

exaggerated. It is obvious that when a person is on the defensive he is less likely to have ammunition than if he is attacking an institution or position. I was somewhat perturbed by the attitude adopted by Mr. Polson, because on the two occasions on which we have met we very unfortunately crossed swords. I am sorry for that, but I hope that it will not prevent our working together in the future, and our discussing problems common to the farmer. I have devoted my efforts during the past ten years to the investigation of agricultural problems, and I feel that agricultural problems are the problems that require perhaps the most attention in this country. When last Mr. Polson and I met he twitted me on my youth: since that time three years have passed, and though I have not yet achieved that intellectual aristocracy of old age which perhaps Mr. Polson has attained, yet I notice that he has shifted his ground to-day and twitted me with exaggerated guesswork. He has queried my estimate of the proportion of land which changed hands during the period which I quoted in my paper—I think it was between 1915 and 1924. The figures upon which I based my conclusions were taken from the Year-book, and I made it clear at the beginning of my paper that I did not profess to be able to estimate to the nearest penny the importance of the burdens which were bearing upon the farmer. I also should make it clear that I did not intend to estimate to the nearest half-million acres of land which changed hands. The total area of occupied land is about $43\frac{1}{2}$ million acres. During the period that I have mentioned, the official figures show that about 27 million acres changed hands. That is considerably over half the total area; and I consider that in allowing, say, 6 million or 7 million acres for a margin of error I was being too conservative. But even if you do not accept that point, and you take the estimate of Mr. Polson, which was also in the nature of a guess, you will remember that Mr. Polson said that about 20 per cent. of the land was transferred. That brings it down to 9 million acres. That is to say, Mr. Polson would assert that of the total of 27 million acres which have been transferred, 18 million acres includes land which has been transferred several times, or comes under the category which Mr. Acland referred to—an allowance which is certainly far too large. I should point out here also that the frequent transfer of a particular farm has serious effects upon productivity, and that is a point which I might have stressed with advantage in my paper. Mr. Acland mentioned the fact that men sold farms at inflated values and bought other farms. But surely that is not a relevant criticism of my position. If a man sells his farm at an inflated value and buys another farm at an inflated value, surely the effects of that transfer are not mitigated. In fact, I should say that the duplication of such transactions intensifies the difficulties, because it takes a man some time to know his farm, and there is a loss in momentum involved which is an important factor relating to such transfers. I should say, too, that perhaps there was too much stress laid in my paper upon the question of transfer: perhaps I should have laid more stress on the question of mortgages. The ill effects of transfer might have been liquidated by the present time were it not for what I consider to be the excessive burdens which are falling upon the farmers in consequence of their overmortgaged position. That is why I suggest the importance of the extension of credit facilities in order primarily to relieve the burdens which are pressing upon overmortgaged farmers. An increase in productivity might be expected to result if the machinery for the provision of credit facilities were directed in the first instance to that problem rather than to financing new farmers.

Mr. Williams suggested that I considered that the Arbitration Court was not a factor in labour costs. I did not say that the Arbitration Court has no effect upon labour conditions or upon labour costs, but I do say that in so far as labour costs are raised by restrictions and by the inelasticity of award conditions, those same restrictions and those same inelasticities would still continue if you had strong trade-unions and the Court were abolished. I think, too, that the other aspect of the question has been overlooked—that in this country a great many trade-unions would be essentially weak if the Court were abolished. Therefore the conditions and the pace would be set not by the employers of the type represented here, but by the weak and unscrupulous employers, who would be unable to compete except by pushing wages down and forcing men to do work under conditions which were socially undesirable. In reply to Mr. Turner I do not think he has read the statement aright. He was considerably worried because I put a microscope to the situation instead of a telescope. I think I was putting a telescope on the situation in this sense, that I was visualizing the conditions which would result in the future if the Court were abolished. Mr. Turner is really worried because the “daisies” I have been regarding are not his “daisies.” He stated that in my long paper I had only devoted seven lines to the question of restrictive legislation. I find that on two consecutive pages there were over sixty lines to this matter, and I have made incidental reference in other places. You have all been complaining of the length of my memorandum, or dissertation, or whatever you like to call it, but if I had gone further into the question of restrictions I am afraid I might have been banished from the Conference. The important point with reference to restriction I wish to stress is this: that the restriction would still remain if you had strong trade-unions; and if you had weak trade-unionism elasticity would result in a wholly undesirable fashion.

A Delegate: Do you stand for undue restriction?

Professor Belshaw: I do not. I have indicated in my paper some points for consideration with a view to increasing the elasticity of the wage-rates and conditions of work. Mr. Turner also asked me if I had any later figures about strikes and lockouts. The figures given were published in the year 1927, and I have not any later ones. I do not think there are any.

I would like to be excused from answering the question put by Mr. Cook in reference to the probability of falling prices, because that would involve a lecture on finance and banking and the effect on prices regarding the production of gold, and I do not think I could give it in the short time available. I was referring, however, to the long period trend, not to prices in the next year or two.

Mr. Fisher asked if I had thought of an alternative scheme which might be put into operation in respect to the dairy industry. I would suggest the consideration of Trade Boards which would