

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION
FOR IRELAND.

REPORT
OF THE
DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE
ON
FOOD PRODUCTION
IN IRELAND.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty.



LONDON :

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
By A. THOM AND CO., LIMITED, ABBEY STREET, DUBLIN.

To be purchased, either directly or through any Bookseller, from
E. PONSONBY, LIMITED, 116, GRAFTON STREET, DUBLIN ; or
WYMAN AND SONS, LIMITED, 29, BREAMS BUILDINGS, FETTER LANE, E.C., and
28, ABINGDON STREET, S.W., and 54, ST. MARY STREET, CARDIFF ; or
H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE (SCOTTISH BRANCH), 23, FORTH STREET, EDINBURGH ;
or from the Agencies in the British Colonies and Dependencies,
the United States of America, and other Foreign Countries of
T. FISHER UNWIN, LIMITED, LONDON, W.C.

1915.

[Cd. 8046.]

Price 3d.

To His Excellency IVOR CHURCHILL, BARON WIMBORNE, &c., &c.,
LORD LIEUTENANT-GENERAL AND GENERAL GOVERNOR OF IRELAND.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

I am directed by the Vice-President to submit to Your Excellency the Report of the Departmental Committee on Food Production in Ireland.

I have the honour to remain,

Your Excellency's faithful Servant,

T. P. GILL,
Secretary.

Department of Agriculture and
Technical Instruction for Ireland,
Upper Merrion Street,
Dublin, 19th August, 1915.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

COPIES OF MINUTES APPOINTING THE COMMITTEE AND SECRETARY	PAGE iv.
---	-------------

REPORT :—

NAMES OF MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE	1
NAMES OF WITNESSES	1
PREAMBLE	2
PRESENT POSITION OF IRISH AGRICULTURE	2
MAINTENANCE OF LIVE STOCK ACT, 1915	4
MINIMUM PRICE FOR WHEAT AND OATS FOR A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR ...	4
FACILITIES TO ENABLE LANDHOLDERS TO OBTAIN IMPLEMENTS AND MACHINERY	5
MANURES, FEEDING STUFFS, AND SEEDS	6
OPINIONS OF COUNTY COMMITTEES OF AGRICULTURE ON THE SUBJECT OF THE INQUIRY	6
LOANS FOR FISHING BOATS AND GEAR	6
APPEAL TO LANDHOLDERS	7

RESERVATIONS AND MEMORANDA :—

STATEMENT OF RESERVATION TO PARAGRAPH 17 IN THE REPORT BY MESSRS. JOHN BAGWELL, C. F. BASTABLE, ROBERT DOWNES, JOSEPH O'CONNOR, AND P. J. O'NEILL	8
NOTE APPENDED TO THE REPORT BY MR. WILLIAM FIELD, M.P.	8
JOINT NOTE APPENDED TO THE REPORT BY MESSRS. W. FIELD, M.P. AND JOSEPH O'CONNOR	8
STATEMENT BY MR. HUGH DE F. MONTGOMERY, D.L.	9
FURTHER STATEMENT BY MESSRS. JOHN BAGWELL AND HUGH DE F. MONTGOMERY, D.L.	9
NOTE APPENDED TO THE REPORT BY MR. R. N. BOYD	9
PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 17 AND PROPOSED NEW CLAUSES ...	10

MINORITY REPORT BY THE RIGHT HON. SIR HORACE C. PLUNKETT, D.C.L., K.C.V.O., F.R.S.	12
--	----

ANNEX :—MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED BY THE IRISH AGRICULTURAL ORGANI- SATION SOCIETY	19
---	----

Departmental Committee on Food Production in Ireland.

COPY OF MINUTE APPOINTING THE COMMITTEE.

I HEREBY nominate and appoint a Committee to consider and report what steps should be taken by legislation or otherwise for the sole purpose of maintaining and, if possible, increasing the present production of food in Ireland, on the assumption that the war may be prolonged beyond the harvest of 1916.

The Committee will be constituted as follows:—

The Right Hon. T. W. RUSSELL, M.P., Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland (Chairman);

Mr. JOHN BAGWELL, General Manager, Great Northern Railway (Ireland);

Mr. HUGH T. BARRIE, D.L., M.P.;

Mr. C. F. BASTABLE, M.A., LL.D., Professor of Political Economy, Dublin University;

Mr. JOHN P. BOLAND, M.P.;

Mr. ROBERT N. BOYD, Carnmoney, Co. Antrim;

Mr. J. R. CAMPBELL, B.Sc., Assistant Secretary in respect of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland;

Mr. ROBERT DOWNES, J.P., Russellstown, Mullingar;

Mr. WILLIAM FIELD, M.P.;

Mr. THOMAS P. GILL, Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland;

Mr. JAMES S. GORDON, B.Sc., Deputy Assistant Secretary in respect of Agriculture and Chief Inspector, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland;

The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY, Lord Bishop of Ross;

Mr. WILLIAM McDONALD, J.P., ex-Chairman, Cork County Council;

Mr. HUGH DE F. MONTGOMERY, D.L., Fivemiletown, Co. Tyrone;

Mr. GEORGE MURNAGHAN, J.P., Omagh, Co. Tyrone;

Mr. JOSEPH O'CONNOR, Mylerstown, Naas, Kildare County Council;

Mr. PATRICK J. O'NEILL, J.P., Chairman, Dublin County Council;

The Right Hon. Sir HORACE C. PLUNKETT, D.C.L., K.C.V.O., F.R.S., etc., President, Irish Agricultural Organisation Society.

(Signed), T. W. RUSSELL,

Vice-President, Department of Agriculture
and Technical Instruction for Ireland.

Dated this 28th day of June, 1915.

APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY.

Mr. Ernest A. M. Morris, M.A., Barrister-at-Law, of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, has been appointed Secretary to the Departmental Committee on Food Production in Ireland.

30th day of June, 1915.

The Minutes of Evidence, Appendices, etc., are published separately, forming
Volume II. of the Report.

Departmental Committee on Food Production in Ireland.

REPORT.

TO THE RIGHT HON. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, M.P.,
CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND.

SIR,

1. The Committee on Food Production in Ireland, which you directed to be appointed, has completed its sittings, and now desires to submit to you and to the Government its considered Report.

2. The Committee consisted of the following members:—

The Right Hon. T. W. RUSSELL, M.P., Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland (Chairman).

Mr. JOHN BAGWELL, General Manager, Great Northern Railway (Ireland).

Mr. HUGH T. BARRIE, D.L., M.P.

Mr. C. F. BASTABLE, M.A., LL.D., Professor of Political Economy, Dublin University.

Mr. JOHN BOLAND, M.P.

Mr. ROBERT N. BOYD, Carntall, Carnmoney, Co. Antrim.

Mr. J. R. CAMPBELL, B.Sc., Assistant Secretary in respect of Agriculture, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland.

Mr. ROBERT DOWNES, J.P.

Mr. WILLIAM FIELD, M.P.

Mr. THOMAS P. GILL, Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland.

Mr. JAMES S. GORDON, B.Sc., Deputy Assistant Secretary in respect of Agriculture and Chief Inspector, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland.

The Most Rev. Dr. KELLY, Lord Bishop of Ross.

Mr. WILLIAM McDONALD, J.P., ex-Chairman, Cork County Council.

Mr. HUGH DE F. MONTGOMERY, D.L., Fivemiletown, Co. Tyrone.

Mr. GEORGE MURNAGHAN, J.P., Omagh, Co. Tyrone.

Mr. JOSEPH O'CONNOR, Mylerstown, Naas.

Mr. PATRICK J. O'NEILL, J.P., Chairman, Dublin County Council.

The Right Hon. Sir HORACE C. PLUNKETT, D.C.L., K.C.V.O., &c., President, Irish Agricultural Organisation Society.

The Committee held sittings on 13th, 14th, 15th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd July and 4th, 5th and 6th August, 9 meetings in all, and examined 12 witnesses, viz.:—

Mr. J. M. AIMERS, Secretary, Irish Corn Traders' Association.

Mr. R. A. ANDERSON, Secretary, Irish Agricultural Organisation Society.

Mr. T. J. CROWE, Menlough Co-operative Agricultural Society.

Mr. J. HUNT, Co. Roscommon.

Mr. E. W. L. HOLT, Chief Inspector of Fisheries.

Mr. P. MACNULTY, Transit Inspector, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland.

Mr. J. MILNE, J.P., Chairman, Irish Manure Manufacturers' Association.

