any use. If several million quarters were withdrawn at once for storage purposes it would create a shortage, and the price would go up to an unknown point. The community would thus have to pay the cost of the storage scheme and a higher price for their bread.

Secondly, the whole expenditure would be quite unproductive. The capital expenditure on buildings, the interest on capital, the loss by deterioration, are all dead loss. Some labour would be employed to keep the wheat moving, and some dealers would make profits by market manipulations, which a storage scheme would facilitate. But the chief loss would be incurred through buying wheat at the top price (since the purchase of wheat for storage would send up the price) and selling it at a lower price; this lower price being due partly because it had (or soon would be) deteriorated in quality, and partly because the sale would bear the market.

In view of the uncertainty regarding the possible capture of food in vessels on the high seas, the necessity of increasing the quantity of home-grown food supplies will be apparent; while such an increase must be much more effective than the payment of a national indemnity for ships and cargoes lost during war time. As was clearly recognised in the Minority Report of the Royal

* Since this report was presented another factor has been introduced, viz., hostile aircraft.

Commission on Food Supply (Cd. 2643, page 79), the payment of an indemnity will mean that a cargo has been lost, not that the food supply has been augmented.

TABLE "A."

Year.	Grown in United Kingdom.	Imported.	A 2s. duty on imports raises	This gives a bonus on home-grown crop of	Average price per quarter for year.	Amount needed to make up difference between 35s.* and average price.
	Quarters.	Quarters.	£	s. d.	s. d.	£
1907	7,066,399	27,081,864	2,708,186	7 8	30 7	1,560,408
1908	6,741,180	25,467,061	2,546,714	7 6½	32 0	1,011,150
1909	7,899,587	26,414,540	2,641,454	6 8¼	36 11	—
1910*	7,074,179	27,779,885	2,777,988	7 10	31 8	1,179,027
1911	8,039,182	26,144,331	2,614,433	6 6	31 8	1,339,863
1912	7,175,288	28,869,070	2,886,907	8 0½	34 9	264,073

TABLE "B."

Year.	Foreign Importation.	A 2s. duty on this raises	Imported from British Possession.	1s. duty on this raises	Total duty raises
	Quarters.	£	Quarters.	£	£
1907	17,100,000	1,710,000	9,800,000	490,000	2,200,000
1908	19,200,000	1,920,000	6,200,000	310,000	2,230,000
1909	15,800,000	1,580,000	10,500,000	525,000	2,105,000
1910	15,400,000	1,540,000	12,200,000	610,000	2,150,000
1911	13,400,000	1,340,000	12,693,000	634,650	1,974,650
1912	13,546,868	1,354,686	15,322,000	766,110	2,120,796

These Tables were prepared to illustrate articles by A. H. H. Matthews which appeared in the *Morning Post* in 1910, but were first published in Captain Charles Bathurst's pamphlet "To Avoid National Starvation."

* This Table was based on 35s. per quarter as the minimum price, but as the cost of production has since increased through higher wages, higher rates, National Insurance, &c., a minimum of 40s. would be necessary in 1915.

APPENDIX No. 5.

THE AGRICULTURAL PARTY.

A REPLY TO CRITICISMS BY A. H. H. MATTHEWS.

THOSE who oppose the formation of an Independent Agricultural Party in the House of Commons ostensibly base their objections on three grounds:—(1) That it is unnecessary; (2) that it is impracticable; and (3) that it is undesirable. One of the most able opponents thinks it is unnecessary because (he says) every possible benefit which could accrue from the formation of a parliamentary group is obtainable by drafting Bills, and by only returning those candidates to Parliament who definitely pledge themselves to support these Bills. I will answer this point first.

Others say it is unnecessary, because an Agricultural Committee already exists in the House, and that that Committee, and the general desire of members representing agricultural constituencies to look well after that industry, is all that is required. This will be the second point dealt with.

Let us assume that half a dozen Bills are drafted, dealing with as many definite subjects, and that we are on the eve of a General Election. These Bills are to be launched at the heads of all candidates, and only those who will distinctly pledge themselves to "vote for these Bills, the whole Bills, and nothing but the Bills," may expect to obtain the votes of the landlords and tenants. Now, is it possible to find any number of men who will pledge themselves to all the points and details which one single well-considered Bill must contain? And if not to one Bill, how much more impossible to find men who will pledge themselves to more than one. If we are to content ourselves with only one Bill at each General Election, we shall be very old men before we get much in the way of reform. But supposing, say, fifty such men were found and returned to Parliament, and by great good luck this Bill obtained a place in the ballot, what happens then? It probably passes its second reading and is referred to a Standing Committee. But, however well considered a Bill may be, it is extremely improbable that it will emerge from that Committee as it entered it, and if it does not, what becomes of those members'

pledges, as this is no longer the Bill to which they pledged themselves ?

