

THE LAND  
AND  
THE NATION

*Rural Report of the  
Liberal Land Committee*

1923-25

HODDER AND STOUGHTON  
LIMITED LONDON

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## FOREWORD.

The Enquiry which has preceded this Report has been prolonged and extensive. The Report is consequently a bulky document, and attention may therefore profitably be directed to the way in which its material is arranged.

There are four Parts. The first states the problem and the urgent reasons for seeking a solution. The second contains a detailed survey of facts. The third deals with Land Tenure, and the fourth sets out the policy which the Land Committee puts forward.

At the beginning of each Part will be found a brief synopsis of its contents, and at the end of Parts 2, 3 and 4, a number of Appendices relating to the text of the Part.

There is a sequence and, it is hoped, an organic unity between the four Parts, but each Part may be read as a unit by those who are more particularly interested in its subject matter than in that of the others.

The Committee believes that in the Report itself will be found evidence of the care which has been taken both in ascertaining facts and in working out the policy, but it can scarcely hope that in so large a mass of close detail there could be no errors. Nor does it put forward the policy as though it were not capable of amendment and improvement. The policy, as a whole, is based on the facts of national life to-day in town and country. Constructive criticism and practical alternatives are invited from all who realise the vital importance of these facts.



# PART 1.

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*"It is from the tillers of the soil that spring the best citizens, the staunchest soldiers; and theirs are the enduring rewards which are most grateful and least envied. Such as devote themselves to that pursuit are least of all men given to evil counsels."*

(CATO—*De Re Rustica.*)

## PART I.

### CHAPTER I.

#### ARGUMENT.

*The prosperity of the town depends on that of the country ; that of the nation on both. The strength of our country life, whether measured by the output of food or by the number of country dwellers or by their standard of life, was gravely tested by the war. Though war dangers may be relieved war lessons remain, and should be taken to heart. A nation relying only on its manufacturing industries is unstable, particularly when unemployment in industries threatens to become permanent and when our command of the world markets will not return. We have more people unemployed than we have engaged in agriculture. We have agricultural depression and many believing that it can be met only by low standard farming. We have a smaller proportion of our people living on the land than any country has ever had. We depend for our food on others more than any country ever depended before. We have a landless peasantry such as nowhere else has existed, and we offer them much too little in the way of independent life and practically nothing in the way of chances for advancement. Are these things inevitable? Many have thought not. Do they demand serious thought? Surely they do. Do they present a case for drastic and determined national action? Later chapters will show.*

## CHAPTER II.

### ARGUMENT.

*There are ample facts upon which a correct judgment can be formed. They show that there is no need for rural ill-health if we are not afraid of drastic treatment, and if we will pursue it determined to keep the interest of the nation above all private interests. The simple principle is found to be very far-reaching. It means that land differs from other "property" in being an asset of which the nation is bound to make the most. It means that the nation can fairly expect service in return for the holding of land. It means that that service must be productive. But to make their service truly productive for the nation those who use the land may also fairly ask that simple principles should be observed. They should be secure of the full fruits of their work, and their work should be such as ensures to all workers a proper wage and opportunities for advancement.*

*The question arises whether our present system of land-holding, as it works to-day, either adequately recognises the needs of the nation or the necessities of existing and would-be land workers. Detailed study of the facts must precede an answer.*

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## CHAPTER I.

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### RURAL LIFE AND INDUSTRIALISM.

I. Our nation has too long neglected its agriculture and its rural life. It has too long aspired to the factory and scorned the furrow. The saying of the stern Roman which faces this opening chapter of our Report embodies an eternal and universal truth. To it many nations of modern Europe have returned. It was a German statesman who declared that without great and flourishing agriculture at its side industry would soon use up the best forces of the nation, and that agriculture is the mother of the nation's strength which industry employs. He voiced a powerful movement of opinion throughout Europe. Great Britain alone remained wholly unaffected by it. Yet it is at least as true here as elsewhere that without an effective, even if unconscious, partnership between town and country there can be no confidence in the continued well-being of the nation.

In London, Birmingham, Glasgow and Manchester, as in Cato's Rome, health and physique is maintained by the constant infiltration of rural elements. Not less true is it that town mentality soon becomes morbid without continued contact with country experience and continued reinforcement from rural sources of sanity.

Politically nothing could be more dangerous than that national policy should be wholly directed by, and in the interests of, a large majority of the population concentrated on a minute proportion of the total land area. Socially and economically nothing could be more dangerous than that industry should thrive temporarily by using up the health and vigour of the rural population while throwing on the scrap-heap the devitalised products of

urban environment. The greater the predominance of industry over agriculture the more carefully must the nation, and industry itself, look to the soundness of its rural foundations. The first broad result of honestly examining the state of our nation to-day is to find that our towns contain more people than they can employ, and that our fields employ fewer persons in proportion to their area than the fields of any country whose civilisation is reasonably comparable to our own. Here is a *prima facie* case for scrutiny.

#### TESTS OF RURAL LIFE.

2. To judge the condition of rural life three distinct tests should be applied :—

First, the number and vigour of persons maintained on the land and supported by its working.

Second, the quantity and quality of food produced from the land, and

Third, the standard of life enjoyed by those who depend more or less directly on the land for a livelihood.

The importance of each of these tests is obvious enough at all times. Their relative importance may vary according to the temporary or local circumstances. In war-time, for example, the point of immediate importance will be actual and potential food production and the present fitness of the nation's manhood. It is difficult, if not impossible, to say that in normal times any one of these tests markedly exceeds the others in importance. All three interact, and if at any time and in any country rural life fails to pass any one of them, there is ground for grave uneasiness on that score alone, and for strong suspicion that the application of the other tests will reveal further weaknesses.

#### LESSONS OF WAR-TIME.

3. We have no desire to press war-time experiences unduly hard. But in the history of the late war are contained facts of particular significance and important

indications that bold policies may succeed where timid policies would certainly have failed. Let some of the facts be first set down.

The English Army, drawn from a population 80 per cent. urban, had a disquietingly high percentage of rejections. Our nation had, it is said, a higher percentage of men unfit for military service than either our opponents or our allies.<sup>1</sup> Nor is it yet forgotten that during the war we came within appreciable distance of being starved out by the submarine campaign. That campaign might, perhaps, never have started had not Germany been convinced that British agriculture was so enfeebled that it could not, to any serious extent, increase production.<sup>2</sup> The country had to face again a crisis similar to that which it faced in the Napoleonic wars, but immeasurably more severe. Our ancestors were better off for labour; they had a smaller margin to meet by emergency measures and public opinion of the day was conscious that their daily bread depended on the weather and their own exertions. "In the German War," Lord Ernle says, "a generation had grown up which had never realised the importance of home-grown food, and could not conceive the possibility of their exclusion from foreign markets." The statement drawn up in December, 1917, of the amount of food in the country, of the number of ships sunk and the amount of tonnage available could not be issued to the public; it would have spread at home too profound an alarm and in enemy lands too warm an encouragement. We know to-day how narrow was the nation's escape in the winter of 1917—18. And, in remembering this, it is well to take into account that part of the problem was that we were dependent on imports, not only for food and provisions of war, but also for timber and other natural products,

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Ernle, "The Land and Its People." (Page 102 *et seq.*)

<sup>2</sup> Now (1925) five out of eight would-be Army recruits are being rejected. Before the war the Navy rejected 30,000 boys to get 5,000 future sailors.

which took up ship-room ; the teaching of war applies to forestry as well as to food. Emergency measures raised the home-grown wheat supplies of English land from that for 14,000,000 persons to 19,000,000 persons. The emergency measures were not necessarily those which would wisely be taken in time of peace. But with regard to the fundamentals of national well-being there is no difference in kind between the case for vigorous action in war-time and that for vigorous action in time of peace. Little can be done once war has started to undo the results of past neglect or indifference. Much which in the event may be of vital service in war may be done in peace-time for the profoundest purposes of peace.

We have said that we do not desire to press War-time experience unduly. But we maintain unhesitatingly the necessity of remembering that the invention of the submarine and of the aeroplane have removed any excuse there might ever have been for England's willingness to rely on imported food more largely than is necessitated by any necessary discrepancy between the population to be fed and the maximum productivity of English agricultural land.

#### NATIONAL TOP-HEAVINESS.

4. At the present time special importance attaches to the rural life of Britain being sound, vigorous and progressive.

The Census of 1921 shows that out of a total population in England and Wales of less than thirty-eight million persons more than thirty millions, i.e., just on 80 per cent. live in Urban Districts. This preponderance of urban over rural population is the culmination of a tendency set in motion by the Industrial Revolution. Towns, as we know them to-day, have grown, not as market towns serving the needs of a regional population, but as workshops supplying world markets. Their size and the employments they offer their inhabitants are governed by their ability to sell goods abroad. But these world

markets are no longer expanding. They have been seriously restricted, and as they recover, English trade finds itself engaged in fiercer competition than ever before. Even if the world markets were still expanding as they were throughout the 19th century, the present structure of British social and economic life would be top-heavy. Of the dangers latent in such top-heaviness many of the best minds of the 19th century were conscious. The danger they feared has come into being. There is in our towns to-day a volume of unemployment unprecedented in its persistence and unparalleled in other countries. The suffering consequent on unemployment is mitigated by Unemployment Insurance. But the cost of relief in itself handicaps trade, and no direct palliatives can prevent the demoralisation which is unemployment's gravest menace.

#### MALDISTRIBUTION.

5. It may well prove impossible to reabsorb into urban employment the million and a quarter persons now out of work. A recent report of the Federation of British Industries declares stoutly that the present trade position in the country gives every appearance of becoming permanent. Will the boldest optimist prophesy that all the miners now out of work will presently be back in the pits? Whatever happens, there will be for many years a volume of unemployment such as must give rise to the gravest anxiety. What can be done to alleviate or cure? Something, in the towns themselves, by works of capital improvement or by anticipating public works of the future. But, in the long run, not much. Faced with the problems of unemployment in towns, statesmanship will be tested by its ability to include agriculture in its view. The first task must be to check the migration from country to town. A sustained effort to promote a return flow from town to country should follow. The aim should not only be to dissipate existing urban unemployment but to correct the maldistribution of population and national interest, which



is expressed by the figure of Great Britain as a pyramid standing on its apex. To both town and country it is of striking significance that the number of persons now registered as out of work (1,343,700 August, 1925) is larger than the total number of persons engaged in agriculture in the whole of Great Britain. (1,254,349, Census, 1921.)

#### WAGES AND DEPOPULATION.

6. The industry of agriculture has constantly, in the last three years, been declared by its leaders to be in an alarming state of depression, to be alleviated only by paying wages below living level and reducing the number of labourers now employed. Low wages, as certainly as, if more slowly than, actual discharges mean rural depopulation. Agriculture, as at present conducted, has been accelerating or is threatening to accelerate migration from country to town just when town populations urgently require reduction. At present there is a lull both in protests and prophecies. The slight rise in wages secured by the Wages Boards has been met somehow—often by expedients which make the increases illusory. Very few farmers have fulfilled their threats to sack their men. But the “will to sack” is kept alive by arguments of economic despair. The threat of reverting to “prairie farming” is a much more serious thing than those who use it realise. It is more serious fundamentally than the declaration that agriculture can give a return to landlords and farmers only by the payment of starvation wages to labourers. That, after all, amounts mainly to confessing agriculture to be a sweated industry, and means of dealing with sweated industries have been devised. But the prairie-farming threat, used lightly perhaps, but persistently, raises the widest issues of national well-being, and with them the whole question of agrarian tenure.

## SOME QUESTIONS.

7. Is the case for agricultural despair unanswerable? Is there any basis for the theory, so often disproved in other industries, that in agriculture underpaid labour is cheap? Is the land of England too poor and thin? Is our climate to blame for this economic disaster as for so many social inconveniences? Is the proximity of England's agricultural land to the best markets of the world a handicap rather than an advantage? Is Free Trade England condemned to fail because of its economic system where Free Trade Holland and Denmark have succeeded?

## SOME ANSWERS.

8. The answers to these questions can hardly all be in the affirmative. Some men of real authority are, in fact, prepared with emphatic negatives to each. They say that England not so long since led the world in farming and might do so again; that her soil and climate are, on the whole, as good as any and better than most; that, given even an elementary system of organising distribution and sales, most kinds of agricultural produce should be remunerative; that the population maintained on the land, so far from continuing to diminish, might be largely increased; and that a very large proportion of the food now imported into Great Britain could be grown at home. There are even to be found men whose practical experience of farming has not been confined to the English shires who assert that, in food production, England could be self-supporting and that without any system of Protection or Bounties.

## OPTIMISM AND ACTION.

9. We are not for the moment concerned either to endorse or deny these assertions. We wish now only to emphasise the importance of examining them with reference to the reiterated "prairie-farming" threat, with its

implications of a continued aggravation of urban unemployment. Making all allowance for the variation of conditions in districts, the differences between rural pessimists and rural optimists are too sharp to admit of compromise. One side or the other is definitely and seriously wrong. In determining which is wrong and which right the whole position of agriculture in this country has to come under review. It may be that the pessimists assume the inevitability of some factor which optimists think could be removed by deliberate and purposeful action. The difference, in fact, may be not merely between pessimists and optimists, but between those who are afraid of and those who are willing to pursue a bold and comprehensive policy. For such a review, material at the present time fortunately is ample. But before it be undertaken, let the primary tests of rural prosperity be applied to English rural life of to-day and summary results stated.

#### POPULATION ON THE LAND.

10. The first test is the population of the land. As has been already pointed out, a fraction over 20 per cent. of the people of England and Wales live in rural districts. Many of them are urban workers living in the country. Only 7·2 per cent. of our occupied population was in 1921 dependent on agriculture. The Census of 1921 showed a slight war-caused rise in a curve which had dipped steeply downwards since 1871. Since 1921 the number of agricultural workers has declined heavily. Proportionately the agricultural population is lower than ever it has been, and lower than it is in any country in the world.

The result of the first test is briefly that Great Britain to-day retains on the land a smaller percentage of its total population than any country has ever maintained in any part of the world at any period of the world's history.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The summary statements of results in this Chapter will all be justified in Part II.

## PRODUCTION OF FOOD.

II. The second test is the production of food. We imported last year not less than £340,000,000's worth of the kind of food which might have been produced at home. Yearly this figure increases: and yet the cultivated area of England has considerably diminished. The arable area has shrunk seriously, and it is still shrinking. Land is being put down to grass which used to grow corn; other land is being allowed to go wild. According to Sir Thomas Middleton, the following is the result of comparing a hundred acres of cultivated land in Great Britain and Germany:—

—	Number of persons fed.	Amount Corn produced per 100 acres.	Potatoes.	Meat.	Milk.
<i>Germany—</i> 100 acres	70-75	33 tons	55 tons	4½ tons	28 tons
<i>England—</i> 100 acres	45-50	15 ..	11 ..	4 ..	17½ ..

These figures indicate primarily that Germany puts more land under the plough than does England. They should not be used without reference to Sir Thomas Middleton's own Report and to Professor Macgregor's criticism in the Report of the Agricultural Tribunal. But one deduction from them may be used without qualification, namely, that Germany, by maintaining a high percentage of arable land, is enabled to excel Great Britain in the production, not only of corn, but also of meat and milk.

The result of the second test, then, is that in an age of invention and increased production, of strained credit

and exchanges, and of new threats in sea and air, the island of Great Britain is to a larger extent dependent on imported food than any country in any part of the world at any period of the world's history, and yet has made, and is making, no effective effort to bring her production up to the level of other countries whose position is nothing like so precarious.

#### WAGES AND LIFE.

12. The third test is the standard of life enjoyed by those who depend on the land for a livelihood. "The economic position of the farm worker," says a well-known authority, "is far better than at many previous periods in his squalid history." That may be so. If it were not, the advance of civilisation would indeed be a mockery. The point of vital importance is that there has never been so serious a discrepancy between the wages paid in the town and those paid in the country. This difference is not in any way due to country workers being able to benefit by a lower cost of living. We have a landless peasantry such as nowhere else has existed on the land. In economic terms that means that agricultural wages have to be considered in relation to a cost of living fixed by village shopkeepers. We have, in fact, a rural population living not on food grown on the land they work, but on foodstuffs distributed by urban wholesalers and often imported from other countries. That is one aspect of the wage question. Another is that the opportunities of life put within reach of the townsman, however serious and well-founded be his own grievances, are debarred to the agricultural worker. In the last few years wages have been scaled down for the agricultural labourer more drastically than in any other industry. The minimum wage for an able-bodied man ranges now from 29s. 2d. to 42s. per week, but the average is only about 32s., and the minimum in a large number of cases is the maximum. Moreover, it must be remembered that the cash wages now paid are almost invariably the total wage, owing to the

operations of the Wages Boards having tended to make farmers reckon up the cash value of allowances. The general standard of rural housing is deplorable. The poverty of the labourers affects the shopkeepers and all who live by serving the labourers' needs. There can be no hesitation in declaring that the result of applying the third test to rural life in England to-day is to find that rural life provides a large section of those who live on it with neither the means nor the opportunity of individual and social development.

There is no comfort to be derived from arguing that lower standards of rural life are found in other European countries. This argument ignores the effects of national standards of living on rural standards, and it omits rural civilisations of the Danish type. It tends to compare the lot of a minority in other countries with that of a majority in Great Britain.

The peculiar danger in English rural conditions is that the discrepancy between the economic position of the rural and urban worker constantly diverts from agriculture the best brains, the strongest bodies, and the most adventurous spirits. Nor is it a matter merely of material standards. Spiritual and moral issues of human independence and self-respect are deeply involved. In the whole rural argument must be borne in mind, not only that the English agricultural labourer is underpaid, but that he is caste-bound. The fine term "agricultural labourer" is itself turned to class-conscious use, and in using it in this Report, interchangeably with "agricultural worker," we emphasise its most honourable connotations.

#### THE NEED FOR DETERMINATION.

13. Merely to call attention to depopulation, low production and poverty in rural areas would be useless. It has been done before. It has disquieted a respectable minority of English opinion. But there is still little or no appreciation of the immediate significance of the facts.

There is little belief in the possibility of alleviation, and there is even less determination to invent and apply a remedy.

¶ We believe that a remedy is within reach. That is our justification for writing and issuing this Report. Under the name of "Cultivating Tenure" we put forward a policy which, we believe, provides a remedy for the fundamental ills from which agriculture, and consequently rural life as a whole in this country, is suffering. It is a bold and drastic policy. For that we make no excuse. The situation is too urgent, and the object to be attained too great, for tinkering with abuses in the hope that sooner or later something will turn up for the good of agriculture, or that the cumulative effect of minor reforms will, in defiance of all past experience, prove effective in the nick of time.

A policy which is confessedly drastic will naturally be closely scrutinised. We have no fears of such a scrutiny. To enable it to be carried out fairly and impartially we set out at length the main facts and considerations on which the policy is based. What is most to be feared is not criticism, but apathy, and for this reason we beg that readers of this Report will, before they proceed further, reflect on what is contained in this preliminary chapter and ask themselves, before they begin to consider our particular proposals, whether the case for drastic national action to redeem English agricultural and rural life is not irresistible.

## CHAPTER II.

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### PRINCIPLES OF POLICY.

14. Data for examination of the rural problem are, fortunately, peculiarly plentiful at the present time. Of Blue Books on agriculture and its related problems there has been for years a plethora. There is a large library of diagnoses and proposals.

‡ In the last year two official Reports of unusual scope and authority have appeared, the Report of the Departmental Committee on Distribution and Prices of Agricultural Produce, commonly known as the Linlithgow Committee, and that of the Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation.<sup>1</sup> The Committee and the Tribunal thoroughly examined two aspects of the agricultural problem, the former carrying out a comprehensive and precise survey of the reasons for the spread in price between producer and consumer, the latter examining the English rural problem in the light shed by policies adopted in foreign countries to promote the prosperity of agriculture.

### THE LAND ENQUIRY OF 1909-12.

15. We have also, of course, been able to use the invaluable survey of the rural land problem made by the Land Enquiry Committee in the years 1909-12, and published in 1913. By universal consent this pre-war Liberal Land Enquiry did its work with a thoroughness which makes unnecessary any further examination of many parts of the problem. The laborious and extensive enquiries

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<sup>1</sup> The important recommendations of these two bodies are summarised in Appendix X.



upon which this Report was based covered the whole of England and Wales, and in its pages are to be found an accumulation of evidence which is at once first-hand and first-rate. Our task has been to extend the Enquiry to the further portions of the field which, it is now seen, must be covered. In particular we have brought into the argument a number of economic factors, the importance of which was not wholly realised before the War. In framing a policy we have been compelled to take account both of the lessons of the War and of certain fundamental changes in the facts which have occurred since 1913.

#### A VALUABLE DIAGNOSIS.

16. In obtaining a clear view of the present position of agriculture in Great Britain, we have been very materially helped by the work of an unofficial Committee, known as the Hutchison Committee, from its Chairman, General Sir Robert Hutchison, M.P., and composed of Members of Parliament, practically acquainted with rural conditions, of landlords, agricultural experts, farmers and others. The farmer members were all tenants of large farms. Small farmers, small-holders and agricultural labourers were not represented. After collecting a great deal of evidence, both oral and written, the Committee applied to the problem an invaluable amount of skill and knowledge, and produced a very valuable survey of the position.

Apart from its Parliamentary Members, the Hutchison Committee did not represent any particular political tendency. Its findings, in fact, gave evidence of considerable diversity of political conviction, but they emphasise the interdependence of many factors in the problem and the necessary interlocking of many lines of remedy. They constitute a valuable diagnosis and reference to them will be found in this volume.

The Hutchison Committee did not produce any definite programme of immediate action, and it has been

part of our task to translate its findings into political terms, to work, in fact, from a diagnosis to a treatment.

#### GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

17. We have been able to make extensive investigations both in this country and abroad. We have thus been enabled to check and amplify both the facts and opinions of other enquirers, and to pursue our own lines of enquiry. As between policies of drift and one of decision, certain conclusions have emerged beyond question.

*First*, that modern States in general have found it advisable and possible to safeguard agriculture.

*Second*, that if English agriculture is less prosperous than that of other countries it is because of its internal condition not of external forces.

*Third*, that a practical rural policy must be one which, while it deals with known economic facts, allows for human nature; which does not discourage personal enterprise or interfere with individual judgment and skill.

*Fourth*, that as rural ills are in general deep-seated, no national policy for rural life can succeed if it evades fundamental questions and hesitates to attack root causes.

#### THE WORK OF LIBERALISM.

18. Economic factors in the problem are intimately dovetailed with imperfections of human nature and elaborately complicated by defects in social evolution. Any constructive policy must arouse fierce and stubborn opposition. Vested interests and entrenched privilege, linked with all the forces of inertia, have to be overcome. To overcome such resistance has been, as we believe, Liberalism's historic function. The rôle of Liberalism, as we see it, has been not so much to liberate men as to enable them to liberate themselves. In so doing it has set itself to secure and preserve the predominance of the national interest over all sectional and private interests,

to break down barriers of caste and to remove obstacles imposed by privilege.

Its proper method has been to work from a diagnosis of the facts to a remedy. The facts must be seen without prejudice. Remedies must be applied without flinching. The aim must be, while being fair to interests which past neglect has allowed to grow up, to develop to the best advantage of the community the national estate. In this spirit, not with any desire to attack individuals or classes, we have approached the whole question. The policy which has resulted, that of Cultivating Tenure, seems to us the right rural policy for the nation. We believe that among all Parties will be found men and women capable of disregarding party labels in support of a national policy which does not pretend to be a panacea but is calculated to release new springs of rural vigour.

#### THE NATION'S RIGHTS.

19. What then are the principles on which the Policy of Cultivating Tenure is based? There are two main principles and three subsidiary, two points of origin and three points of direction. The main principles are:—

First, that the land of our country is the fundamental national asset, property in which can never be regarded in quite the same light as other property, and has, in fact, never been so regarded in English law.

Second, that the obligation of service in return for the use of land must be re-asserted, so that those who hold land shall hold it as trustees for the nation's welfare and that those who fail to carry out the obligations of the trust shall forfeit their trusteeship.

These first two principles, undeniable as they are, are unfortunately not yet beyond its discussion. Carelessness and confusion of thought have impoverished and often almost disabled thought on the land question. For the moment we must be content to illustrate rather than expound the two related principles, with a view to showing

that if put to a practical test they would not be denied even by the most Conservative-minded people who might distrust their abstract expression.

#### LAND AND MONOPOLY.

20. The clearest illustration may perhaps be derived from purely imaginary cases. A grocer may neglect his business as any private citizen may neglect his house, his garden or his person without bringing on himself more than the pity or dislike of his neighbours. Bad business management by him does not decrease national welfare. His employees will lose their employment ; his customers will drop away. But the customers will find other counters at which to purchase sugar and tea ; other grocers will increase their staff to cope with their increased business. Private citizens who neglect house, garden or person come within reach of community action only if they constitute a nuisance, i.e., if their proximity is noxious or dangerous. But suppose a large landowner were wholly to neglect his family estate of 20,000 acres and either refuse to let his farms or let them for unproductive purposes. In this case the national welfare would be directly affected by the diminution of food output and of the possible total volume of employment for agricultural labourers. Can it be imagined for a moment that the community would stand idle and say that X—'s 20,000 acres of land is his personal property with which he can deal as he likes ? The fundamental difference between the grocer's shop and X—'s land turns on the element of monopoly in land. In the last resort no nation may ignore the difference without abandoning its status as a nation.

Such a case of obvious and aggressive neglect of land has, of course, not arisen. But the principle must be applied to all land and to all degrees of negligence. As a corollary, it follows that the use of land for amenity or sport must not be allowed to interfere with what is both its primary and its ultimate purpose, the production of

food and the maintenance of population in physical and mental health. To secure the right use of the land is the concern not merely of the rural population; it vitally concerns urban populations also. Agriculture, it is true, is no longer our largest industry. That in itself is a danger signal. In any case its strength or weakness reacts upon all industrialists. Our industrial towns are divorced from the countryside. But they cannot safely ignore the question of how many people and what kind of people the countryside is producing and maintaining.

#### SOIL AND SITE.

21. In illustrating the first main principle we have, in fact, touched on the second. The kind of property in agricultural land which can be properly recognised by a community is the fullest right of occupancy or possession which is compatible with the community's right to insist that it shall be used to its full capacity. To this point it will be necessary to return, but it is advisable here to explain very briefly the reason for confining the proposition under discussion to agricultural land. We are not suggesting that a different principle must be applied to non-agricultural land. But we are concerned for the moment with land as soil. The application of the principle to land as site needs consideration from quite a different angle.

#### THE INDIVIDUAL'S RIGHTS.

22. The three principles which have been referred to above as "Points of Direction," express, in a sense, the other side of the social contract. They contain the conditions on which individual citizens have a right to insist if they are to accommodate themselves to the pre-eminent right of the State. These subsidiary principles are:—

1. That all agriculturists should be secure of the fruits of applying to the land their knowledge, energy, capital and enterprise.

2. That those who work for wages on the land should be able to earn a living wage.

3. That all who work on the land should have full and fair opportunities of acquiring independent status and of advancement.