Mr. D. S. PRENTICE, Chief Inspector, Veterinary Branch, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland.

Mr. JAMES ROBERTSON, Representing the Irish Seed Trade Association.

Mr. S. SMITH, Representative in respect of Marketing, Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland.

Mr. W. T. WATSON (Messrs. Paul and Vincent).

Mr. T. WIBBERLEY, Irish Agricultural Organisation Society.

3. The Reference under which the Committee sat was in the following terms :—

“To consider and report what steps should be taken by legislation or otherwise for the sole purpose of maintaining, and, if possible, increasing the present production of food in Ireland on the assumption that the war may be prolonged beyond the harvest of 1916.”

It appeared to us that this Reference involves immediate action, seeing that the produce of the harvest of 1916, which will largely govern the food position until the harvest of 1917, can be increased only by action taken during this autumn.

The main objects to be aimed at, in effecting an increased supply of food in Ireland, are in our opinion as follows :—

- (a) A material increase of the area under tillage, not only with a view to the direct production of more human food, but also to the indirect production of the same by increasing the amount of fodder available for cattle.
- (b) The maintenance, increase and improvement of breeding stock of all kinds.
- (c) The improvement of the farmers' position in regard to the means of obtaining the use of machinery and implements.
- (d) The conservation of the artificial manure supply of the country.
- (e) The maintenance of the Irish fishing industry.

Our Report is therefore, for the sake of convenience, arranged on these lines.

4. At the special meeting of the Council of Agriculture held in August, 1914, the question of a possible shortage in the food supplies of the country was discussed and an appeal was made through the Press and by means of the County Committees of Agriculture, County Instructors and Overseers, and by all the machinery of the Department, for an increased tillage output. No doubt the prospect of higher prices had its influence, but these appeals and others on similar lines were warmly responded to throughout the country, as may be seen from the following crop returns for the years 1914 and 1915.

The Present Position of Irish Agriculture.

TABLE showing the Acreage under certain Crops in Ireland on 1st June, 1914, and 1st June, 1915.

CROPS.	Acreage on 1st June.		Increase (+) or Decrease (—)	
	1914.	1915.	Acreage.	Percentage.
Wheat	36,913	86,530	+ 49,617	+ 134.4
Oats	1,028,758	1,088,569	+ 59,811	+ 5.8
Barley	172,289	141,680	— 30,609	— 17.8
Potatoes	583,069	594,457	+ 11,388	+ 2.0
Turnips	276,872	265,122	— 11,750	— 4.2
Mangels	81,570	82,728	+ 1,158	+ 1.4
Flax	49,253	53,143	+ 3,890	+ 7.9
Hay :—				
First Year	532,486	525,880	— 6,606	— 1.2
Second and Third Years ...	407,255	382,968	— 24,287	— 6.0
Permanent Meadow	1,547,772	1,586,866	+ 39,094	+ 2.5

5. In view of the fact that for a long series of years the area under tillage in Ireland has been steadily diminishing the figures quoted cannot be considered unsatisfactory. But they leave abundant room for improvement, and should our recommendations be carried out there can be little doubt that this improvement will take place and that a permanent increase in tillage will be the result.

6. In regard to Live Stock—another important branch of agricultural industry in Ireland—the Department laid before the Committee returns for the years 1914 and 1915. These figures read without knowledge, or comparison with those of previous years, can be, and have been, taken as presenting a rather grave outlook. The Returns of the two years show the following:—

TABLE showing the Numbers of certain descriptions of Live Stock in Ireland on 1st June, 1914, and 1st June, 1915.

DESCRIPTION OF LIVE STOCK.	Numbers on 1st June.		Increase (+) or Decrease (—)	
	1914.	1915.	Number.	Percentage.
HORSES.				
Used for Agricultural Purposes ...	393,646	359,848	—33,798	—8·6
Traffic and Manufactures ...	41,089	42,151	+1,062	+2·6
Amusement or Recreation ...	31,887	27,902	—3,985	—12·5
UNBROKEN—				
One year old and upwards ...	96,790	76,970	—19,820	—20·5
Under one year ...	55,933	54,046	—1,887	—3·4
TOTAL HORSES ...	619,345	560,917	—58,428	—9·4
CATTLE.				
Bulls ...	32,538	32,185	—353	—1·1
Milch Cows ...	1,548,790	1,509,723	—39,067	—2·5
Heifers-in-Calf ...	90,139	83,369	—6,770	—7·5
OTHER CATTLE—				
Two years old and upwards ...	1,099,645	962,131	—137,514	—12·5
One year old and under two ...	1,141,461	1,065,028	—76,433	—6·7
Under one year ...	1,139,072	1,191,359	+52,287	+4·6
TOTAL CATTLE ...	5,051,645	4,843,795	—207,850	—4·1
SHEEP.				
BREEDING—				
Rams ...	45,970	45,940	—30	—0·1
Ewes ...	1,408,262	1,431,805	+23,543	+1·7
OTHER SHEEP—				
One year old and upwards ...	673,407	643,669	—29,738	—4·4
Under one year ...	1,472,942	1,478,653	+5,711	+0·4
TOTAL SHEEP ...	3,600,581	3,600,067	—514	0·0
PIGS.				
BREEDING—				
Boars ...	1,938	1,904	—34	—1·8
Sows ...	133,188	122,013	—11,175	—8·4
OTHER PIGS—				
Six months old and upwards ...	173,816	148,612	—25,204	—14·5
Under six months ...	996,696	932,720	—63,976	—6·4
TOTAL PIGS ...	1,305,638	1,205,249	—100,389	—7·7
POULTRY.				
TOTAL POULTRY ...	26,918,749	26,088,807	—829,942	—3·1

7. *Horses*.—The recent decrease in the number of horses in Ireland is due mainly to extensive purchases by the War Office. For some time the purchase in this way of young mares led to a fear for the safety of the breeding stock. But the fact that the number of mares at the mare shows held by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction has increased from 13,765 in 1913 to 16,749 in 1914 and 20,571 in 1915 shows that the risk to breeding stock of this class is so far not serious. The heavy decrease in our total horse stock is, however, a matter of grave importance and will require to be closely watched. The work of the Department and of the local authorities in encouraging the horse breeding industry should be fully maintained and, if possible, extended.

8. *Cattle*.—The reduction in the number of milch cows, heifers in-calf, and of one and two-year-old cattle, as well as the slaughter of in-calf cows and heifers is disquieting and regrettable.

9. *Sheep*.—The figures showing the number of sheep in the country may be classed as normal and call for no comment.

10. *Pigs*.—The swine industry—one of prime importance in Ireland—shows the serious decline of 11,000 brood sows and a consequent loss of over 100,000 young pigs—the result of mistaken judgment on the part of breeders.

This is the more to be regretted as high prices for pigs and pig products—for which there is an almost unlimited demand—are likely to be maintained. Again, pigs supply a market for grain, potatoes, and dairy bye-products. It has been shown in the Report on the Pig Breeding Industry* that five pounds of grain or twenty pounds of potatoes produce one pound of pork. Farmers therefore have in this direction alone a profitable and extensive outlet for much of their tillage products.

11. The Committee gave very careful consideration to the whole of the figures referred to, indicating, as they do, a rather grave condition of affairs. It may be pointed out, however, that all comparison with recent years is rendered difficult by the existence of Foot and Mouth Disease in 1912-1913 and 1914, years during which Irish cattle were largely held up over certain wide areas of the country. It is therefore easy to make mistakes in comparison, but further progress in the direction indicated by the returns quoted might be very serious.

The Maintenance of Live Stock Act, 1915.

12. The Committee, therefore, notes with satisfaction the passing of the Maintenance of Live Stock Act, 1915. Under this measure powers are conferred upon the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction to stop alike the slaughter of breeding stock in Ireland and the movement of animals where slaughter is prohibited, i.e., the export of such stock to Great Britain, or even their movement in Ireland. The measure also confers powers for dealing with immature stock. In its present form the Act, though wide in its scope, is merely a temporary or emergency measure. Its permanent enactment may be desirable in order to confer power on the Department to take action in future, should an emergency arise, without fresh legislation. The Departmental witnesses before the Committee were satisfied that the Act gives powers quite adequate for safeguarding the breeding stock of the country. These powers vigorously exercised, together with the Improvement of Live Stock Schemes in operation in each county, ought to be sufficient not only for the maintenance but for the extension of the Irish cattle trade.

A Minimum Price for Wheat and Oats for a Period of One Year.

