

RURAL INTERESTS.

FARMER-POLITICIAN.

A SUCCESSFUL COMBINATION.

Mr. Troy's Methods.

(By the Agricultural Editor, "The Western Mail.")

When the Minister for Lands (Mr. M. F. Troy) is called upon to deal with land settlement problems, he must feel, and the State may regard him, as peculiarly fitted for the task. In this respect his personal experience must stand him in very good stead, for at Iudarra, some 15 miles west of Mullewa, he owns a highly productive farm, which he has brought to its present advanced state of development from the virgin bush. Mr. Troy has himself passed through all the trials that beset the ordinary landowner. With little or no capital he commenced the development of his virgin block in 1914. He obtained an initial Agricultural Bank advance, cleared an area, sunk dams, erected the necessary buildings and acquired horses and farming plant. Certainly the best of his country was well above the average of West Australian wheat lands, but it is land that demands good methods of cultivation before it will yield returns such as the Minister for Lands has consistently secured. It stands greatly to Mr. Troy's credit that while continuously engaged in public life, he has been able to develop an area of virgin country into one of the State's most productive farms, when the returns are considered in relation to the area which is improved and cropped. He has achieved conspicuous success in that most difficult branch of agriculture—absentee farming. Basic principles he has, of course, laid down, and he has always spent what time he could spare superintending farm operations, but he gives full credit to Mrs. Troy and his managers for the big part they have played in his success.

By purchases subsequent to the selection of his original block of 1,500 acres, Mr. Troy has built up his homestead farm to 4,000 acres and he has, detached from this and south from Tenipdewa, another holding of 5,000 acres. On his main farm he has 2,000 acres cleared, and he crops annually to wheat between 500 and 600 acres. He never sows wheat except upon early and well worked fallow and the success of this practice may be gauged by the fact that during the past eight years only once has he averaged less than 24 bushels over the acreage cropped, while

24 bushels over the acreage cropped, while individual crops frequently reach 30 to 33 bushels. His rate of sowing is 80lb. of seed, which he raises himself from pedigree stock, with 100lb. of superphosphate on his heavy country and up to 130lb. on his light land. He sows Nabawa as his mid-season variety and Merredin under his conditions, has proved the best early wheat for late sowing. He believes in early fallow and this operation is generally completed by the end of July. Seeding begins in the last week of April and is completed before the end of May.

Oats and Lupins.

In addition to the area which he annually fallows and seeds, Mr. Troy grows anything up to 300 acres of oats, which he sows with lupins on stubble, or light land for sheep feed. His system is to put the harvester over his crop of oats and lupins, in this way obtaining sufficient mixed seed to give him his requirements for the following year. This year he has four crops of oats and lupins—two on last year's oat stubble, cultivated in on mallee land, one on new sandplain and one on sandplain, which was cropped last season with oats. The lupins are thick enough to develop after one seeding into a good stand, and they are doing remarkably well on country upon which they have never been grown previously. In one field, where the seed was sown later under anything but good conditions on much poorer sandplain country, the oats are of indifferent quality, but the lupins are promising well.

To keep his fallows in order and to make use of the burr, trefoil and other feed that grows prolifically on his pasture paddocks, Mr. Troy keeps an average flock of about 800 breeding ewes. With the development of his light lands with lupins it stands to reason that his carrying capacity will increase very considerably in the next two or three years. This has been foreseen and provided for by the installation of a well on the sandplain and a powerful windmill, which pumps to the top of a neighbouring rise. From a storage tank on this point the water is to be gravitated across two miles of country to supply the homestead and provide additional stock water on the way. The property is already divided into 22 paddocks and has three dams, of 3,000 cubic yards average capacity.

Mr. Troy makes no secret of the fact that he started farming without capital and he declares to-day, with justifiable pride, that his property is practically unencumbered. He has reached this happy position by good methods and careful husbandry, and by seeing so far as lay in his power that every pound spent has served a useful purpose. Kaluwiri—that is the name of the farm—boasts no paternal homestead, no motor car, no truck or tractor, but it does boast a good farm-

tial homestead, no motor car, no truck or tractor, but it does boast a good farming plant, with 40 horses, good water supplies, and good fencing and sheds. Furthermore, Mr. and Mrs. Troy have always made it a practice to obtain as much as possible of the farm's requirements from the farm and to that end they have kept a small herd of milking Shorthorns to provide milk, butter and cream; pigs for pork and bacon, and to turn farm waste into profit; fowls, and a well-worked vegetable garden.

The best of the country on Kaluwiri is a heavy York gum and jam clay, which requires much working, but which is capable of holding substantial reserves of moisture in the sub-soil and has the fertility to grow heavy hay and grain crops. This runs out into lighter mallee country and through that into first and second-grade sandplain. The crops normally grow strong and flaggy, but the nature of the soil and regularity of the climate makes failures, under Mr. Troy's methods, practically impossible.

When Mr. Troy tells new settlers how they should farm and finance, he speaks as one having the authority of personal experience crowned with success.