

Fabian Tract No. 115.

STATE-AID TO AGRICULTURE

AN EXAMPLE.

By T. S. DYMOND,
LECTURER TO THE ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL.

PUBLISHED AND SOLD BY
THE FABIAN SOCIETY.

PRICE ONE PENNY.



LONDON:

THE FABIAN SOCIETY, 3 CLEMENT'S INN, STRAND, W.C.

DECEMBER 1903.

STATE-AID FOR AGRICULTURE.*

BY T. S. DYMOND.

In addressing meetings of farmers up and down the country, the late Minister of Agriculture, Mr. R. W. Hanbury, never failed to ask his audience in what direction they desired that "the Government should do more for Agriculture," but he never seems to have got a satisfactory reply except from those who advocated an import duty on corn.

As a matter of fact "protection" does not assume an important position in the assistance given by the State to agriculture in Hungary. It is true that, owing to the *Zollverein* with Austria, there is a heavy import duty on corn, intended to protect the Hungarian farmers, but the farmers feel it to be a very doubtful advantage because, while the Austrians would in any case buy the Hungarian wheat as the cheapest and best procurable, the import duty on agricultural machinery imposed to protect the Austrian machinists (which it fails to do) is to the Hungarians a grievous burden.

There is, however, a form of protection given in Hungary, as in all the sugar-beet growing countries of the Continent, to which special reference must be made, viz., the rebate on exported sugar, a grant so considerable that it makes it possible to sell Hungarian sugar in Great Britain for half the price it is retailed at in Hungary itself, because it pays the producers better to export their sugar than to sell it at home except at an absurdly high price. Hungary is almost a purely agricultural country, and practically the whole population is directly or indirectly dependent upon agriculture. The farmers, then, are taxing themselves in order to aid certain localities to grow sugar (localities which are limited in area, for sugar-beet growing demands a sugar factory in the immediate neighbourhood), and the whole population is, besides, paying an enormous price for this article of food. In spite, therefore, of certain advantages which the sugar-beet industry possesses, *e.g.*, the large quantity of labour it necessitates and the value as cattle food of the refuse pulp, it only needed the counter-vailing duties on bounty fed sugar recently imposed in India—formerly one of the best markets for Hungarian sugar—and the recommendations of the Brussels convention, to cause the country to welcome the prospect of casting off a heavy burden.

From "protection" we may therefore pass to a description of other means of assistance afforded by the State in the direction of (a) agricultural education, (b) the scientific development of agriculture, and (c) the commercial development of agriculture.

It must first be explained that Hungary consists of a vast plain, surrounded by a great tract of hilly country rising in places into stupendous mountain ranges, whose highest summits are never

* Part of a paper read at a meeting of the Fabian Society on May 22nd, 1903

free from snow. The inhabitants are as diversified as the country, for the Magyars are quite outnumbered by immigrant Slavonic, Teutonic, or Latin races, all of them differing not only in dress, language, religion and customs, but also in intelligence, ability and inclinations.

With the exception of an insignificant minority engaged in mining, mechanical, or chemical industry, the whole population is directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture. The farmers may be divided into three classes, (1) the magnates who farm their ten to fifty thousand acres, (2) the gentry with their five to fifteen hundred acres, and (3) the peasants who farm in holdings of less than 120 acres just 50 per cent. of the whole of the cultivated land of the country (excluding forest). These peasant freeholds are for the most part between 8 and 120 acres in size, but in some parts of the country, owing to the Hungarian custom of dividing a property on the death of a father equally between his sons, the holdings through several generations have become reduced to the size of a mere allotment of half an acre and upwards, an area far too small to maintain a peasant and his family, who are therefore obliged to eke out a livelihood by acting as labourers on the large estates and taking as payment, not wages in money, but a certain fixed proportion of the produce of their labour.

AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.

Excluding the means taken for elementary and secondary education, agricultural education is afforded by the following institutions:—

1. The Agricultural Academy at Magyaróvár, an institution which ranks with Hohenheim, Wageningen and Copenhagen as one of the first of the agricultural colleges of the world, intended for those who are destined to fill the highest agricultural positions (average attendance, 157).
2. Four agricultural colleges, ranking with the very best of our own colleges, intended for the sons of the gentry or large farmers (average attendance at each, 125).
3. Twenty-one tillage schools, for the sons of peasant farmers, who receive a two-years' course of training in practical farming (average attendance at each, 26).
4. An immense number of winter schools of agriculture in the villages for the sons of peasants (total yearly attendance, 300,000).
5. Itinerant teaching by a staff of over 200 travelling lecturers and experts, attached for the most part to the staff of the Agricultural Ministry.
6. Educational institutions for special industries, including—(1) a veterinary college, a huge and splendidly equipped institution; (2) an arboricultural college and four schools for foresters; (3) a dairy high-school and four schools for dairymen and women; (4) a horticultural college and five schools for gardeners; (5, 6 and 7) a poultry-farming, a bee-farming, and a meadow culture school; and (8) a viticultural course and eight schools for vine dressers.