13. Having thus considered the returns submitted dealing with the two main food supplies of the country, the Committee desires to say that it cannot take upon itself to express an opinion as to the extent of the danger threatening our present and future food supplies generally. The Committee feels that this is a matter only within the competence of the Government. It is for the Government also to take the responsibility of deciding whether exceptional steps should be taken in order to increase the growth of certain food crops. But assuming that the Government takes this responsibility, then the Committee agrees that the measure calculated to effect this object in Ireland, where persuasion on the people in this direction has been exerted to the fullest extent, is the guaranteeing by the Government of a minimum price in the case of Wheat and Oats.

* Report of the Departmental Committee on Pig-Breeding in Ireland, 1915. Cd. 7890.

14. The Committee believes it to be an essential principle in fixing the amount of any minimum price that it should be regarded as an insurance against loss to the farmer, and not as a bonus. If the farmer is asked to break up land and to run risks as to the result, the Committee does not feel that in a time of emergency there is any departure from sound economic policy in agreeing to a minimum price to secure the farmer against loss. The Committee is further agreed that the minimum price should apply only to the specific crops named, otherwise the expedient would be dangerous, both in the interests of the agriculturist and of the consumer.

15. In the opinion of the Committee it is important to encourage wheat growing for Irish consumption and thus to prevent the outflow of money from Ireland, and to relieve the population of this country from dependence on foreign agriculture for the prime necessary of life. Care must be taken, however, that the cultivators are not artificially encouraged to grow wheat under conditions of soil and climate more suitable for oats; and therefore, if a minimum price be guaranteed for wheat a relative minimum price must be guaranteed for oats, which should remain the staple grain crop in Ireland.

16. In regard to the amount of the minimum price, the Committee recognises that the question of amount has a vital bearing on the general question of the advisability of a minimum price. The figure should be most carefully estimated with a view to its being no more than enough to give the farmer a feeling of security in growing the required crop, having regard to the normal conditions of his business. The price should not be such as to prove an obstacle in his mind, by setting up an artificial standard, to the growing of the crop in subsequent years when a normal profit is available.

17. As to the length of time during which the guaranteed minimum price should operate, the Committee holds that it should be for one year only. It is held that if a price which is sufficient to guarantee the farmer against loss is arrived at, this would prove an adequate inducement to the great mass of farmers in the country to grow a fair proportion of the crop to which it applies and which they are called on to grow in the interests of the country. A proposal going beyond this limit would be regarded as exceeding the requirements of a war measure, and as contemplating a policy upon the expediency of which opinions are sharply at variance.

Facilities to enable Landholders to obtain Implements and Machinery.

18. Throughout the inquiry the Committee has been impressed with the fact that Ireland is an agricultural country where 85 per cent. of the occupiers of the land are small holders. In this connection the Committee was convinced that some system of loans to enable small holders to obtain the use of agricultural machinery and implements, including meal mills for grinding their home-grown wheat and oats, was necessary if much further progress was to be made with the agriculture of the country. Evidence was given by small holders of land in the west of Ireland which showed that some Co-operative Societies had borrowed money from the local banks at 4 per cent. to purchase implements and had hired them out with satisfactory results. It was also shown that the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction had set aside a large sum out of their Endowment as a Loan Fund for this purpose, and that their Assistant Overseers had taught the use of the several implements to the tenants, especially in the western area. Neither of these schemes is open to objection, and they are deserving of development.

19. The Committee is agreed as to the need of a system by which loans should be made to the smaller holders for this purpose, and they are of opinion that, without unduly trenching upon any of the special methods of trading the County Committees of Agriculture might be asked to take charge of such a scheme in their several districts. These Committees are already practised in working the agricultural schemes of the Department involving the supply of manures and seeds. Such work, therefore, would not be out of the ordinary class of business entrusted to these Committees, which it may be remembered are statutory in character.

Manures, Feeding Stuffs and Seeds.

20. The Committee heard important evidence as to the supply of Manures, Feeding Stuffs and Agricultural Seeds. None of the witnesses seemed to fear the danger of any shortage save in the supply of basic slag. The Committee is unanimous in recommending the prohibition of the export from the United Kingdom of artificial manures and of the constituents used in their manufacture. This prohibition is specially necessary in the case of basic slag and sulphate of ammonia.

Opinions of County Committees of Agriculture on the subject of the Inquiry.

21. In regard to other branches of the agricultural industry, the Committee is aware of the fact that the Department of Agriculture has been for many years engaged by means of machinery which is national in character, and which covers every rural parish in the country, in promoting schemes of agricultural education. To a very great extent this education is conducted by Committees of Agriculture in connection with the various County Councils. These Committees are in close touch with the people; and before finally arriving at our conclusions the following queries were addressed to these bodies:—

1. How can the diminution of breeding stock in Ireland be counteracted:—

(A) By prohibition of slaughter and export of breeding and immature animals;

and, if such prohibition is recommended, under what circumstances and to what classes of animals should it be applied;

(B) By inducements to keep breeding and immature animals in the country?

2. How can the cultivation of an increased amount of crops be best encouraged:—

(A) As regards corn crops;

(B) Potatoes;

(C) Fodder crops?

3. What percentage of increase in these several classes of crops would be possible in your county ?

22. The Committee has been impressed with the answers* which have been received to these queries, and desires to point out that they all suggest that inducement in some form or other to the farmer called upon to do something which may expose him to grievous loss is essential. The Committee feels that too much consideration cannot be given to such expressions of opinion coming from bodies specially charged with the working of agricultural schemes throughout the country.

Loans for Fishing Boats and Gear.

23. Fish is an important article of food in Ireland, especially among the poorer people, and the Committee, therefore, gave the question of the maintenance of the supply their careful consideration. The Committee is of opinion that no steps designed to increase the supply of sea fish by way of provision of piers and harbours can be effective during the period of the war. But the system of loans for the provision of boats and fishing gear has been restricted and interrupted, and this will undoubtedly reduce the normal supply of fish at a time when an increase of food production is highly desirable. Hence the Committee is of opinion that these loans should not only be continued but extended. With regard to inland fisheries, the Committee understands that there has been no shortage in recent years, and that while something could be done to develop these fisheries, such development would necessarily be a matter which would only materially affect the supply after some considerable time. For these reasons the Committee refrains from making any recommendation as to the inland fishing industry.

* See Appendices to Minutes of Evidence.

Appeal to Landholders.

24. Before concluding its Report the Committee desires to appeal to the landholders of Ireland, both farmers and labourers, to put forth their best energies to promote the vital interests of themselves and their fellow-countrymen. During the war there is an unprecedented expenditure of the wealth of the United Kingdom, and hence arises a great national need of taking from the soil the most and the best that it can produce. There are in Ireland some millions of acres of second and third rate grass land which at present produce little, but which if tilled would give good crops, and when laid down again would become much more productive of hay and grass.

In present circumstances the value of the imports of the United Kingdom exceeds the value of the exports by one million pounds a day. This creates an adverse balance of trade, with the result that there may be grave pressure on the gold reserves of the United Kingdom which may lead to the most serious effects on the condition of all classes of the people. Accordingly all those who confine themselves to the use of home-grown food do a service to their country. This policy should be followed as far as possible by the population, both urban and rural. The import of foreign feeding-stuffs for animals has the same effect as the import of human food. The Committee strongly urges on the people of Ireland the fact that the greater the amount of food and feeding-stuffs raised in Ireland, and the less of imported commodities used the more they will safeguard their vital interests and lighten the strain and lessen the sufferings of the war.

25. The Committee desires to place on record the obligations it is under to its Secretary, Mr. E. A. M. Morris, for the zeal and ability he has displayed in its service, and for the efficient manner in which he has discharged the duties which the inquiry has imposed on him.

We have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your obedient Servants,

T. W. RUSSELL

(Chairman.)

JOHN BAGWELL.*||

HUGH T. BARRIE.

C. F. BASTABLE.*

JOHN P. BOLAND.

R. N. BOYD.†

J. R. CAMPBELL.

ROBERT DOWNES.*

WILLIAM FIELD.‡

T. P. GILL.

JAMES S. GORDON.

*DENIS KELLY.

WILLIAM McDONALD.

GEORGE MURNAGHAN.

JOSEPH O'CONNOR.*§

PATRICK J. O'NEILL.*

E. A. M. MORRIS,

Secretary.

DUBLIN :

Dated this 14th day of August, 1915.

* See reservation to paragraph 17 on page 8.