#### THE LANDLORD'S POSITION.

23. If these principles be accepted as valid, it is of urgent importance to examine in relation to them the use now made of English land, the tenure on which the land is held, together with the purpose and the substance of the "ownership" of it now enjoyed and the methods by which persons competent to use agricultural land are given access to it.

If it be found that the country's fundamental asset is being seriously misused or wasted, or that agricultural development is impeded, or that opportunities of acquiring independence are generally denied to land workers, it then becomes essential to examine the position of the third partner in the agricultural industry who is not covered by any of the principles enunciated above. It may be that there is some other principle not as yet set forth which covers him. Such a principle indeed there is. But it is one based much less on primary rights than are the five which relate to the farmer and the land worker. It is that, as in the past he has performed a certain function in the industry, so he should be allowed to exercise that function if he is still capable of it. That function has been to provide the industry with capital and to lead it on the path of progress. If now he is either unwilling or unable to perform that function, he can have no moral right to remain undisturbed. The landlord stands or falls on the principle that his land-holding enables either the State or the tillers of the land to use the land of the country to its best advantage.

With these principles and their corollaries in mind, we may now proceed to set out the facts of how the total

land surface of Great Britain is used, with an eye also to the purposes for which it might be, but is not, used. The facts of how the land is divided among "occupiers" and "owners" must inevitably follow. With that must be made a much closer and exhaustive statement of the facts summarily disposed of in Chapter I, namely the population maintained on English land, its productivity and the standard of life enjoyed by its workers. These facts considered with corresponding facts from other countries will be found suggestive. They throw considerable light on underlying causes. But investigation of causes must be carried further and principles of remedy based on this fuller examination.

# PART 2.

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## PART 2.

### CHAPTER III.

#### ARGUMENT.

*There are five divisions to this chapter. The first shows that our production of food is probably stationary, and certainly supports a smaller proportion of our population than it used to do. We import much more food than ever before. We do not produce as much as other countries, most of which are rapidly increasing their production and are outstripping us.*

*Division II. shows that our farmed land has shrunk, though prospects alike for wheat growing and for animal husbandry appear good. The total number of our agricultural holdings tends to decrease, and particularly of our smaller holdings, while elsewhere the opposite tendencies prevail. Ownership here is less well diffused than elsewhere, and forestry and reclamation are less well attended to.*

*Division III. shows that our agricultural population is fewer per hundred acres, and has declined more than anywhere else, and that our land is not in general so used as to give the most employment.*

*Division IV. shows that in many districts the wages paid do not amount to a living wage, but there are indications that a better wage could be afforded. There seems to be a lack of skilled men, but it seems likely that this may be due to low wages and bad prospects. Agriculture abroad seems to offer a better life, and hard work on the land does not*

*appear to be resented by men who are independent and have a prospect of advancement. Housing here is deplorable but elsewhere even housing improves if there are security and good prospects.*

*Division V. shows that whereas the country ought to provide a reservoir of healthy stock for the towns, it very often does not.*

## CHAPTER IV.

### ARGUMENT.

*Division I. shows that a great deal of farming in England is far less productive than it need be. "Safety first" has been our motto, but we could undoubtedly produce much more before we reach the point at which extra effort becomes uneconomic. A cloud of witnesses testify to the facts, which seem to be made worse by the landowner's inability to equip holdings properly, by insecurity owing to prospects of sale, and by the farmer's increased difficulties after he has bought.*

*But it is shown in Division II. that under proper conditions wonders can be done with British land, particularly by small men. The most energetic races seem to do well whenever they have a chance.*

*Division III. shows that there is abundant scope for a forward forestry policy, and Division IV. that scientific advance has enormously increased the possibilities of profitable production.*

*In Appendices to this Part appear 24 Tables of Statistics referred to in Chapter III, a composite view of Small Holdings in their social, practical and economic aspect, and an analysis of fifty years' change in a representative English village.*

## CHAPTER III.

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### FOOD, LAND AND PEOPLE.

24. This chapter deals with facts, not opinions. Facts are most conveniently expressed in figures, and when so expressed commonly misunderstood. Accurate figures are essential in business. Without their use business would be impossible. They are no less essential in any social or political study although when used in this connection they are commonly referred to as "statistics" and passed over with a flippant, thought-saving phrase. The figures here quoted are chosen partly as evidence relied on by the best authorities to establish facts of importance, and partly as illustrations of facts established otherwise than by statistics.

#### *Division I.*

#### *Production and Food Imports.*

25. "In 1914 the gross production from British land was practically the same as it was in 1814 and much less than it was in 1840."<sup>1</sup> This startling sentence expresses the view of a close student of agriculture at home and abroad—Mr. Christopher Turnor.

Mr. R. S. Inglis Palgrave, F.R.S., made an estimate to the Royal Statistical Society in February, 1905, showing that in 1872 the annual value of products from farms in the United Kingdom was £233,000,000. This figure rose to £268,000,000 in 1874, sank in 1896 to £161,000,000, and was in 1903 only £173,000,000.

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<sup>1</sup> The Land and its Problems, page 77.

Such statements as these are criticised very severely by other authorities.

Sir Henry Rew, for example, says that they are based simply on the reduction of arable land and ignore the very great development of market gardening. It certainly seems hard to believe that the 11,000,000 acres of "arable land and gardens" known to exist in England and Wales in 1814, much of it being still unenclosed and one-third of it being annually in fallow, should have produced as much as to-day's arable acreage of 11,000,000 acres. It is, however, abundantly clear that even if one hundred years of farming developments have enabled us, as well indeed it might, to increase our production of home-grown food, the increase has not been so great but that some authorities should doubt its existence. In any case there is no comparison between the progress made in the last thirty years in the production of English soil as compared with that of other countries. It will be shown later that in the period covered by Mr. Palgrave other countries have increased their output.

#### FOOD AND POPULATION.

26. Figures in succeeding paragraphs confirm the general impression that English production is now at best stationary. Throughout the last century the population of Great Britain has enormously increased. In 1814 it stood at about 12 $\frac{1}{4}$  millions. In 1921 it was returned at 42 $\frac{3}{4}$  millions. In general terms it is true to say that before 1760 England raised all the wheat required to feed her own population and exported a surplus. Between 1760 and 1840 England met the greater part of her home requirements.<sup>1</sup> In 1834-40 for example "the soil of the United Kingdom supported no fewer than 23,814,000 people."<sup>2</sup> That was the high-water mark of British food production. In the period 1909-13 we produced food

<sup>1</sup> Middleton's *Food Production in War*, page 94.

<sup>2</sup> " " " " " page 97.

sufficient for only 15½ million persons,<sup>1</sup> and in 1914, according to Mr. Christopher Turnor, wheat for only 8 million persons.<sup>2</sup>

#### FOOD IMPORTS.

27. Lord Selborne's Agricultural Policy Committee in 1916 reported that before the war we were importing into these islands foodstuffs which might have been produced here to the value of 200 million pounds. The corresponding figure for 1924 is not less than 340 million pounds. To go rather more into detail, in 1913 we imported from abroad 141 million pounds' worth of meat, butter, cheese and eggs ; in 1924 we imported 185 millions' worth. We imported, that is, last year, when we had 1½ millions unemployed, when our foreign trade amounted to only 75 per cent. of that of 1913, when our income from investments was heavily down, and when our shipping was only 33 per cent. instead of 44 per cent. of the world shipping, 44 million pounds' worth more in these four commodities than we did in 1913. In 1913 59 per cent. of our total meat supplies were produced at home ; last year the proportion went down to 48 per cent. There was, of course, a certain increase of population, but nothing like enough to explain the difference in imports.

#### FOOD IMPORTS AND HOME PRODUCTIONS.

28. Table A in Appendix I (page 136) shows details of food imported in 1924, together with the home production of each commodity and percentages of each home grown and imported.

It will be seen that 77 per cent. of our wheat and flour, between 54 per cent. and 65 per cent. of our meat supplies, and between 54 per cent. and 82 per cent. of our dairy products, came from abroad.

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<sup>1</sup> Middleton's Food Production in War, page 96.

<sup>2</sup> Chris. Turnor's "The Land and its Problems," page 19.

## WHEAT IMPORTS.

29. The production and importation of wheat should receive rather more special mention. Here the figures for 1922 can be given in closer detail. In that year the percentage of wheat and flour imported for English consumption was just over 70 per cent. Practically the whole of this was used for bread. On the other hand only about two-thirds of home-grown wheat is made into flour for human consumption, owing, apparently, to the preference given by bakers to the strong milling imported grain and partly to the quantity used for seed or fed to poultry and stock. It is worth noting that of the bread eaten in this country 80 per cent. is made of flour imported either as such or as grain, and that each year the imports of flour increase at the expense of the imports of grain, to the disadvantage, of course, of our home milling industry.

## WHEAT PRODUCTION—ENGLAND AND DENMARK.

30. Exaggerated importance is, however, sometimes attached to wheat production, as though to increase the acreage under wheat were the be-all and end-all of agricultural policy. The wheat area is, of course, of vital importance, but neither agricultural nor national salvation rests ultimately on growing at home all the wheat required for the nation's bread. It is important in this connection to note the story of Denmark's agricultural renaissance. The most interesting point in her story is that when she, no less than Great Britain, was exposed to heavy imports of cheap wheat from the virgin prairie land of America, she accepted the importation of cheap wheat and extracted from it the maximum of advantage. Instead of attempting to compete in corn growing with America, either with or without Protection, she built up a system of arable farming for stock, making use of any cheap imports which might be used for fodder. Owing to their adaptability, cheap wheat, in fact, became a blessing to Danish

farmers. In Great Britain cheap wheat, though a boon to the urban population, was to farmers a disaster. English agriculturists took no decided step to discover or adopt a use for arable land alternative to wheat growing. In natural consequence, the area under wheat has for the last 40 years steadily declined.

On the other hand, our home production of wheat *per acre of land under wheat* is high. It would be surprising if it were not, as the land now used for wheat is the land which can be relied on to give the heaviest return. The point may be most clearly illustrated perhaps by a simple statement showing the yield of cereals in Great Britain and Denmark respectively, together with a statement of what the yield might be if Great Britain grew cereals on the same scale as Denmark. Table B in Appendix I (page 137) gives the figures in detail.

The broad fact here brought out is that Denmark, in the year in question (1922), produced  $1\frac{3}{4}$  million tons of wheat, barley and oats. Great Britain in the same year produced  $4\frac{3}{4}$  million tons. The acreage of Great Britain is approximately six times that of Denmark. Great Britain, were the same proportion of land given to corn growing, might have produced  $10\frac{1}{2}$  million tons. But the increase would be, not in wheat, but in barley and oats.

#### ANIMAL HUSBANDRY—ENGLAND AND DENMARK.

31. This great increase in cereal crops would not be effected at the cost of other foodstuffs. The comparison is carried further in Table C (page 137), from which it appears that the Danish system, while enormously increasing the yield of cereal crops, would have reduced the number of sheep kept to nearly one-tenth, would have more than doubled the stock of cattle, increased six times the stock of pigs and raised the poultry stock eight times.

NOTE.—The comparisons here made have a strictly limited value. They show what could be done if the average productivity of Great Britain per square mile



of land, *whether now cultivated or now waste*, were raised to the Danish standard. For the moment we are not considering the amount of food production per cultivated acre in each country. That will be considered later.<sup>1</sup>

#### ADVANTAGE OF SOIL WITH GREAT BRITAIN.

32. Nor must it be imagined that Denmark, Holland, Belgium and Germany are peculiarly fortunate in the kind of land they have to cultivate. The broad truth is that the land of Great Britain as a whole is as good as any in Europe, and better than most. It is certainly intrinsically better than the greater part of Belgium and of Denmark.

Every observer of Danish farming is agreed that Danish success has been achieved in spite of its land, not because of it. Mr. H. Rider Haggard, in "Rural Denmark and Its Lessons," says:—

"Much of what the thrifty Danish agriculturist points out with pride as good soil we should call poor, sand-riddled stuff, a famished country."

The Scottish Agricultural Commission in 1904 reported:—

"The sandy detritus of the ice age, the scrapings of hard crystalline rocks, has given Denmark more poor than good land, and much of it we could know by no other name than a 'hungry soil.' Nor is the climate congenial."

Mr. Secbohm Rowntree's "Land and Labour in Belgium" gives convincing evidence of the property of much Belgian soil, and our Investigators in Holland and

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Rider Haggard's comparison in 1907 indicates how large was the discrepancy even before the War. With the same number of stock per 100 cultivated acres, Great Britain would then have been carrying 11 million horned stock instead of 7 millions, and 8½ million pigs instead of less than 2½ million. On the other hand Great Britain's 26 million sheep would have been reduced to less than 5 million.

Germany agree that Dutch and German agriculturists are not to be envied by English farmers for the land they have to use.

#### WHEAT PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION IN EUROPE.

33. The recent report of the International Institute of Agriculture, conveniently summarised in the *Economist* on August 21st, 1925, brings out the facts of Europe as a whole, which have considerable bearing on English agriculture and commerce. The British Isles, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark all import more wheat than they produce. All of these countries, in fact, except Denmark and Sweden, import more than 70 per cent. of their total requirements. France, Italy, Spain and Portugal, on the other hand, are mainly "self-supporting." Russia, which before the War exported 25 per cent. of her yield, last year imported corn. The Latin countries, generally speaking, are making sustained efforts to feed themselves as a matter of national policy, and so, too, are the "new countries." Germany, after a very bad crop in 1922, bought a great deal of wheat abroad, but after a good crop in 1923, bought very little. The general position in Europe is that whereas the Continent produced before the War three-quarters of the wheat required to feed the countries which were not self-supporting, to-day the whole of the wheat imported by European countries comes from other Continents. By this, Britain gains, to some extent, by the use of her shipping to bring corn to European ports. She loses, on the other hand, in the lack of alternative sources of supply.

#### PRODUCTION IN ENGLAND AND ABROAD.

34. We may now deal with the actual production of Britain's farm acres as compared with those of other countries. Here particular value attaches to the Report of the Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation. It will be remembered that this Tribunal was appointed by

Mr. Bonar Law when Prime Minister in 1922, and that before issuing its report it made a more closely detailed comparison of English and foreign food production than had previously been undertaken. Its members were all economists of high standing. They had access to information out of the reach of unofficial investigators. Table D (page 138), extracted from their report, will repay the closest attention. It will be seen that for the comparison therein made rather different periods had to be taken, owing to the different ways in which information is compiled in different countries. But the comparison is not thereby invalidated. The general indication is perfectly clear. It is that *the average yield of crops per acre shows a much larger increase over the last 40 to 50 years in Germany, Belgium, Holland and Denmark than in Great Britain.* These other countries have raised their production from a figure on the average well below the British to a figure on the average well above. Two of the four countries mentioned—Holland and Denmark—are Free Trade countries. The third—Belgium—is Free Trade so far as foodstuffs are concerned. The fourth—Germany—is Protectionist; but all alike have enormously raised their yield of crops per acre.

35. Light is thrown on how production has been increased in other countries by an extract from the Report of our Investigator in Belgium:—

*Belgium. Area under Corn Crops.*

1880.	1913.	1923.
2,390,357 acres.	1,878,725 acres.	1,732,500 acres.

It should be noted that though these figures show a gradual decline in the acreage under corn crops, the yield per acre has increased enormously, as the following figures for wheat show:—

1866.	1913.	1923.
11.05 cwts.	19.7 cwts.	20.54 cwts.

“Professor Van der Vaeren anticipated that as a result of recent experiments at Gembloux, production per acre will in the next few years increase to 31—32 cwts. per acre.”

Our Investigator in Holland, in discussing the greater yield per acre of Dutch crops, describes it as due generally

to smaller holdings, the percentage of holdings under 50 acres in Holland being 90 per cent. of all holdings; and secondly to the liberal use of chemical manures.

#### LIVE STOCK.

36. The amount of live stock carried in England and other countries is, no less than the production of crops, a point of comparative importance. The Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation, to get over the difficulties caused by the preponderance of cattle in one country and sheep in another, adopted the generally recognised method of reckoning in stock units, and Table E (page 139) may be taken as representing, with general fairness, the relative wealth in live stock of different countries at different dates. Again it should be observed that, whereas Great Britain in 1873 carried more live stock per 100 acres than any other country in north-western Europe, she now carries less than Belgium, Holland or Denmark, all of which countries 50 years ago were a long way behind her. Great Britain is the only one of the countries enumerated which shows a decrease in stock units in the period under review.

#### FOOD AND FARMING METHODS.

37. Sir Thomas Middleton's figures, showing the number of persons who could be supplied with a subsistence diet for one year by different kinds of farming methods, are interesting in themselves and important as one factor in the argument. His estimate is as follows<sup>1</sup> :—

100 acres very poor grass converted into meat	2-3 persons.
" " medium " " " "	12-14 "
" " very good " " " "	25-40 "
" " mangolds (average crop)	35 "
" " wheat (average) as bread	200 "
" " potatoes (av.) as vegetable	400 "

In conjunction with these figures must be considered

<sup>1</sup> "Food production in war," p. 324, *et seq.*

his judgment on how far English land could be expected to provide food for the whole population in the country. To grow all the grain required, more than 20 million acres of land would have to be kept under the plough. "Every acre of cultivated land," he says, "not subject to flooding and not too high above sea level would have to be used for corn." But, he goes on to point out, there is no technical difficulty in the way of largely increasing the output of home-grown food in general. English pastures could increase their yield by 25 to 30 per cent.; dairy produce could be increased 50 per cent.; the tillage crops could be improved, etc. But, the author adds, if the farmer is to increase productivity of the land, larger capital must be at the disposal of farming, that larger capital being both "landlord's capital" and "tenant's capital."

The point here raised is much too important to be disposed of summarily. To it in its various aspects is devoted the major part of Chapter VI.

### *Division II.*

#### *The Ownership, Division and Use of English Land.*

##### TOTAL AREA.

38. The total land area of England and Wales is just over 37 million acres. Scotland has just over 19 million acres. The total for Great Britain is  $56\frac{1}{4}$  million acres, of which just over  $3\frac{1}{2}$  million acres are above the 1,500 foot contour. In square miles the area of Great Britain is 88,745.

Table F (page 139) gives figures in detail.

39. Of the  $56\frac{1}{4}$  million acres of Great Britain,  $30\frac{1}{2}$  million are under crops and grass;  $14\frac{1}{2}$  million acres are returned as rough grazings. No reliable figure is available to

indicate the amount of land taken out of agricultural use for houses with their gardens, factories, shops, offices, roads, etc.

In England and Wales, towns and urban districts occupied, according to the Census of 1921, 4,164,580 acres. Urban districts, however, contain within their borders many thousands of acres of agricultural land. On the other hand, many thousands of acres in rural districts are covered by roads, houses, etc. Sir Henry Rew's figures of just over 5 million acres may be accepted as the most authoritative estimate of land definitely taken out of agricultural use; other estimates tend to be smaller. Woods and plantations are returned as covering  $2\frac{3}{4}$  million acres.

It will be seen from these summary figures that it is impossible to get from available information any clear idea of the amount of land which is "waste." There certainly is a considerable area of land not returned as being put to any kind of productive purpose. But it is not possible to ascertain from statistical sources how much of this land is above or below the 1,500 ft. contour or any other contour. Some authorities think that much land returned as rough grazings could be put to more productive use as farmed or afforested; others think it more important to emphasise the amount of land which is not used even as rough grazings.

The definite fact which emerges, however, from a study of area statistics is that two-fifths of unbuilt-on Great Britain is either mountain, moor or downland, or is used only for rough grazings or not used at all.

It should be noted that, of Scotland's 19 million acres, only  $4\frac{3}{4}$  million are under crops and grass. Over  $9\frac{1}{2}$  million acres (just double what is under crops and grass) are rough grazings. The balance, except for the comparatively small area of urban land in Scotland, is, from the food-producing and population-maintaining point of view, barren.

## SHRINKAGE OF FARM LAND.

40. The total of land under crops and grass in Great Britain was slightly less in 1921 than in 1871. It increased between 1871 and 1891 and, except for the increase during the War due to emergency measures for food production, there has been a steady decline for the last 30 years. Table G (page 140) shows the position at various dates.

The Agricultural Returns show that between 1871 and 1891 nearly  $1\frac{3}{4}$  million acres were added to the productive area of England and Wales. There was in this period a considerable area of land reclaimed, but the real increase in cultivable land was less than the apparent increase, as the figures for 1871 were not complete. Between 1891 and 1924 nearly  $2\frac{1}{4}$  million acres were lost to the productive area. To some small extent this decrease is due to certain land formerly classed by occupiers as "permanent grass" being now more properly placed in the category of rough grazings. Scotland's smaller productive area has been more stable in extent. An official calculation made in 1913 was that, in the preceding 20 years, 730,000 acres of land previously under crops or grass had fallen down to "rough grazings," and that 140,000 acres had dropped out of any agricultural or pastoral use.

The comparative extent of *crops and grass* in Great Britain and other countries in the last 50 years or so is given by the Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation in a table which shows that France, Germany, Holland and Denmark *have been increasing their area*, while Belgium as well as Great Britain has been suffering a diminution. The figures are given in Table H (page 140).

## ARABLE AREA.

41. The arable land of Great Britain has declined steadily and rapidly in the last 50 years, except again for the temporary increase during the War. The decline

is much less marked in Scotland than in England and Wales. In 1924 the arable area of England and Wales had sunk below pre-war level, and shows every indication of continuing to decline. Table I (page 141) gives details. In 50 years over 4 million acres of British soil have been lost to the plough.

#### WHEAT AREA.

42. The low-water mark of wheat acreage in Great Britain was reached in 1904. There was a slight revival in the 10 years which preceded the War. During the War the wheat acreage was raised approximately to the level of 1884. It did not, however, come anywhere near the acreage recorded in 1871. (See Table J, page 141).

The area under oats shows an increase since 1871 in England and Wales, and a decrease in Scotland. The area under barley shows a decrease in all parts of Great Britain.

#### TENDENCY OF CULTIVATION ABROAD.

43. The above figures should be considered in relation to tendencies of arable area and wheat area in other countries of north-western Europe.

*In Germany*, between 1878 and 1913, the total arable area showed a drop of 521,000 acres in a total of 58,329,000. But in that period the area of corn crops rose by 2 million acres, and potatoes and roots by nearly 4 million acres (potatoes alone 1½ million) while the sugar beet area was more than trebled, and that of other roots more than doubled. The small loss of arable area was due to a reduction in ground under fallow and fallow catch crops.

*In France* between 1873 and 1913 the area of corn crops fell by nearly 9 per cent., but potatoes and fodder roots increased.

*In Belgium*, where, as has already been mentioned, the total agricultural area diminished, there has been a decline



in the area of corn crops and of potatoes, but a remarkable increase in that of sugar beet and fodder roots.

*In Holland* during the same period the total cultivated area, thanks to reclamation, has largely increased, and the arable area has increased more than proportionately, thanks largely to potatoes and sugar beet.

*Denmark* has increased the area annually under the plough. It has increased the output per acre. It has increased the number of live stock per acre, and also the total cultivated area by a continuous process of reclamation. The increase under all these headings has been great.

*In Great Britain* there has been a shrinkage in the total of cultivated land, of arable land, of corn land, of the area of roots and green crops, and of the number of live stock per hundred acres.<sup>1</sup>

#### WHEAT AND WORLD'S POPULATION.

44. The relation of the world's agricultural production to the world's population is an extremely complex statistical problem on which there is considerable disagreement. Many countries, some of them among the most important in this connection, have no efficient service of social statistics. It is impossible to judge whether the statement sometimes made to the effect that the arable area of the world is shrinking has any basis of truth. All that can be said is that the world's population is constantly increasing, that an international rise in the standard of living is bringing into the wheat market millions of people who formerly subsisted on rice or rye, and that while Europe, as a whole, has ceased to produce

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<sup>1</sup> The encroachment of urbanism on rural land has to be allowed for in all the countries here quoted. Belgium, by reason of her ratio of population to acreage, is particularly affected; and Great Britain in the next degree. But this would of itself affect only the total of cultivated land. It should have a tendency to increase intensity of cultivation.

a surplus, the virgin lands of America have largely been exhausted.

#### ECONOMIC INCENTIVE TO ANIMAL HUSBANDRY.

45. In this connection, too, should be considered the figures given in Table K (page 142), showing the trend of prices for the last thirty years of vegetable foodstuffs, as compared with animal foodstuffs. The figures are extracted from the *Bankers' Magazine* of January, 1924. They show that animal food producers in the last thirty years ought to have been in a very happy position, as the price of their produce has gone up, and their cost of production ought to have gone down. They may be taken as explaining the increase of pasture at the expense of arable in Britain. But they also explain the development of arable farming for stock in Denmark. In conjunction with Tables B and C (page 137), they illustrate strikingly the rapidity and completeness of Denmark's response to changing conditions, and the slowness and inadequacy of response in England.

#### NUMBER OF SEPARATE HOLDINGS.

46. For agricultural purposes, holdings of less than 1 acre may be, and in official statistics are, in fact, ignored. In Great Britain in 1907 there were just over half a million separate holdings of 1 acre or more. In 1923 the number had declined to 488,000, and the decline in England and Wales, at any rate, appeared to be going on. (See Table L, page 142.)

#### HOLDINGS OWNED BY THEIR OCCUPIERS.

47. Official statistics not only show the number of holdings in groups of size in each county in Great Britain, but they also make a special note of the number of holdings owned by their occupiers. These figures show an interesting tendency. Before the War about 10 per cent. of the cultivated land of England and Wales was in the hands of occupying owners. The tendency at that time was to decrease. Since the War there has been a very con-

siderable increase in occupying ownership in all parts of Great Britain. Table M gives the facts as returned by the Ministry of Agriculture. (It is understood that the Ministry of Agriculture are not altogether satisfied with the accuracy of their figures under this heading, but the tendency is undeniable.) In view of discussions on land tenure in other countries, it is important to bear in mind that at the present time about one-quarter of the total land under crops and grass in Great Britain is farmed by occupying owners. The percentage in Scotland is considerably lower, being less than one-fifth. The proportion of such land to the total land area of Great Britain is, of course, very much lower.

The increase in ownership was mainly effected between 1917 and 1922, when owners of land sold to take advantage of the high prices then prevailing. The Agricultural Credits Act of 1923 made special provision for relieving farmers who had incurred mortgages made between April 5th, 1917, and June 27th, 1921. The relief given was that of money at a fair rate of interest to be used in paying off existing mortgages. This provision is useful and has been taken up to some extent. Many farmers, however, insist that the rate of interest charged is still too high, and the special period covered too short. Very many farmers who bought their farms did so under the severest form of pressure, namely, the certainty that if they did not buy they would have to leave their homes and their means of livelihood. In very many instances purchase has been nothing less than a disaster, as money needed for working capital has been sunk in purchase price.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Hutchison Committee ascertained that farmers themselves consider that the purchase price of farms should be the sum of about 18 years' rent. It is impossible to lay down any definite number of years, as conditions vary so widely. Some farmers think that the purchase price should not be more than the sum of 10 years' gross rent. Farmers have, however, been buying at very much higher prices. In some cases between 20 and 30 years; in others as high as 45 years. (See Section 261 footnote.)

