

salary in a Bill was under consideration, Sir Henry Barwell has decided to accept the position.

**Extensive Railway Action.**

Extensive reductions of the professional and clerical staffs of the Railways Department are expected to take place shortly.

Consternation has been caused among the professional and clerical staffs of the Railways Department by notices which have been served on certain men during the last few days. The whole of the professional staff, with the exception of heads and sub-heads of departments have received notices asking them to send in their resignations, and informing them at the same time that they will have the opportunity to apply for re-admittance to the service. Already, it is understood, 50 professional men, draughtsmen and surveyors, have received notices. They have been requested to send in their resignations, knowing that less than one-third of their number will be re-engaged. Some of the officers affected have spent their lives in the service of the department, even having terms of office up to 50 years to their credit.

It is also understood that the positions for which applications are invited in the weekly departmental notice can only be filled by young men who have received University training. This will probably mean that many highly competent professional officers will be dispensed with. This action is understood to have been rendered necessary owing to the closing up of the rehabilitation scheme.

**Clerical Developments.**

So far such notices have been received only by professional officers; but it is believed that a reduction of the staff is also being contemplated in the clerical branch and that similar action may shortly be taken in that direction. Clerical officers are awaiting developments in considerable trepidation. Construction and maintenance are departments where it is possible that reductions may also be made.

The Railways Commissioner (Mr. W. A. Webb) was out of town on Wednesday and other officials of the department declined to comment when reference was made to the rumoured staff reductions.

The Premier (Hon. R. L. Butler), when questioned on the matter, said the Railways Commissioner had under consideration the reduction of staffs owing to the completion of the rehabilitation scheme, and would subsequently report to the Government.

ADV. 23-8-27  
**NEW AGRICULTURAL POLICY.**

**ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PREMIER.**

**PROVISION OF HOUSES, TRANSPORT AND WATER.**

**RESEARCH WORK AND EDUCATIONAL METHODS.**

Details of the agricultural policy being launched by the Government, with the object of increasing primary production, were announced by the Premier at Gladstone last night.

Gladstone, August 22.

The Premier (Hon. R. L. Butler) travelled to Gladstone by train to-day, and was accompanied by Hons. A. P. Blesing and W. G. Mills, Mr. R. D. Nichols, M.P., the Chief Agricultural Instructor (Mr. W. J. Spafford), the chairman of the Central Agricultural Bureau (Mr. P. H. Jones), and the editor of the "Journal of Agriculture" (Mr. H. C. Pritchard). They were met by the mayor (Mr. U. O. Bennett) and the town clerk (Mr. C. Badger). The visitors inspected the school and other public buildings this afternoon.

There was a large attendance at a meeting to-night. The Premier, in announcing the Government's agricultural policy, said it was unique in the political history of the State. It was not a party question, and if the scheme was to be successful, the assistance and co-operation of all parties were essential. An appeal for increased production was not being made solely to the agriculturalists, although there was greater opportunity in agriculture for increased production. The financial position could be improved only by all people endeavoring to increase output. The Government realised the high cost of providing facilities, such as transport, water, and roads, which the farmer must have if he was to make a success of his operations, and he appealed to the men employed on such work to play their part in bringing about a reduction in costs. This could be done without reducing wages or the standard of living. The Government were determined that wherever practicable the system of piecework or payment by results should be adopted. This would be as beneficial to the workers as to the Government. The cost of all Government operations could be considerably reduced. The piecework rates would enable the men to earn considerably more than at present, and would mean that loan money would go much further in providing facilities which were essential to the success of the farmers. The Government felt that they had no justification in asking the farmers to increase production probably by working longer hours while a section of the community was given more leisure at the expense of the primary producer and the general taxpayer. The scheme he was about to propound did not demand from the farmers any sacrifice for which they would not be amply repaid.

**A 50-Million Bushel Harvest.**

When enunciating the policy on behalf of his party prior to the elections he said their aim was the production of a harvest of 50 million bushels of wheat in South Australia within three years. There were always some people ready to scoff at what South Australia could do, yet he felt confident that he could convince them that a 50-million bushel crop was within the realms of practical politics. It was estimated that there were at least 16 million acres of the State suitable for wheat-growing, of which at least four million acres should be annually under wheat. Last year they harvested 2,700,505 acres of wheat, which averaged about 12½ bushels to the acre. It was possible to bring under cultivation 3,250,000 acres, an increase of nearly 500,000 acres, within three years, and the yield per acre could be increased by two and a half bushels. This would give a harvest of 47 million bushels.

