

[Mr. Haden Guest.] ment, so much the better, although I rather doubt it in view of the difficulties in the way. If we cannot get such an agreement, I suggest that this is a very proper subject to be referred to the Imperial Economic Committee which represents the whole of the Empire. We might suggest to them that they should consider the proposal to set up in this country an Executive Migration Commission that shall deal with the problem of migration in a business-like way. May I say to my hon. Friends behind me, who appear to think there is some difference of opinion about our people settling in the Dominions and settling on the land in this country, that at the Labour Conference last September there was no opposition, and the two policies were considered parallel. Therefore, if you set up training colonies here, you would at the same time be doing something to secure a real settlement on the land in this country.

Mr. J. DAVISON: The first consideration at the Labour Party Conference was the land in this country.

Mr. GUEST: I think if the hon. Member will refresh his memory he will find that my statement is quite accurate. We are not dealing with any question of sending men out of this country, but with the problem of providing facilities for the men who wish to go abroad. There is no doubt whatsoever that at the present time a great many people do wish to go abroad. I am constantly getting letters, and I know many other hon. Members are getting similar letters, which show that there are many men who wish to go out of the country. How can we wonder at that state of things in face of an unemployment figure of 1,600,000, without counting the miners who are unemployed. Can we wonder that under those circumstances men wish to leave this country and migrate to other lands. I think some of my hon. Friends rather under-estimate the spirit of youth and adventure which in so many cases induce in men a desire to travel and to live in other parts of the world, even if eventually they come back to this country. That will always be one of the valued assets of our race whatever particular class we may spring from. I believe it is absolutely essential to us as a community that we should have some of the best of

our blood overseas at the present time. I hope we shall get more men to emigrate, and I shall be very glad to help in giving facilities to those who desire to go overseas, and I know there are a very large number at the present time.

Mr. J. DAVISON: Forced by necessity.

Mr. GUEST: We must have a proper balance between this country and the other parts of the Empire, and we want to get a very great improvement in the standard of life not only overseas, but in this country as well. With regard to this question of settlement in Great Britain and overseas, it is merely a question of taking the narrow or the broad view. I believe that a majority of the people of this country without distinction of party are now in favour of the broad view of Empire development as well as development in this country. We want this bigger view. May I refer, in conclusion, to the necessity of securing a proper development of Dominions like Australia and Canada merely from the point of view of population. We shall not be able

to hold those lands in the future unless we have a large population in them. It is essential for our welfare and security in this country that we should balance the very large and increasing coloured populations in various parts of the world with large white populations in such lands as Australia and Canada. That great problem of the future, the conflict of standard of life between the white and the coloured peoples—a problem which the party on these benches is going to be called upon, I believe, to face in the very near future—is going to be simplified enormously if we have big white areas in the world from which we can get support, as we are getting support at the present time from the Australian Labour party. We shall be in a very much more difficult position if we have not Dominions of that kind. I hope, therefore, that on this matter we shall find ourselves all in substantial agreement, and that the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs will find himself so far able to agree with what I have suggested to-day that he will at any rate give an answer which is sympathetic, if not entirely affirmative.

Major STEEL: I am sure that all of us who sit on this side of the House were delighted to be reassured by the right hon. Gentleman, the former Secretary of

State for the Colonies; that this question of Imperialism should not be treated as a party question, but that it is the bounden duty of us all, in every party, to try to develop our Empire and its trade. There is no doubt that, as has been pointed out by the hon. Member for North Southwark (Mr. H. Guest), the results of the Empire Settlement Act have been extremely disappointing, and have not come up to the expectations which we had all entertained. I think there is no doubt that, as the Government Report points out, the probable reason is bad trade. The Act was passed in 1922, just at the beginning of the very bad cycle of trade. During the four years for which the Act has been in existence we have had a continued depression in trade, and I think it is an indisputable fact that migration is best in years of good trade, and that there is least migration in years of bad trade. Therefore, I think that the occurrence of this trade depression is the principal reason why the result of the Act has been so disappointing up to the present. From that point of view, the coal stoppage is a calamity, because at the beginning of this year the prospects were certainly better, and we all looked forward during 1926 to better trade and a considerable increase in migration to the various parts of the Empire. As the result of this long stoppage, there is no doubt that the recovery of trade must be very considerably postponed, and, therefore, I suppose we cannot look for any great increase over the figures of last year.

It is becoming more and more evident as the years go by that we in these islands cannot regard ourselves merely as an isolated unit, but that we have to regard ourselves as part of an enormous Empire, and that the policy of this part of the Empire must be laid down in conjunction with a great Imperial policy which will suit all parts of our Empire. We are extremely lucky, because, although we may not be self-contained in this country—indeed, we are not—yet our Empire is self-contained. Within our Empire we have territories in the temperate zones where we can grow all those crops which require a temperate climate, and we have also large territories in the tropics where we can grow those crops which require a tropical climate. Again,

in other parts of the Empire, and in the Mother Country here, we have factories and mills in which we produce almost every kind of article that is required by mankind. The point is, however, that in no part of the Empire can we grow every crop or make every article that is required. Therefore, what we have to do is to develop in the different parts of the Empire the crops for which their climate is suitable, and to develop our industries here in order to supply them, thereby doing good to both. This seems a more or less simple proposition. When you have the land and the capital, all that is required is labour.

I have been reading the Fruit Report of the Imperial Economic Committee, which has just been published, and which is an extraordinarily interesting document. There one finds that we imported—and I think very few people in this country realise it—in the year 1924, £48,000,000 worth of fruit from overseas; but the sad part of it is that, of that £48,000,000, we paid away to the foreigner £38,000,000. The Report goes on to say that the Committee have not the slightest doubt that, after the Empire has been properly developed, we shall be able to get all our fruit requirements, with small exceptions, such as grapes and oranges, from within the Empire. Let me take the example which the Committee give, of what happens in a district called Mildura, in Australia. That is a district which, 13 or 14 years ago, was more or less barren, only a few sheep being grazed there. Its area is about 300,000 acres, and it used to carry a stock of about 2,000 sheep, with only one or two men employed in looking after them. The land was irrigated, and to-day it is employing 14,000 men in producing fruit. If that district had not been properly developed, so that we could get the enormous amount of fruit that we get from Mildura, I suppose we should have got it from America, and what does the American do for us? In the same year, 1924, he only bought 9s. worth of our goods while the Australian bought over £10 worth. It must be evident to everyone that it is to the advantage of Australia to have her land irrigated and developed and her production increased, and to the advantage of this country to do business with people who are such extremely good customers.