7. Eighty model peasant farms in the respective counties, each equipped with the implements and stock considered most suitable for the district, and five great State farms which while primarily intended for other purposes, also serve for education and demonstration, and to which parties of farmers are carried by the railways at reduced fares from all over the country.

8. The great agricultural museum at Budapest.

The whole of this enormous scheme is supported and in most cases maintained by the State. Every year further developments take place, old institutions are enlarged and new institutions built, and the policy of the Government clearly is not to wait till the demand becomes imperative, but, by the provision of the fullest facilities for instruction, to encourage the people to take advantage of it. In this, as in every other agricultural development in Hungary, the Government leads the way and the people follow.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the details of teaching or equipment, or to dwell upon the marvellous collections in the museums, which possess of themselves an educational value I could never have believed had I not conducted a party of farmers through them and found how intensely interesting from a practical standpoint did they find the contents; but one important feature must be clearly impressed—that in every institution for higher teaching and even those intended for the training of peasant farmers, education is associated with research, it being realised that, for the future of agriculture to be prosperous, it is important not only to teach the students what is known already, but to impress upon their minds, by this association, how incomplete is our knowledge and how much remains to be discovered.

SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT.

This brings us then to the means taken by the State for the scientific development of agriculture by experimental and research work. The whole of this is under the control of a Departmental Central Committee, on which all branches of the work are represented, and the purpose of which is to encourage and control the harmonious working of the stations (and thus to prevent duplication and overlapping), to direct what experiments are to be carried out, to advise the Minister of Agriculture in what direction development is required, and to publish the results in the form of bulletins. The following is a brief description of the stations under the control of this Committee:—

1. The Geological Institute at Budapest makes a scientific study of the soil in relation to agriculture and publishes maps.

2. The National Institute for Meteorology possesses an observatory, and issues weather forecasts daily to the press, institutes, subscribers and about 400 telegraph offices in rural

I. NUMBER OF MODEL FARMS IN HUNGARY.

1897	..	..	..	9
1901	..	..	..	80

districts, telegraphs rainfall statistics with the object of providing means to prevent the flooding of agricultural land in districts subject to inundation, and promotes defence against gales.

3. The National Chemical Institute and Experiment Station undertakes the analysis and control of fertilizers, feeding stuffs, etc., with a view to prevent adulteration. There are also chemical experiment stations connected with the Academy at Magyaróvár and at each of the four agricultural colleges before-mentioned.²

4. The Bacteriological Institute in connection with the Veterinary College at Budapest carries on defence against swine fever and other contagious diseases, and prepares and distributes mallein and tuberculin.

5. The Central Seed-testing Station at Budapest and those in connection with each of the Agricultural Colleges and the Agricultural Academy at Magyaróvár undertake the control of seeds and feeding stuffs with the object of preventing adulteration; they carry on experiments with a view to developing fertility, feeding value, etc.; and they diffuse a knowledge of weed seeds and defence against weeds and plant parasites. Some 40,000 examinations are made annually.

6. The Experiment Station for Agricultural Implements at Magyaróvár examines all new machinery introduced and advises farmers as to its value.

7. The Experiment Station for Plant-breeding in Magyaróvár has for its object the improvement of species, the acclimatization of new species, the improvement of pastures, and the diffusion of knowledge on the rational manuring of crops. A part of this work is carried out in conjunction with farmers who in consideration of the free supply of manure or seed agree to undertake the work, but the experiments requiring more accurate observation are arranged in conjunction with the other agricultural colleges, identical experiments being thus made in several parts of the country.

8. The Entomological Station at Budapest has for its object to obtain and disseminate information regarding insects injurious in agriculture and the means of defence against them and in urgent cases to undertake the defence. Correspondents are appointed in different parts of the country.

9. The Tobacco Experiment Station in connection with the Agricultural College at Debreczen is established with the object of counteracting the decline of tobacco culture during recent years, by improving the quality, productiveness, proper

2. NUMBER OF ANALYSES MADE AT STATE EXPERIMENTAL STATIONS.

			Chemical.		Seeds.
1890	..	..	4,125	..	2,651
1895	..	..	4,925	..	21,291
1900	..	..	8,391	..	34,858
1901	..	..	10,082	..	—

cultivation and generally increasing the profitableness of its culture.³

10. The Experiment Station for Plant Physiology and Pathology at Magyaróvár has chiefly occupied itself up to the present with the investigation of a disease in sugar-beet; the cause of this disease and the remedies having now been fully ascertained, it is now carrying on experiments on smut, rust and other fungoid diseases of corn.