## SIZE OF HOLDINGS.

48. Table N (page 144) gives figures of agricultural holdings in England and Wales, showing the proportion of "Small Holdings" (*i.e.*, 1-50 acres) and other group sizes to all holdings. Table X (page 152) shows tabularly the group-size distribution in England and Wales and certain other European countries.

Two points are of importance in this comparison: first the actual position, and secondly the tendency. The Tables should be scrutinised with both points in mind.

## DISTRIBUTION OF HOLDINGS IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

49. Holdings of between 1 acre and 50 acres in 1924 comprised nearly two-thirds of all the holdings in England and Wales. But it must be observed that holdings of this size occupy nothing approaching two-thirds of the total acreage. The acreage figure for 1924 is not available, but by comparison with the figures for 1913, when both the number and the percentage of acreage were published, it is certain that only about one-seventh of agricultural land is in holdings of under 50 acres.

## TENDENCY SINCE 1895—ENGLAND.

50. The figures make apparent the tendency of holdings under 50 acres to decrease in number, but this decrease is accounted for by a sharp decline in the number of holdings under 20 acres, and particularly in those under 5 acres. Holdings between 20 and 50 acres have proportionately increased. There is a decrease, too, in holdings over 300 acres. All categories of holdings between 20 acres and 150 acres are tending to increase in number. But this tendency is working very slowly. The total of holdings in the whole country is decreasing—a very serious matter.

## WALES AND SCOTLAND.

51. In Wales, regarded separately, the tendency is slightly different. There, holdings between 5 acres and

150 acres have been increasing at the expense of those under 5 and over 150. In Scotland holdings between 30 and 150 have increased, partly at the expense of those over 150 acres, but mainly at that of holdings of the smallest size.

#### SIZE OF HOLDINGS ABROAD.

52. A direct comparison between holdings in different countries, grouped according to their size, is of great interest. Unfortunately, it is difficult to make, by reason of the fact that the methods of enumeration vary in different countries. In any case it should be pointed out that figures showing the percentage of holdings of each size are not as significant as those which show the percentage of the total agricultural area under holdings of different sizes. The fairest comparison is between Great Britain and Belgium. For these two countries the comparable figures were carefully worked out in 1910 by Mr. Seebohm Rowntree. ("Land and Labour.")

Percentage of acreage under Holdings of :—	Great Britain. (1921.)	Belgium. (1905.)
1 to 5 acres .. ..	·9	7·91
5 to 20 acres .. ..	5·0	31·84
20 to 50 acres .. ..	10·5	28·38
50 to 100 acres .. ..	17·0	14·92
Over 100 acres .. ..	66·6	16·95

*Note.*—The distribution of holdings between the various classes has not changed very much in either country, and the fact that Belgian figures are not available since 1905 does not sensibly affect the comparison.

The comparison shows that two-thirds of the agricultural area of Belgium was under holdings of less than 50 acres, whereas only about one-sixth of English land is under holdings of less than 50 acres. On the other hand, about two-thirds of English farm land was in the occupa-

tion of farmers holding more than 100 acres, and in Belgium only about one-sixth in the hands of these larger farmers.

Mr. Rowntree shows also<sup>1</sup> that if holdings of under 1 acre are excluded the average size of agricultural holdings is as follows:—

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Great Britain	..	about	63	acres.
England	..	..	70	..
Scotland	..	..	62	..
Wales	..	..	57	..
Denmark	..	..	49	..
Prussia	..	..	33½	..
France	..	..	24	..
Belgium	..	..	14½	..

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#### TENDENCY IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

53. *Belgium*.—Since 1895 the number of holdings between 2½ acres and 25 acres has in Belgium increased from 240,300 to over 285,000.

*Holland*.—As compared with the 409,000 holdings of one acre and over in Great Britain (420,133 in 1921), it should be noted that Holland has (1921) a total of 221,000 holdings, of which 180,000 holdings are over one acre, in a cultivated area equal to that of Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Kent. Of these, over 86 per cent. are less than 50 acres and less than 2 per cent. are over 125 acres. In striking contrast to the British figure, holdings of 1–50 acres occupy more than 50 per cent. of the total cultivated area; those between 50 and 125 acres 34 per cent.; between 125 and 250 acres 8 per cent.; and those over 250 acres only 2 per cent. In Holland the tendency is for holdings under 50 acres to increase, both in number and in area. Between 1910 and 1921 those of 2½ to 50 acres increased by 14,000 in number and 118,000 acres in area.

*Germany*.—There are 1,736,000 holdings in Germany, but these include holdings under one acre. With this qualification, the following statistics should be used.

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<sup>1</sup> "Land and Labour," p. 108.

Holdings under 5 acres number 59 per cent. of the total, but only occupy 5·4 per cent. of the cultivated area. Those up to 50 acres number 95 per cent. of the whole and cover 48·5 per cent. of the area. It is clear that the most important holdings in Germany are those between 5 and 50 acres. They comprise 36 per cent. of the total number and 43 per cent. of the total area.

*Denmark.*—The total number of holdings above  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres in Denmark was in 1919, 205,929. Denmark is half the size of Scotland. Unfortunately the classes into which they are divided are not comparable with English figures. Holdings of  $1\frac{1}{2}$ –37 acres number 65·4 per cent. of the total, and cover 24·3 per cent. of the cultivated area. Those over 300 acres only amount to '6 per cent. of the whole and cover 9 per cent. of the total area. The predominant farm is that between 50 and 150 acres. During the last 50 years the extension of the arable area and the sub-division of existing large estates have greatly increased the number of holdings. If England and Wales had as many holdings as Denmark proportionately to her whole area she would have 1,200,000 holdings, and if as many as Holland 1,250,000. She has, we may repeat, 409,000 holdings.<sup>1</sup>

“LED, OR OFF, FARMS.”

54. It is important to note that the number of holdings is not by any means identical with the number of farms. The 1921 Census for England and Wales shows out of a total of 1,254,350 persons engaged in agriculture only 264,093 as farmers. The discrepancy between 409,000 holdings and 264,093 farmers is explained partly by the inclusion of a certain number of smallholders under the large and confused class of nurserymen, seedsmen, florists and market-gardeners, and partly by occupiers of land describing themselves on the Census papers under the heading of some other business carried on by them.

<sup>1</sup> The effect of size of holdings on population and on production is dealt with in Sections 68 and 69.

That, however, does not explain the whole difference or even most of it. Field is still laid to field, and farm to farm. But that fact is not now made evident in official statistics. The absorbed farms continue to be regarded as separate holdings. Sometimes they are such as should properly be worked together. Often they are not.

There are well-known cases of a single farmer to-day controlling 10,000, 12,000 and even 14,000 acres. In Scotland, in particular, a very serious grievance arises from the prevalence of "led farms," i.e., farms taken over by an existing farmer, who puts on them a bailiff. A description of the process and of some of its results may be quoted from Sir Daniel Hall's "Agriculture After the War" (p. 61):—

"One man in the 'eighties' obtained the control of 8,600 acres, a large part being turned into a sheep run. Many farm-houses and buildings and cottages have fallen into ruin, and two hamlets have been completely depopulated. Just pre-war one part of this property, which was previously five farms, then employed only two men regularly on 1,360 acres. *On another part of 1,500 acres, four men were regularly employed where seventy once found work.* The land lies on chalk; much of it is high and poor, but it is all susceptible of arable cultivation."

#### OWNERSHIP OF LAND IN GREAT BRITAIN.

55. There is no information available showing just how the land of England is owned. Attempts have been made to elicit the information, but questions in Parliament can evoke no better answer than reference to the Parliamentary Return of 1875, which is commonly known as the "New Domesday Book." This Return gives a classification of owners as reported in the Rate Books and Valuation Lists. It is severely criticised on the ground that it contains hundreds of duplicates and thousands of leaseholders wrongly returned as "owners." In any case much land has changed hands since 1875.

The nearest approach to accuracy must be made by stating generally the facts set out in the "New Domesday Book," and checking these reports of the Com-



missioners of Inland Revenue, which show facts of land-ownership in so far as land in estates subject to estate duty is concerned.

The New Domesday Book shows that the land of England and Wales, exclusive of London, of roads, of Crown woods, of wastes and commons, and of house and garden properties of less than 1 acre, amounted to 32,862,343 acres, and was owned by 269,547 persons. There were 703,289 owners of properties of under 1 acre each. If all properties of less than 10 acres were omitted, there remain 32,383,000 acres owned by less than 150,000 persons. Slightly more than 2,000 persons owned half the agricultural land of the country.

According to Dawson's "The Unearned Increment," one-quarter of the land of the United Kingdom was held by 1,200 persons, whose properties averaged 16,200 acres. The question has been examined also by Purdy, Ellis Barker, W. H. Mallock and Sir Josiah Stamp, but the general result established is only that the total number of landowners is small in relation to the total population, and that the division of land between them is amazingly unequal. The most recent report of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue (1922-23) shows that the net value of land included in the year's Return was just on 24½ million pounds. This land was owned by 6,572 persons. The 363 persons who left in their wills more than £100,000 left land to the value of £14,635,370. In the year in question rather over 900,000 people died in Great Britain.  $\frac{1}{100}$  of them left all the land which was left in the year, and  $\frac{1}{200}$  left half the land which was left in the year.

#### UNDIFFUSED OWNERSHIP.

56. Professor Henry Clay<sup>1</sup> has recently pointed out that capital in this country is much more concentrated than income, and "much more concentrated than it is in any other country." The reason for this is that

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<sup>1</sup> Address to Manchester Statistical Society, 18/2/25.

agriculture and other small-scale economic units are proportionately fewer here than anywhere else. "Moreover, this country is unique, I think, in having the tenant-farmer rather than the owner-occupier as the predominant class in agriculture." He says that we have completely forgotten the principle pithily expressed by Francis Bacon, "Property is like muck ; it is only good if it be spread."

Table O (page 144) gives figures illustrating Professor Clay's argument.

#### OWNERSHIP BY THE CROWN AND PUBLIC BODIES.

57. The Crown (exclusive of copyholds, foreshores and areas in which the Crown owns the minerals, but not the surface) owns about 218,000 acres. The Duchy of Lancaster, exclusive of town properties, commons, copyholds and mineral areas, owns approximately 25,000 acres. The War Office owns 213,500 acres. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners own or manage 240,000 acres of agricultural land. The Duchy of Cornwall owns 133,400 acres, including 80,000 acres on Dartmoor. The Universities and Colleges of Oxford and Cambridge own 176,000 acres and 115,000 acres respectively.

English County Councils and County Borough Councils administer 358,102 acres under the Small Holdings Acts, 1908 to 1919, and 4,069 acres for the purpose of agricultural education. About four-fifths of this area is owned by the Councils, the remainder being held on lease. Welsh Councils have acquired 58,000 acres for Small Holdings. Of this area, 255,766 acres in England and Wales have been acquired since 18th December, 1918, and on them are now settled 18,702 men, nearly all ex-Service. This figure, 18,702, however, includes men provided with small holdings on land acquired prior to December 18th, the actual acreage occupied by them being 275,097.

#### ALLOTMENTS.

58. There are, according to the most recent returns, about 1,170,000 allotments in the country, a decrease of

roughly 10 per cent. in the last two or three years. For the urban populations allotments meet a real need in the only way, perhaps, in which such a need can be met. The great need of allotment-holders is security. There can be no security so long as the land set aside for allotments in the neighbourhood of large towns is held on lease either from private landlords or public bodies, merely until it is wanted for building. We hope to deal with the urban allotment problem in a later Report. We are concerned with the rural position. Only familiarity can make allotments in country districts appear reasonable. The only satisfactory rural allotment is a garden around a house. Yet it is notorious that allotments are often required in country villages, because cottages have no gardens. We have had a number of reports showing the difficulty met with in acquiring land for allotments in country parishes. The rural allotment problem should be regarded as definitely part of the rural housing problem.

#### LAND USED FOR TIMBER.

59. The figures with regard to forests and woodlands will be found in Table P (page 145) and in Sections 130-141 of the next chapter. Here it need only be said that whereas before the War Great Britain had about 3 million acres under woodland, the afforestable area of level country was estimated by the Royal Commission on Coast Erosion, etc., at about 9 million acres.

In considering figures of area under timber, account should be taken of imports of timber into this country and of the growing scarcity of timber throughout the world. Authoritative statements have been made to the effect that the world is consuming 56 billion cubic feet of timber per annum, whereas its income in timber is only 38 billion cubic feet. It is obvious that if income in this connection means the amount of timber available for replacement the estimate must be very vague and unverifiable. It is, however, beyond doubt that the quality

of timber consumed is on the downward grade owing to the shortage of fully matured trees, and that the price of timber, particularly of the soft woods so extensively used in Great Britain, is steadily rising. Great Britain, while it has so minute a proportion of its area under timber, imports timber on a most lavish scale. In 1924 the total value of wood and timber imported into Great Britain was £51,069,525. A large proportion of the timber imported comes from Norway and Sweden and Germany. France figures largely as an exporter to us of pit props. Professor Storey in 1917 estimated that Wales had at least half a million acres (exclusive of the 186,000 acres under wood) of afforestable land, yet much of the pit prop wood imported goes to South Wales<sup>1</sup>.

Without going into details of the importing countries or of the forms in which timber is imported, it may be pointed out that a considerable amount of timber is imported in a semi-manufactured form, planed or dressed as pit props or pit wood, and also as wood pulp for paper-making. In 1924 the importation of wood pulp amounted *alone* to 1,226,000 tons, a record figure. In the same year wood imported as pit props or pit wood was no less than 3,003,000 loads, of a value of over £5,900,000.

## RECLAMATION.

60. Reference to paragraph 39 will show how impossible it is to estimate the amount of land in Great Britain which could be reclaimed. Elsewhere in this Report attention is called to the necessity of a comprehensive survey being made of all the land in the country. Without such a

<sup>1</sup> IMPORTS AND EXPORTS.*Imports of Timber, 1922/1924.*

	1922	1923	1924.
Total Imports ..	£37,321,017	£47,746,000	£51,069,525
Total Re-exports ..	581,602	557,633	705,329
Net Imports ..	£36,739,415	£47,188,367	£50,366,196

survey no coherent and thorough-going policy, either of afforestation or of reclamation, is possible.

Our Investigators, in reporting on agricultural conditions in different parts of the country, constantly call attention to the amount of undrained land which is allowed to remain as marsh, and to light thin land which has either never been brought into cultivation or has been allowed to have become derelict. In some cases our Investigators made their visits in England soon after having been abroad. The impression made on their minds was that much of the land which we allowed to remain or become unproductive is certainly no worse than the land which, as a result of a continued policy, is kept in cultivation in Belgium, Holland, Denmark and Germany. Our Investigator in Breconshire, for example, coming fresh from a visit to Belgium, reports:—

“There are thousands of acres of land in the county which would repay draining and cultivation, while the possibilities of afforestation are great. Here again we meet with the complaint of a shortage of rural craftsmen.”

#### RECLAMATION ABROAD.

61. In Germany the cultivation of waste land has proceeded steadily by regional and national programmes. The Prussian Diet in 1913 sanctioned a loan of 1¼ millions sterling, half of it for State schemes of reclamation, £15,000 for drainage and half a million for subventions to provincial schemes of reclamation. This policy was not based on protected agriculture, but on the application of modern knowledge of mechanical means and chemical facts to the treatment of the land.

From Denmark our Investigator reports that in 60 years just on 1 million acres have been reclaimed for agriculture from heath, bog and sand dunes, and, in addition, half a million acres have been planted with trees. For irrigation purposes three hundred miles of canal have been dug. The same story, in perhaps an even more striking form, is told of Holland. (See Appendix XII.)

The special scheme for the reclamation of the Zuyder Zee now being carried out will add to Holland an area the size of Oxfordshire. Our Investigator in northern Germany reports that in the provinces he visited soil undoubtedly of inferior quality to that allowed to go waste in England is being cultivated with considerable success. Both public and private enterprise are used. An interesting example reported by him is that at Neuruppin, near Berlin, where some 60 square miles of marsh and moorland are gradually being reclaimed by the operation of a co-operative society assisted by a subsidy from the State. Owners of thin soils and waste land make scientific tests as to the best use to which any soil can be put, and are assisted by the local Chambers of Agriculture, who put their chemical experts at their disposal. Bavaria possesses an "Institution" for the cultivation of moorland. Belgian landowners were given the option of preparing waste ground themselves with the assistance of a State subsidy, or of allowing the State to undertake the work. In most cases the former course has been followed.

In England the Development Commissioners have power to make grants in aid of reclamation as well as for other purposes of capital improvement. The minute extent to which reclamation schemes are being considered is illustrated by the fact that the Commissioners in 1923, out of a total expenditure in grants of £480,000, spent only £321 in grants for reclamation.

To say this is not to criticise in any way the Development Commissioners, who, no doubt, would grant more if more were demanded by public opinion.

The explanation of the slackness of demand is we think best explained by the following extract from an Appendix of the Departmental Committee on the Employment of Soldiers and Sailors on the Land written by Sir Daniel Hall :—

" It is necessary to emphasise this general statement that land reclamation as practised in Great Britain has never taken into account the chemical constitution of the soil and its possible

rectification by cheap mineral fertilizers, largely because the process was already falling into disuse by the time these fertilizers became available, and because few landowners had had sufficient confidence in the situation or faith in science to embark capital on agricultural enterprises during the last 30 years. It is for this reason that such accounts as are available of the costs of land reclamation in England afford no guidance to the possibilities that are open. They sometimes show good results where the land was initially healthy, as on Lincoln Heath, or where plentiful supplies of town refuse were available, as in Cheshire, Bedford, or parts of Surrey; elsewhere they have been unremunerative and have led to the widespread tradition that the most ruinous of all proceedings is to try and turn bad land into good."

#### THE RENT OF AGRICULTURAL LAND.

62. Table Q, extracted from Sir Josiah Stamp's *British Incomes and Property*, gives in a very interesting way an indication of the value of rent derived from agricultural land during the last century. The significant fact brought out is that agricultural rents in 1913-14 were practically the same as a hundred years earlier. In the interval the figure had risen to its highest point in 1879-1880, namely, to 52 million pounds.

The century which saw rents derived from land rise and fall practically to their original figure, saw the income from ownership of houses rise from about 15 million pounds to 202 million pounds.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is as well to make clear that income from the ownership of land includes rents derived from farm houses when occupied by the tenant of the land, but not the rents derived from farm-houses when occupied by the owner of the land, or when sub-let. All land not built over is included, e.g., income derived from land of no agricultural value but let for shooting is included. The whole value of sporting and fishing rights is not included. If the rights are not let but kept in hand by the owner, they are not assessed at all. It is said that in Scotland, where the chief value attaching to large areas of land is its sporting value, the loss to the revenue as a result of owners keeping their own shooting rights in hand is considerable. The Schedule A assessment figure may therefore be taken as representing fairly the annual value of all the agricultural land of England and Wales, together with all other land not used for roads or as sites for buildings. It should be made clear also that the figure is a gross figure.

Sir Josiah Stamp gives also an analysis of the Schedule A value of lands in 1907. The analysis is as follows:—

	£	
Tithe, Taxes, Management and Insurance .. .. .	3,850,000	10 per cent.
Repairs .. .. .	3,850,000	10 ..
Improvements and Sinking Fund ..	5,775,000	15 ..
Interest on landlord's capital ..	16,170,000	42 ..
Net " economic rent " .. .. .	8,855,000	23 ..
	£38,500,000	

A number of interesting points arise in connection with these figures. For the moment we set them out only to draw clearly the distinction between the gross rent received by landlords and the net or expendable income.

#### GROSS RENT AND NET RENT.

63. The significance of the figures referred to in the preceding paragraph may be underlined by a quotation from Sir H. Rider Haggard's *Rural Denmark*.

" In 'Rural England,' Vol. II., p. 433, amongst other instances, I print the balance sheet of an East Anglian estate belonging to a gentleman of my acquaintance, which covers 16,000 acres, and in the years 1899 and 1900 produced a gross rental of £10,000 a year. Except for some drainage and land-improvement charges amounting to under £2,000 a year, this estate is practically unencumbered; also the shooting was let for £1,340 a year, and the garden produce sold. Yet from all this great property the owner received in 1899 only £231 12s. 2d. paid into his account, and in 1900 £298 13s. 1d. Of the nominal rent-roll, over 16 per cent. was disbursed in tithe, and about as much more in repairs. Probably since 1900 the rents may have risen a little, perhaps as much as 10 per cent., though this I doubt. On the other hand, the rates and taxes and other sundry outgoings will certainly have risen also, so that the owner can be but little richer than he was then. If he tried



to live upon the proceeds of his great estate, figuratively, he would starve. Yet, *if that sound, heavy-land corn-growing property of 16,000 acres lay in Denmark, I am as certain as I can be of anything that it would produce a good many thousands a year in net profit, and that its present population would be doubled or trebled. Why? The reader of these pages may be able to answer the question.*"

This was written in 1912. We italicise part of it in 1925. The question demands an answer. Why, on the supposition that only thin farming is profitable, should English land be thinly farmed and thinly peopled, and yet give a thin return to its owner?

The answer lies in Chapter VI of this Report.

### *Division III.*

#### *Population Maintained on the Land.*

64. Figures showing agricultural population are more often misquoted than almost any other statistics. The question, however, has been very adequately handled by the Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation, and its conclusions may be quoted as reliable.

On the whole, a more marked decline in the agricultural population has taken place in this country than in the other chief North-Western States of Europe; and in comparing the decline in Belgium with that in Great Britain, the very large number employed still on the land in Belgium, relative to its acreage, must not be forgotten. "Thus, whereas the number employed per 100 acres of crops and grass in Great Britain amounts to 4·4, and in Denmark 5·5, the number employed in Germany is 6·5, in France 7, in Holland 9, and in Belgium 10. Belgium still carries per acre the highest population among the West European States."<sup>1</sup>

These figures relate population to cultivated areas.

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<sup>1</sup> Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation, Final Report, para. 79.

The discrepancy between Great Britain and other countries is much greater if population is related to the total land area. The gross figures of agricultural population in Great Britain for the last 50 years show a decrease of 400,000 persons. Table R gives these figures as revised by Professor D. H. Macgregor in his section of the Tribunal Report. His calculation is very carefully weighted to allow for such disturbing factors as the inclusion or non-inclusion of domestic gardeners, and the inclusion in earlier returns of children. The net result of the corrected figures is to show, in the last 50 years, a total decrease of 154,000 men and boys engaged on the land.

The figures of Table R include employers as well as employees. The decrease in the number of farm workers in the 50 year period is no less than 294,000. There is an increase of about 26,000 of "farmers and graziers." Attention has already been called to the discrepancy between the return of farmers and graziers and the total number of holdings. There has been a large increase (from 54,000 to 127,000) in the number of market gardeners and horticulturists. Machine attendants and others have increased from 4,400 to 38,400, and this figure should properly be treated in conjunction with that of farm workers.

Some additional light is thrown on the problem, and, incidentally, on the obscurities of official statistics by figures given in the Occupational and Industrial Census of 1921. According to the Occupational Census, there were in England and Wales in 1921, 1,171,298 agriculturists, of whom 148,649 were employers, 147,116 workers on their own account, and 958,605 employees. These figures include domestic gardeners and also some nursery gardeners who were elsewhere not included in the category of farmers. The figures for Scotland show 27,381 employers, 23,175 workers on their own account, 118,765 employees. The number of women returned in the Occupational Census as agriculturists is 83,052 for England and Wales, and 24,317 for Scotland.

## REGULAR AND CASUAL EMPLOYMENT.

65. The figures so far considered are derived from the decennial Census returns. A different aspect of the problem is presented by the returns published by the Ministry of Agriculture of the number of agricultural workers in England and Wales. These returns show the number of workers employed on agricultural holdings of over 1 acre on or about the 4th June in each year. Table S (page 146) shows the fluctuations in regular and casual employment since 1908. It is of importance to note that the figures before the war are not comparable with those of 1921 onwards. (See note affixed to the Table.) The Table does not, as at first sight it seems to do, show an increase in employment since the war. It does show a decline since 1921.

One further fact derived from the Census should be added. In 1921 agriculture, judged by the number of persons occupied in it, had fallen from its pride of place as the first industry of the country. In this sense it is no longer true, therefore, to say that agriculture is the largest national industry. It is eclipsed by the metal group of trades, by the mining group, by the transport group, and by the textile group. It may be said that comparison between agriculture and groups of trades is unfair, but agriculture is, in fact, a group of industries itself, as is made very clear either by a dry study of Census statistics or by the much more interesting method of investigating agricultural conditions in different parts of the country. The diminishing importance of agriculture in relation to other industries is again illustrated by the fact that the persons occupied in agriculture were, in 1921, only 7·2 per cent. of the total occupied population. In 1911 the percentage was 8·1. It has, of course, to be remembered that since the war the percentage of occupied persons to the whole community is considerably higher than it was before the war.

## AGRICULTURAL POPULATIONS ABROAD.

66. In Table T is given the agricultural populations of countries of North-Western Europe as percentages of the total occupied population. The extreme smallness of the figure for Great Britain leaps to the eye, and no argument is needed to emphasise the serious import of any decrease in a figure already so small.

Direct comparison between rates of increase or decrease in Great Britain and other countries is made exceedingly difficult by the existing difference in methods of defining and enumerating agricultural workers. The following points, however, seem to be fairly established:—

(1) In *Germany* the agricultural population decreased between 1882 and 1907 from 19,146,000 to 17,606,000.

(2) In *France* the decrease between 1866 and 1911 was from 5'333 millions to 5'28 millions. There was a rise up to 1906, and a sharp decline between 1906 and 1911.

(3) In *Belgium* the male agricultural population declined by 13 per cent. between 1880 and 1910. This can largely be accounted for by the shrinkage of agricultural area owing to the encroachment of industry.

(4) In *Italy* there was an increase in the total agricultural population up to 1901, and a decrease between 1901 and 1911. As a whole, there was an increase of 11 per cent. in the number of male persons engaged in agriculture.

(5) In *Holland* the period for which accurate figures are available is 1889 to 1909. The increase then was 52,000 persons, *i.e.*, 11 per cent.

(6) In *Denmark* three things are notable in the period 1870 to 1911. First, the absolute and relative increase in the population directly engaged in agriculture. Second, the increase in the population indirectly dependent on agriculture, and third, the increase in the number of farmers and the decline in the number of labourers.

## A SIGNIFICANT SAMPLE.

[ 67. Yet one more point should be safeguarded. Gross figures of agriculturists, if they include horticulturists and nursery gardeners, may give a wrong view of the condition of agriculture proper. There are areas where market gardening has in the last decade or two made very rapid strides, but there are other areas which have remained purely agricultural where the decrease of the agricultural population is much more marked than where horticulture has come to the aid of the figures. This point has been brought out very fully by some of our Investigators in different parts of England. Table U is quoted from the report of our Investigator in Oxfordshire.