But we will assume still more, that the Bill comes from Committee without more amendment than these members can reconcile with their pledges ; it then depends upon the entirely irresponsible decision of the Government of the day whether the Bill shall "be given facilities" to proceed further. These members (under our assumption) are only units of one or other of the existing parties, and cannot, therefore, be expected to take any steps in the direction of "putting pressure" upon their leaders in order to obtain these "facilities." So our hope depends upon a string of chances—first, upon finding a number of candidates ready to pledge themselves to all the details of a Bill ; secondly, upon those candidates getting into Parliament ; thirdly, upon the luck of the ballot ; fourthly, upon the chance of the Bill passing without amendment through Committee ; and, fifthly, upon the decision of the Government as to whether it shall live or die.

But we have not yet referred to what must be considered the greatest assumption of all (one fact which our opponents tell us is against us beyond question), and that is the labourers' vote. If it is true that the labourers will always vote against the farmer and landlord, then goodbye to any hope of returning those-candidates who pledge themselves to one or more agricultural Bills, be they ever so well considered. Luckily, it is not true ; but this comes more correctly under the head of "Impracticability," and must be deferred until later. I will only add on this point that I think the drafting of Bills is most necessary if taken in conjunction with other steps ; and it is the best way of bringing any question forward in a concrete form.

I now turn to the second argument. It may be only a matter of opinion, but it is a very general opinion—that this desire on the part of so-called Agricultural Members is more imaginary than real, and has proved most insufficient in the past ; and it must be said that if this burning desire does exist among these members they have very thoroughly concealed it. Had they shown it there would have been no such proposals as are now made. It is said that the reason why members have not been so active in the required direction as they might have been is because agriculturists themselves are not organised in a way to express their opinions. This is true to an extent, but for many years there has been an organisation (in the Chambers of Agriculture) which has been able to voice the needs of that industry. We will examine such facts as are available to discover how this desire to serve agriculture has been exhibited ; we shall see at the same time the use that members have made of the organisation that was at their disposal.

Paragraph 7 of the report dated 23rd April, 1908, was quoted here. (Page 346.)

IT IS IMPRACTICABLE.

This is a bold assertion, but it has yet to be proved correct, and there are so many who believe it to be practicable that it will be put to the test. Even if the Central Chamber of Agriculture finds itself unable to carry the matter further, there are societies and individuals who will take up the gauntlet.

It is said to be impossible :—(1) Because no member, or group of members, of Parliament would fairly represent the landlord, the tenant, and the labourer. (2) Because the expense incurred would prove a burden too great for agriculture to bear. (3) Because there is no unanimity between the units of any one of the three classes embraced under the term "Agriculturists." (4) Because the labourers will never vote the same way as their employers. (5) Because party political feelings are too deeply rooted in the minds of agriculturists to allow them to transfer their allegiance to an independent candidate. There are others of less importance, but these will suffice. It will be found on analysis that some of these are mutually destructive of each other.

No. 1.

If it is impossible for a member to fairly represent the landlord, tenant, and labourer, how is it possible for members to fairly represent not only those three sections, but the hundred-and-one other sections and interests he affects to represent under present conditions? No one imagines because an individual tries to directly represent that industry which happens to be the principal one in his division that a perfect method of representation has been found. But (on the theory of the greatest good to the greatest number) it is held that a man who stands for a division where agriculture is paramount, and stands independent of the party whips, would be better able to look after his constituents than the carpet-bagger who certainly represents a division, but, frequently, by no means represents his constituents. We do not hear it said when a man is sent to Westminster to represent the railway interest, the brewing interest, or the N.U.T., that his division is disfranchised as regards every interest except that on which he depends for the funds to pay his election expenses. Nor does that argument hold good here. Any candidate standing in any capacity whatever will have to give expression to his views upon all general questions of the day, and will be subjected to questions from all the societies of faddists, as present-day candidates are subject to them. Unless he can pass through this ordeal in a way that satisfies a majority of the voters he will not be returned.

It may be true to a strictly limited extent that the interests of the three sections of agriculturists are not identical; thus the landlord wants as much rent as he can get, and the tenant to pay as little as possible; or the labourer as high a wage as he can obtain and the employer to pay no more than he need. But these are

incidental domestic matters which fade into insignificance beside the much more important one of obtaining profits large enough to enable each section to get a share. Why are we so constantly being told "that there is no community of interests between the three sections?" We do not hear the same about other industries. It is an accepted fact that if there is no margin of profit in any business that business goes to the scrap heap, and both employers and employes suffer; the latter feel it first, and physically, most. However much politicians may endeavour to widen the gulf between these sections, for their own base party purposes, the great truth must prevail at last, and these three sections will realise that they are all in the same boat. Therefore it is *not* impossible for a member to fairly represent them all.