11. The Experiment Station for Feeding of Cattle at Budapest has for its object to ascertain the most economical feeding stuffs grown in Hungary for the breeds of cattle produced in the country, *i.e.*, to apply the results of German and American experiments to Hungarian conditions.

12. The Experimental Wool-sorting Station at Budapest was established with the hope of counteracting the very serious decline in sheep breeding and wool production in the country.

13. The Ornithological Station at Budapest has mainly in view the protection of wild birds useful in agriculture, and publishes popular well-illustrated works on the subject to the general public and to farmers in particular.

14. The Experimental Station for Brewing at Kassa has the general aim of developing the industry.

Such is the program of scientific work carried on by, and at the entire cost of, the State.

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

In the commercial development of the agriculture of Hungary we find that the State takes a much more leading part than in most Continental countries. The grants made for the reclamation of land, the loans given to the agricultural credit banks, and the appointment of agricultural commissionerers in foreign capitals, have their counterparts in many countries, but, in Hungary, beyond all this, the State does not hesitate to foster, by direct financial aid, farming in any depressed part of the country, or any branch of agricultural industry that is capable of development. And it should here be mentioned that Hungarian Governments have not been afraid to embark on industrial enterprise themselves, for to the State now belong the principal railways, it is the owner of silk, hemp, flax, sugar, and many other factories in connection with the State farms, it is proprietor of the world-renowned baths of Hercules and the delightful pleasure resorts of the Northern Carpathians, and it owns

3. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE IN HUNGARY.

	1880.	1900.
Wheat	15,800,000 qrs.	17,500,000 qrs.
Rye	5,400,000 "	6,300,000 "
Barley	5,000,000 "	6,500,000 "
Potatoes	106,000,000 bushels	135,000,000 bushels
Tobacco—area	1870-80. 140,000 acres	1890-1900. 100,000 acres
.. produce	44,375 tons	55,800 tons
.. produce per acre	710 lbs.	1,250 lbs.
Value of cattle exported	1891. £2,330,000	1897. £4,830,000

and manages 3,700,000 acres of forest. But besides this the State farms, and farms to the highest possible advantage, 163,466 acres of land in its five great stud farms, farms which not only serve as models to the whole country of what farming ought to be, not only serve to produce the best stallions, the best bulls, the best seed for distribution through the country, and thus in the most effectual way tend to the improvement of stock, but which also yield a revenue to the State of £300,000 a year.

I propose now to give examples of the means adopted.

To assist the farmers in districts hardest hit by agricultural depression, seed wheat, seed potatoes, linseed, etc., are distributed at low cost or in deserving cases absolutely free. Potatoes being an important crop in these districts special inducements are held out for the establishment of small distilleries, the excise giving peculiar advantages to these distilleries, and the State railway conveying, when the potato crop fails, maize for distilling from other districts at exceptionally low rates.

To encourage the cultivation of malting barley in districts suitable for barley growing, good seed is grown on, and distributed from, the State farms in exchange for seed grown by the farmers, grants are made for the establishment of annual barley fairs, and a rebate of about 20 per cent. is given by the State railways on the rates for carriage of malting barley for export.

To encourage silk worm culture, a home industry carried on it is said by the families of 100,000 peasants in the country, the State has established and owns 145 nurseries, at which several million mulberry trees are propagated yearly, a silk worm breeding station for providing and distributing the eggs, 24 cocooneries for collecting the silk, and five silk factories.

Flax, hemp, and hop culture are encouraged by grants towards the establishment of depôts or markets, and by special reduced rates on the State railway.

Agricultural co-operation in the collection, manipulation, and marketing of agricultural produce, which is an important factor in agricultural development of Hungary, has received the powerful encouragement of the State, firstly, by the distribution of co-operative literature and, secondly, by direct grants in aid of co-operative enterprises. Such grants have been made to the Farmers Market Hall Supply Co-operative Society in order to enable them to start the systematic collection and marketing of eggs, to the co-operative dairies to aid their formation, to the Central Co-operative Distributing Society to enable it to start co-operative stores in the villages in congested districts, and to the National Co-operative Society of Hungarian Wine Growers in the form of the free use of wine cellars beneath the Board of Agriculture in Budapest. Lastly, a grant is given to the county agricultural societies, co-operative organisations as many of these are, amounting in 1901 to £8,270, to encourage and assist them in their invaluable labours for the development of agriculture in their respective counties.