† See additional notes on page 8.

|| See reservations to paragraphs 18, 19 and 23, on page 9.

‡ See additional note on page 9.

§ See additional note on page 8.

I.—RESERVATIONS AND MEMORANDA APPENDED TO THE REPORT.

I.—Statement of reservation to Paragraph 17 in the Report by MESSRS. JOHN BAGWELL,
C. F. BASTABLE, ROBERT DOWNES, JOSEPH O'CONNOR, and P. J. O'NEILL.

While in agreement with everything else in the Report dealing with the question of minimum price, we are not satisfied that the period recommended in this paragraph is adequate to achieve the object aimed at, and we favour a period of three years rather than one year.

(Signed) JOHN BAGWELL.
C. F. BASTABLE.
ROBERT DOWNES.
JOSEPH O'CONNOR.
PATRICK J. O'NEILL.

II.—Note appended to the Report by Mr. WILLIAM FIELD, M.P.

I agree with and have signed the Report, but further suggest:—

Beet Culture.

(a) Beet provides sugar, an important article of food and manufacture, at present almost entirely imported.

(b) The bye-product and leaves of the beet are valuable for cattle feeding.

(c) Beet cultivation fertilises land and enables the subsequent growing of corn.

It would therefore, I submit, be advisable to encourage beet cultivation.

(Signed) WILLIAM FIELD.

III.—Note appended to the Report by Messrs. W. FIELD, M.P., and JOSEPH O'CONNOR.

Transit.

(a) Live stock frequently suffers serious deterioration from careless handling and insufficient assistance when being loaded. The industry also suffers from a want of adequate loading facilities, from delay in transit, and unnecessary shuntings. We, therefore, recommend a system of compulsory insurance at a moderate rate to cover these risks. We also recommend that cattle should be carried at a guaranteed minimum rate of speed.

(b) Local rates for all kinds of food products at special low charges should be universally available.

(c) When required, special market trains should be provided.

(d) Inducement and facilities should be held out to producers so as to encourage them to co-operate in bulking consignments in order to obtain reduced rates.

(e) Universal through bookings should be facilitated.

(Signed) WILLIAM FIELD.
JOSEPH O'CONNOR.

IV.—STATEMENT BY MR. H. DE F. MONTGOMERY, D.L.

I have not signed the Report agreed to by the majority of the Committee, because it appears to me that a document dealing with the best mode of increasing food production in a country where 85 per cent. of the agricultural holdings are under 50 acres, which makes no adequate reference to the agricultural co-operative movement, is misleading.

Subject to the above objection and to the dissent on certain points which I have signed jointly with Mr. Bagwell, and to some of the criticisms in Sir Horace Plunkett's minority report (referred to below) I am in substantial agreement with the contents of the main report.

I have read Sir Horace Plunkett's minority report. I am in general agreement with its drift and in complete agreement with the statements, criticisms, opinions and suggestions in paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6—as regards the inept statement that “persuasion on the people in this direction (increased growth of certain food crops) has been exerted to the fullest extent”—7, 17, 19 and 21.

(Signed) H. DE F. MONTGOMERY.

V.—STATEMENT OF RESERVATION TO PARAGRAPHS 18, 19 AND 23 BY MESSRS. JOHN BAGWELL AND H. DE F. MONTGOMERY, D.L.

With reference to the last sentence of paragraph 18 and to paragraph 19, we are of opinion that while the granting of direct loans to small farmers by the Department of Agriculture may be justified as an emergency measure, there are grave objections to a system of direct loans of small amounts to small farmers by a Government department which is not and could not easily be furnished with suitable machinery for the purpose, and we believe that such a system would be open to grave abuse. The same applies to the suggestion that such transactions should be undertaken by the County Committees of Agriculture. We think that small farmers should be encouraged to form Co-operative Societies under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, with the assistance of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society or otherwise, offering substantial collective security for the monies lent and undertaking collective responsibility for their use.

With reference to paragraph 23, we dissent from that part which deals with Loans to Fishermen, of the justification for which, at the present juncture, we are not convinced.

(Signed) JOHN BAGWELL.
H. DE F. MONTGOMERY.

VI.—NOTE APPENDED TO REPORT BY MR. R. N. BOYD.

I suggest that the object of this Committee—the maintaining and increasing of food production in Ireland during the coming year—would be furthered by making the following facts more widely known among producers.

Farmers may expect a very profitable outlet for the surplus produce of their tillage in rearing and fattening pigs.

Feeding tests, conducted under Government supervision in Denmark, and confirmed by tests in England and Ireland, have established the meat producing values of the various farm crops when fed to pigs in properly balanced rations. From these results—5 cwt. of uncooked meals will produce 1 cwt. of pork or dressed carcass of the pig; feeding 20 cwt. of cooked potatoes produces the same result; and the Danish figures give the same feeding value to 25 cwt. of green vetches or clover, in all cases the constituents of the daily ration being so arranged as to supply a properly mixed diet. The following factors indicate continued high prices, if even the war were over:—Germany, with a pig population of over 20,000,000, has been cutting them off to save their food and supply her needs. Denmark's stock is also reported to be greatly depleted, and America has marketed an increased quantity this year, as selling maize was relatively more profitable than feeding it to hogs. I would therefore suggest that there will be in the coming two years a profitable outlet for all the crops farmers can grow.

(Signed) R. N. BOYD.

AMENDMENT PROPOSED TO CLAUSE 17.

Mr. P. J. O'NEILL proposed to omit the words "one year," and insert the words "three years."

			DIVISION.		
<i>For.</i>			<i>Against.</i>		
Mr. JOHN BAGWELL	...	1	Mr. HUGH BARRIE	...	1
Mr. C. F. BASTABLE	...	1	Mr. JOHN BOLAND	...	1
Mr. ROBERT DOWNES	...	1	Mr. R. N. BOYD	...	1
Mr. JOSEPH O'CONNOR	...	1	Mr. J. P. CAMPBELL	...	1
Mr. P. J. O'NEILL	...	1	Mr. J. S. GORDON	...	1
LORD BISHOP OF ROSS	...	1	Mr. WILLIAM McDONALD	...	1
			Mr. H. DE F. MONTGOMERY	...	1
			Mr. GEORGE MURNAGHAN	...	1
			Sir HORACE PLUNKETT	...	1
<hr/>			<hr/>		
6			9		

REJECTED.

PROPOSED NEW CLAUSES.

1. CLAUSE PROPOSED BY MR. CAMPBELL FOR MR. GILL.

The Committee regrets to learn that the Department's Endowment Fund has been so affected by the war as to necessitate the reduction of certain of the County Schemes of Agriculture which have directly to do with increasing the food supply; and it expresses the hope that, at any rate in the present year when every effort is needed to encourage a special increase in food production, means may be found of replenishing the Department's funds so as to avert any harmful curtailment of these fruitful schemes.

			DIVISION.		
<i>For.</i>			<i>Against.</i>		
Mr. J. R. CAMPBELL	...	1	Mr. JOHN BAGWELL	...	1
Mr. ROBERT DOWNES	...	1	Mr. HUGH BARRIE	...	1
Mr. WM. FIELD	...	1	Mr. C. F. BASTABLE	...	1
Mr. J. S. GORDON	...	1	Mr. JOHN BOLAND	...	1
Mr. HUGH DE F. MONTGOMERY	1		Mr. R. N. BOYD	...	1
Mr. JOSEPH O'CONNOR	...	1	Mr. WM. McDONALD	...	1
Sir HORACE PLUNKETT	...	1	Mr. GEORGE MURNAGHAN	...	1
<hr/>			<hr/>		
7			7		

The Chairman gave his vote with the Noes.

REJECTED.

2. CLAUSE PROPOSED BY SIR HORACE PLUNKETT.

The Committee thinks it well to state that, before deciding to recommend any special legislation or exceptional Departmental action, it did not fail to consider what might be accomplished by other means, notably by co-operative organisation. A communication (see page 19) was received from the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society which should be read by those who attach importance to co-operation as a factor in Irish agricultural development. It was urged that any hopeful scheme for increasing the production of food, in a country where eighty-five per cent. of the farms are small holdings, must depend "at least as much upon voluntary effort as upon governmental action"; that the Society has proved its ability to organise the voluntary effort of the agricultural classes upon the co-operative system which is the only plan suitable for combination among farmers; that, before the creation of the Department it had effected a more radical reform in the methods of Irish dairying than is now required in the methods of tillage; and that, where farmers have used their co-operative organisation for the purpose of enabling them to adopt a more intensive cultivation, a remarkable increase in food production has actually taken place. It is maintained that not only a permanent improvement in Irish agriculture, but also an immediate increase in the production of food can be brought about by the Department and the Society helping each other while each does its own work independently.