NO. 2.—THE EXPENSE TOO GREAT.

It would be intensely interesting if we could ascertain how much of the funds which now keep together the two great parties comes out of the pockets of agriculturists. As their accounts are not open to inspection, we can only guess that if all agriculturists' subscriptions were diverted into other channels the two central Associations would find their claws cut rather short. Why should not this diversion be turned into a strictly agricultural channel? Moreover, when the ice was once broken, there are many wealthy men who would stand as agricultural candidates, and pay all expenses, as they do now under other appellations. It is asserted that the whole cost of registration, as well as other costs, must come out of our pockets. Even if it did, I maintain that it would be the best investment that agriculturists could make. Incidentally it is worth consideration whether a strong body of members might not carry through legislation which would materially reduce these same costs. The fact is that this question of cost is chiefly put forward by those who hope thereby to frighten us from our object. But do not let me be misunderstood. I do not wish to shirk the question; it *will* be a costly matter, and all landlords and farmers must bear their share of it; but I say again that it will be money very well spent.

No. 3.—NO UNANIMITY BETWEEN MEMBERS OF EITHER CLASS.

There is a greater element of truth in this than in any of the other contentions. On several points a farmer in Cornwall will differ from a farmer in Cumberland, and a farmer in Cambridge-shire will not agree with either of them. But while that is true on certain points it is untrue on others. There are many matters which agriculturists desire to see settled, and upon which practical unanimity exists. Absolute unanimity there may not be, but will our opponents tell me of any single question upon which they can get absolute unanimity from any body of men engaged in any industry. Anyone, having even a slight acquaintance with political life, knows that in every question there is, and must be, more or

less compromise, some give and take between those who are asking for legislation. This is another point of which our opponents are making the most. Are the Conservatives absolutely unanimous on any one point? Are the Liberals? Are they even sure they are Liberals or Radicals? Are the Labour Party? Are the Irish Party? Are the Teetotalers? Are the Church Party? There is quite as much accord among agriculturists as there is among any other section of the community; but there is less organisation. This is to be regretted, but it does not weaken our case. The part of the industry that is organised must look after the whole of it. If the greater part prefers to remain voiceless, it may do so; but it need not. There is no reason why every individual should not take his part in helping to formulate the desires of his industry; and if it be said that the Chambers do not voice the majority, or that they advocate matters which are injurious to those not belonging to the Chambers, let those outside come in and alter that policy. The local Chambers are not "pocket boroughs," and the Central Chamber is just what the local Chambers make it. This want of unanimity is only another bogey.

No. 4.—LABOURERS WILL NOT VOTE WITH THEIR EMPLOYERS.

This, on the face of it, would absolutely crush out any vestige of hope that otherwise might have been entertained—if it were true; but it is not. There are hundreds and thousands of labourers that, at the present time, vote the same way as their employers. If this were not so, how is it that Unionist candidates for rural divisions ever succeed in getting into Parliament, since the majority of landowners and farmers *have been* on the Unionist side, but have been vastly outnumbered by the labourers ever since the last Reform Act? If some of these labourers have voted with their employers, I fail to see why they should not support an agriculturist. I believe, on the contrary, that very many labourers would support an agricultural candidate who would not vote for a Unionist. That, of course, remains to be proved; but I—unlike our opponents—do not assert it as an incontrovertible fact. It is not unlikely, either, that many labourers have got as tired of the election promises of both Liberal and Conservative candidates as have many of their employers, and would welcome a change.

It was a labourer who first made it clear to me that the interests of the three sections were so largely identical.

I also base my conclusions upon facts gathered during several years spent in organising work among all classes of agriculturists in nearly every county in England. Judging from that experience, I am not surprised at Mr. Rider Haggard holding the opinions he gave expression to in *The Times* last December. But Mr. Haggard judges from his own experience in North Norfolk; and in that particular district I found the feeling of antipathy

between the different classes far more pronounced than (with one exception) in any other part of England. Mr. Haggard makes the mistake of arguing from the particular to the general. This is not fair to the labourers. Their interest in the welfare of agriculture is just as great to them as to the farmer or landowner ; it is only a question of degree. They are not the ignorant louts that comic and some other papers pretend to think them, and if treated reasonably will act as reasonably as other people. I admit that this is the most difficult point to argue upon in the whole of this question ; no less difficult for our opponents than for us, because their main contention is based on wrong conclusions, or, at best, on a bald assertion ; so for the present this point must lie in the lap of the gods. What we have to do is to discuss all these matters with the labourers ; reason them out calmly and dispassionately, not with any idea of " cajoling " them into believing this or that, but accepting the fact that if met properly they are as clear-headed as other folk. But this must be done now, not during the heat and viciousness engendered by elections. It must be, of course, a part of the policy of those who are proposing the formation of an Agricultural Party to advocate measures which will benefit the labourers directly, as well as those which will only indirectly touch them. No question will be more popular than Mr. Jesse Collings' Land Purchase Bill, and this must be one of the main planks of our programme.

