

[Mr. Haden Guest.]

suggest that we should set up a number of colonies where we can find out, first of all, whether or not people like to live in the country, whether they are psychologically fitted for migrants, for the life of living away from towns, and, secondly, whether they have the special kind of physical fitness which enables them to do work on the land properly. Work on the land does not require enormous strength. It is, as it were, a large amount of work put out at low pressure over a comparatively long series of hours.

I believe that by the setting up of colonies in this country, by a special Migration Authority, which I am going to suggest in a moment, you will have your first and essential preliminary to a real migration policy. You will also have at those colonies elementary training in farming, which will be an additional advantage, but by no means the largest part of the advantage. I am well aware that under the Poor Law there are various institutions where men are trained. There is, for instance, the very excellent training colony at Hollesley Bay, but it takes the wrong type of men. It takes the men who are, according to those well qualified to observe, of the institutional type, whatever that may mean, and they are not exactly the right type for work in the Dominions. That place, because it is attached to the Poor Law, is not able to do the work which otherwise it is well qualified to do, because it is an excellent farm, the training itself is very good, and the physical training is also good. There is a training institution, very much of the kind I have mentioned, under the Ministry of Labour. There needs to be not one or two—and certainly they should not be in connection with Poor Law institutions—but a number of colleges set up under the Migration Department whether for overseas settlement or anything else which shall definitely act as centres where men can be trained for work overseas. My hon. Friend the Member for Silvertown (Mr. J. Jones) has asked why we should not settle the men on the land in this country. May I point out to my hon. Friend that by setting up training colonies in Great Britain you are training men for agricultural work, and they will then be just as fit when trained for settlement in this

country as for settlement overseas, if only you can get the land for them in this country, and that is the difficulty.

Mr. J. JONES: Will the hon. Member recognise that there are plenty of agricultural labourers in this country who have been trained as well here as they could be in the Colonies, and why not give these men a chance here without any further training?

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Captain FitzRoy): That is not a point of Order.

Mr. GUEST: I agree that there are a large number of agricultural workers in this country, but there are not places for a large number of industrially-trained workers who desire to migrate from this country, and it is to the problem of those town workers that my remarks are addressed. I was leading up to the point that the Labour party does not wish to separate the problem of settlement in the Dominions from the problem of settlement on the land in this country, and I was showing that by setting up a system of training colonies, which I think it will be agreed is necessary, you will be preparing men for an agricultural life in this country which otherwise they would have to go to the Dominions to acquire. I think our present arrangements are entirely inadequate. The Empire Settlement Act, which started under very good auspices and with excellent intentions, is not working properly. We have authority to spend a large amount of money overseas, but only a very small fraction of it has been spent, and we have not in fact been able to work the machinery for migration which Parliament has set up. We have not been able to migrate people, because, first of all, we do not choose our people rightly, and, secondly, because it is so difficult to get information about the opportunities existing overseas.

The other day when I raised this matter in the House the Secretary for the Overseas Trade Department referred me to the Overseas Settlement Committee. I do not wish to use harsh language in this House, but I do not hesitate to say that a more ineffective and inefficient body than that Committee has never been created by a Government. It is not doing anything. I suppose it employs a certain number of clerks, and they answer letters after intervals of about three weeks, but

how a body of that kind is going to help us in regard to migration or anything else I really do not know. I am aware that there are other agencies. If you want information about Canada you can go to the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's offices or to the Canadian National Railway and other institutions. If you want information about Australia you can go to a variety of other bodies, and you can collect a large number of illustrated pamphlets on a large number of subjects which will furnish a small library; but you cannot get at any one place in London information about what you should do, and which is the best place suited for you as an individual. On another occasion the Secretary to the Overseas Trade Department referred me to the Overseas Settlement Office in order to get that kind of information. It was suggested that an agricultural labourer in want of information as to the place he should emigrate to should go to the Overseas Settlement Committee. I believe that Committee has changed its address three times within a very recent period. I do not know if that has been done to dodge the agricultural labourer, but I know that Committee does not answer letters until after a lengthy period, and how you can expect agricultural labourers and others who may not be educated men to get any information out of the Overseas Settlement Committee I do not know.

Mr. J. DAVISON: Why talk about migration while the land in our own country is not fully developed.

Mr. GUEST: It may be that the Overseas Settlement Committee can be reformed, but I very much doubt it, and I think we shall have to set up a new body, organised on business lines to deal with this question of migration. I suggest that we have a very valuable precedent set us in this direction by the Empire Marketing Board. If we were to set up an executive Migration Commission, charged with the duty of getting on with the job and getting a move on, we might possibly get something done. My own democratic tendencies would be in the direction of entrusting the work to one man, telling him to get on with the work, and then if we did not like him we could give him the sack. I do not think this kind of work is done so well by a Committee, but, supposing you had a Committee of three men, I think they

should be instructed to set up offices in London, Manchester, and other large towns to which a man or a woman could go and get information about any part of the British Empire to which they desired to emigrate, with the same facility as a man can go to-day to Messrs. Thomas Cook or Messrs. Dean and Dawson and get information about railway tickets to Turkey or India, or steamship tickets to America or Australia. There is no reason why we should not be able to find ways and means of travelling in the British Empire as easily as it is to get information about travelling on the Continent of Europe. This will have to be done by a body which is actively doing the work, and not by a body which is going to sleep like the Overseas Settlement Committee.

I understand from a reply which was given by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs that this whole matter of migration is going to be brought before the Imperial Conference. I suggest that the arrangements which ought to be made should be referred to the Imperial Economic Committee in order that they may survey the whole question. While on this side we know there are many obstacles in the way of migrants getting out of this country, we also know that there are many obstacles overseas in Australia, Canada and elsewhere. For my own part, I believe that those obstacles both in this country and overseas arise from the fact that there never has been a really complete consideration of this whole problem by all the parties concerned, and that if we could get all those interested to appoint representatives, and to agree on some general policy with regard to migration, we might get on very much more quickly with this problem than we are doing at the present time.

I understand, in connection with the Group Settlement Scheme which has been referred to during this Debate, that the Report was issued yesterday, and I am told that it is a very good and satisfactory Report. I understand, however, that the Group Settlement Scheme in New South Wales has come to an end. What has happened? What is the reason for that? When you get this constant chopping and changing how can you have any consistent policy? If when this matter is considered at the Imperial Conference we can get agree-