The argument was supported in evidence by the Secretary of the Society, by a member of its Committee, and by the Secretary of a Connaught agricultural society. The last two had each increased substantially the production of food on his own small holding in the west of Ireland, and attributed his ability to do so to the practice of co-operation. Each testified that similar results had followed from co-operative action upon the farms of their fellow members in their respective local societies. Mr. T. Wibberley, who was at the same time called to give evidence upon continuous cropping, stated that, where holdings were small, the system could not be undertaken except by farmers co-operatively organised up to a point where they could jointly acquire and jointly use a number of necessary labour economising implements beyond the reach of individual farmers.

There does not appear to be any reason why the increased tillage, which has apparently resulted in the cases cited from the co-operative societies putting into practice the Department's teaching, should not be repeated by all the co-operative societies which take similar action. We are of opinion that every effort should be made to establish and maintain harmonious relations between these bodies—the Department with the County Committees of Agriculture, on the one hand, and the I.A.O.S., with the farmers' co-operative societies throughout the country, on the other.

DIVISION.							
<i>For.</i>				<i>Against.</i>			
Mr. JOHN BAGWELL	...	1		Mr. C. F. BASTABLE	...	1	
Mr. HUGH BARRIE	...	1		Mr. JOHN BOLAND	...	1	
Mr. HUGH DE F. MONTGOMERY		1		Mr. R. N. BOYD	...	1	
Sir HORACE PLUNKETT	...	1		Mr. J. R. CAMPBELL	...	1	
				Mr. ROBERT DOWNES	...	1	
				Mr. WM. FIELD	...	1	
				Mr. J. S. GORDON	...	1	
				Mr. WM. McDONALD	...	1	
				Mr. GEORGE MURNAGHAN	...	1	
				Mr. JOSEPH O'CONNOR	...	1	
				THE LORD BISHOP OF ROSS	...	1	
		4				11	

REJECTED.

MINORITY REPORT

BY

RT. HON. SIR HORACE PLUNKETT, D.C.L., K.C.V.O.,
President, Irish Agricultural Organisation Society.

Reasons which necessitated a Minority Report.

1. I would have gone to great lengths in sinking my personal opinions in order to concur in the main Report of the Food Production Committee, had not a governing principle of agricultural policy been involved. If I had signed that document I should have had to put on record so many reservations and notes of dissent that it would have been extremely difficult for anyone who had not been present at the deliberations of the Committee to see just where I stood. And little as my personal views might matter, I had to remember that as President of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society (whose letter * to the Committee is appended to, and should be read with, this Report) I speak for tens of thousands of farmers, whose opinions and wishes I am in a position to know.

2. In order to have adequate expression given to these views, I drafted a Clause † embodying the principle at issue, and handed it to the Chairman before we met to consider his draft Report. I asked him to permit its insertion at the point where, if it was accepted, it would logically belong. The Chairman ruled that as my Clause contained wholly new matter (*i.e.*, co-operation, which had occupied about five hours in examining witnesses of the I.A.O.S.) it could not be taken until the Committee had disposed of his Report. When this was done, I moved my Clause, and after the most emphatic expression of his own hostility to it, on the ground that it suggested friendly relations which he said the behaviour of the Society in certain matters had made impossible, it was rejected by a majority of 11 to 4. I was thus driven to a Minority Report, whose terms I was unable to discuss with those who had supported my Clause and who might have joined me to some extent in the opinions and recommendations I now submit.

Interpretation of the Terms of Reference.

3. It will facilitate the understanding of what follows if I say at the outset how I read the Terms of Reference. It must be borne in mind that the Committee had to conduct its inquiry and frame its recommendations to meet two alternative conditions of affairs. A marine—or more properly a submarine—situation might cause the Government to call upon the farmers of the United Kingdom to grow specified crops as an emergency measure. In this eventuality, which might not, and I trust will not, arise, I agree with my colleagues that the farmer should be insured against loss caused by an extraordinary departure from his usual system of cultivation at the request of the Government. In the other alternative it is also vitally important (as the Majority in their concluding paragraphs properly insist) to increase the production of home grown food, if only with the object of limiting purchases from abroad and stopping the further depletion of the nation's gold reserves. In either event the intention contained in the Terms of Reference is obvious. The working farmers have to be moved to produce more food, and the only question is: How?

Principles of Action considered.—(1) Compulsion.

4. There were three ways of attaining the end in view:—the Committee might rely upon compulsion, upon inducement, or upon persuasion. In my opinion the majority were right in not recommending compulsion: the controlling of agriculture would be a much more formidable task than the controlling of munition factories. But, having put compulsory organisation aside, the Committee was, in my judgment, bound to recommend some other form of organisation which would be effective for the end in view.

* See page 19.

† See page 11.

Organisation of some kind we must have. The astounding economic strength which Germany has shown under the greatest strain to which any nation has ever been subjected is due, before all else, to the organisation—partly compulsory, partly voluntary—of her national resources, including her food supply. Now, organisation can be matched only by organisation. We have learned some things from Germany since the beginning of the war; we need not disdain to take from her this further lesson. If the agricultural resources of this country are to be used with effect for the purposes of the war, the nation's efforts must be directed to that end on some definite plan, and direction of national effort on a fixed plan implies organisation. This essential truth my colleagues either did not recognise, or, if they recognised it, did not feel themselves free to discuss the only practical means for its application to the food producing industry of Ireland.

(2) *Inducements.*

5. I am in general agreement with the attitude of the majority in regard to inducements in the form of insurance against loss should the Government press upon the farmer an extraordinary departure from his usual method of cultivation. Nor do I think the Committee was called upon to elaborate the administrative and other details of the scheme, which will have to be carefully thought out when the policy of the Government in the matter has been declared. It is when the majority come to the vastly more important question—what measures might lead to a natural, voluntary and continuing increase in the production of food—that I am at complete variance with them.

(3) *Persuasion.*

6. I strongly dissent from the opinion (expressed in paragraph 13 of the Majority Report) that the limits of persuasion, as a means of moving Irish farmers to produce more food, have been reached. This conclusion, if unchallenged, might well have a result not contemplated by those who assented to it. Such an admission would point to severe retrenchment in the educational work of the Department, the disappointing practical results of which, as I have often publicly declared, are not due to any lack of ability or devotion on the part of the exceptionally able staff which is in charge of it, but to a radical defect in the agricultural policy of the Department. The conclusion that the limits of persuasion had been reached, with the depressing estimate of the usefulness of that institution which it implies, was arrived at through ignoring an essential portion of the evidence submitted, no doubt from a laudable desire to avoid controversy. This evidence, as I shall show, calls for a much wider policy than that to which my colleagues have pinned their faith. But first let me register my agreement with them on one section of their proposals.

The Maintenance of Live Stock.

7. The food supply with which we have been concerned may conveniently be divided into Crops and Live Stock. In regard to the latter, I am in complete agreement with the Majority Report. No means could be devised for an immediate substantial increase in the supply of this part of the people's food, with the exception of pigs, in respect of which my colleagues gave some useful hints in paragraph 10. I think their recommendation will at least insure the maintenance of the present production of live stock. To this end I do not see that any more useful recommendation could be made, within the Terms of Reference, than that the position of the Department, as the guardian of our flocks and herds, should be strengthened by getting Parliament to make permanent the powers conferred upon it by The Maintenance of Live Stock Act, 1915, so that they might be available whenever the interests of the public demanded their exercise.

The Increase of Tillage—The Majority's anticipations.

8. When we come to the other branch of food production, "a material increase in the area under tillage" is rightly put by the majority in the first place among "the main objects to be aimed at." They call attention to a table of figures which prove that in the past year there has been an increase of 50,000 acres of wheat, of which we normally grow something over 40,000 acres, and of some 60,000 acres in oats, of which we usually grow a little over a million acres, against which must be set a decline of 30,000 acres of barley. I think they take rather a rosy view of the figures, but they admit that such nett increase as there has been in the area under tillage (which I am afraid is due almost entirely to the prospect of high prices for produce) leaves "abundant room for improvement." Then

come the glad tidings for which this generation has been longing. "Should our recommendations be carried out," it is confidently asserted, "there can be little doubt that this improvement will take place and that a permanent increase in tillage will be the result."