NO. 5.—PARTY FEELING TOO DEEPLY ROOTED.

In the last section the expression was used : " Since the majority of farmers and landowners *have been* on the Unionist side." I use the words " have been " advisedly, for there are very many men who all their lives have staunchly supported the Conservative Party in the blind belief that they were really the farmers' party, but who had their faith so rudely shaken by the late Government that their allegiance is no longer certain. Some of these might—under present conditions—vote for a Liberal candidate, many would not vote at all, but practically every one of them, as well as those who have never been tied to either party, will give their support to agricultural candidates. Moreover, there will be many opportunities for agricultural votes to be given to candidates who, though standing as agricultural candidates, and free of the Party Whips on agricultural questions, will show a decided bias to either the Liberal or the Unionist side. One proposal is that agriculturists should select their own candidates, but that in a division where the preponderating vote is Liberal a candidate acceptable to the Liberals should be chosen, and conversely in the case of a Conservative constituency.

This is another point upon which it is useless for us or our opponents to dogmatise. It remains to be proved, and until it is proved that we are wrong it is unreasonable to say that it is impossible.

The formation of this Independent Party may be impracticable ; but we shall require more conclusive arguments than any yet put forward to convince us that it is so.

IT IS UNDESIRABLE.

The force of this opinion depends almost entirely upon the point of view of the person making it. I say "almost," because our opponents give as the ostensible reason for its undesirability the condition of things in those Parliaments abroad where the group system has become a recognised method of government ; and from this point of view the group system can be shown to have many disadvantages. But why should we take any foreign method as the standard for emulation ? I have sufficient faith in the good sense, and freedom from panic, of the average Britisher to believe that under the group system he will act in the way that will be best for the country as a whole.

The *Morning Post*, on 6th January, 1908, referring to the autocratic action of the present Government with regard to the "guillotining" methods of last session, said :—

"Was ever a House of Commons since Cromwell's day treated so autocratically ? Of course, it may be said that the majority of the House is to blame for tolerating such treatment. Obviously it is, but party loyalty is carried very far in these days."

It is indeed—carried so far that the rights and privileges of private members were practically extinguished by Mr. Balfour, with his followers' consent, during his last administration. The reason why members of Parliament do not occupy the same position as formerly in the minds of the public is entirely due to this fact. The man in the street recognises that the individual M.P. has become a mere pawn in the hands of his leader, and values him accordingly. We want those privileges restored.

But the great point in this aspect of the question is that it does not matter in the least whether we think the group system desirable or the reverse. It is already with us. Apart from the four main groups in the present House of Commons, there are numerous sub-divisions (held together with some difficulty by their respective leaders) and still others in embryo ; and the whole present tendency is in the direction of more clearly establishing this system. It is no use shutting our eyes to this fact, and the sooner men realise it, and set to work to organise their own industries, both inside and outside the House of Commons, instead of wasting effort in a fruitless attempt to instil life into the dead bones of the old parties, the better it will be for them. The two-party system is some 250 years old ; it has done good work in the past, but it has served its purpose and outlived its use. Its demise has probably been hastened by over organisation, by the too accurate numbering of heads, and by its destruction of personal thought and initiative. It prevents personal interest being

developed in any question, as it is so much easier to merely do what the Whip commands; the useful knowledge which accrues from personal interest is therefore lost, and the units of a party become in very many cases merely automaton, useful to their leaders, but no longer representative of their constituents.

The results are necessarily bad. No measure is taken up until the party in power either sees a chance to please the mob and so to gain votes, or fears to lose them by refraining from action. Merely useful measures have no chance of becoming law; there is no time to deal with anything that does not help to make "an attractive shop window." Time which should be spent on well considered legislation is wasted over every conceivable dodge by which one party attempts to score off the other. Instead of devising a rational system of decentralisation, the Legislature is choked with business, and recourse is had to that most barbarous, dangerous and unconstitutional process known as the "guillotine." Well-considered legislation is a thing of the past.

It may be *undesirable* to try a new system, but it is difficult to imagine that the group system could be worse than the one we suffer under now.

December, 1908.

APPENDIX No. 6.

JOHN ALGERNON CLARKE.

Son of John Clarke, celebrated sheep breeder, 22 years Hon. Secretary of the Long Sutton Agricultural Association. Born at Long Sutton, Lincolnshire. Died in London November, 1887. Age 60.

First Secretary of the Central Chamber of Agriculture. Founder of the *Chamber of Agriculture Journal* in 1869, at offices in Arundel Street, Strand.