Here it will be seen that in fifty years the rural population, *i.e.*, the number of persons actually resident in rural districts, has been almost stationary; but that the agricultural population has declined from approximately 27,000 to 17,000 persons. The table showing the analysis, at each census period, of the agricultural population into farmers, agricultural labourers, etc., shows that the number of agricultural labourers, including farm servants in charge of cattle, etc., and shepherds, had decreased from 21,531 (of whom 1,351 were female) in 1871 to 9,914 (of whom 189 were female) in 1921. The increase in farmers and graziers is from 2,298 to 2,406, and gardeners' labourers, from 1,069 to 2,806. For figures of this kind, the Census Returns, county by county, should be studied if the facts of rural decline are to be appreciated at their proper value.

Attention here may be called to the Appendix, *Fifty Years of an English Village*, which will be found on page 179. As an analysis of change and decay it is very striking.

## POPULATION AND SIZE OF HOLDINGS.

68. That there is a direct connection between the size of holdings and the number of persons employed is

universally recognised. In Denmark, for example, holdings of less than 25 acres employ on the average 11.3 men per 100 acres, and holdings of over 250 acres employ only 5.44 men. The maintenance of a larger population on the land does not necessarily mean a larger net output of food. It does, in practice, mean a larger gross output, part of which is used in maintaining the larger population on the land. Economists tend to define efficiency in agriculture as meaning productivity in proportion to cost of production. It may be said in passing that had this definition of efficiency in agriculture been adopted in other countries, Great Britain would not be alone among the countries of North-Western Europe in her lack of a national agricultural policy.

Our Investigator in North Germany reported that holdings of between  $12\frac{1}{2}$  and 50 acres employed 18 persons per 100 acres, and of those over 250 acres only 7 persons per 100 acres.

"The number of people employed per acre seems to be inversely proportional to the size of the holding, and that this is recognised is evident from the statement of a high official in Stettin, who pointed out that one of the principal reasons why large farms produced more wheat, etc., in proportion than small farms was because they maintained less people per acre to consume the products; on the small farms most of the produce was required to feed the family. In the present extraordinary times, therefore, the attempt to sub-divide large estates is held up."

Our Report on South Germany contains the following calculation made by the Peasant Co-operative Society in Wurtemberg:—

#### *Food Production.*

"Excluding the workers themselves, the following people can be fed from the bread corn raised on:—

250 acres under	small holdings	( $2\frac{1}{2}$ – $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres)	13 persons.
" "	" "	( $3\frac{1}{4}$ – $12\frac{1}{2}$ acres)	15 persons.
" "	middle "	( $12\frac{1}{2}$ –50 acres)	27 persons.

## BUT

*Employment of Labour.*

On 250 acres of agriculturally used land the following persons are maintained in work :—

Holdings under	1½ acres	..	560 persons.	
"	"	1½ - 5 acres..	171	"
"	"	5 - 25 "	88	"
"	"	25 - 50 "	44	"
"	"	50 - 250 "	22	"
"	over	250 "	18	" "

## POPULATION AND METHODS OF FARMING.

69. There is a connection also between population and methods of farming. The Ministry of Agriculture has recently worked out figures for the year 1923 showing that :—

*Norfolk arable farms* (over 90 per cent. arable and averaging 569 acres) employ 33 workers per thousand acres.

*Potato farms* (averaging 72 acres) in Lincolnshire employ 54 workers per thousand acres. Smaller farms in Bedfordshire and Kent, on which fruit and vegetables are also largely grown, employ 89 and 94 workers respectively.

*Arable sheep farms* (averaging 720 acres) employ only 25 workers per thousand acres.

*Sheep farms, not arable* (averaging 378 acres) employ only 15, and hill sheep farms (averaging over 1,000 acres) only two workers per thousand acres. Employment on mixed farms in the east of England ranges from 26 to 30, and in the west of England from 20 to 26.

Understanding of the above figures is stimulated by a conversation with any of the thousands of rural workers, who bitterly lament the steady impoverishment of rural life, or by study of any one of the many books which in recent years have endeavoured to make rural protests audible to urban ears. Mr. Hugh Aronson, for example, in *The Land and the Labourer*, emphasises in particular the evidence given in the "Report on Migration from Rural Districts of England and Wales" issued by the

Board of Agriculture in 1913. The evidence indicates that the root cause of rural depopulation is not merely low wages; it is to a very large extent lack of opportunity. The appeal of the towns and of Canada is to those who do not wish to leave the land but cannot see in this country a reasonable chance of living by it. Lack of opportunity is the expulsive force working on a population which is, to some extent, rendered unstable by low wages, bad housing, and education, which gives a distaste for country life. In every village it is the best of the young men and young women who go.

#### *Division IV.*

#### *The Land Worker's Standard of Life.*

70. One of the witnesses to the Hutchison Committee puts very pungently some of the considerations which must be in the mind of anyone who begins to study the social condition of English villages.

"I detest," he said, "the prevalent opinion so widely held and expressed by good people interested in social reform and others—politicians amongst them, men who ought to know better, that the farm worker's life is monotonous, dull, that he needs the amusements and amenities of the town. I hold that it is all the other way, that life to a worker in a big manufacturing town where he works all day and goes home to a little ugly house just like ten thousand more, with no scrap of garden, this is what I call an intolerable life, and would be literally intolerable but for the public house and the pictures. But for the farm labourer, give him a wage equal to what he—a skilled man—could earn at any other trade or occupation in England, and he will need no further assistance to provide him with amusement or amenities. Instead of the farm worker's life being dull and monotonous, it is the only one occupation that our industrial system has spared. He is the freest worker in England, and in the best and healthiest of occupations. Give him another 10s. a week, and he would be the happiest too; the Government can make this possible, the farmer can't."

The farmer who wrote this certainly saw a great deal that the townsman ignores; he also ignored a great



deal that the townsman necessarily and properly takes into account. The townsman will not accept the statement that the Government can and ought to give the agricultural labourer a living wage, nor will he believe that inherently the farmer cannot. On the other hand, he is in constant danger of forgetting that the standard of rural life should not be measured simply by the rule of wages, gas-lamps and cinemas. He runs an even greater risk in assuming that the countryman's mind is inferior to his own because it works more slowly.

#### SKILLED MEN—AND PRACTICAL WIVES.

71. The term, "agricultural labourer" disguises the fact that farm work is a very highly skilled occupation. The lamentable tendency of English Agriculture has been to increase the number of wage earners, while paying a wage which compares most unfavourably with the wage even of an unskilled labourer in the town. Judged by the rule of quality of output, the agricultural worker should receive a wage comparable with that of the highest class of mechanic. But the conditions of economic and human success for the most important of the living things on a farm have never been studied.<sup>1</sup> Agriculture does not lend itself to the methods of the check weigher or to clocking in. A rigid wage-system cannot adapt itself to the conditions of farming. The condition of agricultural workers must be judged not merely by the wages they receive, but by the access they are given to the land itself.

Nor must the importance of women in agriculture be overlooked. We take the following extract from Appendix XI which contains interesting statistics illustrating the variety of work undertaken by women in the industry.

"To the wife of the factory operative or the clerk, her husband's occupation may seem a thing apart, with the politics of which she has little or nothing to do. But the agriculturist's wife is in a very different case. She is an active participant

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<sup>1</sup> See Mr. A. W. Ashby's "The Human Side of the Farming Business."

in her husband's business, takes a practical and lively interest in its progress, and is qualified to take, and actually does take, a part in determining farm policy.

"In our own time we have had striking illustration of the influence exerted by women on rural development. The dissatisfaction of country women with their own conditions of life, coupled with the desire for a better future for their children has been one of the main factors in the rural exodus.

"The nation needs a contented rural population and good home-produced food, but this will never be achieved till a policy is evolved which women can support and which satisfies the aspirations they cherish for themselves and their children."

#### WAGES.

72. It is unnecessary to make more reference to the most careful enquiry into wages carried out by the Land Enquiry Committee of 1913, than to quote their report that at that date over 60 per cent. of all agricultural labourers in the country received less than 18s. a week in cash and kind, and that in low paid counties, real wages had declined since 1907. Since then there has been the steep, though belated, rise in wages which occurred during the War, and the precipitous reduction which followed. For a long time after that fall many agricultural labourers were expected to support their families on wages of 25s. to 27s. per week.

The Wages Committees re-established in 1924 have done something to raise wage rates. The lowest minimum wage now (August 1925) in force is 29s. per week (Norfolk), but in many cases the rise has been illusory as it has been off-set by an increase in the rents charged for cottages and by deductions on account of allowances.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Extract from current notices on exhibition in village Post Offices dealing with the Wages Committees:—

"No deductions from the above rates may be made except in cases where Milk, Potatoes, Coal and Wood, Manure, Board and Lodging or a cottage are supplied. Particulars of the amounts at which these allowances may be reckoned in part payment of wages may be obtained from the Secretary of the Committee at the address given below."

## LIVING WAGE AND ECONOMIC WAGE.

73. Nearly every farmer witness who gave evidence to the Hutchison Committee declared that farmers were "only too anxious" to pay their men a *living wage*. On the other hand, our Investigator in Norfolk in the autumn of 1924 reported that farmers there were generally of opinion that the *economic wage* for labourers was 18s. 6d. per week. The question arises at once whether farmers anywhere regard a wage of 18s. 6d. as a living wage.

The Hutchison Committee put the following question: "What rate of wages do you think would now be sufficient to give a reasonable standard of life to a man with a wife and, say, three children?" The average answer to this question was "about 35s." Some farmers in their evidence put the figure as high as 42s. to 45s. The lowest figure given was 30s., "exclusive of rent for cottage and garden and other privileges." Be it noted that this lowest figure is substantially higher than the minimum wage now enacted in many counties.

No argument is needed to prove that wages at the rate of the minimum wage in many English Counties to-day are inadequate to support a wife and family. According to calculations of Mr. Seebohm Rowntree in 1913, the lowest limit of subsistence to-day would be 37s. per week, after making allowances for increases in the cost of living and continuing to leave out of account, as does Mr. Rowntree's pre-war figure, butcher's meat, tobacco or recreation. But in reality calculations of this kind need not be adduced except for the contemplation of persons who think that an agricultural labourer with a wife and family of, say, five children and 29s. a week can somehow or other, with the aid of a lump sum paid at harvest time, make both ends meet and launch on the world strong and healthy young men and women. Our written and oral evidence and our investigators' reports have constantly paid a tribute of admiration to labourers' wives. Such tributes are deserved. They should not be necessary.

The mention of harvest payment above indicates the importance of remembering that cash wages in relation to agriculture do not tell the whole story. On the one hand deductions may be made for wet time; on the other men may be put to work on piece work, and there is some evidence that the custom of piece work is extending. Both farmers and labourers, it is said, find that piece work pays them. Again, allowances in kind, very general before the War, are now in many districts exceptional. They were cut down when the first Wages Boards were instituted and have very often not been restored.

#### WHAT DETERMINES WAGES.

74. Whatever may be a farmer's view on what constitutes an economic wage, in fact he pays not what he considers an economic wage, but what he has to pay in order to get his labour. In Table V will be found very interesting figures showing for English and Welsh Counties the minimum wage rate fixed under the present Act, the number of men employed per 100 acres of crops and grass, and the arable area of the county as a percentage of its total acreage under crops and grass. Study of this table will show that wages do not vary according to the intrinsic profitability of agriculture, and that, apparently, when farming has to pay a higher wage rate it is not compelled to cut down the amount of the labour employed. As is shown elsewhere in this chapter, the amount of labour employed per 100 acres is considerably higher on arable land than on pasture land. Column 3 of Table V should be studied in this connection. Readers of this Report will be able to compare counties they know best. *Where there is an alternative employment for rural workers farming seems to afford a wage which at any rate approximates to a living wage, and there is no evidence that in fact this wage is not economic in those areas.*

One simple comparison of adjoining counties may be taken. Carnarvon and Anglesey are now under one

**Wages Committee.** The minimum wage is 30s. per week for men living out and 17s. 6d. together with board and lodging for men living in. In North Wales the living-in custom is very general. We understand that in Anglesey the minimum wage is commonly paid, but that in Carnarvon the wage actually paid is considerably higher. One Carnarvon farmer informed us that he paid 26s., 27s. and 28s. per week to men living in, and that if he did not pay these rates he would not get men to work his farm. Carnarvon land is not better than Anglesey land. On the contrary, cattle are sent from the mainland across the Menai Straits to be fattened on the rich land of the Island. But in Carnarvon there are stone and slate quarries. That and that alone explains the discrepancy in the wages actually paid. Lest it should be thought that our evidence is insufficient for saying that more than the minimum rate is generally paid in Carnarvon, it may be added that in 1907, *e.g.*, long before the Wages Boards were instituted at all the average wage in Carnarvon was 14s. 8d., and 12s. 7d. in Anglesey, allowances included. An explanation there must be. It has never, so far as we know, been given to the public. Is it that farmers in low-wage counties might, despite their protestations, have paid the wages which obtain in high-wage counties? Or under the stimulus of paying higher wages and with the assistance of the higher efficiency induced in labour by them, have farmers in high-wage counties been extracting more wealth from their soil, and, therefore, been able to pay the higher rates without strain? Or have landlords in high-wage counties consciously or unconsciously adjusted their rents to their tenants' higher wages bill? The answer we suspect lies in saying "Yes, to some extent" to the first two questions. High wages, high rents and high farming so often go together, and also low wages, low rents, and low farming, that we are less certain about the third. For deciding the relative importance of each of the three factors the data is insufficient.

## AGRICULTURAL WAGES, POOR RELIEF AND THE "DOLE."

75. Another set of facts worth close attention is contained in Table W, which compares the minimum wages in certain typical counties with the amounts paid in unemployment benefit and poor relief in towns situated in those counties. It will be noted that an agricultural labourer in the Christchurch Union would be better able to support his family if dependent on the Poor Law than when in receipt of the statutory wage for a full week's work. Elsewhere he would be better off in work, but by a perilously small amount. It is at least remarkable that the lowest agricultural wage in an English County is identical with the Unemployment Benefit for a man with the "standard family."

The average agricultural minimum wage is 32s. The "dole" for the standard family is 29s. Out relief scales examined by us for the standard family range from 27s. to 36s. (average 30s. 6d.) in urban areas, and from 22s. to 33s. (average 26s. 8d.) in rural areas.

## UNEMPLOYMENT.

76. Agricultural labourers are not included in the Unemployment Insurance Scheme. From some parts of the country come complaints that labourers are tempted to take temporary work on drainage schemes and other works which qualify them for unemployment insurance, so that when the temporary work is over they may fall back on the "dole."

Such a position as this is bound to arise when there are any classes of workers outside an insurance scheme which is, except for them, practically universal, and when the amount paid in benefit is not substantially lower than the wage that may be earned at work.

Another aspect is presented in the experience of many of our witnesses.

"There is no unemployment in rural districts. The difficulty is to get the labour. I could employ many more men if

the men sent me by the Employment Exchange to F— were what they pretended to be—agricultural labourers. I find that men set out to deliberately make themselves troublesome in order that they may be dismissed."

The above is quoted, not to endorse any charge against men on the Unemployed Register, but to express what is a very common complaint among farmers, and to emphasise the danger of such charges being soundly based when the wage earned for skilled agricultural work is not markedly superior to the subsistence allowance granted during unemployment.

That there is an actual shortage of skilled labour is beyond doubt. A thoroughly representative phrase in our evidence is :—

" Not a man can be had to lay a hedge, build a wall, patch a rick or even clean a ditch."

So, too, a letter in the " Times " of June 15, 1925 :—

" While our roots are getting smothered by weeds for want of men to hoe them, our sheep are panting in their wool under the hot sun because we can get no shearers, our hay is getting too old because we can get no men to go with the horses on the mowing machines, and our horses lie idle, yet we read that the number of unemployed have, during the week, increased by 43,900."

It is important to note that the shortage is mainly of skilled men. But there are unemployed persons in agricultural areas. They are often the weaker members of the agricultural community, men who, as the result of continued migration of the stronger rural workers, represent the results of breeding from the residual unfit.

The minimum wage, be it remembered, is enacted for able-bodied men. Men not able-bodied are employed at less than the minimum wage—by permission of the Wages Committees. Among them there is unemployment, and as these unfit persons do not refrain from marriage and from having children, there is also among them an aggravated degree of inefficiency and distress.

A note from the "Daily News" of December 17th, 1924, evokes disturbing memories of Speenhamland.

"When the distress of a Norfolk farm labourer and his wife and family of eight, who had only 21s. 7d. a week to live on, was brought before the St. Faiths Board of Guardians, they ordered three stone of flour to be supplied each week to this household of ten.

"The Guardians are now in a dilemma, for to-day they were informed that the Ministry of Health could not sanction relief to a man in full work.

"The relieving officer stated that after the plight of this family had been reported in the Press offers of clothing and groceries came from St. Helens, Leeds, Norwich, and other places. One butcher had promised the family a good Christmas dinner.

*"It was stated that the children were weak for want of nourishment."*

"The Guardians decided to ask the medical officer to attend the case and to allow the supply of flour for a month."

An extract from our evidence from Yorkshire in 1924 is even more telling:—

"There is a good deal of unemployment among agricultural labourers in this district. Before we threshed, no less than sixteen men called to ask for a day's work at the thresher. Some whom we employed were underfed and really unfit for a hard day's work. The custom here is to provide refreshments at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., but not dinner. Some of the men ate so ravenously at 10 a.m. that my wife had to bake the next day. It is almost incredible the food that was eaten on that one day's threshing."

The fact that unemployment is not much in evidence in country districts as a whole in spite of the policy of many farmers to economise on their labour bill, appears to be mainly due to the fact that as the older men die off younger men are not taken on to replace them.

Prolonged underpayment of agricultural labour is producing its inevitable result. A weakened stock gives inferior work; a lower standard is set and works in a vicious circle with a lower standard of living. Despite all the village schools can do, the agricultural labourer is becoming less and less skilled. But agriculture every



year demands more intelligence, not less. There can be no solution of the economic problem without response to the human demand. How can interest in agricultural work be revived, confidence in agricultural prosperity restored and agricultural skill encouraged except by being given the prospect of reward?

Mr. Christopher Turnor's opinion may be quoted in this connection:—

“Agriculture cannot possibly succeed if the farmer has to farm against bad labour or inadequate output per man. Labour is bad largely because of generations of underfeeding and under-stimulus.”

#### RURAL STANDARD OF LIVING IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

77. The Agricultural Tribunal's general conclusion is that in other Western European countries agricultural wages are lower and hours longer than in England, but that, on the other hand, no other rural population has anything like so high a percentage of agricultural workers employed for wages. Abroad, “family farmers,” either tenants or occupying owners, far outnumber the smallholders of England; moreover, agricultural workers for wages frequently have smallholdings of their own.

Nothing came out more clearly in the reports of our Investigators abroad than the fundamental difference between the position of agricultural workers here and in other countries. Here the essential facts are that:—

(1) The majority of workers on the land are almost wholly dependent on a cash wage.

(2) The wage paid is often not sufficient to enable a man to maintain himself and a family in health and decency.

(3) Once a labourer always a labourer is the general rule.

In the other countries of North-Western Europe, and indeed in rural communities generally throughout the world,

the ruling facts are that the majority of workers on the land have the use of some land for themselves ; that they and their families are not wholly dependent on cash wages ; that the lot of the countryman is not glaringly inferior to that of the townsman ; and that employment is regarded as a temporary stage through which the labourer progresses naturally to land occupancy.

The rather surprising finding of the Agricultural Tribunal with reference to wages is best regarded in the light of another sentence from the same Report :—

“ Any speeding-up of the machinery by which the unsatisfied demand for smallholdings is met would result in intensifying production from the land without any lowering of the standard of living of the persons concerned when measured in terms which they themselves would wish to apply.”

One or two summaries of our Investigator's reports will be to the point :—

(1) *Belgium*.—There is a tendency to equality of wages in town and country. An important factor in this is the mobility given to labour by the high development of transport facilities. Moreover, agriculture is showing an increasing capacity to pay wage-earners a higher wage. According to the latest information the average cash wages in 1923 range from 12 to 18 frcs. a day as compared with 3.50 frcs. before the war. In any case, the labourer is regarded as a peasant cultivator *in posse*.

(2) *Holland*.—The national average of wages seems to be much higher than the figure given in the Agricultural Tribunal's Report. Our Investigator obtained for us from Dr. Molhuysen, Secretary of the Royal Dutch Agricultural Committee, a statement showing that Dutch agricultural wages for the present year were £82, or 31s. a week.

(3) *Denmark*.—There are very few men who are permanently labourers. Wages are approximately 4s. a day for nine months of the year, and 3s. 8d. a day for the remaining three months. During the four harvest weeks there is an addition of 9½d. a day.

In view of statements commonly made by persons, who seem to be anxious that the lessons of Danish experience should not be assimilated in this country, that the Danish smallholder leads a slavish existence, it may be well to

quote in this paragraph one further sentence from the Tribunal's Report :—

“ The country which compares most favourably with England is Denmark, where the social status, housing and standard of comfort of the smallholder provide on the whole a better life than that of the agricultural labourer in this country.”

To this we may add the verdict of the most recent American investigator of farming conditions in Europe. Professor Branson, of Carolina University, in a series of letters,<sup>1</sup> as characteristic in their phraseology as in their acuteness, pays particular attention to the actual conditions of life created both for men and women by the agricultural systems of Germany, Denmark and France. In Germany he is oppressed by the servitude of the peasant women. In Denmark he is mightily impressed by the great range of happiness open to the worker on the soil. We do not for a moment suggest that the impressions of an American traveller, however highly skilled as an observer, should be taken as wholly conclusive, but we do wish to emphasise that the tremendously rapid agricultural progress of Free Trade Denmark has resulted in, and has been consolidated by, a marked rise in rural welfare, and that not only of a material kind but of the higher kind which is betokened by cheerful homes and the development of spontaneous systems of rural education.

#### THE MORAL OF FOREIGN EXPERIENCE.

78. The outstanding lesson derived from the study of agriculture in other countries is that the prosperity of the industry and the health and contentment of those engaged in it depend, primarily, not on cash returns but on the existence of a living interest in the land, a sense almost of partnership between the land and those who work on it. In a comparison of wage conditions between England

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<sup>1</sup> “ Farm Life Abroad ” (1924). For fuller details of Denmark see Appendix XIII.

and other countries, the unlikeness of the things compared becomes immediately evident. When the majority of those who work on the land are landless wage-earners, there is a difference in kind created, oddly enough, by the difference in degree. It is possible to imagine a rural reform which aims primarily at making agricultural wages fairly comparable with industrial wages, but that would be a rural reform of an entirely new character. It would compromise with, if it did not actually accept, the fallacy that the prosperity of agriculture should be measured by the same rule as the prosperity of, say, the tailoring trade. In fact, agriculture is a life as well as a means of livelihood. In so far as land workers are dependent on wages, the object of rural reform must be to raise the minimum wage to a living level. To this point we shall return more than once in other chapters. In this chapter we are concerned with hard facts, not with remedies or principles. What we wish to emphasise here is that the inter-action of material and moral forces in rural prosperity is a fact; that the standard of life of agriculturists must be measured "*in terms which they themselves would wish to apply*"; and that the actual output from the soil is affected by the spirit in which it is worked.

79. *Hours of Labour.*—It is often said that English Trade Unionism is guided solely by urban ideas when it demands a 48 hour week for agricultural labourers. We are quite clear that agriculture cannot be conducted on a schedule of hours of work; we are equally clear that so long as workers for wages preponderate in the industry, there will be an irresistible demand for such a schedule. But in Holland, Denmark and Germany, even the much smaller proportion of wage-earners have formulated, and in some cases enforced, conditions as to the hours of labour. Our investigators report that smallholders and farmers of every degree themselves work longer hours than the men who are protected by wage and hour agreements. It does not appear, however, that the smallholders in other

countries would consider for a moment abandoning their independence and sense of own-mastership for the advantages of fixed hours.

#### AGRICULTURISTS AND RURAL INDUSTRIES.

80. A further result of foreign comparison is to emphasise the truth of Lord Ernle's statement<sup>1</sup> that England is the only country which "attempts to charge the land with the exclusive support of agricultural workers." Foreign nations have never let go their rural industries.

*France*, apart from her peasant proprietors, has 3,000,000 agricultural workers, of whom 600,000 are earners of weekly wages. But most of them have subsidiary remunerative employments in rural industries. They are thus saved from underpayment during the winter, and agriculture is exempted from the burden of paying wages at a season when wages cannot be earned.

As the result of a Report on economic conditions issued in 1875, *Germany* in 1882 set up a Department to promote the industrial development of rural districts, to level up conditions as between town and country, and to foster the progress of intensive farming. As a result, her rural minor industries before the war were "amazingly prosperous." The three objects aimed at had all been achieved. "Numerous whole time and half-time employments, many of which are seasonally supplementary to farm work, have been revived or created on economical yet profitable lines."

#### RURAL HOUSING.

81. Accurate statistics of the rural housing position in the country to-day are not available. Anyone who casts even a casual eye on rural conditions knows that the housing position in the villages is deplorable. The Land Enquiry Committee of 1913 reported that there was a housing need in the rural districts of England alone of 120,000 houses. Since that time conditions have become worse owing to:—

(1) The wearing out of yet more of the older houses without replacement.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Land and Its People," page 96.

(2) The taking of labourers' cottages for urban or non-agricultural workers, and to a deplorably large extent, for week-end residences of the well-to-do.

There is some evidence also that the number of tied cottages has increased, not so much by the building of new tied cottages on farms, as by the purchase of houses in the villages by farmers.

The case for tied cottages was most carefully and sympathetically considered by the Hutchison Committee. On the other hand, our Enquiry Campaign Meetings in different parts of the country revealed what indeed we already knew, that there is no question which arouses stronger feeling in the villages than the knowledge that eviction from his home may be to any labourer the price of a gesture of independence. What is resented is not the farmer's hold over men in charge of animals who, to perform their work, must live on the farm, but the power given them over employees who need not live on farms but can find no cottages in the villages other than those owned by their masters.<sup>1</sup>

#### CAUSES OF SHORTAGE.

82. The roots of the rural housing shortage go deeper than those of the urban shortage. Cottage building for agricultural labourers has never been on an economic basis. Labourers' cottages have been part of the equipment of an estate or of a farm. They must in fact be regarded as part of the land's permanent capital. They have often been an investment made by landlords to increase the rental value or the selling value of farms. The demand for larger and better cottages is now insistent. It is made at a time when the cost of cottage building has risen out of all proportion to previous costs. It is made also at a time when a large number of landlords have difficulty in keeping older cottages in repair

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix III. (page 179) should be read in conjunction with the section.

and are quite unable to build new cottages. Here we desire only to emphasise that the actual shortage of houses in rural parishes is even more serious than in the town, that under the National Housing Schemes undertaken since the war it has been possible to build only an infinitesimally small proportion of cottages for agricultural workers, and that *for the ultimate purpose of national well-being housing reform is starting at the wrong end if it improves urban conditions but leaves rural conditions unchanged.* Such a process necessarily aggravates migration from the country to the over-populated towns.