Examination of the Majority Proposals for increasing Tillage.

9. When we examine the recommendations, which open such a vista of prosperity to the gaze of their authors, what do we find? "Throughout the Inquiry," the Majority tell us, "the Committee has been impressed with the fact that Ireland is an agricultural country where 85 per cent. of the occupiers of the land are smallholders." After contemplating this discovery, the conviction grew that "some system of loans to enable small holders to obtain the use of agricultural machinery and implements, including meal mills for grinding their home-grown wheat and oats, was necessary if much further progress was to be made with the agriculture of the country." So the majority suggest that "without unduly trenching upon any of the special methods of trading, the County Committees of Agriculture might be asked to take charge of such a scheme in their several districts." The only other measure the majority deem to be required for a "permanent increase in tillage" is "the prohibition of the export from the United Kingdom of artificial manures and of the constituents used in their manufacture." The uninitiated will ask why Ireland has had to wait until the coming of the Departmental Committee for this rather simple solution.

Another Treatment of the Tillage Problem.

10. If I venture to give to the problem of increased tillage a somewhat fuller consideration than the majority deemed to be necessary, my justification will be found in the oral and written testimony which has been ignored. Meanwhile, I submit that the steady decline of tillage for decades past indicates the need for a vigorous and comprehensive scheme of agricultural reform if the food producers of the country are to meet the nation's necessity. The first thing to consider is some change in the prevailing methods of husbandry. One such change (which I discuss next) was brought before the Committee but was not considered worthy of mention in the Report. If it be said that the Committee was appointed for immediate action rather than for a study of existing systems of cultivation and of schemes for their improvement, I take leave to point out that the practical farmer who, whether from a desire to do his duty to his country in the exercise of his calling, or to take advantage of the existing and probable high prices for produce, is contemplating the adoption of a more intensive cultivation, would have to take thought not only for the morrow but for many days after. He could not, for instance, be reasonably expected to equip himself with the necessary additions to his implements and machinery without looking beyond the period to which the majority seem to think the Reference called upon them to restrict their investigations and Report. In any case it will be generally admitted that the difficulties incidental to a radical change of method in a productive industry are best surmounted in a period of high prices, and that the opportunity thus offered should be seized.

Continuous Cropping recommended.

11. While I am convinced that a more productive agriculture depends chiefly upon a reorganisation of the whole business of farming, such reorganisation must be considered in connection with the system of cultivation it is to subserve. So I will now give my reasons for believing that continuous cropping, as it is called, gives every promise of an increase in the production of food. This system was brought before the Committee by Mr. T. Wibberley, himself a practical farmer with considerable qualifications on the scientific side. He maintained that it was far better suited to the climatic conditions of this country than the ordinary Norfolk rotation, and that the change can be begun at almost any time of year. By adopting it the farmer can reduce substantially the quantity of artificial fertilisers and imported feeding stuffs he usually has to buy, and can double and even treble his production of food. The great increase of forage crops (which can be converted into meat, milk and butter) does not, it is claimed, preclude a simultaneous increase in the production of grain crops.

12. The system depends absolutely for its success upon the use of modern implements and machinery, with which, the statistics show, even large farmers are singularly ill equipped, while to the great majority of small farmers they are wholly unknown. The most important statement made by Mr. Wibberley was that these implements, by econo-

* Majority Report, par. 5. The italics are mine.

missing labour, will make it much more efficient while it will be rendered much less toilsome by the added interest of the work. In the result, labour will be much better paid and an increase of revenue will be assured to the farmer.

13. These anticipations are based on a good deal of diversified experience. Several country gentlemen have, under Mr. Wibberley's advice, broken up grass lands and tried continuous cropping during the last two years. On the whole they are well satisfied with the results. Mr. Wibberley admitted in his evidence that it was too early to come to a final judgment upon the suitability of his system to farming on the larger scale, although he was fully convinced that the principle is established and that it is only a question of adjustment. Here he seems to have the support of no less an authority than Mr. A. D. Hall. But, in regard to small holdings, he argued with much force that the experiments which had been carried out in Co. Limerick, where he had been for seven years an agricultural instructor under the Department, demonstrated the immense value of his system to that large section of Irish farmers who provide all the labour in their own families. The advantage was most marked in the dairying districts, where the system leads to a rapid increase in the number of cows that can be fed, and, by spreading the production of milk over the whole year, bids fair to furnish a complete solution of the problem of winter dairying.

Labour.

14. I need not say that the Committee, which had the advantage of an eminent Professor of Political Economy to advise it, did not in dealing with agricultural production ignore the factor of labour. If the majority were silent upon the subject in their Report, it was not from any lack of sympathy for the wage earners upon the land, but because they thought that, so far as the immediate production of food was concerned, the labour engaged would be predominantly that of small farmers and their families. Moreover, any treatment of the subject, within the Terms of Reference as they understood them, would appear inadequate to the representatives of labour and possibly lead to misunderstanding. But my case is different: the solution of the problem, as I see it, cannot be approached without taking some account of this factor.

15. Through the operation of long standing causes, which I need not here discuss, and the drain caused by the war, the decrease in the number of agricultural labourers has been considerable. Moreover, the labour which is available is unevenly distributed through the country, so that one hears from farmers themselves the most conflicting views as to the supply. Although it is true that the small farmer and his family have hitherto done most of their own work, it is manifest that an increased effort in production will require that, on small holdings which are above the line which divides farms from plots and allotments, their own labour should be supplemented. The agricultural labourer working to increase tillage should be recognised by Government to be fulfilling as important a function for the State as the artisan working to increase the output of munitions, and care should be taken that his services are not diverted to other purposes. To secure an adequate provision for the farmer, labour should be organised and made more mobile, and I suggest that the machinery of the Labour Exchanges should be extended throughout the country in order to equalise, as far as possible, the supply and the demand. In Italy, at the outbreak of war a decree was issued by which the local authorities were given power to move labourers from one district to another at Government expense, and similar action might be taken here. Nor ought it to be impossible to organise unemployed persons suitable for this work (*e.g.*, refugees, prisoners of war, etc.) into squads which could be moved from place to place.

16. It may be unreservedly admitted that a substantial rise in agricultural wages must be an essential part of any scheme of agricultural development such as we are considering. I do not think that any such plan as the "minimum wage" would benefit the agricultural labourer at the moment, for it would limit employment by making farmers unwilling to develop their industry. The true solution is to be found in the adoption of a more profitable system of cultivation such as I have recommended. This is as much in the interest of the farmer as of the labourer, for the loss of efficiency in ill-paid labour is not compensated for by the saving in wages paid. The farms on which Mr. Wibberley's experiments have been conducted have proved that an intensive system of cultivation can, as I have pointed out, increase both the wages of the labourer and the revenue of the farmer. But the use of labour-saving implements is a necessary corollary to the adoption of intensive methods of farming. And this brings me to the fundamental principle upon

which, in its application to our chief national industry, the Chairman and most of the Committee are diametrically opposed to those with whom I work for rural progress in Ireland and for whom I speak in this Minority Report.

The Co-operative Method as an essential to increased production of Food.

17. The two paragraphs (18 and 19) in the main Report under the heading "Facilities to enable Landholders to obtain Implements and Machinery" should be carefully studied for two reasons—they contain the chief constructive recommendation of the majority and they also raise, in a concrete case, the whole issue between the two agricultural policies which I had hoped the Committee would have reconciled. Machinery and implements, we are told, are "necessary if much further progress was to be made with the agriculture of the country." The Report proceeds:—

"Evidence was given by small holders of land in the west of Ireland which showed that some Co-operative Societies had borrowed money from the local banks at 4 per cent. to purchase implements, and had hired them out with satisfactory results. It was also shown that the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction had set aside a large sum of their Endowment as a Loan Fund for this purpose, and that their Assistant Overseers had taught the use of the several implements to the tenants, especially in the western area. Neither of these schemes is open to objection, and they are deserving of development."

In this passage the outside student of Irish agricultural development would find the only indication that the Committee considered co-operation to be a factor in the problem it was discussing. If he happened to come from any continental country, where Departments of Agriculture recognise that their own utility depends essentially upon the degree in which the farmers with whom and for whom they work are co-operatively organised for every branch of their industry, he would go home with the impression that in rural Ireland the Dark Ages had hardly passed.