**Easing Off in Borrowing.**

South Australia had borrowed a lot of money, and it was now becoming recognised by the people that it would be wise to ease off in their borrowings and live within their own resources to a greater extent. The Government realised the advantages which would follow a serious attempt to

improve their financial position, and so had promised to do everything in their power to bring about the change, and they proposed beginning with the agricultural industries, with the intention of bringing about a great increase of primary products. They were convinced that agriculturists could add considerably to their profits if they were shown how, and because increased returns and profits to the farmers would mean a great benefit to the State, they proposed to concentrate for the time being on that method of improving financial matters. The State was an agricultural country, and as such was almost wholly dependent on primary products, and if any marked progress was to be made, it must be along agricultural lines. They had no manufacturing advantages, there being neither coal nor water for power, and the few things they did manufacture for export were not likely to be extended to any great extent in the near future. The Government Statist showed that for the year 1925-26 that the value of their production was:—Agriculture, £25,340,837; mining, £1,028,471; manufactures, £12,258,961; miscellaneous, £1,177,422; total, £39,805,691. The value of materials exported to countries beyond the Commonwealth for 1925-26 was:—Agriculture, £13,900,846; mining, ores, &c., £1,910,666; machines, &c., £2,411,703; specie, £1,076,241; miscellaneous, £152,748; total, £19,450,144. These figures showed that the value of manufactures was really considerable, but most of it was for internal requirements, and the amount exported was only small, and they impressed on them the overwhelming importance of rural products. (Applause.)

**Increasing Production.**

They could, of course, increase the production of every type of rural activity, but with many of their products that would not be wise, because they would immediately be up against the need of developing a market to absorb the excess, and markets had always been difficult to establish. In the circumstances, it seemed advisable for them to concentrate on wheat and sheep, two lines of production which at present offered the best opportunities for a rapid expansion. South Australia produced a special type of wheat, the grain being white, extremely well cleaned, and producing high-class flour, with good color, and so it was much sought after in the principal markets of the world for blending purposes. Because of its general excellence they always secured a good price for their wheat, and unlimited quantities would be absorbed in European countries, and so they could safely recommend a great increase in production of wheat. If no special attempt was made to increase their wheat crops they could confidently expect to make a noticeable advance in that direction, judged by what had happened in the past, because, despite the general disorganising effects of the war and its aftermath, the area cropped with wheat last year almost reached the maximum area yet harvested in one year in South Australia. Further, during the decade ending 1916 the average yield of wheat crops was four and a quarter bushels per acre ahead of the average yield for the previous decade, and again in the decade ending 1926 yet another increase of two and three-quarter bushels per acre was made. They were improving their methods all the time, and the newer lands were becoming more and more cleared, and so they could naturally expect another increase during the next decade. They wished, however, to see a more rapid increase than would happen in the ordinary course of events, and by the encouragement and help being given by the Government they were expecting to see a much greater area under crop and an increase in the average yield. (Applause.) It was proposed that in future before Crown lands were opened up for allotment, houses and transport and water facilities would be provided, and they intended to consider the advisability of rolling or logging some of the scrub on timbered blocks, before allotment or during the first year of occupation. The provision of those conveniences for settlers would enable beginners to get a good start on their holdings, and would be a means of greatly increasing the area cropped soon after the land was thrown open for application. (Applause.) They advised all farmers who could economically do so to increase the area of land being prepared for the seeding season of 1928, and although it was a little late in the season to do so they asked wheat-growers in the cleared areas to increase the area being fallowed. In the newer districts the Government intended encouraging a vigorous clearing policy, so as to bring a greater area under crop. (Applause.)

**Increasing Wheat Yields.**

The possibilities of bringing about a rapid increase in the average wheat yield of the State were promising, because the difference in the results secured by the best farmer and the poorest farmer in one and the same district was very great. Even if the good crop-growers made no further progress in their methods, but the poorer ones were educated up towards the good men, a wonderful increase in yields would be the result. These differences were well set out by the Government Statist, who showed that the 12,248 farmers who harvested wheat in this State in the 1925-26 season, 823 averaged less than 3 bushels per acre; 3,734 averaged between 3 and 9 bushels; 6,460 averaged between 9 and 21 bushels; 1,219 averaged between 21 and 30 bushels; and 12 averaged 30 bushels per