The co-operative credit movement has also had the powerful support of the State. "In order to facilitate and control the

co-operative popular credit movement (I quote from the recently issued report of the Minister of Agriculture upon the work done by his department during his five years term of office) the Legislature passed a special Act in 1898 on the agricultural and industrial credit banks, under which a part of the shares were subscribed by the Exchequer, a part by the already existing co-operative credit societies, and the remainder, at the request of the Minister of Agriculture, by some of the large landowners. Since that time the central bank, so founded, has been very satisfactory as a working institution and has helped the department in every way connected with local agricultural co-operation. The local branches in 1902 numbered 1,566, with 317,851 members.

"The action of the Department since starting the central bank has been practically limited to helping the formation of local banks which, situated in the economically worst parts of the country, cannot start themselves without assistance. The grant is limited to some hundreds of crowns. The greater number of these are situated in the congested districts of the North-Eastern part of the country. The Department being anxious to form these co-operative banks in order to emancipate the poor farmers from the local money lenders (Polish Jews who charged, I may interpolate, 20, 30, or even 40 per cent. on loans, and who have been reduced to a condition of most miserable penury by the loss of their business), not only strongly advocates the system, but being a local landowner everywhere itself, subscribes a part of the shares and deposits money. These banks in the neglected parts of the country combine credit-giving with store-keeping."

It may be added to this account of the Minister that in connection with some of the local credit banks co-operative granaries have been established, a system which has a special advantage in Hungary, as it is there the custom for the buyer to travel from farm to farm purchasing corn, at his own price, from the farmers.

Having given some examples of the aid given by the State towards the commercial development of agriculture in Hungary, I propose now to deal somewhat more generally with certain typical branches of agriculture which have received State support on educational and scientific as well as commercial lines. An important point that is probably already self-evident should be borne in mind in considering what follows, viz., that in Hungary it is the deliberate intention of the Government to take the initiative in every forward movement, and by doing so and by granting aid to obtain control. The branches of agriculture I shall deal with are fruit-culture, stock-breeding, and forestry.

FRUIT CULTURE.

The climate of Hungary is eminently suitable for fruit, but up to the 'nineties the imports very nearly equalled the exports. Attention had been drawn during the previous decade to the suitability of the sandy and almost barren districts of the plain for fruit culture, because vineyards had been successfully started

upon them to replace the mountain vineyards devastated by the phylloxera. Steps were therefore taken to utilise these districts for the development of fruit culture.

With this object in view the first step taken by the Department was to decide what fruits and what varieties were suitable for cultivation in each district. Lists were then drawn up and sent to the agricultural colleges and the orchards on the State farms.

The next step was the planting of a number of nurseries in different parts of the country for propagating the varieties of fruit decided upon, and the forestry stations were utilised for cultivating the proper stocks for grafting. Between 1892 and 1901, 25 State orchards were established altogether.

Next there followed the distribution and sale at very low charges of the fruit trees, fruit seedlings, wild fruit stocks and grafted stocks thus propagated. To schoolmasters and clergymen fruit trees were given free, as also the seedlings and fruit stocks to the nurseries of parishes and agricultural and horticultural associations, who were required to supply fruit trees for planting the highways. In 1901 as many as 378,000 grafted stocks and over 2,000,000 seedlings were thus distributed. Even this vast number proved insufficient for the demand, and, to further increase the supply, prizes were given to those schoolmasters who in the parochial orchards produced the greatest number of grafted stems, and plum trees, being more useful to poor farmers than anything else, were imported from Orleans and Antwerp to the number of 600,000.

Meanwhile steps were taken to provide the necessary instruction in fruit culture. The great horticultural school was established on the slopes of the Gellert Hill at Budapest for systematic, theoretical and practical instruction. For orchard labourers four country schools of fruit culture were founded, in addition to which the State orchards served for their practical training. An industrial school at Budapest was made purely horticultural. The winter schools of agriculture in the villages for sons of peasant farmers were required to include fruit culture in their curricula, teachers of fruit culture were appointed to secondary and other schools, encouragement was given to schoolmasters in teaching the subject in the parochial schools by offering prizes to their pupils, courses of lectures were arranged for the road surveyors who would have the care of the fruit trees upon the highways, and courses of fruit growing were arranged for all schoolmasters and for a few clergy (for the clergy in Hungary as in every country are the best pomologists) of whom 172 applied for the 12 places offered! Lastly, the Department published a weekly paper, "The Fruit Gardener," and several treatises and popular pamphlets.

Finally came the question of the marketing and export of the produce. And here comes the advantage of the control that had been exercised in only encouraging the cultivation of a few kinds of fruit, the production of small lots of many kinds being the worst hindrance to an export trade. Grants were given to

encourage the formation of local fruit shows, and of co-operative fruit marketing societies. Willow plantations for basket-making were started on the State farms, and gifts of willow seedlings made to parishes together with grants to enable them to prepare the land for willow plantations. Special low rates were charged by the State railway for export fruit, and reports upon the demand for fruit in Russia, Germany, Great Britain, and Scandinavia obtained from the respective consuls. For unsold fresh fruit the State began to hire out machines for cider-making, spirit distilling and fruit drying to parishes and co-operative associations, and sometimes to give them free, and grants were made towards building two fruit drying factories.