18. The situation is not quite as bad as the readers of the main Report might conclude. If they turn to the letter of the I.A.O.S. published on another page, they will see that our farmers throughout the country are beginning to grasp the truth that an all-round application of co-operative methods to the farmer's business is essential to the well-being of rural communities where small-holders predominate. The farmer can, no more than the manufacturer, compete successfully in the modern market if he has to buy the raw materials and implements of his industry at retail, and to sell what he produces, at wholesale prices. He cannot get the advantage of cheap freight rates unless he is so organised that he can consign in bulk of uniform quality and choose his own market. Only by organisation—co-operative organisation—can the small cultivator attain economic independence in days when everything must be done in a large way if it is to be done with profit to the doer. Nor can any such revolution in the industry and business of farming as the tillage revival, now urgently required to increase permanently the food production of the country, be accomplished in any other way than by co-operation between the agencies which direct governmental functions in developing agriculture and those which render the voluntary efforts of the workers effective through organisation. The I.A.O.S., in the days of governmental neglect of agriculture, before there were any central or local institutions for administering State aid, successfully initiated a far more complicated and difficult reform in dairying than that which has now to be undertaken in general agriculture. The "better business" part of the problem was substantially the same as that which we are now considering with a view to "better farming." We have to arrange for the joint purchase and joint use—this is the real crux—of implements and machinery. It may be observed that the necessary equipment for co-operative dairying was far more costly to acquire, and needed a far higher degree of organisation to use, than is the case with the task now before us. In several instances the I.A.O.S. has had to help co-operative agricultural societies in the poorer districts to increase their tillage in this way. The results obtained have convinced the Committee of the Society that if only the experts and instructors of the Department, who have to advise upon the technical details, were encouraged to co-operate with the organisers of the business involved, the hitherto baffling tillage problem could be hopefully approached. I can still believe that, when the majority banged, bolted and barred the door against the appeal of the I.A.O.S. for an experiment in co-operation between the Department and the Society for this great national service, they had not the slightest notion of the consequences of their action. They were led to believe that the proposal was an attempt to reconcile irreconcilables and that the problem could be dealt with in a better and a simpler way.

Co-operative versus individual acquisition of Implements and Machinery.

19. What that way was I have already noted.* Since organised self-help, as a factor in bringing implements and machinery within the reach of small cultivators who cannot acquire them individually, is ruled out, and in the probable inability of the Department to advance the necessary funds in the near future, a new scheme is called for. So the County Committees of Agriculture, it will be remembered, are to administer a system of loans to small-holders. They must do this "without unduly trenching upon the special methods of trading"—a besetting sin of co-operators. These bodies can be properly charged with such a function because they are "statutory in character"—a sufficient reason, it might be suggested, for leaving this business alone. I do not think that those who know the procedure and most useful work of these committees will be convinced by the somewhat laboured justification of this new departure, namely, that they "are already practised in working the agricultural schemes of the Department involving the supply of manures and seeds."

20. It will not make a heavy demand upon the intelligence of the reader to see where the whole trouble lies. Every effort of small men to club together in the business of their lives for mutual advantage is brought up against well-organised and politically powerful vested interests. The long fight of the agricultural co-operative movement in Ireland and all the bitter opposition it has had to surmount (including the attempt of the Department, which grew out of it, to prevent the organised farmers of Ireland from sharing with their organised brethren in England, Wales, and Scotland the assistance provided by Parliament under the Development Fund Act for "the organisation of co-operation" as a means of "aiding and developing agriculture") is not due to any personal antagonism between the Vice-President of the Department and the President of the Organisation Society. It is simply an inherent conflict between the producers and the distributors of food. The advocates of the Irish agricultural policy, based upon a combination of organised voluntary effort with State assistance, have always held, and I think have proved, that the temporary disturbance of some "special methods of trading" was far more than compensated by the total gain to trade. But that controversy may be put aside now. The farmers of the United Kingdom are called upon by the Government to produce more food. The farmers of Ireland can respond to this call more easily, and more effectively, than their brethren across the water, because both on the governmental and voluntary side our agriculture is in a far more advanced state of organisation. It is the tragedy of the situation that this fact which opens limitless possibilities for good from co-operation should be used to demonstrate the infinite capacity of conflict for evil. The majority should have seen that if, in a great national emergency, compulsion was to be averted, it was not the part of wisdom to substitute inducements not to co-operate for persuasion to co-operate.

A Committee for combined action.

21. I come now to my main recommendation, which I would have made on behalf of the organised farmers of Ireland to the Committee on Food Production had not the procedure adopted rendered this impossible. It is that we should drop argument upon the fundamental principle I have enunciated and come to action. Let a joint committee of the Department and the I.A.O.S.—two or three from each side—be formed, with a Chairman appointed by agreement or, failing agreement, by the Government. Let that Committee decide by what co-ordination of function the two bodies can work together towards an increase of food production in Ireland.

22. If the first experiment in joint action produces the desired result—and I can undertake that it will not be the fault of any of those for whom I am entitled to speak if it does not—then I think we may rest assured that the Government will lend all the assistance that is required to solve the main problem with which the Food Committee was appointed to deal. They might help in the organisation of labour, as above suggested. They might arrange with the Military Authorities to have some regard to the effect upon the supply of agricultural implements of diverting labour therein employed to the manufacture of munitions. There is a serious deficiency in artificial manures owing to the lack of potash usually imported from Germany. The Government might investigate the possibility of meeting this need by arranging with the Admiralty to allow kelp burning under proper restrictions around our coasts. I must not add further details to the recommenda-

* See paragraph 9.

tions I have made; but it is highly pertinent to suggest that the Treasury (who cannot be expected to subsidise a row) might favourably consider the supply of any funds necessary to enable the combined forces of State assistance and organised voluntary effort to meet the needs of the gravest economic situation with which the United Kingdom has ever been faced.

23. Among the matters as to which I have been happily able to record my agreement with my colleagues, I must not forget to mention my full concurrence with their appreciation of the zeal and ability of Mr. E. A. M. Morris. If our conclusions fall short of public expectations, it will not be from any failure of our Secretary to provide us abundantly with the material facts and figures.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS.

- (1). Insurance (as recommended by the Majority) to farmers against loss if called upon by the Government to grow special crops as an emergency measure. (Par. 5).
- (2). Majority recommendation for maintenance of live stock endorsed. (Par. 7).
- (3). Continuous Cropping recommended upon small holdings. (Pars. 10 to 13).
- (4). Labour to be organised and mobilised through the agency of Labour Exchanges. No legislative action for raising wages until it is proved that labour does not get its full share of any increase in the revenue of the farmer. Temporary employment of refugees prisoners of war, etc., to be considered. (Pars. 14 to 16).
- (5). Co-operative organisation to be encouraged; and, more especially, to be utilised in enabling small holders to acquire and use suitable implements and machinery. (Pars. 17 to 20).
- (6). A small joint Committee, consisting of representatives of the Department and the I.A.O.S. with an impartial Chairman, to co-ordinate State assistance with organised voluntary effort in food production, and to move the Government to take certain measures in regard to labour, the supply of agricultural implements and manures, and the provision of funds needed for the combined campaign of better farming and better business. (Pars. 21, 22).

(Signed) HORACE PLUNKETT.

MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED BY THE IRISH AGRICULTURAL ORGANISATION SOCIETY.

THE PLUNKETT HOUSE,
DUBLIN.*July 20th, 1915.*

To the Secretary
of the Food Production Committee.

SIR,

1. At the Quarterly Meeting of the Committee of the I.A.O.S. held to-day, the President stated that your Committee had invited the Society to submit a general statement of its views in regard to the subject matter of your Committee's Inquiry and to send three witnesses to support the case presented. Such a statement is contained in this letter.

2. My Committee appreciate the opportunity thus afforded of placing on record the reasons why they hold that their special work—the reorganisation of Irish Agriculture upon co-operative lines—is an essential part of any hopeful scheme for increasing substantially the food production of Ireland. Representing, as they do, the largest association of the agricultural classes in Ireland, and indeed in the United Kingdom—an association which, notwithstanding the most strenuous opposition, has enrolled 100,000 members in its thousand branches, and has a record of an aggregate turn-over not far short of £40,000,000—they naturally feel that they will be expected to play an important part at the present crisis. This expectation will not be limited to their own members or to the Irish sympathisers with their social endeavour. Throughout the English-speaking world, and in India, the experience of the Irish co-operative movement has been largely used. Wherever the problem of rural life, as it is now commonly called, is under discussion, the Irish three-fold scheme—better farming, better business, better living—is regarded as the final solution, and the Society is hailed as the parent of a new agency of social service which was needed before any conceivable Governmental action could avail to right what was wrong with the rural economy of nations absorbed in the interests of city life. My Committee point with some pride to the fact that this institution, the product of Irish thought, has been copied in England, Scotland, Finland, and now in the United States, and they earnestly desire to use the moral and material resources at their command in helping the Department and the nation to solve the serious problem upon which your Committee is engaged.