acre or more. Even in the lower north districts, where practically all the land was cleared of scrub, and where the soil and climatic conditions were recognized as being well suited for wheat-growing, the yields of different farms showed great variations. Of the 3,131 wheat-growers in the 1925-26 season—67 averaged less than 3 bushels per acre; 309 between 3 and 9 bushels; 2,193 between 9 and 21 bushels; 499 between 21 and 30 bushels; and 4 averaged 30 bushels per acre or more. Such figures showed the possibilities of improving their average wheat yields, even after making full allowances for the variations between farm and farm. Transplanting the methods being practised by the best wheat-growers to the others would quickly have a beneficial effect. The district agricultural instructors would be of considerable help in carrying the methods of the successful men to those in need of the knowledge. The raising of the efficiency of wheat-growers was most likely to come by improving their methods of fallowing, because it was generally recognized in all districts that the best wheat growers were the best soil cultivators. It would also be dependent on reducing to a minimum the area sown to wheat on land not previously fallowed, because in most cases the yields received were not directly profitable. For the three-year period, 1924-26, only 65 per cent. of the area sown to wheat in the State was fallowed land, and the average yield secured was 14.77 bushels per acre, against 7.44 bushels per acre from unfallowed land. It was, of course, claimed that it was necessary continuously to crop scrub land with wheat to hasten the killing of the mallee, but it was becoming generally recognized that it was better to fallow scrub land after the first crop, and that it was good practice in some cases to fallow new land before it was cropped. It was not only in new districts that wheat was grown on unfallowed land, for in the lower north district 13 per cent. of the crops were grown in that way, and only averaged about 9½ bushels per acre, against an average of 16½ bushels per acre from fallow. Next in importance to increasing the proportion of crops on fallowed land, and thoroughly working the fallow, was the need to increase the amount of superphosphate used with the wheat crops. The results of experiments showed that increased profits from the superphosphate continued to be secured even up to 2 cwt. per acre, and the feed that followed the crop was also much improved. Sheep were directly profitable in all the agricultural districts of the State, and where the holdings were utilised for crop-growing the animals were of considerable indirect value as well, and as they had an assured market for wool and a very fair one for lamb and mutton, it was advantageous to both the farmer and the State to increase the numbers and improve the type of their sheep. Farmers should endeavor to become breeders of sheep rather than continue as dealers of this class of livestock, because to the average man there was much more profit in breeding, and it was of advantage to the country to be increasing the numbers so long as they could be properly maintained. The production of fat lambs was a profitable way in which to handle a farm flock, particularly if export lambs were bred.

**The Government's Proposals.**

After very careful consideration the Government were convinced that the way to put the finances of the State on a sound footing was considerably to increase its rural production, and that wheat and sheep were the two lines which could be rapidly increased with safety. To do this it was considered that research work and educational methods would have the greatest effect, and so additions were being made to the staff of the Department of Agriculture, and it was proposed to make money grants to the Waite Agricultural Research Institute. (Applause.) When the Government came into power the instructional staff of the department consisted of the Chief Agricultural Instructor and five district agricultural instructors, stationed at Gawler, Jamestown, Murray Bridge, Port Lincoln, and Mount Gambier respectively. Not only were the districts allotted to these men too large, but much of their time was occupied in arranging and caring for experiment plots conducted by farmers in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture. At least one-half of the Chief Instructor's time was taken up in controlling the Government experiment farms and all other field experiments. In a few days' time the Government would appoint two District Agricultural Instructors, thus making seven instructors living in their districts. The position of supervisor of experimental work, originally held by the Chief Agricultural Instructor, was being recreated by Government, and the appointment of a man to that position would also be made in a few days' time. A second field officer would also be included in the appointments practically decided on. The work of supervising, collecting data, and reporting on the various experiment plots in their districts had prevented the instructors from concentrating on instruction work. That was recognised as a great handicap when an instruction "drive" was contemplated, and as the Chief Instructor was also experimentalist and was only available for about half his time for instruction work, it was decided to free those men from that work and permit them to be instructors pure and simple. The experiment work of the department was of the utmost importance, and as the demand by branches of the Agricultural Bureau to have experiments conducted in their districts, increased yearly, it was decided to appoint a supervisor of experiment work. That officer would, under the Director

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**SIR HENRY BARWELL TO BE AGENT-GENERAL.**

The Premier (Hon. R. L. Butler) stated yesterday that the question of the appointment of Sir Henry Barwell as Agent-General in London in succession to Mr. J. L. Price, had been considered in Cabinet. Sir Henry had been offered the position, and was considering his reply. The leader of the Opposition (Hon. L. L. Hill), in the Assembly on Wednesday, asked if there was any truth in the report that Sir Henry Barwell had been offered the position, and whether the term of office and the salary were to be increased. The



Sir Henry Barwell.

Premier (Hon. R. L. Butler) said the Government had decided that morning to offer the position to Sir Henry Barwell, and he presumed the offer was now being considered by him. It was the intention of the Government to introduce legislation increasing the term to five years, but the question of salary had not been decided. The Act had not been entered for 20 years in respect to the method of paying the salary. The desirability of fixing the