STOCKBREEDING AND DAIRYING.

Equally comprehensive is the aid given by the State in these branches of Agriculture, and also intensely interesting because the State itself farms 163,466 acres of land in the five great estates which serve for the production of the pure-bred stock which are distributed through the country with the object of improving the various breeds.

The aim of the Government is that a particular breed of horses or cattle should be bred by the farmers in a particular district, the object being to keep the breeds pure, to economise sires, and to enable buyers to know to what particular district they must go to purchase what they want. With this aim in view each State farm breeds a particular class of horses or cattle; for each district of Hungary the Government decides upon the breed most suitable for encouragement, and the County Councils publish particulars to the farmers as to where sires of this breed may be obtained.

With regard to horses no expense is spared; £125,000 is spent yearly in the interests of horse breeding; the stables at Kisbér contain some of our best English thorough-breds purchased at almost fabulous prices, and fresh batches of pure-bred Arab horses are fetched from Arabia every year. The number of registered stallions owned by the State and hired out for public service at fees of from 6s. to 10s. is 3,100, which in 1901 covered as many as 119,114 mares, and in addition to these are 200 stallions hired out to private breeders. So strict is the control that a sire belonging to a private owner must not be used by his neighbours unless registered.

The management of the studs is admirable. All are under military control and the men of the cavalry regiments serve their three years upon the farms, thus, not only saving the State a heavy bill for labour, but learning all there is to know about horse-breeding and gaining knowledge which they are able to turn to useful account on returning to their own farms or holdings. The policy of the country in this respect seems to be abundantly justified, for nothing is so astonishing as the excellence of the horses bred by the small holders, who in one small village I visited were able to produce some 50 or 60 horses, any one of which would have looked well in Rotten Row. In any part

of the Great Plain good post horses can be had. I think the most vivid impression that anyone who has travelled in Hungary will bring back is driving over that limitless expanse behind a pair of Hungarian horses, on and on, mile after mile, now racing madly along the soft unmetalled roads, mere cart tracks, canopied in a cloud of dust, or sweeping dustless over trackless turf.

Similar steps are taken for the development of cattle breeding. The whole country is divided into 20 districts, to each of which an inspector is appointed, who possesses such powers as will enable him to induce farmers to develop their business in the direction approved by the Department. Every year an immense number of good bulls are sold from the State farms, generally to the parishes or village communities, a tax being raised by the parish council for the purchase, the bulls being thereafter available for the use of any farmer living in the parish. In 1901, 3,428 bulls were thus distributed. Stock markets are also organised and prizes for the best cattle given, the grant for this purpose amounting in 1901 to £3,300.

Particular attention is paid to dairy cattle. The native Hungarian cattle being primarily draught cattle, a large number of the best stock from Alpine herds of dairy cattle are annually imported for breeding purposes (325 in 1901). The dairying industry, as already mentioned, is assisted by five Government dairy schools and by direct grants to the co-operative dairies. So remarkable has been the development of the dairying industry since the first co-operative dairy was started in 1895, that the excess of exports over imports of dairy produce has increased from £57,000 in 1895 to £486,000 in 1901, an increase of more than eight fold.⁴

Equally striking are the results of the fostering care of the State in the poultry industry. A State poultry farm and school has been started on the Crown estate of Gödöllő, and here the most suitable breeds are reared. These are distributed in a remarkable way,—the cock birds are exchanged with the farmers for common poultry, and as many as 7,666 cock birds being exchanged in 1901; the same system apply to eggs for hatching. Still more has been done in conjunction with the Market Hall Supply Co-operative Society by establishing local egg-collecting stations, mostly in connection with the local co-operative dairies. By systematic sorting of the eggs, and by the elimination of the German middlemen, the price obtained by the farmers for exported eggs has been raised 30 or 40 per cent., and the export of poultry and eggs increased in five years by 80 per cent.

Another form of State-aid in stock-breeding is the steps taken to eliminate contagious disease. Strict isolation regulations are imposed to prevent the spread of swine fever. A serious outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia in 1893 was dealt with by

4. COÖPERATIVE DAIRIES IN HUNGARY.

	Members.	Receipts.
1897	2,767	£22,470
1901	40,673	£292,415

the wholesale slaughter of the animals in infected yards, compensation being given in full, as many as 20,942 cattle being slaughtered in 1894 and £37,000 paid in compensation, measures which were entirely successful in stamping out the disease.

