A NATIONAL ADVISORY SERVICE FOR AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE

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IN a statement in Parliament on January 20, dealing with the future of agricultural education, the Minister of Agriculture said that after careful consideration of the Luxmoore Report the Government has concluded that the provincial and county agricultural advisory services should be unified and combined into one national service for the whole country, directly under the Minister of Agriculture and financed wholly by the Exchequer. This statement, together with the publication of the Luxmoore Report, has concentrated attention on the organization and function of the existing agricultural advisory services and on how far the proposals of the Luxmoore Committee would strengthen and unify them. This subject was discussed at a recent meeting of the Association of Applied Biology, when Prof. W. B. Brierley was the principal speaker.

In the early stages of the development of agricultural education in England and Wales, most farmers regarded scientific agriculture with suspicion, and had little inclination to seek the help of technical advisers for the solution of farming problems. At first only formal courses of instruction for young people were available, and later lectures and demonstrations were provided for farmers. Prejudice hampered development and by 1908 only eight counties had appointed full-time agricultural organizers. In 1908 a departmental committee investigated the position of agricultural education in England and Wales, and recommended that each area the size of an average county should have a resident agricultural organizer to give instruction to farmers, to arrange field experiments, to lecture on their results and other matters of agricultural interest, and to act as director of agricultural education. Since then county agricultural staffs have been increased and now include instructors for crop production and animal husbandry, horticulture, dairying and poultry-keeping, who are well qualified to give advice on all practical difficulties. The county agricultural service has been controlled by the local county council and financed partly from rates and partly by the Ministry of Agriculture.

With the establishment of the Development Commission in 1909, money was made available for new developments in agricultural research and for the extension of advisory and teaching services. New research institutes were founded and financial assistance was given to those already in existence. In order that farming practice should be influenced by the extension of research work it was necessary to provide some bridge for the gap between the scientific work of the research institutes and the practical advisory work of county technical staffs. In 1911 it was decided to make annual payments from the Development Fund to certain universities and agricultural colleges to enable them to supply specialist advice to farmers and to provide for the investigation of local agricultural problems. This new specialist advisory service was organized on a provincial basis, and thirteen provinces covered England and Wales. The provincial advisory staffs were appointed, accommodated and administered by universities and agricultural colleges, which in return

were allowed to call upon the advisers for a limited amount of teaching. The number of advisers varied with the demands of the provinces but usually included advisers in entomology, mycology, chemistry, economics and veterinary science. A memorandum of the Board of Agriculture ($A\frac{200}{1}$) defined the

nature and scope of the two agricultural advisory services. Advice on such practical matters as the uses of artificial fertilizers, the relative merits of feeding stuffs for livestock and the manufacture of dairy produce should be given by the county staff. Advice on matters requiring special knowledge or special investigation should be given by the staffs of universities and agricultural colleges. County staffs were recommended to refer such problems to specialists and to consult the staffs of universities and colleges when their scientific knowledge and experience would be helpful.

In 1941 the Luxmoore Committee was appointed "to examine the present system of agricultural education in England and Wales, and to make recommendations for improving and developing it after the war". The Committee found that technical advice reached the farmer from two separate advisory services, the county service and the provincial service. The county advisory service possessed some men of outstanding ability and personality who with their staffs had given valuable assistance to the farming community especially in periods of depression and also during the war-time campaign to increase food production. The standard of the service, however, varied greatly and tended to be lower in counties where agriculture was the main industry. There were several causes for this: funds for agricultural education were generally smaller in agricultural counties where rateable values were low; local interests were occasionally detrimental to the development of the county advisory service, and in some counties those engaged in the agricultural industry had no sympathy with the science of agriculture and failed to appreciate the value of technical assistance. Occasionally members of the county agricultural service were used for purely administrative duties, and serious under-staffing made it impossible for them to maintain contact with more than a few farmers. The existence and functions of the provincial advisory service were not widely known. Provincial centres were controlled by either a chief advisory officer, a professor of agriculture, or the principal of an agricultural college. There was some lack of co-ordination between the advisory officers of a province, and at agricultural colleges there was little or no contact between the advisory officers and other scientific workers. Accommodation and equipment for advisory officers was frequently unsuitable and inadequate. It had been intended that the two services should co-operate in a relationship closely analogous to that between the general medical practitioner and the medical specialist; and that together the services should link agricultural research with farm practice, the provincial advisers having stronger affinities with research and the county staffs with practice. Co-operation was unorganized and in consequence varied greatly in different counties and provinces. In many cases the county advisory service had failed to make sufficient use of the provincial advisory service either because the county organizer did not recognize the problems calling for specialist advice or because the county service had become self-sufficient by the appointment of specialists to its

staff. In other cases provincial advisers had tended to usurp the functions of county organizers, or they were not sufficiently acquainted with agriculture to gain the confidence of practical men. Thus instead of a steady stream of ideas from the research institutes reaching the farmer through the provincial and county services as intended, the groups of workers associated with agriculture were linked loosely and haphazardly and, in some cases, not linked at all.

