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It is anticipated that the final draft of the proposals will be ready for consideration by Commonwealth and State Ministers of Agriculture at the next meeting of the Australian Agricultural Council, possibly in January, 1947.

It was decided that the Commonwealth Government should be requested to transfer to the Equalisation Committee, when formed, surplus funds under the control of the Egg Controller.

Conference recommended that costs involved in bringing the equalisation scheme to fruition should be borne equally by the several egg marketing boards in Australia.

Finally, it was resolved by egg boards at the conference that a communication should be sent to the Commonwealth Government requesting extension of operation of the present egg control scheme till 30th June, 1947, pending finalisation of the industry's equalisation plan for marketing of surpluses under producer control.

Mr. Outerbridge was appointed secretary to act on behalf of State egg boards in attending to details incidental to finalising matters for presentation of the scheme to the Agricultural Council.

H.J.H.

FARMERS' LICENSING ACT—SOUTHERN RHODESIA.

With a population of approximately 85,000 Europeans and 1½ million natives and an area of about 150,000 sq. miles, Southern Rhodesia is essentially a primary producing country, farming and mining being among its principal activities. Tobacco is its main agricultural export, but small quantities of beef and pig products and other produce are exported.

A delegate from Southern Rhodesia, the Hon. H. V. Gibbs, attended the recent conference of primary producers held in London in May of this year, as a representative of the Rhodesia National Farmers' Union, and it is through his courtesy and that of Mr. R. C. Gibson, General President of the Primary Producers' Union of New South Wales, also a delegate, that a copy of the Farmers' Licensing Act of Southern Rhodesia is available for review.

In the course of his remarks at the conference, Mr. Gibbs stated that the National Farmers' Union is a compulsory union and the only officially recognised body of farmers in the Colony, with which the Government negotiates all agricultural policy. Some few years ago, it appears, the Government was requested by a majority of farmers to introduce the Farmers' Licensing Act under which membership and subscription to a National Farmers' Union became compulsory. In continuation, Mr. Gibbs added, the Union, since it has been able to speak with one voice on behalf of all farmers in the Colony, has been the medium through which certain agreements have been negotiated with the Government to stabilise the farming industry over a period of years in the local market.

For the purpose of the Act, a farmer is a person, other than a native, engaged in agriculture in the Colony; persons with less than 50 acres of land and who do not normally derive their sole or principal means of livelihood from agriculture are excluded from the definition.

Agriculture, within the meaning of the Act, includes horticulture, forestry, the use of land for any purpose of husbandry inclusive of the keeping of live stock, poultry or bees and the growing of fruit, vegetables, etc.

Agricultural products include crops, horticultural products, timber, live stock (including poultry and bees), the produce of any kind of animal husbandry, including the carcasses, hides or wool of animals, bacon, cheese, butter and other dairy produce, eggs, honey, seeds and anything produced in agriculture.

The Act is comprehensive in that it provides that no farmer may export from the Colony, or sell any agricultural product, unless he be in possession of a current licence issued to him under the Act. Licences have a currency of twelve months and it is within the prerogative of the Minister for Agriculture, in consultation with the recognised representative body of farmers, to prescribe, from time to time, up to a limit of £2, what shall be the fee.

Provision is made for the opening of a special account, to be known as the Farmers' Licence Account, into which shall be paid the fees collected on the issue of licences.

Upon the constitution of a Union of farmers, which, in the Minister's opinion, is representative of farmers as a whole, it becomes obligatory upon him to pay to such Union, from time to time, the amount standing to the credit of the Farmers' Licence Account. Any moneys so paid to the Union shall only be expended on objects which are included in the constitution of the Union at the time of its recognition by the Minister or of which he has subsequently approved. It is clear that broad discretionary powers are vested in the Minister as to what constitute worthy objects on which money may be expended.

Safeguards and alternatives are provided in the legislation to cover matters and contingencies such as the annual audit of accounts, action in the case of unlawful expenditure, the manner of disposal of fees, pending the constitution of a body representative of the farmers, etc.

R. N. SMITH.