FORESTRY.

There is one other State-aided branch of agriculture to which reference must be made on account of its importance to this country—namely, forestry. The part of the report of the Minister of Agriculture that deals with this subject is somewhat apologetic. It points out that while the aid given is to the material benefit of the proprietor, it is also directly to the benefit of the nation because (1) forest provides an article of national wealth which is in permanent readiness, (2) it promotes health, (3) it has a favourable climatical influence, and (4) it provides the raw material of a vast number of industries without recourse to import, besides which there is a vast amount of land in Hungary which it is otherwise impossible to render productive and of which part, while barren, is an absolute danger to the surrounding districts. It is concluded that State-aid to the proprietors of such land is perfectly legitimate, both because it is to the public benefit, and because the afforestation cannot be remunerative for some years to the proprietors.

An act was passed in 1879 which made it compulsory to re-afforest formerly de-afforested and now barren land, and it prevented the de-afforesting of land which could not otherwise be profitably cultivated unless an equal portion of barren land be afforested at the same time.

The State affords aid in this direction by establishing a central experiment station for forestry, four schools for foresters, and nurseries for forest trees in connection with each of the foresters' schools. From these nurseries seedlings are distributed free to proprietors, as many as 358,000,000, it is said, having been distributed between 1874-1901. Proprietors can, if they wish, give over to State management the land that they are compelled to re-afforest. The State also sometimes buys forest land, for example, as a national pleasure resort or to prevent foreigners from acquiring large tracts for sporting purposes.

LABOUR.

Owing to American competition and consequent low prices of agricultural produce on the one hand, and to abundance of labour due to completion of public works and the introduction of labour-saving machinery on the other, the wages of agricultural labourers in the beginning of the nineties fell to a very low figure. The disaffection produced was accentuated by the working of an Act of 1876, disadvantageous to themselves as the agricultural labourers considered it to be, which imposed between farmer and labourer the necessity of contracts in all cases, and which required that agricultural labourers should be able to produce certificates of efficiency in certain cases, which certificates there seems to have been difficulty in procuring. Encouraged by the Social Democratic Party, the labourers secretly determined, in order to secure higher wages, to refuse to

perform their contracts with the farmers as soon as the harvest in 1897 was begun. The Department conceiving that its duty was to aid the farmers to get in the harvest where actual contracts had been made, made ample preparation, chiefly by providing some thousands of labourers from the State stud farms and forests, and although the strike was very wide-spread and the feeling aroused very bitter, harvesting operations were eventually safely performed.

The result of the strike was to strengthen the demand for revision of the Act of 1876, and the Department therefore promoted an Amending Act in 1898, the object of which was to facilitate the smooth working of the 1876 Act. There was an attempt to revive the strike in the summer of 1898, but it failed partly owing to the same steps being taken by the Department to meet the emergency as in the previous year, and partly because the Department had included in the Amending Act a clause for facilitating the distribution of certificates, and a clause for establishing a labour bureau for the efficient interchange of labourers and so equalising the supply and demand in the various districts, in order to prevent the super-abundant supply of labour in any district and the consequent lowering of wages. Under this clause every parish council must nominate a person to keep a list of employers and employed in the parish. Any surplus in supply or demand must be reported to the county council, who draws up weekly reports which are sent back to the parishes on the one hand and to the central bureau on the other. This system of interchange between parishes or districts seems to work thoroughly well; it is further facilitated by a reduction of 50 per cent. on the railway fares for labourers travelling to their work in another district and home again.

Simultaneously with this reform, the Department began to take measures for bettering the circumstances of the labourers. They began to establish popular libraries for labourers (there are now 1,068), to give grants to clergy and schoolmasters to enable them to establish reading-rooms, friendly societies, etc., and to give rewards to those clergy and schoolmasters who had been most successful in their labours. They award prizes to the labourers for efficient performance of their work (some 1,279 have been awarded), and yearly distribute 400 diplomas as a permanent recognition that the State recognises their conscientious work and fidelity. Through the request of the Department, the agricultural societies recommenced in 1899 the old harvest feasts in order to promote the mutual interest of farmers and labourers in each other, and lastly the Department issues a popular weekly paper for labourers, the circulation of which amounts to 43,000 copies, and which is published in Hungarian, Slovak, German, Roumanian, Servian, and Ruthenian. The total grant made by the Department from 1898 to 1902 towards bettering the condition of the labourers amounts to £66,000.

The last Act promoted by the Department for the benefit of the labourer (xvi., 1900) established a fund for insurance against accident, sickness, and old age, an Act of which the labourers, or their employers on their behalf, have eagerly availed themselves.

APPLICATION TO GREAT BRITAIN AND
IRELAND.