The Luxmoore Committee recognized the necessity for the continuation, improvement and extension of the agricultural advisory services and suggested that county and provincial services be combined into a national service. The aim of the proposed national advisory service would be to give every farmer easy access to the best practical and scientific information available. To achieve this the Committee suggested that each county should be divided into districts, their size to be determined either by the number of farmers or by the acreage of agricultural land. Each district should have a district officer whose duty would be to advise and help the farmers in his area. He should visit all the farms in his district at least once a year, arrange for meetings of farmers, demonstrations, lectures and discussions. A county organizer would direct and co-ordinate the work of the district officers, advise on local problems and where necessary forward them to specialist officers. In addition, the county organizer would have a staff of assistants qualified to give instruction and advice on such subjects as dairying, poultry-keeping, and the maintenance and repair of farm machinery. The specialist advisory service should be continued on a provincial basis, but in order to provide for a more comprehensive range of agricultural sciences it was suggested that the number of provinces should be reduced from thirteen to six and the staff appropriately increased. Specialist advisory officers should be scientific men with some practical experience of agriculture, and they should be allowed the freedom on which original thought and successful investigation depend. The co-ordination of the work of the specialist staff at the centre should be the responsibility of a chief advisory officer who should not himself be called upon to do advisory work. There should also be a provincial organizer to co-ordinate the work of the county organizers and their staffs throughout the province. A provincial administrator should be administrative head of both branches of the service and responsible for the office organization of the province.

The Association of Applied Biologists has many links with the advisory and research services in agriculture, and though members were agreed that the advisory services needed overhauling and re-organization, the proposals of the Luxmoore Committee received critical examination. An outstanding omission was lack of proposals for the co-ordination and integration of advisory and research services. It was obvious that the Luxmoore Committee was hampered by terms of reference that excluded the research service from the inquiry. The advisory and research services were essentially interdependent and the work of each provided stimulus to the other. The Luxmoore proposals would tend to isolate the two services and sever established relationships. The removal of specialist advisers from the university departments would isolate them from scientific contacts, and the transfer of advisory centres from the universities would lower the status of the specialists and weaken their ties with other scientific workers.

The provision of specialist advisers on a scientific

basis was commented on, and it was suggested that recent developments in the sciences associated with agriculture necessitated widening the scope of the advisory services. Besides the advisers in entomology, mycology, chemistry, economics and veterinary science, there was need for advisers in such subjects as plant physiology, animal nutrition, virology, microbiology, helminthology. The Luxmoore proposals provided for advisers for all kinds of husbandry at the county level, and if suitably trained and experienced advisers were selected there should be no need for further specialist husbandry officers. Although the number of provincial centres would be reduced by the Luxmoore proposals, increases in personnel were suggested, and it should be possible to arrange that all branches of the agricultural sciences were represented. The provincial out-stations, which were an integral part of the suggested provincial organization, might well be used as centres for additional specialists whose services would be available for the province. The enlarged provinces should offer better facilities for the training of new entrants to the specialist advisory service. The concentration of the specialist service at six provincial centres should make it possible to provide adequate accommodation and the necessary equipment of staff and apparatus for laboratory and field investigations. The advisory services had in the past been hampered by unsuitable accommodation and lack of facilities for their work.

It was noted that the organization of the advisory services as suggested by the Luxmoore Committee made no provision for the co-ordination of the work of specialist advisers in the particular sciences. The province would be a self-contained unit with no organized contacts beyond its boundaries. It was of great importance to all types of advisers that they should maintain contacts with advisers faced with similar problems in other provinces. Many of the major agricultural problems occurred in similar or related forms in several provinces, and interchange of experience, co-ordination of advisory and investigational work and arrangement of co-operative experiments should be possible. At present co-ordination of the work of entomologists and mycologists was achieved through the Plant Pathological Laboratory of the Ministry of Agriculture. Co-ordination of specialist investigations and advisory work might be obtained under the Luxmoore proposals if chief advisory officers were representative of various agricultural sciences and were charged with the responsibility of co-ordinating on a national scale the work in their respective sciences, in addition to co-ordinating the specialist work within their provinces.

Mr. Ronald Ede, secretary of the Luxmoore Committee, explained to the Association the permissive character of the present system of agricultural education and that the total expenditure of £600,000 for 1938-39 for all agricultural education and technical advice was quite inadequate for the needs of a basic industry like agriculture, the products of which were valued at £250 millions a year. The present county advisory system offered little chance of promotion and advancement except within the county and did not provide sufficient incentive for progressive young men. The establishment of a national advisory service would obviate some of the disadvantages occurring from the number and variety of responsible authorities, and its dependence on the national exchequer would ensure that all counties were served according to their needs and not according to their

financial resources. The proposed reduction in the number of provincial centres should allow greater numbers of specialists at each centre, and the development of out-stations of the provincial service should ensure that no part of the country was isolated from specialist assistance and that areas with special and distinctive needs would have necessary assistance. The provincial centres were to be established in university towns, though they would not be administered by the universities. The case for the integration of the existing advisory services into a comprehensive national service was strong. The agricultural industry would be better served by an organized and co-ordinated service, and greater opportunities for promotion and improved professional status would ensure that capable and energetic men entered the service.