#### RURAL HOUSING ABROAD.

83. Our report from Belgium emphasises the dangers arising from bad rural housing conditions. In that country there is an actual shortage of full-time agricultural labour, and a factor in this shortage is said to be the arrangements made for housing single labourers, whose conditions are described in some places as "épouvantable." In Holland the labourers are thought, on the whole, to be better housed than in many English villages. In North-Eastern Germany the houses are reported to be well built, in good repair, clean, airy and roomy. But they are nearly all tied. In Denmark it is evident that housing improvement has followed developments in agricultural tenure. Our Investigator there notes that when the Small Holdings Policy was first instituted, cheap and rather primitive buildings were thought sufficient. Holders got on to the land, ran up, often by the help of their neighbours, some sort of buildings for their beasts and their families, and then in the course of a few years, improved their houses just as they improved their land. Holders under the 1919 Small Holdings Legislation have been given generous assistance by cheap loans for erecting necessary buildings. It is beyond question now that the houses of Danish smallholders compare more than favourably with the English cottages.

## HOUSING AND POPULATION.

84. The place of housing in the rural problem is very clearly illustrated by the following extracts from the report of our Investigator in Wales :—

“ The traditional method of housing married Welsh farm labourers was on small holdings varying in size from about 3 acres upwards, cut out from the farms on which the men were employed, and the labourers were able to produce for themselves a considerable quantity of their own food supplies.

“ The decay of the system began with the agricultural depression which commenced in the seventies, when farmers, owing to the prices of corn, laid down their land to grass. The need for labour immediately declined and hundreds of labourers migrated to the industrial areas, their holdings being vacated, and in many cases allowed to become derelict. During more recent years, others were abandoned through falling into disrepair and becoming untenable. The cottages and holdings were usually let by the landowner to the farmer with the farm, and the latter sublet to his labourer. When the depression came, rents dropped and landowners became less able to carry out necessary repairs both to the farm buildings and cottages. The farmer was naturally more anxious to have his buildings maintained in a satisfactory condition than his cottages, and the latter became sadly neglected, and in course of time became untenable, the tenants were compelled to move, usually to the mining districts, and the cottages were allowed to fall. The land in such cases was merged into the farms, and subjected to ordinary farm cultivation. Not infrequently, however, the holdings were allowed to become derelict, and to-day the ruined buildings, gardens and enclosures of hundreds of these abandoned small holdings may still be seen in various parts of Wales.

“ The old holdings were tied to the farms and the system interfered with the labourer's freedom. The feeling of the modern labourer against tied houses is very strong, and if the system of labourer's holdings is to be effectively restored, the land and cottages must be publicly owned and controlled.

“ If one visits a rural hamlet or village in Wales, seldom will he find a labourer occupying one of the cottages; policemen, tailors, carpenters, roadmen, insurance agents, widows and old age pensioners, yes, but infrequently a farm worker. When one does come across a case it is that of a day labourer employed by a number of farmers in the vicinity for special duties. After all, the task we have before us is not merely increasing food production, but building up a rural civilisation, and a step to-



wards it is to show more vision in the erection of our countryside villages."

What is here said of Wales is true, both historically and psychologically, of many other parts of Great Britain.

#### RURAL CRAFTSMEN.

85. One further point, true of Great Britain as a whole, may be illustrated by figures from Wales. Examination of the Census figures for the rural districts in a group of Welsh counties shows that there has been a steady decline in the number of craftsmen resident in the rural districts. For simplicity's sake the figures for Carpenters are extracted for the two Census dates 1911-1921:—

<i>Rural districts in the Counties of</i>	1911	1921
Anglesey .. .. .	349	294
Carnarvon .. .. .	482	420
Merioneth .. .. .	172	122
Radnor .. .. .	166	106
Cardigan .. .. .	452	293
Carmarthen .. .. .	852	538
Pembroke .. .. .	524	374
	Total 2,997	2,147

The figures for masons, masons' labourers, etc., show a similar tendency.

Nothing could be more clearly indicative of a falling away in the vigour of rural life than this failure in the supply of craftsmen who are essential for repairs to existing buildings, the construction of new buildings, housing and schools.

In framing a rural policy it is important to bear in mind that there are many others, besides those actually engaged in agriculture, whose lives and livelihoods are affected by agricultural depression or prosperity.

*Division V.**Rural Health.*

86. *Sources of Information.*—At the beginning of our Report reference was made to rural population as a reservoir of health for the whole nation. The assumption that country life is healthier than town life is sometimes questioned by persons who, being familiar with the immense advance made of recent years in the care of urban children, are not infrequently saddened by seeing anæmic, rickety or stunted children in country villages. In matters of this kind impressionism is dangerous. The facts are amenable to statistical treatment and may be accurately stated.

The primary sources of information are the Registrar-General's Annual Reports and the Reports of urban and rural Medical Officers of Health. A multitude of pamphlets and books have been written round the official figures, and material for forming a judgment is, in fact, ample.

One of the best treatments of the subject is from Sir William Ashley's Memorandum, published as an appendix to the Report of the Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation. Another distinctly useful study of the question has recently been published in "Internal Migration and its Effect upon the Death Rates."<sup>1</sup> The latter has particular reference to the county of Essex, but its conclusions are generally applicable.

## RURAL HEALTH AND URBAN DISEASES.

87. In broad outline the facts are that during the period of adolescence, that is 15–25 age period, there is a higher death rate in rural than in urban areas, but that for the age periods under 15 and over 25 rural areas show an advantage. During the first five years of life the urban death rate is more than double that of rural districts, and in later adult life it is nearly double. Mr. Hill, in the work named above, examines the excess of rural death

<sup>1</sup> By A. B. Hill, B.Sc., H.M. Stationery Office.

rate in the 15 to 25 age period and concludes that it is due to "a population weakened by selection succumbing to disease which the general conditions of their life do not assist them to overcome." In other words, the percentage of young people dying between the ages of 15 and 25 is higher in the country than in the towns because the stronger and healthier young people leave the country for the towns. Despite the constant drain on country vigour, rural surroundings and employment give better health figures than urban.

Sir William Ashley in the memorandum referred to above puts very concisely the result of Farr's life work. He points out that wrong deductions may easily be made from statistics unscientifically used. Since 1883 the Registrar-General has "corrected" the recorded death rate in order to show what the mortality would have been in the several districts if they had the same age and sex distribution as the whole country. In any test of comparative mortality the "corrected" death rate is the figure to be used. Using this test, fair comparison becomes possible both of consecutive periods and of contemporary areas. The result arrived at is that growing urbanisation and higher mortality went together in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century. In the fourth quarter the effect of better sanitation and medical progress made themselves felt. Fairly comparable now are County Boroughs (in effect the larger towns and cities of Great Britain) and Rural Districts, although many residents of the latter are not engaged in agriculture. For the four years before the War the comparison is as follows :

		Corrected Death Rates.			
		1911	1912	1913	1914
County Boroughs	..	16.6	15.2	15.6	16.1
Rural Districts	..	11.4	10.5	10.7	10.8
Difference	..	5.2	4.7	4.9	5.3

88. The superiority of rural health to urban health is emphasised again by the statement of the Registrar-General that phthisis "increases with urbanisation to a maximum in London." Standardised figures for the period 1911-1914 of the average rate per million inhabitants were :—

London .. .. .	1,315
County Boroughs .. .. .	1,218
Other Urban Districts .. .. .	879
Rural Districts .. .. .	776

It is perfectly true that the population of rural districts includes many persons who are, in fact, town workers, but who are able, by reason of larger incomes, to live in country surroundings, and that many urban-dwelling adults were rural children. Sir William Ashley, however, very properly brings into calculation the evidence derived from mortality year by year in various occupations, and from the reports of School Medical Officers. He concludes definitely that farmers have, after the clergy, the best expectation of life; that agricultural labourers more nearly enjoy the same health as the clergy than any of the operatives of the ordinary factory industries (exclusive of specifically dangerous trades), and that country children have an appreciable superiority both in height and weight.

#### HEALTH IN OXFORDSHIRE.

89. None the less, it is true that in the villages some children are anæmic, rickety or stunted. This side of the picture is clearly brought out in a valuable Survey of Rural Education recently made in Oxfordshire<sup>1</sup>

The general impression made on the authors of this book is of a low standard of life, low wages, poor housing and lack of well-being and vitality amongst the children. Medical reports show strikingly large numbers of children suffering from various ills, but the provision of treatment and preventive remedies is slowly gaining ground. In

<sup>1</sup> "Rural Education," by A. W. Ashby and P. G. Byles.

one or two of the villages it is reported " that the physical condition of the children is perfect " ; but, on the other hand, there is evidence that the villages thus favourably reported on are those where agriculture is subordinated to employment of other kinds.

Of the more purely agricultural villages the report states :

" Throughout these villages are seen many examples of children stunted in physique and weak in brain power."

A Doctor writes in evidence :—

" The general standard of health and physique is, in my opinion, below what one might expect considering the advantages of fresh air, etc."

A Teacher says :—

" Most of the children suffer from debility of one form or another." Another witness says that " the bad physique of the children is due to low wages " ; and a Doctor adds, " under present conditions it is waste of money to organise lectures and classes in hygiene, etc., until the housing and wages questions have been settled."

Generally speaking, the Oxfordshire Doctors concentrate on bad housing as the prime cause of the children's defective physique.

#### HEALTH IN DEVONSHIRE.

90. In the Report of the Chief Medical Officer of the Board of Education for the year 1923 is contained a very striking Report by Dr. Corkery, School Medical Inspector for Devon. He speaks of the steady and manifest decline in the general physique, appearance and stature of the rural children. In former years the country-bred child was much superior in health and vigour, and the difference now was obvious to the most casual observer. Now " many of the children in country schools (*excepting the children of farmers*) are pale-faced, anæmic looking, with eyes lacking lustre, undersized, underfed and sad faced." The decline in physique has been steady and progressive, and exists practically all over the rural areas of the county.

91. The reason for the deterioration is, in Dr. Corkery's opinion, complex but not obscure. The A1 youths and girls have deserted the country, leaving behind the B3 and C3 adolescents who, in process of time, become the parents of the next country generation.

Next to this continued breeding from the unfit comes bad housing. "The labourers' cottages are, in some cases, quite unfit for human habitation."

The third cause is the lack of sufficient and suitable food, which operates very injuriously on children who have to walk two or three miles to school in all weathers.

Other causes brought into account are intermarriage (particularly in moorland parishes), and large families, operating in conjunction with inadequate wages and bad housing.

Between the evidence contained in the last two paragraphs and the facts stated in the paragraphs which preceded them there is undeniably some conflict. The fact is that rural life is intrinsically healthier than urban life, and that until towns as we know them to-day can be entirely reconstructed the nation must look to rural population for constant renewal of its health and vigour. But when close examination is made of rural conditions grave doubt is aroused whether rural population can continue to re-invigorate the towns. Low wages, landlessness, continued breeding from the less fit and continued bringing up of children in stuffy and insanitary homes, deterioration of diet resulting from dependence on boughten food (which is itself a consequence of landlessness), and a general suppression of ambition and hope, are producing their inevitable results. What is at stake is not only the quantity but the quality of the population maintained on British land.

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FACTS.

92. The facts dryly related in this chapter may perhaps be found dull by some. They will not be found dull if their intrinsic significance and their mutual inter-connec-

tion are realised. No cause can more fitly evoke patriotic effort than that of rural regeneration. On the saving and restoring of rural life depends the future of the nation. An analysis of present conditions, such as has been attempted in this chapter, reveals rural weakness and decay. By the facts here accumulated must be tested the soundness of the conclusions reached in the first chapter of this report. In succeeding chapters we attempt to probe the causes of present conditions and we will conclude this chapter by stating in the briefest possible form the facts viewed from the standpoint of national welfare.

We have living on and by our land a smaller proportion of all our population than any other country. We have less of our total capital invested in agriculture than any other country. We have, since the industrial revolution, paid less attention to agriculture and rural life than those countries which, as industrial competitors, are now becoming increasingly formidable. A larger proportion of our agricultural population is without any real hope of occupying land for themselves than in any other country. More of our land is in the ownership of a very limited number of persons than is the case in any other North-Western European country.

To this must be added that in Europe generally, wherever there has been in modern times a concentration of landed property in few hands, a complete change in the system of land tenure has been made. In Denmark the change has been none the less drastic for being gradual and peaceful. In Russia and Roumania it began before the War. In Poland, Czecho-Slovakia and other "new countries" its force and even violence is due to the post-War release of democratic energy.<sup>1</sup>

All these facts must be considered in relation to each other, and to the urgent national necessity for increasing our production of primary wealth and lessening our dependence on foreign markets.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix VII.

## CHAPTER IV.

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### LOW COST FARMING AND HIGH PRODUCTION FARMING.

93. In this chapter an attempt will be made to illustrate by definite examples of land use, the full significance of the facts recorded in the last chapter. Two conclusions will, we think, stand out. The (1) that there is a serious degree of under-cultivation of English land; (2) that there are possibilities of improving the use of English land still undreamt of by many of those who occupy it.

#### *Division I.*

#### *Badly used Land.*

94. At the outset it is necessary to emphasise, on the one hand, that the instances of bad farming given in this chapter prove, not that all English farming is bad, but that a good deal of English farming is much worse than it need be. The instances of successful high farming, on the other, are given to prove, not that the whole of England might become a gigantic market garden, but that much land which is now regarded as fit only for extensive or low cost farming is capable of being used for more intensive or higher production farming. Conversation with farmers up and down the country makes two things very evident. First, that farmers themselves very often resent bad farming by their neighbours; and secondly, that very many farmers regard low cost farming as inevitable. Conversation with labourers shows that their minds are moving very rapidly to the demand that bad farming and low cost farming should be eliminated.



For many years they have suffered as the result of low cultivation; they now definitely attribute low wages and rural depopulation to the way in which farmers use, or misuse, the land. This development of opinion among labourers is comparatively new. No argument is needed in a democratic country to prove its very great importance.

#### WHY LAND IS UNDER-CULTIVATED.

The theoretical basis of under-cultivation has perhaps never been more simply expressed than recently by a prominent Welsh agriculturist, writing in an admirable agricultural supplement issued by the "Western Mail," a Conservative newspaper.

"The great bulk of the farming of the country," says this writer, "is carried on on the system . . . of collecting what Providence bestows without labour and without cost."

An extract from Sir Daniel Hall's brilliant *Pilgrimage of British Farming* puts this desperately pious theory in concrete form.

"It was, in fact, in this district that we began to hear, as we did not infrequently through the Midlands, of good-sized farms worked prairie fashion by a farmer either single-handed or with the one man customary on the small farms, everything neglected, land and fences going downhill, the farmer skimming little more than a bare living though he obtains an excessive return on the nominal capital he has put into the business."<sup>1</sup>

Put by an economist the theory appears as "the predilection of British farmers for an essentially safe system of agriculture."<sup>2</sup>

The three quotations taken together make up a singularly depressing picture of farmers regarding themselves as safe because, relying on the unstimulated production of nature, they are able to skim a bare living from the land.

<sup>1</sup> Pages 412-413.

<sup>2</sup> Venn, *Foundations of Agricultural Economists*, page 179.

## THE AGRICULTURAL PARADOX.

95. Once again it must be repeated that this theory is not held by every farmer. Sir Daniel Hall should be quoted again.

"We possess farmers full of enterprise, none better; but *their example is not generally followed, their methods have not been systematized* so as to become the ordinary standard of agriculture. Many farmers are short of capital for the size of their holdings; they cannot, if they would, depart from the routine of the minimum of cultivation; still more are knowledge, determination and enterprise lacking."

"The paradox of a limited amount of land in close proximity to the best markets of the world, accompanied by *farming that is yearly growing less instead of more intensive*, can be explained only in one way—that the amount of land is still in excess of the demand for it by many who are capable of using it to advantage. The number of really skilful farmers has not been recruited rapidly enough to maintain the standard, still less to ensure progress."

"It is not too much to say that if the farming throughout Great Britain reached the standard, not of the best, but of the good farmers existing in every district, *there would be an increased production of food of from 10 per cent. to 15 per cent. without any addition to the existing proportion of arable land.*"

In weighing this verdict let it be remembered that the arable acreage of Denmark has been measured not for growing corn (which may or may not be an economic proposition in this country) but for increasing the stock-conveying capacity of the land.

Sir John Russell and Sir Henry Rew put the same point statistically.

"The evidence," they say, "of the best farmers is very convincing. Many farmers obtain low yields, but it is not they who make money. *The good farmer does*

*much better for himself and for the consumer.* The yield of certain crops are :

		Measured bushels per acre.		
		1912-1921 England and Wales.	A good farmer expects.	Highest recorded yield.
Wheat	..	30·7	40 to 50	96
Barley	..	30·8	40 to 50	90
Oats	..	38·3	60 to 80	121

#### THE LAW OF DIMINISHING RETURNS.

96. "The Law of Diminishing Returns" is one of the few phrases which have escaped from the text-books of economics into daily agricultural discussion. Its patrons are sometimes apparently satisfied to use it and think no further.

It is perfectly true that in agriculture, as, indeed, in all industries, successive application of power, whether capital, or energy, or material, gives successively increasing returns up to a point, but then begins to give successively decreasing returns. That is the much-quoted law. But it does not mean that the less power of any kind that is applied the greater will be the profit. Nobody suggests that from British agriculture should be expected an impossible output. What is suggested is that the output for British agriculture in general has not yet reached the point at which the Law of Diminishing Returns begins to operate. The point has been well dealt with of recent years by several writers of the first rank, and is put best perhaps by Sir Henry Rew and Sir John Russell when they say:—

"As the farmer increases his efforts so his returns increase up to the point when the inevitable diminishing return sets in

Where this point lies we do not pretend to know, but we cannot admit that it is yet reached."

#### LABOURERS AND FARMERS.

97. In view of the quotations from Sir Daniel Hall given above it is unnecessary here to draw attention to the many instances of under-cultivation brought out in the Land Committee's Report of 1913. We would add only a few of more recent date, which point not only to facts but causes.

The following sentences are taken from the Report of our Investigator in Norfolk :—

" This shortage of capital is reflected by economies in labour which lead to inefficient farming."

" Many of the labourers complain of dirty farming. They pointed out examples of barley thick with thistles, and asserted that root crops were scratched over once instead of being hoed carefully three times, that hedges were left unkempt, and ditches uncleaned. These conditions, however, are *partly* attributable to poor land. Some of the labourers, however, would appear to be sceptical in regard to the alleged losses of the farmers."

#### UNDER-CAPITALISATION OR ----

98. *Facts About Land* published by the Land Agents' Society in 1916 in reply to the Land Enquiry Committee Report of 1913, maintains that bankruptcies are fewer among farmers than among other business men, but admits that there is bad farming, and indicates several causes.

" Want of capital, apart from the personal qualities of the individual farmer is the most important of all the causes of bad farming" (p. 209). And again: " Under-cultivation, where it exists, is due to want of capital, or want of education, or want of character, or to the occupation of too much land.

. . . Where two or three farms are in the occupation of one tenant, and the area is too large for his capital and personal supervision, *under-cultivation and less employment often result*" (p. 166).

Sir Rider Haggard, after visiting Denmark, has no hesitation in giving his verdict.

"Many tenants also have a habit of taking far larger farms than they have either the capital, the energy, or sometimes the skill to manage. . . . no circumstance in our agriculture astonishes and indeed horrifies the Danish farmer so much as does our huge acreage of wasteful and indifferent pasture." <sup>1</sup>

#### MANAGEMENT AND CAPITAL.

99. Mr. J. Orr, in *Agriculture in Oxfordshire*, a valuable survey of an English County where rural life has for many years been particularly depressed, sums up a part of his argument as follows:—

"Farmers themselves have accurately diagnosed their condition, it may be in a very general way. They lack strength . . . Their own efficiency is constantly limited by the inadequate amount of capital which they bring to it, and keep in it. Capital does not come to them as it comes to men in other undertakings, and could not stay with them, because they have never provided the form of management which would serve as a basis for co-operation between themselves and the people who have capital to invest" (p. 129).

Mr. Orr recognises that farmers are not their own masters in this respect, and he goes on to criticise them pretty severely for lack of grip on the essentials of business. "There is no element in their business which excepts it from the economic laws which govern others."

#### FARMING METHODS AND THE LABOURER.

100. The connection between theories of cultivation and the actual lot of the agricultural labourer is fairly brought out in the following quotation from Mr. Enfield's *The Agricultural Crisis*:—

"Small blame to the farmer, therefore, when confronted with a movement he did not understand and could not check" (Mr. Enfield is referring to the deflation policy of 1920-23) "if he fell back upon a drastic curtailment of his cost of production, even though it involved, as it did, great hardships to the agricultural labourer."

<sup>1</sup> "Rural Denmark and its Lessons," pp. 258, 259.

## WASTED LAND AND UNDER-PRODUCTION.

101. No authority on the subject is more generally respected than Lord Ernle, whose *English Farming Past and Present* is already a classic of the agriculturist's library. He says quite bluntly with reference to the present condition of English land :—

“ The land has suffered and is still suffering. Thousands of acres of tillage and grass-land are comparatively wasted, under-farmed and undermanned. Countries whose climate is severer than our own, and in which poorer soils are cultivated, produce far more from the land than ourselves. The gross receipts per cultivated acre in Great Britain have been calculated at only one-fifth of those of Belgium, and two-thirds of those of Denmark ” (p. 398).

Sir Daniel Hall points out that the trouble is not only that some farmers have more land than they can profitably utilise through lack of skill and capital, but that in certain backward districts the small men were equally wanting in all the arts of husbandry.

## LIVE STOCK.

102. A further point brought out by the same authority is the failure in the line of communication between the most expert farmers and others. Speaking about live stock, he says :—

“ The amazing thing is the comparatively small influence our classic breeders seem to be exerting upon the general stock of our farmers ; although Great Britain is the fountain-head from which every other great stock-producing country draws its blood, the general level of the animals which may be seen on sale at any local market is below that which prevails, say, in Canada or the northern United States ” (p. 165).

## CHEAP CAPITAL AND LOW EFFORT.

103. Three quotations from Mr. Christopher Turnor's *The Land and its Problem* will serve to bring out an essential connection between facts, causes and results.

“ In the golden era of our agriculture, 1840 to 1860, and up to 1870, the farmer's working capital was about £10 per acre ;

after the depression and up to the outbreak of the Great War that capital was down to about £5 or £6 per acre, taking an average for the whole country, while on a similar basis the continental farmer's working capital was from £12 to £15 per acre with an upward tendency. On the Continent land was attracting capital; in England it was not" (p 88).

" . . . It is undoubtedly pleasing to the practical man to get capital below the market rate of interest, but it is uneconomic, and therefore, in the long run, unsound. Above all it is not conducive to the highest effort on the part of the farmer" (p. 31).

" Our farmers do not put into the land anything like the amount of nourishment for the crops that is given in countries with a highly developed agriculture. . . . It cannot and should not pay to grow crops which come out at 3 quarters to the acre" (p. 97).

#### THE VICIOUS CIRCLE.

104. The vicious circle, a large part of which is seen in the quotations given in the last paragraph, is outlined in the Report of one of our Investigators.

" Grassland on the downs soon runs to furze, and if it is to continue to be of feeding value furze must be stubbed or land reploughed and resown."

" The flocks of sheep here have declined by half or two-thirds and the dairy extended. The sheep kept the arable land in good heart and it grew good corn, especially barley (Z——'s used to buy it for malting), and no doubt it paid. Cows, however, do not improve arable land unless heavily caked, and they do not consider that a paying proposition here. No bullocks are fatted, so no real good quality dung is produced nor any great quantity. As so little corn is grown, so is the quantity of straw regulated and the manure heap is small. The arable land is neglected all ways. Artificial manures are not used; thistles and charlock are never checked; the farming itself is slovenly, and no supervision is given. It seems that in a fair season the land grows about 8 sacks of wheat and much the same per acre of barley, and 10 or more of oats, and the average is going down."

Another paragraph from the same Report illustrates that failure of enterprise in one direction may well lead to impotence in another.

"The whole district is dairying, and farmers largely live for their milk cheque, and gradually have run their farms so casually that they are entirely in the hands of the combine. They own no churns, and if they do not accept the price offered they are unable to convert their milk into butter or cheese—in fact they are in many cases living hand to mouth, so that they could not afford to wait during the necessary interval between manufacture of cheese and maturing and sale."

## GENTLEMEN FARMERS.

105. Another Investigator writes:—"Half-hearted, uninterested, extensive farming is often indulged in by 'gentlemen farmers' who attach a good deal more importance to sport than to cultivation."

"X. is a very old hale and hearty man who keeps the farm in his own hands, so that his sons do little but hunt, in which they are encouraged by their sporting father. The farm is neglected, overrun with rabbits and foxes; most of the arable land is laid down to permanent or semi-permanent grass, and the rest foul—thistles, charlock, etc. . . . The popular idea is that when the old man dies the whole farm must collapse."

Or, again, another Investigator reports:—

"One is amazed at the number of ex-officers who own or rent big farms, but who cannot be experienced agriculturists and are obviously there to be near the Hunt and to satisfy their own vanity. These men often give very high prices for their holdings and so keep out good farmers who farm for business. One has heard, for example, of one of the most competent farmers in the county who tried for two years to obtain a farm for his son at a business rent—but in vain."

## LAND STARVED OF LABOUR.

106. A single quotation will be enough to emphasise that slack farming means rural depopulation:—

"Depopulation of this village of young men has proceeded in proportion as the land has got into one control. The general standard of cultivation has declined. Twenty per cent. at least is badly farmed, and *all* starved of labour." (Verbal evidence at a Dorset meeting.)

A dozen other illustrations might be given of this same point. The fact needs putting directly and brutally that any occupier of land who lets land down because he occupies



it in order to satisfy some æsthetic, social or athletic ambition is a public danger and a pest to the countryside, if only because his failure to farm the land to full capacity drives men and women away from the country. That a thistle farmer is a pest in another way ultimately less serious but more apparent may be illustrated by a quotation again from *Facts about Land*.

“A man who farms his land badly is a nuisance and a danger to his neighbours. He seeds their land with noxious weeds, waterlogs it by neglecting his ditches, leaves his hedges uncut and straggling, to the detriment of adjoining tenants, and the neighbourhood is glad to be quit of him. In such cases there need not be, and there is not, any fear of disturbing friendly relationships” (p. 283.)

#### GRASSLAND NEGLECTED.

107. Quotations have already been given to the effect that failure to improve grassland may be due to lack of capital or lack of knowledge of fertilisers, etc. Mr. Edward Wood, the present Minister of Agriculture, writing in a West Country newspaper (the “Western Mail” of Feb. 3rd, 1925) while in office, emphasises another aspect of the question:—

“In Wales, including Monmouthshire, of a total area of 5 million acres, no less than 3,700,000 acres consist of grassland, of which a large quantity is in poor condition, not merely because it was of indifferent quality but because *a considerable amount of inherently good land has been let down by neglect.*”

#### UNDER-CULTIVATION AS VILLAGERS SEE IT.

108. Part of our Enquiry was carried out on the rather novel plan of holding meetings in country villages partly in order to expound the main principles of what we believe to be a constructive rural policy, but much more to encourage free discussion of rural matters, and to obtain from village audiences statements both of fact and opinion. This section on low production farming may be completed by a series of quotations from these meetings:—

“A farmer who was present at the meeting confessed at the end of our discussion that he owned a large number of

acres, but his land was heavy clay land and had not been properly drained for years ; it was therefore in bad condition."

