

A.P.P.U. PRESIDENT'S WARNING

Fears Of Food Crisis

THE grim prospect of a grave food shortage in Australia was no longer remote. At long last the public was becoming increasingly aware that the food supply was not inexhaustible; that in a national emergency, Australia could not feed an army rushed to her defence.

Declining production was a serious flaw in Australia's armour.

This was said by the State president of the Australian Primary Producers' Union (Mr. H. V. Stirling) when commenting on a statement by the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture (Mr. McEwen) for action to check the lag in primary production.

Suggestion by the A.P.P.U. for a representative conference had sounded a warning that helped to arouse the public to the nationally serious nature of our declining food production, said Mr. Stirling.

The public had been lulled into a false sense of plenty without end, by those who found it hard to face unpleasant facts.

"The present crisis in food production is the inevitable sequence to the denial of security and social justice to the food producers," said Mr. Stirling.

"It is not fully appreciated that declining output in any section of food production cannot be arrested in a day or a month or a year.

"It would take a long time to expand wheat production, after acreage sown to wheat had contracted by more than 3,000,000 acres in three seasons."

NEGLECT OF FARMERS

Mr. Stirling said Governments had neglected to create the farmers conditions equal to those in secondary industry, to encourage them to produce the food that sustains Australia.

"Food producers at this critical time are burdened with a shortage of plant and labour, and crippling taxation," he said.

"They are exposed to the ever-present risk of losses by flood, fire, drought and destruction of crops by pests, which can in one season ruin farmers.

"Farmers were not unmindful of their responsibility to provide food for Australia's increasing population. But immediate Government action to stabilise the food producing industries was needed to climb the steep slope back to plenty.

EQUALITY WANTED

"Equality with city living conditions and industrial returns is a measure of social justice for the farmer which is long overdue. "Australia's trade balance,"

NEGLECTED FARMS

Soldier settlers were warned last week by the Acting Minister for Lands, Mr Hawkins, that firm action would be taken against any who neglected their farms or proved unsatisfactory.

Mr. Hawkins said the Department had recently called on a soldier settler to immediately repay all his advance debts for this reason.

Despite repeated warnings he had neglected his stock, failed to maintain fences or suppress rabbits and had sold, without authority, stock and plant bought by the Department.

Mr Hawkins said the man, who was also heavily in debt to private firms, had been given every chance to make good. He had foolishly wasted a golden opportunity and would get no more financial help from the Department.

His farm would probably be forfeited and re-allotted to a new settler.

Soldier settlers get benefits far above those open to ex-service-men under any other rehabilitation scheme, Mr Hawkins said.

It is only reasonable that those who won't accept the responsibilities that go with these benefits should make way for the men who will, he added.

Air at sea level is heavier than air at high altitudes, and its physical properties vary accordingly. Therefore, stratosphere planes must be equipped with superchargers that feed the motors great quantities of air to compensate for its thinness.

now precarious, was only made possible by primary producers.

"The primary producer is responsible for more than one-half the value of Australia's annual production and three-quarters of our exports.

"Failure of food production in Australia would mean national disaster," added Mr. Stirling.