Special correspondent of *The Times* for 30 years, and wrote Crop and Stock Prospects weekly. At the time of his death he was editor of *Bell's Weekly Messenger*. Author of "*What the Prophets Foretold*" and "*Fen Sketches*;" also contributor to the "*Encyclopædia Britannica*."

Inventor of "Psycho," the celebrated automaton card player, introduced by Maskelyne and Cook, at the Egyptian Hall.

Reporter and Judge of Machinery at the Royal and Bath and West of England Shows.

Wrote many articles for the Royal Society *Journals*, was awarded Prince Albert's Medal for Prize Essay on Agriculture, and was Lecturer on Agriculture at Cirencester College.

APPENDIX No. 7.

CHAIRMEN OF THE CENTRAL CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE.

- 1866-67.—ALBERT PELL, Esq., M.P. 1892.—Right Hon. Sir EDWARD GREY, Bart., M.P.
- 1868.—R. JASPER MORE, Esq., M.P.
- 1869.—CLARE SEWELL READ, Esq., M.P. 1893.—Right Hon. JAMES LOWTHER, M.P.
- 1870.—Colonel GEORGE TOMLINE, M.P. 1894.—Lord CHANNING OF WELLINGBOROUGH.
- 1871.—Right Hon. Sir MASSEY LOPES, Bart., M.P. 1895.—Right Hon. A. F. JEFFREYS, M.P.
- 1872.—1st Lord HENEAGE.
- 1873.—Sir M. HICKS-BEACH, M.P. (1st Viscount St. Aldwyn) 1896.—4th Earl GREY.
- 1874.—G. F. MUNTZ, Esq. 1897.—Right Hon. J. LLOYD WHARTON, M.P.
- 1875.—1st Lord HAMPTON.
- 1876.—W. W. BEACH, Esq., M.P. 1898.—3rd Lord WENLOCK.
- 1877.—3rd Earl FORTESCUE.
- 1878.—Sir GEORGE S. JENKINSON, Bart., M.P. (11th Bart.) 1899.—6th Marquis of LONDONDERRY, K.G.
- 1879.—11th Marquis of HUNTLY.
- 1880.—Colonel S. B. RUGGLES BRISE, C.B., M.P. 1900.—V. C. W. CAVENDISH, M.P. (Duke of Devonshire).
- 1881.—1st Earl CARRINGTON, K.G. (Marquis of Lincolnshire) 1901.—5th Marquis of BATH.
- 1882.—Right Hon. Sir R. H. PAGET, Bart., M.P. 1902.—Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Bart., M.P. (Lord Strachie).
- 1883.—THOMAS DUCKHAM, Esq., M.P. 1903.—5th Earl of WARWICK.
- 1884.—Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P. 1904.—W. C. B. BEAUMONT, M.P. (2nd Viscount Allendale).
- 1885.—18th Earl of SUFFOLK and BERKSHIRE.
- 1886.—PICKERING PHIPPS, Esq. 1905.—16th Earl of DERBY, K.G.
- 1887.—Viscount EBRINGTON, M.P. (4th Earl Fortescue) 1906.—Col. Sir T. COURTENAY T. WARNER, Bart., M.P.
- 1888.—7th Earl of JERSEY.
- 1889.—CHARLES WING GRAY, Esq., M.P. 1907.—1st Lord DESBOROUGH.
- 1890.—7th Lord VERNON.
- 1891.—Sir EDWARD BIRKBECK, Bart., M.P. 1908.—Sir J. DICKSON-POYNDER, Bart., M.P. (Lord Islington).
- 1909.—G. L. COURTHOPE, Esq., M.P.
- 1910.—6th Earl of CHICHESTER.
- 1911.—21st Lord CLINTON.
- 1912.—Sir LUKE WHITE, M.P.
- 1913.—9th Lord BARNARD.
- 1914.—Hon. EUSTACE FIENNES, M.P.
- 1915.—Captain CHARLES BATHURST, M.P.

Vice-Chairman in 1915.

Major-General Sir IVOR HERBERT, Bart., M.P.

APPENDIX No. 8.

OFFICERS OF THE CENTRAL CHAMBER.

TREASURERS.

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 Sir BOWEN BOWEN-JONES, Bart., 1897-1914.
 Colonel H. LE ROY-LEWIS, D.S.O., 1915.

AUDITORS.

Mr. THOMAS WILLSON, 1870-1892.
 Mr. S. B. L. DRUCE, 1893-1904.
 Colonel H. LE ROY-LEWIS, D.S.O., 1905-1914.

SECRETARIES.

Mr. J. ALGERNON CLARKE, 1867-Feb., 1879.
 Major P. G. CRAIGIE, C.B., 1879-Feb., 1890.
 Mr. R. H. REW, C.B., 1890-Nov., 1898.
 Mr. E. H. GODFREY, 1898-Dec., 1901.
 Mr. A. H. H. MATTHEWS, 1901-1915.

CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES.**Local Taxation.**

Sir MASSEY LOPES, Bart., M.P.
 Mr. ALBERT PELL, M.P.
 Sir RICHARD PAGET, Bart., M.P.
 Sir J. GRANT LAWSON, Bart., M.P.
 Sir JOHN DORINGTON, Bart., M.P.
 Sir LUKE WHITE, M.P.
 Mr. G. WOOD HOMER.
 Mr. W. A. HAVILAND.

Cattle Diseases.

Mr. WM. STRATTON.
 Mr. B. ST. JOHN ACKERS.
 Colonel H. LE ROY-LEWIS, D.S.O.
 Professor JOHN PENBERTHY.

Dairy Products.

Sir R. PAGET, Bart., M.P.
 Mr. T. CARRINGTON SMITH.
 Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Bart., M.P.
 Mr. CHRISTOPHER MIDDLETON.

Railway.

Sir R. PAGET, Bart., M.P.
 Mr. A. F. JEFFREYS, M.P.
 Colonel C. W. LONG, M.P.
 Mr. HARRY BARNSTON, M.P.

Agricultural Holdings Act and Compensation for Unexhausted Improvements.

Mr. G. F. MUNTZ, 1873-6.
 Mr. WM. LIPSCOMB, 1883-4.
 Mr. WM. LIPSCOMB, 1894.
 Mr. WM. LIPSCOMB, 1899-1900.
 Mr. CHRISTOPHER MIDDLETON, 1903-1912.
 Mr. SAML. KIDNER, 1912.

Agricultural Education.

Mr. PICKERING PHIPPS, 1878-84.
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 Mr. CHRISTOPHER TURNOR, 1912.

Co-operation.

Mr. WM. LIPSCOMB.

Sugar Beet.

Col. VICTOR MILWARD, M.P.
 Earl of DENBIGH.

Boundary Fences.

Mr. S. ROWLANDSON.
 Mr. CHRISTOPHER MIDDLETON.

Weights and Measures.

Major P. G. CRAIGIE.
 Mr. SAML. KIDNER.

Prevention of Fraud.

Mr. F. J. LLOYD.
 Lord CLINTON.

Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs.

Mr. F. J. LLOYD.

Market Garden, Fruit, and Hop-growing.

Mr. LAURENCE HARDY, M.P.
 Mr. W. G. LOBJOIT.

Slaughter of Calves.

Mr. W. A. HAVILAND.

Income Tax.

Earl of WINCHILSEA.

Tithe.

Mr. C. W. GRAY, M.P.

Bimetallic.

Mr. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.

APPENDIX No. 9.

CHAMBERS OF AGRICULTURE, FARMERS' CLUBS, AND OTHER BODIES IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE CENTRAL CHAMBER.

CHAMBER.	No. OF DEPUTIES	SECRETARY.
AYLESBURY AND DISTRICT FARMERS' ASSOCIATION	1	Mr. J. H. Coales, Solicitor, Aylesbury
BATTLE AND DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB..	1	Mr. Percy Woodhams, 51, Havelock-road, Hastings
BEAUFORT HUNT FARMERS' CLUB	1	Mr. W. Markham, Badminton, Glos.
BEDFORDSHIRE	2	Mr. Walter Peacock, 84, High-street, Bedford
BERKS AND OXON	2	Mr. W. Anker Simmons (Hon. Sec.) Mr. F. W. Simmons, 39, Blagrove-street, Reading (Sec.)
BERKS AND ADJOINING COUNTIES DAIRY FARMERS' ASSOCIATION	1	Mr. J. W. Youngs, 38, Friars-street, Reading
BERWICK AND BORDERS FARMERS' ASSOCIATION	1	Mr. J. R. Wood, Castle-Heaton, Cornhill-on-Tweed
BILLERICAY FARMERS' CLUB	1	Mr. G. A. Saner, Billericay, Essex
BISHOP'S STORTFORD	2	Mr. E. Pigg, jun., Furneaux Pelham, Buntingford, Herts
BLACKBURN AND DISTRICT FARMERS' ASSOCIATION	1	Mr. Hy. Pickup, Mellor Brook, near Blackburn, Lancs.
BLACKPOOL AND DISTRICT DAIRY FARMERS' ASSOCIATION	1	Mr. Rd. Bibby, Market-place, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancs.
BLANDFORD FARMERS' CLUB.. .. .	1	Mr. W. H. Creech, 48, East-street, Blandford
BRITISH DAIRY FARMERS' ASSOCIATION	3	Mr. F. E. Hardcastle, 28, Russell-square, W.C.
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	4	Mr. C. E. Freeman, Wendover, Bucks.
BURNLEY AND DISTRICT FARMERS' ASSOCIATION	1	Mr. W. Whitaker, 2, Brunel-street, Burnley
CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND ISLE OF ELY ..	2	Mr. A. E. Saunders, Waterbeach, Cambridge (Secretary of Isle of Ely Branch) Mr. W. E. Stockdale, The Towers, Ely
CANTERBURY FARMERS' CLUB AND EAST KENT CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE	3	Mr. E. L. Gardener, 69, Castle-street, Canterbury
CHESHIRE	2	Mr. James Sadler, 62, Nantwich-road, Crewe
CHESHIRE MILK PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION	1	Mr. James Sadler, 62, Nantwich-road, Crewe
CHESTER FARMERS' CLUB	1	Mr. T. Linnell, Newgate-street, Chester
CIRENCESTER	1	Mr. Robert Wm. Ellett, Cirencester
CLEVELAND	1	Mr. C. Middleton, Vane-terrace, Darlington
CORNWALL COUNTY FARMERS' UNION..	1	Mr. G. A. Northey, Gwarnick, Truro
Craven Agricultural Society and Farmers' Club	1	Mr. R. Wilson, Bank Buildings, Skipton
Craven Tenant Farmers' Association	1	Mr. T. W. Dean, Castle Chambers, Skipton
CUMBERLAND AND WESTMORLAND ..	1	
DARLINGTON, DURHAM, AND NORTH RIDING	3	Mr. R. C. Pearce, Darlington
DORSET	1	Mr. Herbert Till, 5, South-street, Dorchester
DROITWICH, BROMSGROVE AND DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB	1	Mr. R. Hedges, 91, High-street, Bromsgrove
EASTERN COUNTIES DAIRY FARMERS' CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY	1	Mr. H. Chadderton, 106, Windmill-lane, Stratford, E.
ESSEX FARMERS' UNION	1	Mr. A. H. Symons, 68, South-street, Romford, Essex