With regard to education in, and the scientific development of, agriculture there is, with little exception, nothing done in Hungary which we cannot parallel in our own country. But the great difference is that whereas in Hungary the systems adopted are applied to the whole country, with us there is, with the single exception of the control of contagious disease in farm stock, absolutely no general systematisation whatever. In my own county, farmers can have their sons given an agricultural education, can have field experiments carried out on their own class of land, the object of which is the increase in quantity and improvement in quality of their agricultural produce, and can control, by having analyses made, the manures, feeding stuffs, and seeds that they buy, but in the adjoining county they have no such privileges, and they are debarred from ours. It is the system of decentralisation, of remitting to the county councils the duties of agricultural education, under which title almost all scientific development of agriculture is now carried on in this country, that is the difficulty in the way of the systematic application of any scheme to the whole country. The great variation in different parts of our country necessitates of course very different treatment, but the time must surely soon come when the experimental period of agricultural education has proved what the right treatment for each part of the country is, and every county should be persuaded to carry out its share of the work. *How* the systematisation should be carried out, what counties should be grouped for the purpose, what means of persuasion should be adopted, and whether by the Board of Education or Board of Agriculture, is not my purpose to enquire. The Board of Agriculture has lead the way in attempting to systematize the field experiments throughout the country and have utilised the Agricultural Education Association—an association of agricultural professors and teachers—in carrying out the scheme, and this small beginning may be the beginning of a far reaching movement.

Next, with regard to the *commercial* development of agriculture, it must be remembered that the prosperity of a country devoid of colonies chiefly depends upon the prosperity of its industry and that in Hungary agriculture is the only important industry. It is quite certain that the policy adopted has been a gigantic success, and that the country is going ahead by leaps and bounds as a direct consequence. On the other hand it cannot be denied that the knowledge that the State is ready to initiate any developments required discourages private enterprise. There is already a feeling of dissatisfaction abroad, a feeling of the powerlessness of individuals to develop an industry without State interference, that the initiative in any forward movement must come from the Government, and a feeling of resentment at the restraint and control which it is evident is and must be exercised by the State whenever State-aid is given.

And if there is this growing feeling against State-aid and interference (the two terms are almost interchangeable) in a nation so uncommercial and so primitive in many respects as the Hungarians, how much stronger would the feeling be with us. Our English farmers are intensely commercial; the barterings at the weekly market, the sale of corn by a farmer at 6d. a quarter better than his neighbour or the purchase of seed at 6d. less, is the bright spot in an otherwise monotonous existence, and all wish of sharing with others the advantages of a profit-sharing and co-operative undertaking is absent from a farmer's breast. I do not think that the farmers whom I accompanied to Hungary will ask again that the Government should do more for agriculture; they are rather imbued with the idea that it is better to have too little State-aid than too much.

The commercial development of agriculture in this country is slowly but surely taking place as the result, not of State-aid, but of better education, and the development would take place far more quickly if agricultural education were better systematised in the whole country.

In certain directions, however, I believe that the example of Hungary might be advantageously followed. Strict laws should be enforced against de-afforestation. The de-afforesting of land in the Eastern Counties during the great corn years was a perfect calamity, for the land that was originally woodland was always the poorest land, and is quite unremunerative to cultivate in any other way. The re-afforesting of this land might well receive some encouragement, and the same may be said of enormous tracts in Scotland and Ireland, the re-afforesting of which would in a number of ways be to the inestimable advantage of the nation.

Again, the county agricultural societies and chambers of commerce might well be encouraged to develop in a commercial direction, perhaps by establishing depôts for agricultural produce where the means for its disposal are defective, or studs for the sake of facilitating horse-breeding by the farmers, and especially by organising agricultural labour bureaux in connection with a central bureau in London, which might possibly remedy the scarcity of labour, the greatest of all drawbacks to successful intensive farming in the home counties.

There can be no doubt, too, that credit banks would be a boon to the farmers in every part of the country.

It is, of course, manifest that Ireland needs entirely different treatment. The Irish and Hungarian temperament is not unlike in some respects. The Department of Agriculture in Dublin appears to be fully alive to the possibilities. Already it has adopted several means, similar to those adopted by the Hungarian Department of Agriculture, to foster the commercial development of the country, and there is every reason to believe that it will be equally successful.

FABIAN SOCIETY.—The Fabian Society consists of Socialists. A statement of its Rules and the following publications can be obtained from the Secretary, at the Fabian Office, 3 Clement's Inn, London, W.C.

FABIANISM AND THE EMPIRE: A Manifesto.

Edited by BERNARD SHAW. 4d. post free.

FABIAN ESSAYS IN SOCIALISM. (35th Thousand.)

Paper cover, 1/-; plain cloth, 2/-, post free from the Secretary.

FABIAN TRACTS and LEAFLETS.

