

The amendment to the Co-operative Societies Act states that the Minister for Agriculture "may" require non-members to sell their produce through an association under certain conditions. Compulsory co-operation, with the possible exceptions mentioned above, is an unsound and dangerous doctrine and in as much as the amendment in question gives the Minister the final decision, it is to be hoped that he will exercise this power with the greatest discretion.

GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES.

One of the chief dangers to co-operative organization is that coming from Government interference. Co-operation in agriculture can best develop if it is carried on by producers and by producers alone. Agriculture in South Africa has been entirely too dependent upon Government help in times of distress; many farmers feel that things are not enough under the protection and encouragement of the Government in the best of times. A Government, no matter how good it may be, is a necessary restriction; the more power, liberty and freedom that can be left to the people themselves, the better will be their progress. Development and advance in agriculture as well as in any other activity depend largely upon individual and co-operative effort. When any group of people calls upon the Government to handle their problems for them or to give them any advantage not had by other groups, their initiative and enterprise are seriously weakened thereby. There has been too much "spoon-feeding" in this country on the part of various Government departments, and the people, especially those engaged in agriculture, have naturally developed a tendency to demand Government help the minute anything goes wrong. At a recent gathering of farmers in Pretoria a resolution was put forward asking that the Government fix a minimum price on agricultural products. Such a doctrine is totally unsound from an economic viewpoint but even more alarming is the

trend of thought causing such a request to be put forward. Many persons have advocated the operation of a line of Government-owned ships to carry the export agricultural produce. The country at present is more of a Socialistic nature than most others and aside from many economic reasons it would be unadvisable to add so greatly to this Socialistic tendency. Already we have State-owned railways, telephones and telegraphs, and it is enough. **What is needed is not "more Government in Business but more Business in Government."** The future of co-operation in this country depends on the enterprise and initiative of the people engaged in agriculture and these qualities are only restrained by Governmental interference. The function of the Government in regard to co-operation in agriculture should be to assure legal power to co-operative organizations, help in standardization and see that fair play is accorded to all interests. To do more than this discourages any development of initiative and enterprise and therefore is unadvisable. If farmers will not help themselves, leave them severely alone until they will do so. It is only in that way that agriculture can be maintained on a sound basis.

LIMITATIONS OF ORGANIZATION.

Through the formation of a large co-operative organization the producers of a given product can accomplish much, provided that the organization is based on the fundamental points enumerated in the preceding pages. One must not lose sight of the fact that such an organization has definite limitations as well as possibilities. Prices to the consumer cannot be raised unduly without causing a reduction of consumption. Arbitrary price-fixing is impossible, although an organization may influence prices considerably. The price of a given product is merely a reflection of supply and demand and it is unsound for an organization to attempt arbitrary price-fixing.