CHAMBER.	No. OF DEPUTIES	SECRETARY.
FAREHAM AND HAMPSHIRE FARMERS' CLUB	2	Major Archibald Wyatt, F.S.I., 79, High-street, Fareham, Hants
FARMERS' CLUB, THE (LONDON)	2	Mr. H. Trustram Eve, 2, Whitehall-court, S.W.
FRAMLINGHAM FARMERS' CLUB	1	Mr. E. G. Warren, Framlingham, Suffolk
GILLINGHAM FARMERS' CLUB	1	Mr. H. Kaines, Milton, Gillingham (Hon. Sec.) Mr. J. G. Dovey, New-road, Gillingham, Dorset (Sec.)
GLAMORGANSHIRE	2	Mr. Hubert Alexander, 5, High-street, Cardiff
GLOUCESTERSHIRE	2	Mr. F. Pamphilon, Crypt House, Gloucester
HAMSTREET AGRICULTURAL CLUB	1	Mr. Joseph Timmins, Fairview, Ruckinge, Ashford, Kent
HEREFORDSHIRE	2	Mr. W. G. C. Britten, 20, East-street, Hereford
HERTFORDSHIRE	1	Mr. Wm. Young, 4, St. Peter-street, St. Albans
HOLDERNESS AGRICULTURAL CLUB	2	Mr. J. F. Robinson, Solicitor, 4, Parliament-street, Hull
HOWDENSHIRE AGRICULTURAL CLUB ..	1	Mr. P. C. Thompson, Saltmarshe, Howden, Yorks
HUNTINGDONSHIRE	2	Mr. Gerald Hunnybun, Solicitor, Huntingdon
HURSTMONCEUX AND DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB	1	Mr. A. K. Burtenshaw, Hailsham, Sussex
ILFORD FARMERS' ASSOCIATION	1	Mr. Rupert Brown, Gaysham Hall, Barkingside, Essex
ISLE OF PURBECK AND WAREHAM FARMERS' CLUB	1	Mr. R. E. Cann, High-street, Swanage, Dorset
ISLE OF WIGHT AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY	1	Capt. H. C. Bertram, West Standen, Newport, Isle of Wight
JOINT RAILWAY AND PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE	2	Mr. H. W. Goodall, Tavistock Hotel, Covent Garden, W.C.
KENDAL FARMERS' CLUB	1	Mr. Michael Hodgson, Auctioneer, Highgate, Kendal
LANCASHIRE FARMERS' ASSOCIATION ..	4	Mr. T. H. Holborn, County Chambers, Fishergate, Preston
LAND AGENTS' SOCIETY, THE	1	Mr. C. B. Marshall, 2, Millbank House, Westminster, S.W.
LEEDS AND DISTRICT MARKET GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION	1	Mr. W. H. Turner, Robin Hood, near Wakefield
LEICESTERSHIRE	1	Mr. P. L. Kirby, 25, Horsefair-street, Leicester
LINCOLNSHIRE	2	Mr. R. Lamming, St. Benedict's-square, Lincoln
LIVERPOOL & DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB	2	Mr. James Lunt, 9a, Great Horner-street, Liverpool
LYDNEY FARMERS' CLUB	1	Mr. R. R. Bowles, Priors Mesne, Lydney (Hon. Sec.) Mr. Gerald Ford, Woolaston, Lydney, Glos. (Sec.)
MAIDSTONE FARMERS' CLUB AND MID-KENT CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE	1	Mr. Philip Champion, 5, Market Buildings, Maidstone
MARKET GARDENERS', NURSERYMEN, AND FARMERS' ASSOCIATION	2	Mr. A. Monro, 41, King-street, Covent Garden, W.C.
MAYFIELD FARMERS' CLUB	1	Mr. R. T. Lade, 75, Erskine Park-rd., Rusthall, Kent
MELPLASH AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY ..	1	Mr. Austen Whetham, Bridport
MIDLAND FARMERS' ASSOCIATION	1	Mr. Edwin Smithells, 111, New-street, Birmingham
MILBORNE ST. ANDREWS FARMERS' CLUB	1	Mr. R. E. Bennett, Chesilbourne, Dorchester
MONMOUTHSHIRE	3	Mr. T. Morris Prosser, Emlyn Works, Newport, Mon.
NANTWICH FARMERS' CLUB	1	Mr. T. L. Hitchen, Highfields, Badgiley, Nantwich
NATIONAL FRUIT GROWERS' FEDERATION	1	Mr. O. B. Cowley, 2, Gray's Inn-place, W.C.
NEWCASTLE FARMERS' CLUB	1	Mr. A. J. Hargrave, 33, Sandhill, Newcastle-on-Tyne
NORFOLK	4	Mr. J. B. Forrester, 32, Prince of Wales-road, Norwich
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE	2	Mr. C. H. Davis, 1, Sheep-street, Northampton
NORTH COTSWOLD FARMERS' ASSOCIATION	1	Mr. G. Haines, Campden, Glos.
OLDHAM AND COUNTIES FEDERATION OF FARMERS' ASSOCIATIONS	1	Mr. W. H. Rodwell, 16, Knowsley-street, Bury
RIPON AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION ..	1	Mr. B. North, Market-place, Ripon
ROBERTSBRIDGE FARMERS' CLUB	1	Mr. A. Elsam, Bodiam, Hawkhurst, Sussex