" There was general agreement here that as much as 20 per cent. might be held to be badly farmed—one man, a local Tory, thought nearer 50 per cent."

" While Mr. X was describing the farm at Y—docks, nettles, etc.—a woman interjected, ' we got 'em like that 'ere, sir. You should come and see 'em June or July, when the flowers be out on the weeds.' "

" Young labourers very keen. One thought only 30 per cent. of land here well farmed."

" In every meeting the labourers were very bitter about the small number of labourers employed on the farms, and in some places stated that the amount of badly farmed land amounted to 50 per cent., due almost entirely to this cause. In other cases the amount of badly farmed land was stated to be 10 per cent. (this was the smallest), 20 per cent., 25 per cent. or over. Another grievance was the amount of land which had ' fallen down ' from the plough."

" Alleged that on three farms of over 500 acres each in this parish 25 per cent. of the land is badly done. Examples : farm of 450 acres on which speaker worked 20 years ago then employed 7 men and 2 boys ; now not one man. Another, about the same size, years ago employed 12 men ; now not one.

" A Mr. —, a farmer, says there are two farms in this village, one of 600 acres and another of 400 acres, both being badly farmed, shockingly so. He threw out the suggestion that the two farms might be split into 10 holdings of 100 acres each. There are, he says, plenty of farmers' sons who would take up holdings of this size who are unable to get land of reasonable size now, but with the opportunity would work with two men a farm of this size, and do the job well. That would solve in the parish the bad farming problem. This found at once great favour."

" They asserted that half the land in the district was under-cultivated. Said there were plenty of cases where only one man was employed on farms of 120 acres." (North Dorset.)

#### A LANDLORD'S VIEW.

109. The estimates made at the village meetings referred to here are borne out by Earl Fortescue, who, at the Annual

Meeting of the Devon Branch of the Central Landowners Association in May, 1925, suggested that the amount of bad farming might be 15 or 20 per cent. Some farmers, he said, were inefficient and lazy, but such people were to be found in every class of the community.<sup>1</sup> He added that recent legislation gave more benefit to the indifferent than to the best farmers.

#### SIGNS OF NEGLECT.

110. Examples of bad farming could very easily be multiplied. All that we instance in this chapter are verifiable. We do not wish them to be identifiable. We are not attacking individuals; nor are we attacking either farmers or landlords as a class. What is wrong is the system. Landlords themselves are often the first to give telling pictures of neglected land, insufficient stocking, inadequate production, and ridiculously small employment of labour. In all such cases an Investigator, however highly skilled, has the utmost difficulty in deciding whether the condition of the land reflects most clearly mismanagement by the landlord or by the tenant. Stories of bad farming very frequently contain a description of the farm buildings, describing them as leaky, dilapidated, out of repair, or ruinous. "Everything requires painting; tenant says landlord should supply the paint, but never does," is one comment. Another is, "Fields urgently require draining; tenant says that under his agreement the landlord ought to supply drainage materials, but says that he cannot afford to do so." Or again, "The tenant states that he has supplied straw for thatching but could not get the work done." The ruling factor in a number of cases is the desire to preserve game. The influence of sport on farming is dealt with in a later chapter. Only one instance may here be given.

"The landlord is . . . a keen sportsman . . . who ties his tenants down not to kill ground game."

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<sup>1</sup> With this should be read Section 20, Chapter II.

## BREAKING THE HEART OF SMALL MEN.

III. Another extract illustrates clearly the deterioration which may take place within a very few years.

“ On the other side of the road from this is a farm of which complaint is made. A place of 100 acres originally, but present tenant ‘ farms ’ 50–60 acres. Good buildings, but very neglected. Present tenant has been there ten years and ‘ slacked ’ all the time—even during the war. Before the war this was all corn land, and there were employed nine full-time men and two piece-workmen—hedging, ditching, haymaking, etc. Now has ‘ one man and a machine ’—a tractor, I think. Has help from wife and daughter. The bulk of this place has been a riot of unhoed and neglected mangolds, dock and thistles, ‘ as tall as the farm gate. ’ It has just been ploughed up and the mangolds ploughed in, and the ploughed earth is full of the remains of the last rank ‘ crop. ’ A work of years to clean it up. With reference to this case of bad farming, a smallholder who accompanied me said, ‘ If you want a better illustration of how the small man’s heart is broken, and of the need for your proposals *re* bad farming, you’ll have to look a long way. ’ ”

## OWNERSHIP AND BAD FARMING.

II2. A very striking feature of the comments made at our Enquiry Campaign meetings was insistence on the fact that land owned by its occupier is frequently the worst farmed land in the district. Evidence to this effect had already been given by our Investigators in certain parts of the country. There seem to be two kinds of cases in this category.

First, there is land which is badly farmed because the farmer has no one with authority to call him to account. As one of our witnesses put it :—

“ The owner-occupier sometimes falls into the same state of mind as the man who lives on the ‘ dole. ’ He is content to live anyhow so long as he need not exert himself. ”

Secondly, land owned by farmers who have been compelled to buy since the war, frequently at exorbitant prices, is already in many cases showing evidence of the neglect caused by the absorption of the farmer’s working

capital in repayment of the purchase price. In cases of this kind farmers were frequently compelled to buy in order to save their homes and means of livelihood. Sometimes the selling landowner gave sitting tenants an option at a price which was reasonable compared with what might have been obtained in open competition. Frequently, however, the sitting tenant had to buy in open competition. In many cases, farmers who had purchased are actually paying more per annum in interest charges than previously they paid in rent, and, be it remembered, they have now to do their own repairs and meet all charges on the land. A very serious position has arisen in many parts of the country owing to this fact. For example, a farmer quoted his own case :—

“ He had to sell a flock of sheep to realise £500. He has been unable to restock since. In consequence, been unable to get best results from his land. Hoping for better times he has gradually been getting worse off.”

The report of an agriculturist of wide experience who took part in the Land Enquiry Campaign is particularly well worth quoting in this connection :—

“ A tenant, who was paying £50 per annum rent before the sale, was obliged to buy and paid £2,300. If the farm were to be re-sold to-day it would not fetch more than £1,500. The tenant was said to be in a very difficult financial position, and the farm was deteriorating through want of stock, etc. I found a number of similar cases. Apparently a very considerable area of land has been sold in this county since the War, and in the great majority of cases the tenants bought their holdings at fictitious values.

Further evidence was given by a speaker at one of the Enquiry Campaign meetings :—

“ A cake, corn and general agricultural merchant, gave me a very gloomy account of the district. Practically every tenant has had to buy, and nearly every farm was heavily mortgaged. The annual payments were generally more than double the previous rent. Farmers in the district were heavily in debt. He told me that the local Farmer's Co-operative Society had £7,000 on their books of old debts, and that he had £5,000 worth of rather doubtful debts. He added that if he or the

Co-operative attempted to press for payment, there would be many failures and probably mortgagees would begin to insist on repayment. He felt that a very serious crisis might arise at any time."

Further he says :—

" In the meantime it is true that farms are deteriorating and the buildings are becoming dilapidated owing to shortage of capital and stock. Against this rather gloomy picture, one has to acknowledge that re-sales of farms bought since the War are almost unknown, which proves that the interest so far has been paid. It may be that indebtedness to the merchant has increased."

#### A WARNING.

113. Of a certain district where owner-occupancy predominates our investigator reports as follows :—

" All the soils in this district are very short of phosphates and most of them of lime ; where these natural deficiencies have been rectified the farms look very well. . . . there are considerable communities in this district where the occupiers are devoid of capital, experience or knowledge of modern farming, with no education, and unaccustomed to contact with the outside world. . . . Their standard of living is considerably below that of the usual farm worker both as regards housing, clothing, food and recreation. . . . The land is mostly owned by the occupiers and is a good example of what many districts will descend to in the absence of an efficient landowning class if a determined effort is not made by the State to introduce a properly organised system of land tenure."

#### THE EXTENT OF BAD FARMING.

114. The statements made by country dwellers previously quoted, alleging 20 per cent., 50 per cent. and even 70 per cent. as the extent of bad farming (section 108) must be examined more fully. Are these figures too high ? Clearly, the percentage varies from district to district. Witnesses have pointed out that just as bad farming is contagious, so good farming is, in a sense, infectious. A good farmer is actually handicapped by his neighbour's harbouring of weeds and by his failure to carry out drainage. At the same time he sets a standard of achievement to his neighbours.

No witness put the amount of really bad farming in any district at less than 5 per cent. One said that practically all the land in his county was badly farmed, and 5 or 10 per cent. very badly. Another witness put the bad farmers in his district at about six out of every ten. It was this witness who pointed out first, the vital necessity of getting rid of bad farming and, secondly, the extreme difficulty of so doing.

#### GOOD FARMING MAKES GOOD LAND.

115. It seems to be proved up to the hilt that farmers themselves, however powerfully organised, cannot or will not get rid of unworthy members of their craft. So far the bad farmer has beaten the labourer; he has beaten the good farmer; he has beaten the landlord. Nor must it be thought that bad farming is the pathetic evidence of struggle against bad land. As has been said by one shrewd farmer of Oxfordshire, "Good land is where the good farmer is."

A statement by a smallholder in the same part of the country may also be quoted.

Speaking of the state of farms in his area, he says:—

"Very often these are not in any sense farmed. The hedges are not cut or trimmed, the ditches are trodden in, fences are broken down, arches to gateways are broken in, and many acres flooded in consequence. I should say it closely resembles part of a wilderness where a large herd of elephants have held a tournament. It is not because it is poor land, as is so often said to be the case; too often it is the 'spirit' which has been abroad in rural England.

"To show that it is not always poor land: a well run farm with splendid crops, standing out like a beautiful rose in a desert, may often be seen adjoining, possibly in the midst of two or three farms which have gone to ruin. All over this farm is written in a language that all men of whatever nationality can read; 'This is what the land of South—shire will give to the nation if treated fair.'"

There is, in fact, little land in England as bad as much of the land which had been made really productive in other countries, notably Belgium and Denmark, or even as land

which has been brought into productive bearing and kept in that state by men of enterprise and ability.

#### A FRENCH DIAGNOSIS OF ENGLISH CONDITIONS.

116. The root cause of all this has perhaps never been more succinctly described than by Monsieur Siegfried, an acute and friendly critic of England, in his book *L'Angleterre d'Aujourd'hui*. To him it is perfectly clear that the prosperity of industry and commerce in England has been built up on the ruin of agriculture. He is inclined to think that this ruin is the cause of deliberate neglect.

"What above all is lacking in England is not so much an agricultural atmosphere . . . as a peasant atmosphere. . . . In England of to-day the country is the place where one goes to spend the money earned in the towns. In France the position is exactly reversed. *The habit of indulging in landowning at a loss* is one of the factors mainly responsible for 'queering the pitch' of English Agricultural production." (p. 149.)

"The habit of indulging in landowning at a loss" is a pregnant phrase. It tells of the state of affairs possible only when land owners as a whole are a wealthy class; it speaks not of altruism but of a culpable indifference to rural welfare. It is reflected in the paradox spoken of by Sir Daniel Hall, and in fact, by every one who goes through modern rural England with open eyes: "Men who are earning good incomes on one side of the hedge, and on the other men who are always in difficulties . . . only kept going through the tolerance of their landlords." (p. 150.)

All is not well with agriculture in France, but Monsieur Siegfried is voicing accumulated experience when he says:—

"The majority of Englishmen are certainly not unaware that the independence of the peasant proprietor stimulates his work, is a cause of social stability, and makes productive work which would otherwise not be so. . . . But probe deeper and you will discover that an instinctive sentiment leads them directly to the contrary view." (p. 154.)



The solution which suggests itself not unnaturally to Monsieur Siegfried is a peasant proprietorship.

" . . . Entrusting cultivation to a class of peasant proprietors might make of England, not the semi-feudal country which it is still so largely, but a rural democracy. That is an eventuality which has been much spoken of recently. . . but mainly elsewhere than in England." (p. 153).

We have already given some reasons, and will later give more, for thinking the solution not quite so simple.

For the moment we would merely emphasise the paragraphs of this chapter which illustrate bad farming by owner-occupiers, and those passages in the evidence collected which suggest that there is a good deal to be said for the power ultimately resident in landlordism of removing from the land a farmer incapable of using it properly. To say this is to argue not for the system of landlordism but for one of its good features.

## *Division II.*

### *Well-used Land.*

117. It is time now to give definite illustrations of how British land can be made no whit less productive or less profitable than land in other countries. First, let the opinion of Mr. J. Harling Turner, C.B.E., Commissioner to the Duke of Portland, be given. Mr. Turner, in the "Glasgow Times" of January 19th, 1925, published what is known to be his decided view, after exhaustive consideration. He argues that the present Conservative Government will only be wasting its time if it listens to the farmers' one idea of getting for themselves protection by the levying of an import duty on foreign agricultural produce. Systematic research work and education he thinks of much more importance.

"I know many cases where farmers by the judicious selection of grass seeds and the proper treatment of the land. . . are now making, not the proverbial two, but four and five blades of grass grow where one grew before."

This is an interesting admission by someone who has been intimately connected with and interested in the present landowning system. It must be noted that all scientific farming needs capital. The great block to scientific development in British farming is the defective means at present existing of supplying it with capital—in other words, the defects of the existing landlord-tenant system.

Mr. Turner's argument implies recognition of this defect inasmuch as he goes on to urge the Government to loan money at a low rate of interest for re-draining land, for the extension of steadings, and for other purposes.

“Speaking from experience, I would say that in a very short time there will be anything from 50 per cent. to 75 per cent. of our arable lands requiring re-draining.”

Mr. Turner will not regard as unfair the comment that nothing can prove the breakdown of the present system of land tenure in this country more clearly than that the drainage of 50 to 75 per cent. of our arable land has been neglected and cannot be put right unless the Government steps in to carry out what is the acknowledged function of the landlord, namely, the provision of capital to enable works of primary importance, such as drainage, to be carried out.

#### LAND WILL RESPOND.

118. Sir H. Rider Haggard in *Rural Denmark* quotes an article from another newspaper, “The East Anglian Daily Times,” of 26th November, 1910, which, though it is anonymous, is clearly written with great authority. The writer calls attention to the great amount of land which has been unmercifully abused.

“Although every man,” he says, “is supposed to possess a right to do what he likes with his own, there is a line beyond which no one should step where the interests of the nation are involved. . . . There is no land, and we may refer to some of the strongest and foulest in the country, which will not respond to generous and determined treatment.”

Sir Rider Haggard confirms this. He gives it as his considered opinion that a change of land tenure in England resulting in an assimilation to the Danish model would result in the land producing nearly double what it does at present.

“There are thousands of acres now rented that do not yield much more than one half of what they ought to do.” (p. 252).

This of course is on an average. There are some areas where natural fertility is high and the general standard of farming excellent.

He then quotes his own experience :—

“Within the last four years, by the help of an able and enthusiastic steward, I have, in stock and crop, quite doubled the produce of some of the land I farm, and this without resorting to any form of what I may call fancy or market garden cultivation, or to the breeding of pedigree animals for sale abroad. My only methods have been to apply a sufficiency of money (about £10 or perhaps £12 the acre) and a sufficiency of muck, which, in the old farming adage, is “the mother of money.” (p. 252).

#### PRODUCING A HUNDREDFOLD.

119. One of the leading agriculturists in the country gives the two following interesting cases of his own experience :—

(1) A farm in —, 400 acres, at £300 p. a. rent. Farmed for 40 years by a farmer who made £300-£400 a year and satisfied with that. Taken over a few years ago by an exceptionally good agent to a Kentish landowner. The agent lost his agency because the landowner decided to manage his land himself, and qualified himself by a two-years' course at an agricultural college. The land, when the agent took it over, was covered with twitch, and extremely foul. He expended something like £50 an acre in deep cultivation and manuring, and made a cent. per cent. profit on much of his land. On 80 acres he got in one year over £100 per acre, and this land was previously regarded as too poor to repay anything but scratching.

(2) Sir XY is now selling some land in small holdings and is getting £100 per acre. His bailiff is buying some of it at that figure, and will, beyond doubt, do very well out of it. Only a few years ago this same land was rough pasture, covered with broom and gorse, rentable at perhaps 10s. per acre.

The secret of good farming, says Sir XY, is "giving the land the right sort of stuff and enough of it."

One of these farms has lately taken a prize for the best farmed land in the neighbourhood.

#### AN ESSEX CASE.

120. Another example of what may be called redemptive farming by an English farmer in Essex may be quoted.

"I farmed about 1,500 acres. Four of my farms, aggregating about 760 acres, had been held for over 30 years by farmers who, one after another, became bankrupt, and the land was considered to be worthless. The crops were exceedingly poor and unremunerative when I took the farms on. I drained all the land, limed it, analysed the soil, and applied phosphates chiefly, growing leguminous crops to supply the nitrogen, and applying potash where required. The farms were all very foul, and I got rid of the weeds by growing seeds and other broad crops which permitted cleaning between the rows, and also by growing lucerne and similar crops for about 7 years, and then breaking up for corn, peas, etc., etc., thus eliminating docks and thistles.

"The soil on these farms varied somewhat, but the subsoil was chiefly boulder clay. After draining, I broke up the whole of the land as deeply as I could with steam plough and cultivator and steam digger, and on these very farms, where the crops were shockingly poor and the farmers went bankrupt, I grew my record crops, over 8 quarters of wheat per acre, 10 quarters of barley, and 14 quarters of oats.

"I employed four times the number of men that my predecessors did, built them good cottages, and gave them good gardens, and experienced no labour troubles. I bought thatch-making machines, fence-making machine, opened sand and gravel pits, made building blocks, employed about 100 hands, and only paid off one permanent hand in the whole time. Thus by making thatch, fencing for sheep folds, etc., in the winter time I was able to find them occupation; and I had my own steam threshing tackle.

"The following figures will show more clearly the contrast between the position when I took the farms over and the subsequent results:—

Farm.	Date taken over.	Acres.	Number of men employed	Stock.		
				Horses.	Pigs.	Cattle.
No. 1	1881	237	5	7	4	8
Increased to	..	—	14	11	abt. 60	50
No. 2	1887	166	3	4	4	1
Increased to	..	—	7	6	200	20
No. 3	1895	50	abt. 2	abt. 2	—	—
Increased to	..	—	4	2	50	10
No. 4	1892	307	abt. 4	abt. 7	abt. 8	abt. 6
Increased to	..	—	10	10	40	30

"Sheep also frequently kept on all farms in addition.

"Steam plough, steam digger and other steam implements kept in addition to supplement horse labour.

"I am now 70 years of age, and should just enjoy tackling some of derelict England could I put the clock back 25 years."

#### A LANDOWNER FARMER.

121. Perhaps one of the most outstanding instances, however, of first class up-to-date farming is that carried on by Lord Bledisloe at Lydney Park.

"Lord Bledisloe's system of farming," says the agricultural correspondent of *The Times*, on 20th May, 1925, "is nothing if not modern in conception and management. Evidence of a master mind behind and directing the whole enterprise is discernible at every turn and in every department. We are prone to laud what is to be seen abroad, and to draw deductions unfavourable to our own country, but where is there anything overseas comparable with the Lydney farms and factories organised and worked under the personal supervision of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture? The scheme is still in the process—already well advanced—of development, and in due time it is hoped there will be a financial result to show compatible with the excellence of the organisation that distinguishes the project and that will justify the investment of capital in similar enterprises elsewhere."

## SUCCESS OF SMALL MEN.

122. The example just given is of thoroughly efficient farming on a large scale. There can be no doubt whatever that large areas of land now comparatively unproductive could be made reasonably profitable given a farmer with adequate capital and real ability. But of greater significance in some ways are the instances which prove that even where neither land nor climate are ideal, the application of ability and a small gross amount of capital can greatly increase the production of the soil. The demonstration work being done by a number of County Agricultural Committees—that of Bucks County Council has been particularly mentioned to us—proves over and over again the tremendous possibilities of making profitable small plots. A good example of the same result being achieved quite independent of official encouragement or help is the following:—

“Mr. Z., who began life as a gardener at 21s. a week in the neighbourhood, started for himself with a capital of £28 in 1895.

“He took a strip of land, growing vegetables, flowers, and fruit, and seems to have been successful from the first. In 1902 he rented his present farm of 30 acres at 25s. per acre. He has refused £3,000 for it from three different men in the last year. He has paid for the farm, and has set up his sons on a 50 acre County Council small holding with a dairy of 30 cows, the milk from which they are retailing. The two businesses, market gardening and dairying, are run as one, Mr. Z.'s sons' cows grazing partly on his grass, and the sons helping him with his business. Mr. Z. grows violets (specialises in Mrs. L.G.'s, which he sells all over the world), honey and bees, and vegetables, cream, milk and eggs.

“Mr. Z. is the biggest employer of labour in the village in proportion to acreage. His nearest neighbour has 167 acres on which he employs (on similar land) 1 man and a boy. Mr. Z.'s wages bill is £20 a week in the winter, and he has 7 workers (one girl) on the fruit farm, and 4 on the dairy farm, including his two sons, *i.e.*, 11 on 80 acres, not including himself. This does not include heavy casual labour in the summer. The milk is retailed in the village. The flowers, fruit and vegetables (specialises in early potatoes) are sold to retail shops in Y—

(6 miles distant), as is the honey. He has a big mail order business in bees and plants, especially violets. He also breeds and sells pigs as pork . . .

"The land is light, dry, free working loam on gravel, but not very strong, looks liable to burn. The farm is conveniently situated for Y—, and the produce is conveyed in his own motor lorries.

"The whole place is an excellent example of the way in which it pays a smallholder to specialise in suitable crops instead of attempting to compete with larger farms in the growing of corn and grazing."

#### DANES WHO FARM IN ENGLAND.

123. In the course of this Report a number of references have been made to Denmark. References to Denmark are sometimes resented by agriculturists in this country. Conditions, they say, are quite different in the two countries. Unfortunately for their argument they invariably fail to point out what is the difference which makes impossible in England what has been done in Denmark despite its poor soil, harsher climate and more distant markets. The detailed description of Denmark by one of our Investigators given in Appendix XIII is convincing on many points.

One of the striking facts which has emerged in the course of our enquiries was that there are quite a number of Danes farming in this country, and by their own confessions not doing at all badly. One of them has written as follows :—

"My chances of success as a farmer in Denmark are not to be compared with those I have here.

"I am more fortunate than others farming this wonderful British soil, because I have had both the essential advantages, capital and a certain amount of security—the latter by way of a lease—but even with these two items I must eventually suffer loss, the case being that I have so materially improved my land that my landlord is certain to be anxious to get the farm in hand."

"Before actual success can be expected from farming there must be a reason for the farmer to hope for reward from production, not trading ; from what I can see of the British farmer,

he is always trying to do a deal of some sort. For this he has every excuse, because he does not know where he is; all he does know is that when his joint is carved he is left with the bone."

Very similar is the opinion of a Swedish farmer of whom Sir William Beech Thomas speaks as "trying out Swedish methods in the English Home Counties." His view is that "we are singularly blest in soil, in climate and, above all, in the possession of the best markets in the world; that our land ought to double in value and fertility."<sup>1</sup>

It is of particular significance to us that the Swedes have rescued their agriculture not by concentrating on the best land, but by treating generously their poor land. By multiplying pigs, milch cows and poultry, and feeding them on green food and grain grown on the holding, they can make the poor lands pay well. The Scandinavian recipe for agricultural success is, says Sir William Beech Thomas, organisation, new methods and hard work.

#### DANES WHO HAVE FARMED IN DENMARK AND ENGLAND.

124. The experience of Danes who, having farmed in Denmark, are now farming in England, is obviously of considerable importance in the argument. We give here the gist of reports of visits paid to some of these Danish farmers in England.

##### *Visit A.—A Farm in A—shire.*

"Light (two-horse) land on chalk. Present tenant took over farm burdened with debt. It carried about 200 sheep, some implements that had to be scrapped, some out-buildings in a very bad condition, a few cottages. Present tenant substituted for the sheep a dairy herd of 50 cows. He also went in for keeping pigs in the open. He is now turning out 100 pigs a month. He employs 25 men permanently."

#### A DANE'S VIEWS ON ENGLISH FARMING.

His views on English farming in brief are as follows:—

"The majority of farms, he considers, are handicapped for lack of capital. The maximum of production is impossible

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<sup>1</sup> "The Observer," Sept. 20th, 1925.



without good out-buildings, proper drainage, up-to-date implements, and freedom from the dealers. The dealers have a hold on the farmer and place him in the position of not being a free agent. He has to buy and sell through them, and at prices he knows he could considerably improve upon if he had a free market on which to operate. One of the many useful directions in which capital could be employed, our correspondent stated, would be in releasing farmers from the clutches of the dealers, in many instances, an intolerable burden.

He said that the reason why Denmark is able to flood our markets with butter and bacon, (and soon, she would be doing the same with cheese), is because her agriculture is an arable one. "Denmark does not," he continued, "know what permanent grass is, as we understand the term in England. As a result of Danish arable farming methods, her land is able to carry far more stock per acre than in Great Britain, and the more stock land carries the less the overhead charges." He does not see why England eventually might not become an exporter of agricultural produce.

#### ANOTHER CASE

##### *Visit B.—Farm in B——shire.*

Two-horse, land with chalk subsoil.

When taken over in very bad cultivation. Stock carries only 5 horses, now (1925) it carries 148 head of cattle, 252 pigs, 10 horses and a pony, farm has begun to yield a profit, and the tenant estimates that he has doubled the value of the farm. Labourers are paid above the general rate. The land of England the farmer considers is on the whole of much better quality than that of Denmark, but land which has been allowed to fall into bad condition requires at least nine years methodical working before it can be made into a paying concern. For this, capital is necessary, and absolute security.—The farmer attributed the success of Danish farming to education "first, last and all the time."

"The land of Denmark," he states, "carries far more stock per acre than England. This is the outcome of her change-over policy in the early eighties. Instead of putting down land to grass I am for ploughing up."

He makes much use of a well-known agricultural College in his neighbourhood. "Very good information it gives—and free. But how many of my neighbouring farmers make use of it? None that I am aware of."

"The English labourer," he states, "is splendid material. What he most lacks is education of the right kind. But," he

says, " he is not properly fed. The human animal requires to be fed in just as understanding a way as I feed my cows and pigs. It is extraordinary the difference I find in my men now, compared to when I took on this farm. My ploughmen plough an acre and a half a day, and I doubt if my neighbours get more than an acre."

*Visit C.—Farm in C—shire.*

Four hundred and fifty acres, largely arable, London clay throughout. Farm owned by a land company and managed by a Dane. Farm was bought at £7 per acre including buildings. Was very foul, with no drainage and no ditches. About a quarter has now been mole-drained and all the mole-drained land except the grass land has been subsoiled. The Report of our Investigator, in the Appendix, gives some very interesting comments on the true value of drainage on this farm.