OBITUARIES

Lieut.-Colonel Stanley Casson

BORN in 1889, Stanley Casson went from Merchant Taylors School to Lincoln College, Oxford, and held a senior scholarship at St. John's and a studentship at the British School of Archaeology at Athens. In 1914 the War interrupted his studies, but he made good use of local opportunities in Macedonia and returned thither for excavation after the Armistice. During 1919-22 he was assistant-director of the School, and was elected in 1920 to a fellowship of New College, which combined opportunity for travel and research with a limited amount of lecturing under Prof. Percy Gardner, to whose philosophic outlook he owed much.

In 1924, Casson's historical geography of "Macedonia, Thrace and Illyria" won the Conington Prize, and after its publication in 1929 he produced a series of studies of Greek and modern sculpture—"The Technique of Early Greek Sculpture", "Some Modern Sculptors", "Twentieth Century Sculpture, and Artists at Work"—the result of much thought, observation and experiment in technique and equipment. In 1927 he was promoted to a university lectureship, and in 1928 he was proctor. In 1929 he explored the Hippodrome at Constantinople for the British Academy. In later years he gave much time to organized visits of younger students to Greece, and to more general and popular writings, "The Progress of Archaeology" (1935), "The Discovery of Mars" (1939) and "Progress and Catastrophe" (1937), the last a remarkable anticipation of present disasters. He wrote also reminiscences of war service, a detective story, a volume of essays on "Ancient Cyprus" (1937), and in 1939-43 valuable summaries of the history and services of the Greeks, "Greece and Britain", "Greece and the Axis" and a re-issue of his "Ancient Greece". He was a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, honorary associate of the Royal Institute of British Architects, member of the German Archaeological Institute and honorary member of the Bulgarian Archaeological Institute. In 1939 he rejoined the Intelligence Corps, served in the Netherlands and in Greece, and was again on active service when he was killed in April 1944. He leaves a wife and one daughter.

Casson was a devoted and effective exponent of Greek antiquity, in all aspects and periods, especially of the sculpture and its counterparts in modern Europe. He had also exceptionally wide knowledge of the modern Greek people, among whom he was widely known and very popular. JOHN L. MYRES.

Mr. L. V. Lester-Garland

LESTER VALLIS LESTER-GARLAND (*olim* Lester), who died on March 23, was of the scholarly type of botanist more common in former days. Born on July 28, 1860, he was educated at Sherborne School and at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he held a demysip. He took a first in classical moderations and in 'Greats'. After being an assistant master at St. Edward's School, Oxford, during 1883-86, he became fellow and lecturer at St. John's College, Oxford, where he remained for ten years. In 1896 he became president of Victoria College, Jersey, retiring in 1911.

Lester-Garland is best known botanically for his "Flora of the Island of Jersey", published in 1903. This small volume is a model of what a local Flora should be. Incidentally, it was the first British Flora to adopt the Engler system of classification. In the introduction he asserts that if British botanists "are ever to emancipate themselves from the insular ideas which too often dominate the science, they will have to learn to look abroad, and realize that British plants grow in other places besides Great Britain and Ireland, and that the British flora is only an insignificant portion of the flora of the globe". The need was probably brought home to him by the continental affinities of the Jersey flora, with its conspicuous Mediterranean element; it led him to criticize the continued use of Watson's 'types' as tending to limit the views of British botanists on plant distribution.

His only other botanical publications were short papers, but for some time after leaving Jersey he was prominent in London botanical circles, and served on the council of the Linnean Society during 1923-26. On moving to Bathford he busied himself with local affairs and restricted his writings to religious philosophy.

Lester-Garland had a charming and unassuming manner which covered not only a wise, scholarly knowledge but also a sense of humour and convictions which were strongly, but not stupidly, held.

J. RAMSBOTTOM.

Dr. A. R. Jackson

WITH the death of Dr. A. Randall Jackson at his home in Chester on March 18 we lose our leading British systematic arachnologist. Despite a busy medical practice, he always found time to provide unstinted help to numerous correspondents in the identification of their collections of British and Arctic spiders, phalangids and chelonethids. This flair for diagnosis has never been surpassed. It enabled him both to straighten out the synonymic muddles created by other workers and also to add many species to the British list. Despite the constant pleadings of his friends, he published comparatively few papers and, as these were often in obscure journals, the excellence of his work never gained the wide recognition it deserved.

A rugged exterior concealed a sensitive and sentimental nature with a deep interest in the beauty of good literature, paintings and garden flowers. A manner, at times somewhat cynical, was apt to hide a keen sense of humour, conscientious attention to his medical practice and, above all, the kindness and generosity he always showed to young collectors. His death is a serious loss to British arachnology.

W. S. BRISTOWE.