3. The evidence to be furnished will seek to satisfy your Committee that the I.A.O.S. has a proved capacity to effect large changes in the methods of Irish farmers and is, therefore, entitled to be treated as an effective agency in increasing the production of food—a task upon which it has long been actively engaged. But in this statement I am to justify the Society's belief that the attainment of this object depends at least as much upon voluntary effort as upon Governmental action.

4. It is common knowledge that many of the leaders of the agricultural organisation movement support it because they think that, in view of the past history of the country and in its present circumstances, the development of self-reliance is the greatest service any man or body of men can render towards the economic, social, and (in the non-party sense) the political up-building of the nation. But they know that their movement would not last a week if it did not bring material advantage to its adherents, that is, if it did not pay. It can only pay by enabling men to make more out of their industry by combination than they can make by isolated action. Whatever merit this scheme for reorganising the farming industry on co-operative lines—the invariable practice of progressive agricultural communities all over the Continent—may have for Irish conditions in normal times, its value should be multiplied tenfold in the present crisis.

5. In the financial situation created by the War the general body of taxpayers will insist—and rightly insist—that the resources of self-help shall be drawn upon to the utmost before any assistance is given out of public funds to any particular interest in the conduct of its industry or business. It will be for your Committee to decide whether any such demand can, in existing or indeed in any probable market conditions, be

successfully advanced on behalf of Irish farmers. At a time when the organisation of national resources, with the object of enabling nations to stand the greatest economic strain in history, is either in being or in contemplation—when the extremest forms of compulsion, with a view to avoiding the waste of any available resources, are freely discussed—surely organised self-help as an active principle in agricultural development cannot be disregarded. If there be any reason in this view, it is clear that the I.A.O.S., whose function it is to render self-help effective through organisation, in the working lives of the agricultural population, has a strong claim to every help and encouragement in its work.

6. The evidence to be submitted will be mainly directed to prove, in the light of what has been done in the last twenty-one years, that the I.A.O.S., given a fair chance, can render material assistance in the existing crisis and can do, as no other body can, part of the work which your Committee is expected to initiate. In the Autumn of last year our Organisers were instructed to impress upon the local Societies the importance of using their organisation for the purpose of enabling their members to put into practice the Department's advice for increasing the production of food. Alike in the dairying and in the tillage districts, this involved a development of co-operative purchase of agricultural requirements and of co-operative sale of produce, including the bulking and regularising of consignments so that they may be carried more cheaply and marketed more expeditiously. It has always been held by my Committee—and, since the foundation of the Co-operative Reference Library by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trustees, foreign analogies have been constantly brought before them to confirm this opinion—that these two conditions must be supplied before farmers can be induced even to consider any radical change in their methods of cultivation. And when these business necessities have been attended to, a large number of labour-saving implements—with which, the statistics show, even our better off and most advanced farmers are inadequately equipped—must be obtained. It is to this particular requirement, and to the part of the Society in supplying it, that I am to direct the special attention of your Committee.

7. It would be beyond the scope of this letter to enumerate, still more to describe, the kind of implements which are needed for the more intensive tillage upon which an increased food supply essentially depends. But the special point my Committee wish to emphasise is that where the rural communities consist chiefly of small farmers they must club together to purchase the necessary implements. When this is done co-operative organisation is found to be necessary for the use and care of the implements—two matters commonly overlooked but of essential importance.

8. A concrete illustration, based upon the Society's procedure, will make the matter clear. An Organiser is sent to, say, a Connaught Parish where the farmers are conducting their industry according to the usual Irish practice. They purchase their seeds and manures from the general dealer of the locality, who also supplies them with such implements as they use, and sells for them a large proportion of their produce. The Organiser points out to a meeting of farmers the immense economy which is effected by the wholesale purchase of agricultural requirements. He is able to tell them of the enormous saving which has been effected over the whole of Ireland through the joint purchase of, for example, artificial manures—a saving from which non-co-operative farmers have also greatly benefited. A Society is formed, in the first instance, for this simple purpose.

9. Later on, when the Society has proved its ability to do business collectively, an Organiser, who has sufficient agricultural knowledge to make him a safe business adviser, shows that no less an economy of labour can be effected, and a great increase of produce realised, through the use of certain implements, which are beyond the means of individual members but well within the means of the society using the credit of its members. When the acquisition of these implements has been arranged, the organiser has next to devise a satisfactory scheme by which the participants in the undertaking can have the use of the new equipment in proper rotation and in such order as will get the greatest amount of work done with due regard to the needs of the poorer members. Lastly, proper provision for the care of the implements must be made. Only through co-operative organisation—and in this case a very carefully elaborated form of organisation must be devised and explained—can these apparently simple, but in reality no less difficult than important, matters be arranged among a peasantry unversed in the mysteries of intensive cultivation. Of course it is assumed that on all technical points the advice of the

Department and of the County Committees of Agriculture is available. But, even then there are essential things which must be done by the people themselves and which the people must be organised to do. This organisation is the function of the I.A.O.S. and not of the Department. But without it no adequate equipment of implements and consequently no substantial increase in food production is possible. Mr. Wibberley will be prepared to go into this very practical question in as much detail as your Committee desire.

10. The I.A.O.S. concerns itself chiefly with the welfare of small farmers for the double reason that these constitute some eighty-five per cent. of the total number of farmers in Ireland, and they also depend more than large farmers upon combination for economical production and distribution. But my Committee are also interested in the methods employed upon the large farms, partly because the large farmers are the natural leaders of the agricultural community in such matters, and still more on account of the effect agricultural co-operation, especially through the introduction of implements, would have upon the labourers, who would be the Society's chief concern were it not that so many more of the actual workers upon the land of Ireland either own or rent their farms than are in receipt of wages. As Mr. Wibberley will testify, my Committee have good reason to believe that a thorough organisation of farmers for the wide use of labour economising machinery would tend to make agricultural labour far more remunerative to the farmer, who would be able to pay a considerably increased wage to the labourer and, at the same time, to add to his own revenue.

11. I am not to go further into detail, as the Committee can get all the facts they require from the witnesses of the Society. The above will be a sufficient indication of the kind of evidence my Committee think it proper to submit. I shall, myself, be in a position to tell from personal experience the early history of co-operative dairying in Ireland. It will be seen that the I.A.O.S., unaided by any governmental authority such as has since been created, initiated a reform in agricultural methods, bearing directly upon the production of food. I shall submit that the reform which is now needed to enable the farmers to take full advantage of the Department's instruction, having the same end in view, should be no more difficult or complicated. I shall further express my Committee's belief that the Department and the I.A.O.S. working together should be able to produce a veritable revolution in the present methods of cultivation. The witnesses of the Society have been instructed to offer such an explanation of the precise function of the I.A.O.S. in promoting increased tillage as will show that no overlapping with the Department is necessarily involved, but that an immense addition to the utility of both bodies will be gained.

12. In conclusion, I am to express a hope that, as the result of the present inquiry, your Committee will be able to give its adhesion to a principle of Irish agricultural development which the I.A.O.S. holds to be at all times true but now vital. That principle is that State assistance should be given so as to evoke and supplement voluntary effort. The Department, responsible for State assistance, and the Society, whose function is the organisation of voluntary effort, have unfortunately not been able to help each other in their common task. My Committee feel that the present crisis demands of both sides a forgetting of past controversies, and that all efforts should be directed to the discovery of a means by which the two bodies can work harmoniously together. An experiment in co-operation between them within the Terms of Reference to your Committee would, it is believed, be wholly successful. These two forces united would achieve what neither can achieve alone, and a foundation would be truly laid for an Irish prosperity commensurate with the human and material resources of our country.

I am,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) R. A. ANDERSON,
Secretary.

DUBLIN CASTLE,

20th August, 1915.

SIR,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th instant (G. 3596-15), forwarding, for submission to His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, the Report of the Departmental Committee on Food Production in Ireland.

I am,

SIR,

Your obedient Servant,

MATTHEW NATHAN.

The Secretary,
Department of Agriculture and
Technical Instruction,
Dublin.