Co-operation, the farmer believes, has failed in England partly because farmers are not educated up to it and partly because Co-operative Societies in England have covered too wide areas ; but co-operation in any case is not so essential for a man farming on the scale on which he farmed in England ; but it is essential to the small farmer and the small holder. Cheap capital is absolutely necessary. The English labourer can respond in a remarkable way, but the labourer in Denmark was remarkably intelligent, and everyone working on the land in that country had a real love for the work.

RECLAIMED FARM IN THE MIDLANDS.

125. Perhaps the most striking example of what can be done with English land is derived from Staffordshire, where an Englishman took over some years ago 500 acres of land to reclaim which at the time was yielding no income to the landlord, except for shooting, and producing no crops. It is now carrying a considerable number of stock, cattle, pigs and poultry, producing valuable crops, and paying an annual wages bill of over £1,000. The present cultivator took it over in 1907, on a lease of unusual character, being :—

- (1) First three years experimental.
- (2) Twelve years period with option to break at end.
- (3) Nine years with no right of renewal.

The following condensed account brings out a large number of interesting and important points:—

*Condition of Land when taken over by the Tenant.*

Not growing an ounce of farm produce.

Not a furrow ploughed.

Used solely as a game shoot ; on it ran a herd of deer.

The greater portion consisted of marsh and moor. No roads. No timber except a few solitary trees.

No labour employed except a few gamekeepers.

The district up to recent times was famous for a herd of wild cattle called the " ——— Wild Cattle," the existence of which can be traced back to the 13th century.

Subsoil, clay of rather stiff character ; between topsoil and clay, about two inches of gravel. Depth of topsoil averages about eleven inches in natural state. Land might be described as " two-horse."

In the early sixties some draining was done, and still works in places, but pipes are too small and too deep.

Some new drainage has been done, but the principal work has been rectifying deficiencies in the old system. A proper system of drainage is considered essential for all land similar to this.

*Rent Basis.*

Two shillings and sixpence an acre on unreclaimed land and ten shillings on the reclaimed.

*What has been Accomplished in the Eighteen Years.*

Three hundred acres reclaimed, of which 151 are arable and 142 pasture.

On farm to-day about 115 head of stock—young cattle, fattening bullocks, 36 dairy cows (crossbreds), 200 pigs (mainly porkers), 150 head of poultry. No sheep kept. Tenant makes frequent use of the pigs as " cultivators."

*Labour Employed.*

Fourteen permanent hands ; also a dairymaid for the cheese factory. The fourteen hands include tenant's

two sons. Five of the labourers are married, three of whom are provided with cottages, the rest provide their own accommodation.

Taking the tenant's family into account, it is estimated that the farm now carries a population of about 40 persons.

#### *Crops Grown.*

Turnips, mangolds, barley, oats, young cabbages, but the main crop is potatoes, the land being particularly suitable for growing this crop. The tenant has got as many as 12 tons per acre off some of the land, but the average yield would be about 6 tons. Specially good seed potatoes are grown and young cabbage plants for re-planting. He has a big sale for both to neighbouring farmers and at good prices. Oats and barley of good quality and yield are also harvested, but no wheat is grown. This year it is proposed to make an experiment with carrots, for which, it is thought, the land will be suitable.

Considerable quantities of Cheshire Cheese of the Cheddar type are made.

The tenant estimates that the annual value of the produce raised is somewhere about four thousand pounds.

His reply to the question—"What would you say would be the increase in value of the land per acre in comparison with 1907?" was "Taking output as a basis it would be about 30s."

#### *Hindrances to Greater Efficiency.*

Lack of roads through the farm. There is only one road (made by the tenant), about 1,000 yards long. The main county road touches only one end, and that but a short bit of the farm. All fertilisers, implements, etc., have to be hauled over the open fields, which adds materially to the cost of running the farm and as well reduces the life of the implements, wagons, etc., considerably. These drawbacks also prevent the maximum efficiency being got from the horses, owing to their strength being unnecessarily taxed. In the first six years of the tenancy 18 horses were

lost from this cause. There is plenty of good road making material on the farm. The farm also suffers from lack of suitable out-buildings for the housing of stock and implements.

#### *Wages.*

The tenant pays one half-penny an hour *over* the standard rate (7d.) fixed for the county. His relations with his employees, he mentioned, were admirable. He has had no serious trouble.

The married men get potatoes, and each cottage has a good garden attached.

The wages bill of the farm is somewhere about £1,000 per annum.

#### *Capital with which the Tenant started the Farm.*

One thousand pounds raised through the bank and guaranteed by his two brothers. This was practically all he had. All the money he makes he puts into the farm. He could use more capital with great advantage. All overdrafts are fully covered. The average rate of interest paid is about one and a half per cent. over current bank rate.

The tenant considers present banking facilities to farmers might be extended with great advantage to the country, and he is also of the opinion that special loans should be made by the State to assist in the developing of unreclaimed land.

#### WHY NOT EVERYWHERE ?

126. At the end of his visit our Investigator asked the tenant the following simple question :—

“Do you see any reason why similar results to those you have secured could not be obtained throughout the country? The farmer replied :—

“None whatever.”

It is almost as unnecessary for us to emphasise that a condition of success on other farms must be some shar-

of this particular farmer's grit and ability as it is to declare that it would be practically impossible to find a more unpromising case for the exercise of these qualities. Neglect of the land had been so complete that the poverty of the land had become locally proverbial, the tenant was inadequately provided with capital, and had, so far as can be ascertained, no peculiar advantages as regards a special market for produce or any special assistance. It may be noted that the landowner, though he contributed nothing to the success of this very striking bit of reclamation, was, at any rate, not in any way obstructive.

#### GOOD FARMING IN SCOTLAND.

127. Reference should here be made to farming in Scotland. It is fairly widely known that over large areas of the Scottish lowlands there is a generally higher average of farming than is to be found in most or even any parts of England.

"The general average of the farming in Scotland," says Sir Daniel Hall in his 'Pilgrimage,' "is certainly higher, and wherever the land is really suitable the whole district looks well managed, and possesses an aspect of hard business that is rare over any considerable area in England. The farms give one the impression that considerable capital has been put into them of recent years, buildings are extensive and in good repair, drainage is still going on, hedges have been straightened up and are kept close, the bad farmer is not allowed to drag on at an easy rent because he makes no calls on the estate. Agriculture, after all, depends on the men who direct it." (p. 253 and 392.)

The question of the Scottish attitude with regard to farming and of the different results achieved in Scotland requires fuller treatment than can be given it in this chapter. It is very much to the point, however, to refer to the facts:—

(a) That farmers in Scotland regard security of tenure as the first condition of good farming.

(b) That leases of fair duration are usual in Scotland; whereas the English farmer commonly dislikes a lease,

and prefers to trust himself to the chances of a yearly agreement.

(c) It was in Scotland that the farmers whole-heartedly accepted Cobden's advice, and embarked on a policy of meeting foreign competition by farming high and rejecting any expectation of protection.

#### A FARM IN THE LOWLANDS.

128. The results of this policy are clearly brought out in the Report of one of our Investigators in the Scottish Lowlands.

"I made a particularly close study of one arable farm, as I was so struck by the large profits being made and by the methods and personality of the occupier. This farm is in the Scottish Lowlands. Total acreage 1,200, 1,050 ploughed. Two-thirds recently bought, one-third rented, but the whole of it in the present owner's father's occupation for many years. Estimated rent, £2,295. Annual labour, £5,465. About one-third of the total staff are women (*practically all the field labour is done by women*); their wages are 21s. per week. Ploughmen 35s. a week (cash and perquisites). 184 acres of potatoes. 1,000 fattening sheep, 400 steers fatted inside. Principal income derived from potatoes, barley and fat cattle."

The noteworthy feature of this business is *the contrast between the management of the permanent or landlord's part of the capital under the present owner and the late landlord.*

"On every side is evidence of steadings remodelled or practically rebuilt, miles of useless hedges grubbed, ugly and harmful trees turned into useful timber. No one could go over this farm without being impressed by the advantages to be gained by the owner of the land being a practical man with a *real* knowledge of agriculture and himself engaged in the day-to-day details of working the land. I saw steadings being entirely remodelled on the most up-to-date labour-saving plans by the ordinary farm hands with the minimum of bought material and at a time when outside employment was at its lowest. *Schemes of improvement that would cost the average landlord thousands were being carried through for hundreds, unhampered by the burden of interference from opinionated men devoid of any first-hand knowledge of farm requirements.* In every direction waste was being checked and serious and unnecessary leakages of income stopped. . . .

*"For years on this estate the landlord had advanced poverty as a plea when pressed to keep his equipment in order.*

*"Although, like everyone else, I knew of cases of neglected opportunities and gross neglect in the management of landed estates, I had never before had the opportunity to witness the transformation that can be brought about when the control passes into hands willing and able to make the most of things."*

Our Investigator points out that large profits are made on this particular farm owing to exceptionally good land and an ideal climate. The fruits of this good land and climate were not garnered under the old system. For years the landlord had advanced poverty as a plea when pressed to keep in order the standing equipment of the estate.

#### PARKS.

129. When a survey is made, and it must be made, of the utilisation of all land in this country, interesting material will be made available of the amount of land devoted to parks, and it will undoubtedly be found that much of this land is kept at a level of production very much lower than that which it might attain.

The redemption of British agriculture does not depend on the abolition of all parks. But the amount of land devoted to parks in Great Britain is a result of national inattention to agriculture. "There is nothing," reports our Investigator in Holland, "comparable to what may be seen in Great Britain of tracts of good land used as uncultivated private parks."

In Holland enclosures of any size are largely on sand, where the value of the land is of the lowest. "Wealthy men in well cultivated districts are content with two or three acres at most." Park walls seven miles in length are doomed to fall before the new spirit in British agriculture. So long as landlords were able to convince their neighbours that they knew more of the land and cared for it more than others, public opinion might condone larger parks. Now it is more true even than when F. E.



Green wrote his *History of the English Agricultural Labourer*.

“What seemed to impress him (Richard Jefferies) more than anything else was that when the labourer was speaking with perfect freedom he took a delight in looking forward to the day when he would be able to plough the squire’s ‘bloody park,’ which was certainly one manner of bringing grass land back to cultivation!” (p. 87.)

### *Division III.*

#### *Land for Timber.*

130. Afforestation must be touched on more than once in this Report because it enters our argument from several angles. The main facts of its neglect in Great Britain may conveniently be assembled here.

Great Britain is sadly behind other countries in the amount of timber grown. Yet our climate is well suited for woodlands. There is a very large area of land not under crops and grass and *prima facie* suitable for trees. Woodlands give a certain amount of specialised employment and a considerable amount of subsidiary employment to small farmers. And the world is spending annually much more than its natural income of timber. The weaving together of these considerations makes an immensely powerful argument for pursuing a vigorous national policy for afforestation.

#### NEED FOR A FOREST POLICY.

131. The Forestry Position of foreign countries is clearly and simply put in Appendix VII of the Agricultural Tribunal’s Report. We have already shown in Table P. how very poorly our afforested area compares with that of our neighbours and competitors. Moreover, our position now is definitely worse than at any previous time in history. The first Report of the Forestry Commissioners, issued in 1921, put the matter very clearly when

it divided the forestry history of the United Kingdom into four periods.

1. A period of destruction, during which natural forest resources were destroyed without replacement.

2. A period of private enterprise, in which voluntary effort attempted to make good some of the loss.

3. A period of enquiry, in which the public gradually came to realise that the forests of the world were not inexhaustible, and that private enterprise unaided could not cope with the forestry needs of Great Britain.

4. A period of State action, in which a national forest policy was defined, and the first steps taken to bring it into being.

The "first steps" referred to were the establishment, by Mr. Lloyd George's Government, of the Forestry Commission (1919), and the commencement of a continuous programme. The extent of the programme was based on the Report of the Acland Committee, that to ensure supplies of home-grown timber for a three-year period, the State should, in the course of 80 years, afforest 1,770,000 acres of land previously unplanted, and at the same time secure the continuance under timber and increase the yield from the 3,000,000 acres of private woodlands which existed in 1914.

In considering this programme, a number of points have to be borne in mind.

1. Our consumption of timber per head rose from  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cubic feet per annum to nearly 11 cubic feet between 1850 and 1910.

2. Home-grown timber in 1914 was barely 10 per cent. of the total supply, imports having increased five-fold in the last half century.

3. The quality of imported timber had, before the War, been going down, and its price steadily rising.

4. The volume of timber and grain imported were in 1913 about equal. Between them, they absorbed one quarter of the total shipping which entered British ports.

5. During the War special arrangements had to be made for supplying the timber requirements of the British Army from the French forests, and old and young woods in the United Kingdom were ruthlessly felled in order to release tonnage for further imports of food.

6. About a third of Great Britain's inadequate woodland area was cleared during the War, and much of it has not been replanted.

7. A considerable proportion of the woodland area is not and never has been of commercial value; they are pleasure woods, not business woods.

#### PROGRAMME OF THE FORESTRY COMMISSION.

132. The Forestry Commission exists to carry out a continuous programme. It is able to work in two ways:—

1. By acquiring land, planting, and maintaining it.
2. By making grants (£2 per acre for soft woods and £4 per acre for hard woods) to landowners who are willing to plant or replant their land.

In order to carry out its work effectively, it has to engage in extensive research and experimental work, and to educate and train forest officers, foremen and manual workers. The most recent Report (for the year ending 30th Sept. 1924) shows the following programme. Figures in brackets after each item refer to the programme laid down by the Acland Report:—

	Land Acquired.	1920 1924 inclusive.
By leasing or feuing .. .. .	99,524 acres	(53,200 acres)
By purchase .. .. .	41,946 ..	(112,000 .. )
<b>Total land acquired ..</b>	<b>141,470 ..</b>	<b>(165,200 ..</b>

#### PLANTED—Conifers.—1920—1924.

37,790 acres .. .. . (33,300)

#### PLANTED—Hardwood.

1,679 acres .. .. . (———)

The Commission have secured the planting of 22,870 acres by Local Authorities and private owners, and the clearing and preparing of another 25,000 acres.

## AREA THAT COULD BE AFFORESTED.

133. Against this programme must be set the void to be filled. The lowest estimate of the area waiting for afforestation is 3,000,000 acres. But other estimates are much higher and it is not necessary to assume that because they are high they are exaggerated. The Royal Commission on Coast Erosion, Afforestation etc., estimated the approximate available area for afforestation in Great Britain at 7,500,000 acres. Mr. Seebohm Rowntree (*Land and Labour*) has added to these 7,500,000 acres another 1,000,000 acres representing poor tillage land which might be better as forests than as farm land. It may be as well to reiterate that not only has Great Britain a smaller proportion of forest area than other countries, but that she also has a larger proportionate area of wholly unproductive land than any comparable country.

## LAND USED FOR FORESTS ABROAD.

134. France has approximately 26,000,000 acres of forests. Its largest forest area is now the Landes, where upwards of 2,000,000 acres of sandy waste have been drained and afforested to, be it added, the great improvement of climatic as well as economic conditions. *Altogether in the last century France has afforested 3,000,000 acres. "By so doing," reports the Agricultural Tribunal, "she has brought a considerable area of disused agricultural land back into cultivation."*

Germany has added 1,000,000 acres to her previous 34,000,000 acres of forest in the last 50 years. Moreover she has so improved her methods of silviculture that the production of existing forests has been increased three-fold. It is said significantly that the amount of waste land available is now relatively small.

The steady progress of *Denmark* towards complete elimination of waste land by its consistent scheme of afforesting all land which could not be cultivated, has been

already referred to in this Report. Since 1866 she has doubled her forest area by adding to it 425,000 acres.

*Sweden*, which imports annually an immense quantity of timber into Great Britain, has now 55,000,000 acres of forest, and has of recent years made determined and sustained efforts to repair the damage done by the excessive exploitation which followed the removal of British timber duties in 1866. "The State forests have been increased from 1,053,000 to 14,984,000 acres, the user of private forests is restricted by law, and the State has on hand large schemes for draining and afforesting land at present unproductive."<sup>1</sup>

*Norway* has done less than Sweden, but vastly more than Great Britain.

In *Russia*, *Spain*, *Portugal* and *Italy* the need for systematic forestry has been recognised but nothing substantial has been done. These countries are, in fact, the only countries whose attitude towards the problem closely resembles our own.

Of *Canada* and the *United States* nothing need be said save that both these great countries are still in the state of extravagance engendered by consciousness of resources which are so huge as to appear inexhaustible. Both countries, however, are now becoming seriously concerned about their afforestation problem.

#### PIT PROPS AND BARE HILLSIDES.

135. Our investigator in South Wales reported to us that at present less than 4 per cent. of the total area of Wales (roughly 250,000 acres) is under timber; that deforestation during the war had left "hideous scars" on the Welsh woodland area; that over 30 per cent. of woodland area in two counties had been left derelict by the war, and that of the remaining 70 per cent., over

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<sup>1</sup> A.T.I. Report. Appendix VII. Memo. by the Forestry Commissioners, page 337.

20 per cent. was classed as ineffective. And this where the climatic conditions are ideal for growing timber and where coal pits consuming 1,250,000 tons of pit wood are close at hand. An extract from the "Times" of April 4th, 1925, helps to bring home the reality of the demand:—

"How great is the demand for timber may be gathered from the fact that the South Wales Coalfield alone absorbs 100,000 tons of pit-wood a month. During the war the collieries were rationed, but they are now using the normal amount, which represents the felling, in the case of South Wales, of 1,500 acres of trees every four weeks."

Since trees are only useful for this purpose at an age of 30 years and over, it follows that to keep South Wales supplied with timber, it would be necessary to have nearly 600,000 acres under forest. It is a telling coincidence that Professor Storey's estimate of the forestable, but not now afforested, area of Wales is at least 500,000 acres.

Except in Great Britain it would be incredible that a country urgently requiring timber and with a considerable area of land more suitable for forestry than for agriculture, should have a smaller proportionate area under forest than any other country of Europe, of which figures can be obtained. This, in spite of the fact that the climatic conditions for afforestation in Wales are unsurpassable; that the rate of tree growth on existing afforested areas in Wales is phenomenal; and that the characteristic type of farm in Wales (between 50 and 100 acres, or smaller) is precisely the kind of holding which most requires and is most suited to give the kind of extra employment made possible in forests.

#### USE OF POOR LAND.

136. Of the kinds of land used for afforestation it is practically impossible to speak in comparative terms. It is beyond question that some land now lying waste in Great Britain would not carry trees. It is equally

beyond question that an immense area of land which, in other countries would be carrying trees, is now lying waste. There is little land in Great Britain more unpromising than the Ardennes, two fifths of which are covered by forests of beech, oak and pine, or the Landes, that one-time sandy waste of which two million acres have been drained and afforested.

#### POSSIBILITIES IN GREAT BRITAIN.

137. One of the witnesses to the Hutchison Committee put very shrewdly his view of the present position.

"On national grounds England is certainly underwooded. Recent schemes only affect blocks of 100 acres and upwards. Hence the owning farmer here with from 10 to 60 acres of wood gets no help. Woods cut in the war are mostly still unplanted, and small owners cannot meet the cost. On national grounds I think capital on very easy terms might be lent for planting suitable areas by such men, especially for the planting of larch, which is the Bamboo of those parts. But, in that case, the craze that woods are not a crop but a rich man's toy must be abandoned and rates reduced to the level taken on agricultural land. Further, in the interests of the planters and farmers (and of humanity) steel traps must be made illegal so that vermin may increase and the rabbit be removed. Planting, with rates the same as those on a garden and with rabbits everywhere, is a fool's game."

Another aspect is presented by a landowner, who said to us:—

"On my own estate the estate carpenter has always been the estate forester. He has picked out from time to time the trees he wanted for whatever job he had in hand and left the rest. Replanting was left to nature."

In this amenity use of woodlands, this "craze that woods are not a crop but a rich man's toy" lies the explanation of the Acland Committee's finding that much of England's 3,000,000 acres of pre-war woodland were commercially valueless. The importance attached to keeping down rabbits may be illustrated again by a note contained in "*Land and Labour*," with reference to the low cost of planting forest land in Belgium. Mr. Seebohm

Rowntree gives three reasons for this low cost, the first of them being that "*the forests are very seldom fenced, presumably because the rabbits are better kept under in Belgium than in England.*"

#### EMPLOYMENT IN AFFORESTATION.

138. The case for prosecuting a national forestry policy sometimes suffers from advocates who too glibly assert that it will solve too many diverse problems. The A.T.I. concludes that the primary object of afforestation is to secure home-grown timber supplies. The employment aspect, however, is much too important to neglect. Mr. F. D. Acland has recently reported that if the Forestry Commission is allowed to carry out its original ten years programme, it will in that time have settled 6,000 families in permanent employment who would otherwise not have been so settled. The Forestry Commission estimates that when its full programme of afforesting 1,770,000 acres is carried out, the new forests will then maintain 17,700 men, though they will have displaced about 2,000 men from sheep-farming. On balance, forestry clearly has the best of the argument. Much land now used for sheep runs is as such being used for its best purpose. But there is also much afforestable land which now carries an average of one sheep to the acre and one shepherd to 1,000 acres, that would under forest carry 10 men to the thousand acres and create subsidiary employment. It is vitally important to argue the case for afforestation on the right grounds; to wit, that afforestation helps to stabilise rural population by providing a certain amount of skilled employment, by making smallholdings economic, and by bringing into existence rural industries providing alternative employment for agricultural workers.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It is stated in an article in the "Times" of April 8, 1925, that the afforestation of new areas provides 150 days' work annually for each small farmer.



## AN EAST ANGLIAN INSTANCE.

139. The Forestry Commission's Report for the year ending September, 1922, contains specific instances, e.g. :

" At Rendlesham, in East Anglia, where the Commissioners are planting up at a rate which will complete the area in about 7 years, there were, at the beginning, only 8 men employed on the estate, 4 out of 10 cottages and a farm-house being unoccupied. At the present time there are resident on the estate 13 men (the 10 cottages and farm-house being now occupied), while the average number of men employed in the work of afforestation has been as follows :—

		Winter.	Summer.
1919-1920 ..	..	25	25
1920-1921 ..	..	75	25
1921-1922 ..	..	115	20

" An enquiry into the Tintern Woods (3,320 acres), which have now been under systematic management for 20 years, shows that the amount spent annually in wages on agricultural work (including timber felling) is equivalent to the full time employment of 30 men and 5 youths on, say, 1 man per 100 acres. In addition the transport of timber, etc, to rail employs full-time 13 men and 18 horses. The area is not by any means fully developed, and it is estimated that when it is in full productive order, full-time employment will be provided in silvicultural work, transport and sawing of timber for 1 man per 40 or 50 acres."

## NO EXCUSE.

140. Yet another quotation from *A Pilgrimage of British Farming* by Sir Daniel Hall may here be pardoned :—

" From Stratford we struck across the edge of the Lias clay and limestones and the New Red Sandstone to Droitwich, through a poor country as badly farmed as though it were a thousand miles from a market. On the low limestone hills field after field was entirely derelict, given over to briers and rabbits, with the stones protruding through the thin scurf of vegetation as on a Bagshot common or the driest and thinnest scarps of the chalk. It may be true that it is waste of money to try to farm on bad land and make a soil where nature has not supplied the foundation, but *for such entire neglect there can be no excuse in England.* The rabbit is the curse; on poor land he affords some sort of return, enough to provide an excuse for letting

things drift and for putting in neither thought nor money to turn the land to better account. Some people have no great opinion of the future of forestry in England because it can never support the proportion of men to acres which ought to prevail in our densely populated island. But better a forest than a desert, better an organised attempt to earn three per cent. sixty years hence than the deterioration which the unchecked rabbit brings, even if he will earn a shilling or two per acre for sport."<sup>1</sup>

141. We would conclude this Section by emphasising yet again the connection between afforestation, farming, and rural industries. What we have previously described as the disastrous simplification of English rural life is very largely due to the abnormal dependence of the English agricultural population on agriculture pure and simple. Countries which have carried through a consistent and comprehensive forestry policy have been rewarded by the economic and social enrichment of their rural life. The sober conclusion of the Agricultural Tribunal is that we require over 10 million tons of timber and produce considerably less than one million; that we produce none of the million tons of wood pulp which we require annually; that we cannot continue to obtain this necessary material except at considerably enhanced prices; and that we have several million acres of uncultivated land well suited for timber production. Let us add that in preparing land for forestry there is non-recurrent work for some of the million and a half unemployed now seeking work in vain.

#### *Division IV.*

##### *Science and Opportunity.*

142. Already, in Chapter III, we have given figures which show that, within reason, the smaller the holding the greater the gross production of food per acre and the greater the density of people on the land. Can the objects which we have set out as the aims of a national rural

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<sup>1</sup> Pages 185-186.

policy be achieved by the multiplication of smallholdings and, if so, how can smallholdings be multiplied? The answers to these questions necessarily involve us in a disquisition too long to be inserted in the text of this Report. An appendix to this chapter (Appendix II.) contains a striking description by E. O. F. of an East Anglian parish reinvigorated by smallholdings, and a searching analysis by Dr. Ruston of the economic position of smallholdings, here and abroad. We recommend perusal of these papers to critics as well as to enthusiasts for smallholdings. They have considerable, if indirect, bearing on conclusions reached in later chapters of this Report. In this chapter we are still concerned with the statement of facts and we would emphasise, first, that the truth with regard to smallholdings is compounded of E. O. F.'s human facts, no less than of Dr. Ruston's economic conclusions. In winning higher production factors of land tenure and land-division must be combined with factors of research and diffusion of scientific knowledge.

#### PRODUCTION AND EDUCATION.

143. One fact must be added to this chapter to facilitate a right approach to those that follow. That is the comparative fact that while other countries have been increasing their production of foodstuffs, Great Britain has been slipping back. Evidence of this has already been given in Chapter III with regard to crops of various kinds and also to livestock. Wheat may be taken as typical. We have pointed out that the increased yield of English wheat in the period 1886-1922 is less than might have been expected from the fact that now only the best corn-growing land is utilised for corn. We would add here that the increase seems to owe nothing whatever to the results of scientific advance. In other countries the increase in average yield has been very great. (In Germany, from 10·1 cwts. to 17·7; in Belgium, 12·0 to 20·7; in Holland, 13·4 to 20·7; in Denmark, 16·0 to 23·8.) In none of these

countries has the process of selecting only the best land for cereals gone anything like so far as in England. Their increased productivity per acre is due to definite farming advance. So, too, in branches of farming other than cereals. It has already been pointed out that Great Britain, between 1873 and 1922, showed a decline in stock units per 100 acres of crops and grass of from 34·3 to 33·1, whereas Holland, for example, in a comparable period, has increased her stock units from 32·7 to 44·9; Belgium, from 31·1 to 47·0; Germany, from 25·7 to 30·8; and Denmark, 24·0 to 39·4.

How has this been done in other countries?

In reply, Sir Thomas Middleton's well known pamphlet on the *Recent Development of German Agriculture* may be cited.

"The average German farmer," he says, "uses nitrogenous manures nearly twice as liberally as the average British farmer and employs about one third more phosphates and five times more potash." (page 37.)