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Several Acts of Parliament, Royal Commissions, Select and Departmental Committees are recorded here, although no reference is made to them in the text of the book; they are included partly for convenience of reference as to dates, and partly because they demanded more or less attention by the Chamber, though not perhaps enough to justify any further mention than being indexed.

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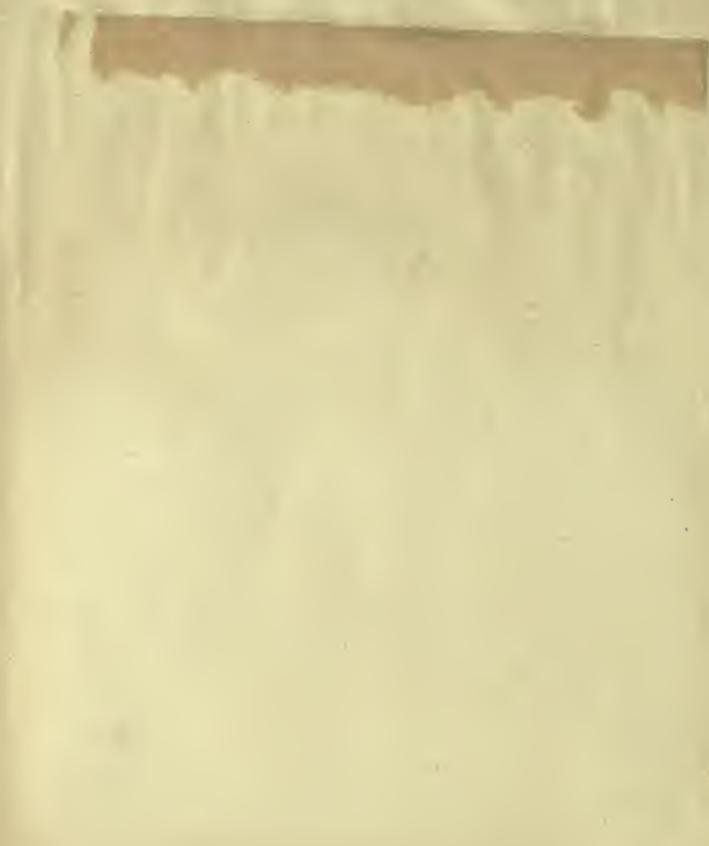
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