Tracts, each 16 to 52 pp., price 1d., or 9d. per doz., unless otherwise stated.

Leaflets, 4 pp. each, price 1d. for six copies, 1s. per 100, or 8/6 per 1000.

The Set of 84, 3s.; post free 3/5. Bound in Buckram, 4/6; post free for 5s.

I.—On General Socialism in its various aspects.

TRACTS.—113. Communism. By WM. MORRIS. 107. Socialism for Millionaires. By BERNARD SHAW. 79. A Word of Remembrance and Caution to the Rich. By JOHN WOOLMAN. 78. Socialism and the Teaching of Christ. By Dr. JOHN CLIFFORD. 87. The same in Welsh. 42. Christian Socialism. By Rev. S. D. HEADLAM. 75. Labor in the Longest Reign. By SIDNEY WEBB. 72. The Moral Aspects of Socialism. By SIDNEY BALL. 69. Difficulties of Individualism. By SIDNEY WEBB. 51. Socialism: True and False. By S. WEBB. 45. The Impossibilities of Anarchism. By BERNARD SHAW (price 2d.). 15. English Progress towards Social Democracy. By S. WEBB. 7. Capital and Land (6th edn. revised 1903). 5. Facts for Socialists. LEAFLETS.—13. What Socialism Is. 1. Why are the Many Poor? 38. The same in Welsh.

II.—On Application of Socialism to Particular Problems.

TRACTS.—115. State Aid to Agriculture: an Example. By T. S. DYMOND. 112. Life in the Laundry. 110. Problems of Indian Poverty. By S. S. THORBURN. 98. State Railways for Ireland. 88. The Growth of Monopoly in English Industry. By H. W. MACROSY. 86. Municipal Drink Traffic. 85. Liquor Licensing at Home and Abroad. By E. R. PEASE. 84. Economics of Direct Employment. 83. State Arbitration and the Living Wage. 74. The State and its Functions in New Zealand. 73. Case for State Pensions in Old Age. By G. TURNER. 67. Women and the Factory Acts. By Mrs. WEBB. 50. Sweating: its Cause and Remedy. 48. Eight Hours by Law. 23. Case for an Eight Hours Bill. 47. The Unemployed. By J. BURNS, M.P. LEAFLETS.—89. Old Age Pensions at Work. 19. What the Farm Laborer Wants. 104. How Trade Unions benefit Workmen.

III.—On Local Government Powers: How to use them.

TRACTS.—114. The Education Act, 1902. 111. Reform of Reformatories and Industrial Schools. By H. T. HOLMES. 109. Cottage Plans and Common Sense. By RAYMOND UNWIN. 105. Five Years' Fruits of the Parish Councils Act. 103. Overcrowding in London and its Remedy. By W. C. STEADMAN, L.C.C. 101. The House Famine and How to Relieve it. 52 pp. 76. Houses for the People. 100. Metropolitan Borough Councils: their powers and duties. 99. Local Government in Ireland. 82. Workmen's Compensation Act: what it means and how to make use of it. 77. Municipalization of Tramways. 62. Parish and District Councils. 61. The London County Council. 54. The Humanizing of the Poor Law. By J. F. OAKESHOTT. LEAFLETS.—81. Municipal Water. 68. The Tenant's Sanitary Catechism. 71. Same for London. 63. Parish Council Cottages and how to get them. 58. Allotments and how to get them. FABIAN MUNICIPAL PROGRAM, FIRST SERIES. London's Heritage in the City Guilds. Municipalization of the Gas Supply. Municipal Tramways. The Scandal of London's Markets. A Labor Policy for Public Authorities. SECOND SERIES (Nos. 90 to 97). Municipalization of the Milk Supply. Municipal Pawnshops. Municipal Slaughterhouses. Women as Councillors. Municipal Bakeries. Municipal Hospitals. Municipal Fire Insurance. Municipal Steamboats. Each Series in a red cover for 1d. (9d. per doz.); separate leaflets, 1/- per 100.

IV.—On Books.

29. What to Read on social and economic subjects. 4th edition, enlarged and re-arranged. 6d. net.

V.—On General Politics and Fabian Policy.

108. Twentieth Century Politics. By SIDNEY WEBB. 70. Report on Fabian Policy. 41. The Fabian Society: its Early History. By BERNARD SHAW.

VI.—Question Leaflets, containing Questions for Candidates for the following bodies:—

20, Poor Law Guardians. 24, Parliament. 27, Town Councils. 28, County Councils, Rural. 56, Parish Councils. 57, Rural District Councils. 59, Urban District Councils. 102, Metropolitan Borough Councils

BOOK BOXES lent to Societies, Clubs, Trade Unions, for 6s. a year, or 2/6 a quarter