

other major industries. You just can't foster agriculture on parts of the northeast coast — unless you first import the soil. On page 2,¹ the report says, "It seemed to us and still does that our fisheries are of prime importance." Coming from a fishing district where the word "farmer" humorously applies only to a sea-sick, third-rate fisherman who is usually also a bungler, I can appreciate the truth of that statement; but isn't there something in this centralisation idea? Isn't it possible for the fisherman to fish from sheltered inland harbours where he could produce enough vegetables for his own family? Are there to be found around our bays and inlets, sites where towns could be built for fishermen-farmers? The big problem is the centralising of our fisheries in selected communities where men can till the soil and reap the harvest of the sea as well. Some will say this is but a vision, but it is a vision that we must keep before us, and while large scale commercial farming can never be carried on on the coastal belt, there is a lot which can be done. We must in the future have men big enough to put the centralisation idea into effect, and I can only visualise success through the fisherman-farmer method. I am not suggesting a Markland land settlement idea, rather places where the cod-fishery can be profitably prosecuted, for example Glovertown and Eastport — Glovertown in particular, built on a good harbour, up to last year (when that disastrous fire occurred) possessing lots of available timber and very fertile soil. Here a fisherman could prosecute the Labrador fishery and grow enough vegetables for himself and some to sell, thus being able to produce fish at a much lower cost than his fellow Labrador fisherman at Wesleyville, who buys every spring and fall the agricultural produce of Glovertown and Eastport.

On the matter of expenditure the government reconstruction scheme proposes to spend in the next nine years \$3,892,000 on land development, \$8,000 for soil survey, and a further \$691,000 for schemes to further promote development of agriculture. Against this they propose spending only \$650,000 for fishery development. So it may be that quite a few of us may nine years hence share in the beneficence of this approximately \$5 million expenditure, and under the benign influence of the Commission of Government find

ourselves gathering eggs on lovely farms where sleeping chickens grow.

Mr. Smallwood I wonder if Mr. Keough would care to give us a little dissertation on the main problems of the professional farmer. He comes from a farming district. What are the obstacles in the way of a professional farmer, and does he see any general solution of these problems?

Mr. Keough I would need more than a minute's notice to tackle that.

Mr. Higgins I will give Mr. Keough time to answer the question. Reverting to protection for farmers, the question that's been agitating me and a great number of us who are not farmers, is whether we ever hope to compete in our sale of vegetables with the people of the continent next door. Have we the land, and can we ever get the price down? If you can't, what is the best thing to do? Is it better to subsidise the farmer or put the duty up and also the cost of living? That's the general question. Could you give your Committee's opinion on that?

Mr. Butt The evidence that we got varied very considerably as between individual farmers. We were informed that it was possible to get down the cost of certain items. For example, I don't think we had any evidence to show that potatoes could be grown as cheaply as we could import them, but turnips, yes. The reason was that there is so much land that we have not yet cleared for growing potatoes with the help of machinery, and we could not afford that land. But turnips, you require so much less land that you can produce, not perhaps as cheaply as they can be imported, but pretty nearly.

Mr. Higgins Under no circumstances can you produce potatoes, is that it?

Mr. Butt In subsistence farming the more potatoes you grow, provided people do not stay away from productive work, the better, but on a commercial basis it is doubtful if you could grow them as cheaply as we can import them. Do you follow that?

Mr. Higgins If you can't grow them as cheaply as you can import them, should we cease to protect the farmer and bring in these imported potatoes?

Mr. Butt We did not follow on that far, because it is a very important issue of the economy of the country, wider than the Committee could go. In

¹Volume II:167.