The British farmer, it is true, uses more imported feeding stuffs and, theoretically, this ought largely to compensate for the smaller amount of nitrogen applied directly by him. But it does not require much acquaintance with farming in this country and in Germany to realise that the English farmer takes much less trouble on the average to store his animal manure properly and so to conserve its manurial value than the German. In fairness again it should be added that Germany has a great deal of light soil particularly apt for potash manures. But, as Sir Thomas Middleton says:

"The chief factor in developing the use of artificial manures in Germany, however, was unquestionably a well organised system of technical education. Investigation at the research stations established the precise uses of these manures; trustworthy advice was supplied by institutions, by peripatetic instructors, by technical leaflets and by agricultural newspapers; and the farmer, even the backward Bauer, like other Germans, brought his methods into line with 'Authority.'" (p. 37.)

## OPPORTUNITIES WAITING.

144. This increased use of fertilisers is symptomatic. There has been, in fact, a rapid and general improvement in the technique of German agriculture, a drastic elimination of inferior strains both of plants and of animals, and a keen appreciation of the importance of business methods. At the same time, it may be noted that the development of important rural industries in Germany is also symptomatic of the general quickening of rural intelligence. Perhaps from the German point of view the most promising feature of the position is that German agriculturists as a whole are remarkably alive to the necessity of more education in the technique both of farming and of business. Instance after instance might be given to show the potential cash value to farmers of scientific discoveries. Professor Biffen's evidence, for example, to the Agricultural Policy Sub-Committee of the Reconstruction Committee was to the effect that whereas the average yield of barley was about 33 bushels, 40 bushels might easily be obtained; experiments in securing disease resistance in potatoes had made the average loss of 20 per cent preventable. Professor Somerville declares that as a result of his many experiments in different parts of the country he is satisfied that practically all the poorer soils, now let down, rather than put down, to grass, can, by the application of basic slag, be made to produce nourishing herbage and carry a large head of stock; he says that where a farmer possesses an area of poor grass he can, by investing a capital of £6 10s. per acre, obtain 100 per cent. return. His own experiment at Poverty Bottom has already become famous.

Lord Bledisloe, in an address to the Agricultural Society for the University of Wales in 1924, said that science, in its application to any branch of industry, could be justified ultimately only by its economic results, and then detailed at length the profitable discoveries of modern research. In this address, he pointed out that the progress of agri-

cultural science in the past has been checked by its detachment from practical husbandry, and that among agricultural scientists are included now not only chemists, but physicists, biologists, bacteriologists and physiologists, who work together as a team in promoting remunerative husbandry. Lord Bledisloe himself at Lydney has proved that the accumulated results of scientific enquiry can be applied on English land. In this he could not stand alone. But the company of which he is part is nothing like numerous enough. It is a matter of urgent national importance to ascertain why our country which, more than any continental country, requires to make full use of the possibilities created by science for production on the land, is most backward in following the scientific agriculturist's lead.

*(Three Appendices follow ; the text of the Report is resumed on page 191.)*

## APPENDICES.

## APPENDIX I.

STATISTICS REFERRED TO IN CHAPTER III.

TABLE A.

(Reference—Hansard, 6th April, 1925, and N.F.U. Handbook 1925.)

ESTIMATED TOTAL SUPPLY OF THE UNDERMENTIONED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN 1924 IN GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND.

	Estimated Home Production.	Net Imports.	Estimated Total Supply.	Percentage of Total.	
				Home Produced.	Imported.
Figures given in Thousands of tons.					
Wheat and Flour ..	1,500	6,466·6	7,966	23	77
Barley ..	1,116	1,084·8	2,200·8	51	49
Oats ..	2,356	507·5	2,863·5	82	18
Beef and Veal ..	599	716	1,315	46	54
Mutton and Lamb ..	188	268	456	41	59
Pig-Meat ..	294	539	833	35	65
Butter ..	54·4	254·1	308·5	18	82
Cheese ..	65·5	141·7	207·2	32	68
Milk and Milk Products ..	1,318	1,566	2,884	46	54
Potatoes ..	4,465	245	4,710	95	5

Figures of Meat relate to the 12 months ended May, 1924. The home production of Wheat, Barley and Oats comprises two-thirds of the crops harvested in 1923 and one-third of those harvested in 1924.

TABLE B.  
(Compiled from Official Returns.)  
YIELD OF CEREALS IN 1922.

	Denmark.	Great Britain.	If Great Britain were Denmark.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Wheat .. ..	251,715	1,742,000	1,510,290
Barley .. ..	662,612	1,096,000	3,975,672
Oats .. ..	847,727	1,932,000	5,086,362
	<u>1,762,054</u>	<u>4,770,000</u>	<u>10,572,324</u>

TABLE C.  
(Compiled from Official Returns.)  
LIVE STOCK IN GREAT BRITAIN AND DENMARK.

	1923. Denmark.	1923. Great Britain. Actual Figures.	1923. If Great Britain were Denmark.
	Numbers.	Numbers.	Numbers.
Cattle .. ..	2,523,000	7,016,582	15,138,000
Pigs .. ..	2,855,000	2,797,633	17,130,000
Sheep .. ..	374,000	20,621,256	2,244,000
Poultry .. ..	20,029,000	15,123,000	120,180,000



TABLE D.

(Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation.—Final Report, p. 27.)

AVERAGE YIELD OF CROPS IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES.

	France	Germany	Belgium	Holland	Denmark	Great Britain
	1878-81	1879-82	1875-78	1871-74	1875-78	1886-89
	cwts.	cwts.	cwts.	cwts.	cwts.	cwts.
Wheat..	8.3	10.1	12.0	13.4	16.0	15.7
Barley..	8.5	10.4	14.9	18.1	12.0	14.3
Oats ..	9.0	9.2	13.3	15.1	10.1	13.0
Rye ..	7.7	7.3	12.1	10.1	13.1	—
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Potatoes	2.6	3.0	6.4	3.8	6.0	5.9

  

	1911-13	1911-13	1911-13	1919	1919	1919-22
	cwts.	cwts.	cwts.	cwts.	cwts.	cwts.
Wheat..	10.5	17.7	20.7	20.7	23.8	17.2
Barley..	11.2	17.0	22.0	21.0	18.4	14.6
Oats ..	10.6	15.7	18.4	15.0	13.9	13.0
Rye ..	8.5	14.4	17.6	15.0	10.9	—
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Potatoes	3.5	5.5	7.8	6.4	6.0	6.2

TABLE E.

(Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation, p. 31.)

NUMBER OF LIVE STOCK PER 100 ACRES OF CROPS AND GRASS,  
EXCLUDING ROUGH GRAZING, IN THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES  
AT PERIODS STATED.

	Cattle.	Sheep.	Pigs.	Stock Units.
France, 1883 ..	13·0	24·0	6·5	17·7
" 1913 ..	16·3	17·7	7·7	20·4
Germany, 1873 ..	19·5	30·9	8·8	25·7
" 1913 ..	24·5	7·0	26·6	30·8
Belgium, 1880 ..	28·2	7·5	13·2	31·1
" 1912 ..	40·9	4·1	27·5	47·0
Holland, 1873 ..	28·7	18·0	7·2	32·7
" 1922 ..	37·6	12·2	27·7	44·9
Denmark, 1872 ..	18·7	27·8	6·6	24·0
" 1922 ..	33·5	6·0	25·3	39·4
Great Britain, 1873	19·2	94·6	8·0	34·3
" " 1922	22·3	65·4	7·4	33·1
England, 1873 ..	17·5	80·2	9·0	30·7
" 1922 ..	21·2	43·0	9·0	29·2
Scotland, 1873 ..	25·2	159·8	3·2	48·6
" 1922 ..	24·2	141·0	3·2	45·0
Wales, 1873 ..	28·3	122·0	7·1	47·2

TABLE F.

(Ministry of Agriculture Statistics, 1923 and 1924.)

AREA OF ALL LAND—EXCLUDING INLAND WATER, 1924.

England and Wales .. ..	37,136,005 acres.
Scotland (1923) .. ..	19,069,683 "
Great Britain .. ..	56,205,688 "

TABLE G.

(Ministry of Agriculture Statistics.)

## AREA UNDER CROPS AND GRASS IN GREAT BRITAIN AT DIFFERENT PERIODS.

		England and Wales.	Scotland.	Great Britain.
1871	..	26,322,477	4,516,090	30,838,567
1884	..	27,654,048	4,811,813	32,465,861
1891	..	28,001,134	4,917,380	32,918,514
1913	..	27,129,382	4,797,919	31,927,301
1922	..	26,025,793	4,725,499	30,751,292
1923	..	25,943,261	4,724,438	30,677,699
1924	..	25,876,797	—	—

TABLE H.

(Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation—Final Report, p. 20.)

## AREA OF CROPS AND GRASS EXCLUDING ROUGH GRAZINGS IN GREAT BRITAIN AND OTHER COUNTRIES AT DIFFERENT PERIODS.

			1,000 Acres.		1,000 Acres.		
Great Britain	..	1873	..	31,103	1922	..	30,751
France	..	1873	..	89,509	1913	..	90,910
Germany	..	1878	..	80,838	1913	..	82,241
Belgium	..	1880	..	4,899	1912	..	4,472
Holland	..	1873	..	4,992	1921	..	5,489
Denmark	..	1876	..	6,624	1919	..	6,862

TABLE I.  
(Ministry of Agriculture Statistics.)  
ARABLE AREA AT DIFFERENT PERIODS—ACRES.

		England and Wales.	Scotland.	Great Britain.
1871	..	14,946,179	3,456,946	18,403,125
1884	..	13,570,247	3,604,794	17,175,041
1913	..	11,058,233	3,301,954	14,360,187
1918	..	12,399,000	3,453,493	15,853,000
1922	..	11,310,515	3,338,068	14,648,583
1923	..	11,181,137	3,296,876	14,478,013
1924	..	10,928,673	—	—

TABLE J.  
(Ministry of Agriculture Statistics.)  
WHEAT AREA IN GREAT BRITAIN AT DIFFERENT PERIODS—ACRES.

		England and Wales.	Scotland.	Great Britain.
1871	..	3,438,884	133,010	3,571,894
1884	..	2,608,322	68,716	2,677,038
1913	..	1,701,588	54,782	1,756,372
1918	..	2,557,000	79,000	2,636,000
1922	..	1,966,917	65,251	2,032,168
1923	..	1,740,257	59,000	1,799,000
1924	..	1,544,804	—	—

TABLE K.

*(Banker's Magazine, Jan., 1924.)*TREND OF PRICES OF VEGETABLE AS COMPARED WITH ANIMAL  
FOOD STUFFS, 1892-1922.

	1892-6.	1909-13.	1920.	1922.
General Index No...	64.4	80.4	251.0	131.0
	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.
Vegetable Food ..	89.0	87.6	90.5	81.6
Animal Food ..	124.1	116.9	104.8	140.5
Sugar, Coffee, Tea ..	102.5	69.8	79.0	62.6
Minerals .. ..	101.7	121.8	117.7	108.2
Textiles .. ..	85.4	92.6	104.3	102.2
Sundries .. ..	101.5	100.3	97.2	94.6

TABLE L.

*(Ministry of Agriculture Statistics.)*SEPARATE HOLDINGS OF ONE ACRE AND OVER PRE-WAR AND  
TO-DAY IN GREAT BRITAIN.

	England and Wales.	Scotland.	Great Britain.
1913 .. ..	435,677	77,388	513,065
1922 .. ..	414,115	76,001	490,716
1923 .. ..	411,673	76,134	487,807

TABLE M.  
(Ministry of Agriculture Statistics.)

OCCUPYING OWNERSHIP, 1913-1924. NUMBER AND ACREAGE OF HOLDINGS IN GREAT BRITAIN.

England and Wales.				Scotland.		
	No. of Holdings	Acreage.	Percentage of Acreage to Total Cultivated Land.	No.	Acreage.	Per centage.
			Per cent.			Per cent.
1913	48,760	2,890,559	10.65	—	—	—
1914	—	—	—	—	526,557	11.0
1921	70,500	5,232,000	20.1	7,554	756,663	16.0
1922	62,700	4,640,000	17.8	7,824	820,749	17.4
1923	87,900	6,273,000	24.2	8,381	883,558	18.7
1924	94,236	6,574,044	25.4	—	—	—

TABLE N.

(Ministry of Agriculture Statistics.)

ENGLAND AND WALES—Size of Holdings in Percentages.

Holdings.	1895	1913	1913	1921	1921	1924
Acres.	Nos.	Nos.	Acre- age.	Nos.	Acre- age.	Nos.
Above 1 to 5 ..	22·21	21·18	1·05	19·33	·97	18·77
„ 5 to 20	28·77	28·03	5·06	27·65	5·02	27·34
„ 20 to 50	16·99	17·91	9·67	19·27	10·40	19·43
„ 50 to 100	12·89	13·61	15·94	14·52	16·99	14·85
„ 100 to 300	15·50	15·94	43·45	16·15	43·72	16·47
„ 300 ..	3·64	3·33	24·83	3·08	22·90	3·14

Note.—Percentages of acreage for 1924 are not available.

TABLE O.

(Prof. Clay's Presidential Address to the Manchester Statistical Society, 18th February, 1925.)

OWNERSHIP OF AGRICULTURAL LAND IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES.

	No. of Agricultural Holdings.	No. of Occupying Owners.	Total No. Engaged in Agriculture	Total Population.
England and Wales, 1913	436,000	49,000	1,260,000	37,338,000
England and Wales, 1921	415,000	70,000	1,254,000	37,885,000
Scotland, 1913	77,000	5,600	227,000	4,760,000
Ireland, 1913	566,000	349,000	876,000	4,390,000
France, 1908	5,505,000	2,200,000	8,777,000	39,250,000
Germany, 1907	5,736,000	5,250,000	15,000,000	67,000,000
U.S.A., 1920	6,445,000	3,925,000	10,953,000	107,438,000

TABLE P.

("Forest Resources of the World." Zon and Sparhawk, 1923.)

AREA UNDER WOOD AND FOREST IN VARIOUS COUNTRIES.

Country.	Per cent. of total area under wood.	Area of woodland per head of population (acres).	Per cent. of woods (shown in Col. 1) belonging to State.
England and Wales	5.1	0.050	4.4
Scotland .. ..	6.1	0.237	1.4
Ireland .. ..	1.4	0.066	7.9
Sweden .. ..	55.0	9.7	23.6
Russia in Europe	38.7	4.4	66.8
German Empire ..	23.8	0.49	32.2
Norway .. ..	21.4	6.4	12.4
France .. ..	18.4	0.63	12.1
Belgium .. ..	18.2	0.2	5.75
Denmark .. ..	8.2	0.27	24.0
Portugal .. ..	22.0	0.83	0.8

TABLE Q.

(Extracted from "British Incomes and Property," by Sir Josiah Stamp, K.B.E., D.Sc.)

INCOME FROM THE OWNERSHIP OF LANDS AND HOUSES. GROSS ASSESSMENTS—SCHEDULE A. ENGLAND AND WALES.

Year.	Lands.	Houses.
	£	£
1814-15 .. ..	37,063,000	14,895,000
1850-1 .. ..	42,790,000	39,354,000
1860-1 .. ..	43,036,000	49,505,000
1880-1 .. ..	51,847,000	102,417,000
1890-1 .. ..	41,635,000	123,721,000
1901-2 .. ..	37,017,000	162,263,000
1910-11 .. ..	37,044,000	196,196,000
1913-14 .. ..	37,071,000	202,018,000
1918-19 .. ..	36,900,000	207,648,000



TABLE R.

(Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation—Final Report, p. 173.)

MEN AND BOYS OF OVER 15 YEARS OCCUPIED IN AGRICULTURE,  
1871-1921, IN GREAT BRITAIN.

1871	..	..	..	1,366,000
1881	..	..	..	1,319,000
1891	..	..	..	1,253,000
1901	..	..	..	1,209,000
1911	..	..	..	1,267,000
1921	..	..	..	1,212,000

TABLE S.

(Ministry of Agriculture Statistics.)

NUMBER OF AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS IN ENGLAND AND  
WALES, 1908-1924.

Regular Workers.			Casual Workers.		
Year.	Males.	Women and Girls.	Males.	Women and Girls.	Total.
1908 <sup>1</sup> ..	508,000	68,000	114,000	32,000	722,000
1913 <sup>1</sup> ..	508,000	43,000	78,000	22,000	651,000
1921 ..	612,000	73,000	131,000	53,000	869,000
1923 ..	566,000	59,000	104,000	43,000	772,000
1924 ..	582,000	62,000	115,000	43,000	802,000

<sup>1</sup> Figures for these years do not include members of the occupiers' families: those for 1921, 1923 and 1924, include sons, daughters, etc., working on the farm. Domestic servants are excluded throughout.

TABLE T.

(Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation—Final Report, p. 166.)  
 PERCENTAGE OF OCCUPIED POPULATION ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURE IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES.

Great Britain..	..	1921	..	..	7.2 per cent. <sup>1</sup>
Belgium	..	1910	..	..	16.6 ..
Holland	..	1909	..	..	27.3 ..
Denmark	..	1921	..	..	33.0 ..
Germany	..	1907	..	..	36.7 ..
France	..	1911	..	..	40.7 ..

<sup>1</sup> Occupational Census, 1921, p. 3.

TABLE U.

(Census Returns.)

AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL POPULATIONS IN OXFORDSHIRE,  
 1871-1921.

Census.			Rural Population.		Agricultural Population.	
			Total.	Total.	Male.	Female.
1871	..	..	—	26,988	24,535	2,453
1881	..	..	105,670	21,794	20,963	831
1891	..	..	104,358	20,939	20,480	459
1901	..	..	95,748	16,028	15,751	277
1911	..	..	100,046	17,494	17,056	438
1921	..	..	97,237	16,841	16,327	514

The area of the county was returned in 1871 as 470,095 acres ; in 1921, 479,220, of which 456,371 were in Rural Districts. The total population in 1871 was 177,975 ; in 1921, 189,815.

TABLE V.

(Ministry of Agriculture Statistics, 1924, and Official Reports, House of Commons, June 23, 1925.)

MINIMUM WAGE RATES IN THE COUNTIES OF ENGLAND AND WALES, TOGETHER WITH A STATEMENT OF THE ACREAGE AND ARABLE AREA OF EACH COUNTY, AND THE NUMBER OF REGULAR WORKERS EMPLOYED IN EACH COUNTY.

## ENGLAND.

County.	Arable Acreage.	¹Number of Regular Workers per 100 Acres. Crops and Grass 1924.	²Rate of Wage for Male adults 1/6/25.
	As percentage of Total.		
Norfolk .. ..	74.7	3.2	29/-
Suffolk, E. .. ..	72.7	3.5	29/2
"   W. .. ..	79.2	3.3	
Berks. .. ..	49.6	2.8	29/2
Buckingham .. ..	31.7	2.4	30/-
Cambridge .. ..	80.0	3.2	30/-
Isle of Ely .. ..	78.1	4.1	
Dorset .. ..	35.1	2.3	30/-
Essex .. ..	64.5	3.4	30/-
Gloucester .. ..	35.2	2.2	30/-
Hampshire } .. ..	58.3	3.0	30/-
Isle of Wight }			
Northampton .. ..	31.0	2.0	30/-
Soke of Peterboro' .. ..	62.5		
Oxford .. ..	47.0	2.3	30/-
Sussex, E. .. ..	29.1	3.5	30/-
"   W. .. ..	47.3	3.5	
Warwick .. ..	28.3	2.1	30/-
Wiltshire .. ..	39.1	2.5	30/-
Worcester .. ..	36.2	2.9	30/-
Bedford .. ..	57.7	3.2	30/6
Huntingdon .. ..	61.6	2.5	30/6
Cornwall .. ..	54.8	2.1	31/-
Hereford .. ..	31.9	2.0	31/-
Hertford .. ..	61.3	3.4	31/-
Salop .. ..	30.3	2.1	31/6
Stafford .. ..	26.4	2.2	31/6
Durham .. ..	37.8	1.9	32/-
Lincoln, Kesteven .. ..	63.6	2.2	32/-
Lindsey .. ..	64.3	2.2	

¹ Agric. Statistics, 1924.

² Hansard 23rd June, 1925.

TABLE V.—Continued.

## ENGLAND.—Continued.

County.	Arable Acreage.	Number of Regular Workers per 100 Acres. Crops and Grass 1924.	Rate of Wage for Male adults. 1/6/25.
	As percentage of Total.		
Nottingham .. ..	50.6	2.1	32/-
Somerset .. ..	21.6	2.3	32/-
Surrey .. ..	38.1	4.4	32/3
Westmorland .. ..	15.8	1.8	32/6
Cumberland .. ..	33.9	1.9	
Devon .. ..	42.1	2.0	32/6
Kent .. ..	45.7	4.5	32/6
Rutland .. ..	36.6	1.6	32/6
Yorks., N. Riding .. ..	39.8	1.7	33/-
Leicester .. ..	22.0	1.8	34/-
Northumberland .. ..	26.6	1.5	34/-
Yorks., E. Riding .. ..	67.5	2.1	34/-
Middlesex .. ..	33.5	8.8	34/4½
Chester .. ..	36.0	3.1	35/-
Derby .. ..	19.5	1.9	36/-
Lincoln, Holland .. ..	42.7	4.0	36/-
Yorks., W. Riding .. ..	31.5	1.9	36/-
Lancaster, E... ..	31.0	3.2	42/-
„ S... ..			33/6
„ M... ..			37/6

## WALES.

Anglesey .. ..	33.2	1.9	30/-
Cardigan .. ..	35.5	1.9	30/-
Carmarthen .. ..	15.2	1.4	30/-
Carnarvon .. ..	31.4	2.2	30/-
Pembroke .. ..	31.2	1.9	30/-
Denbigh .. ..	31.1	1.9	30/6
Flint .. ..	28.2	2.2	
Brecon .. ..	19.8	1.5	31/-
Radnor .. ..	25.1	1.2	31/-
Montgomery .. ..	24.3	1.7	31/6
Merioneth .. ..	20.3	1.6	31/6
Monmouth .. ..	16.3	1.8	32/-
Glamorgan .. ..	21.7	2.0	37/6

¹ Agric. Statistics, 1924.

² Hansard 23rd June, 1925.

## COMMENTS ON TABLE V.

The English Counties can be arranged in categories according to the percentage of arable acreage of each. Counties where the arable acreage is more than 60 per cent. of the total area of crops and grass may be described as Arable Counties; those where the "arable" is less than 60 per cent. but more than 40 per cent. as Mixed; and those where the arable is less than 40 per cent. as Pasture Counties.

Adopting this classification, some very interesting facts emerge from close study of the figures given in Table V. The average minimum wage in the 12 Arable Counties is 30s. 7d. In the 11 Mixed Counties it is 31s. 3d., and in the 27 Pasture Counties it is 32s. 4d. An analysis of the Pasture Counties shows that, as will be expected, a considerable proportion are in the West. The Pasture Counties which are not in the West of England and where, therefore, the small extent of arable land must be attributed to causes other than the climate, are as follows: Buckingham, Northampton, East Sussex, Staffordshire, Durham, Surrey, Rutland, East Riding of Yorkshire, Leicester, Northumberland, Middlesex, Cheshire, West Riding of Yorkshire and the three divisions of Lancashire. The striking thing about this list is that practically without exception they are the "home counties" of large industrial areas. It would appear, therefore, that the factors in the higher wage are:—

- (1) The prevalence of pasture over arable, and
- (2) The neighbourhood of great centres of population.

It is, of course, to be considered at once in this connection whether the second fact does not govern the first, or whether, in fact, farmers in the neighbourhood of large towns are not naturally induced to use their land as a milk walk.

TABLE W.

(FIGURES ASCERTAINED BY INVESTIGATION AND FROM HOUSE OF COMMONS OFFICIAL REPORTS.)

COMPARISON OF TYPICAL MINIMUM WAGE RATES of adult male agricultural workers fixed by County Agricultural Wages Committees with the amount of UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT AND OF OUT-RELIEF paid by Boards of Guardians, classified by the Ministry of Health as Rural, for a man, wife and three children, under 14 years of age, i.e., the standard family (April, 1925).

County.	Board of Guardians.	Unemployment Benefit.	Out-Relief Scale.	County Minimum Wage Rate.
Berkshire ..	Wantage ..	29/-	25/6	29/2
Cheshire ..	Nantwich ..	29/-	23/6	35/-
Cornwall ..	Penzance ..	29/-	22/-	31/-
Devon ..	Barnstaple	29/-	22/6 plus rent 4/-	32/6
Essex ..	Braintree ..	29/-	20/6 (plus 1 cwt. coal and rent up to 7/-)	30/-
Gloucestershire	Chipping Sodbury	29/-	24/6	30/-
Hampshire ..	Christchurch	29/-	33/-	30/-
Kent .. ..	Strood ..	29/-	25/- (plus rent)	32/6
Lincolnshire ..	Gainsborough	29/-	23/-	32/-
Lincolnshire ..	Stamford ..	29/-	26/-	32/-
Northumberland	Alnwick ..	29/-	25/6	34/-
"	Bellingham	29/-	32/-	34/-
Oxfordshire ..	Bicester ..	29/-	24/6	30/-
Shropshire ..	Shifnal ..	29/-	30/-	31/6
Somerset ..	Frome ..	29/-	28/-	32/-
Suffolk ..	Sudbury ..	29/-	25/-	29/2
Surrey ..	Reigate ..	29/-	31/-	32/3
Worcestershire	Droitwich	29/-	24/-	30/-
Yorkshire (W. Riding)	Goole ..	29/-	23/-	36/-

TABLE X.

COUNTRIES.		AUTHORITIES.		
England and Wales	..	Agricultural Statistics, 1921.		
Germany	.. ..	German Year Book, 1923.		
Switzerland	.. ..	Federal Statistics, 1905.		
Denmark	.. ..	"Denmark, 1924" (Official Booklet).		
Belgium	.. ..	Seebohm Rowntree, 1910.		

  

PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL AGRICULTURAL AREA OCCUPIED BY HOLDINGS OF CERTAIN AVERAGE GROUPS IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES.

England and Wales.	Germany.	Switzerland.	Denmark.	Belgium.
Size of Holding.				
1-5 acres 9%	—	1½-7 acres 8%	1½-7 acres 2.5%	2½-5 acres 30.2%
5-20 acres 5.0%	5-25 acres 24.8%	7½-75 acres 52%	—	5-25 acres. 52.3%
20-50 acres 10.5%	25-50 acres 18.2%	over 75 40%	7-37 acres 21.8%	25-50 acres 9.0%
50-100 acres 17.0%	50-125 acres 21.4%		37-150 acres 56.7%	50-100 acres 3.2%
100-150 acres 15.1%	125-250 acres 7.8%		—	100-375 acres 1.3%
150-300 acres 28.6%	250 and over 22.2%		150-300 acres 10%	over 375 acres .03%
Over 300 acres 22.9%	—		over 300 acres 9%	

APPENDIX II.  
SMALL HOLDINGS.  
DIVISION I.

*What a Small Holding is.*

It is necessary, perhaps, first to say that, technically, a small holding is a holding under 50 acres in extent, or rented at less than £50 per annum.

This appendix aims at putting very briefly the results of the Small Holdings Movement in this country, and the economic considerations which experience has shown to be of primary importance.

*Men and Measures.*

At the end of the Appendix will be found a short sketch of what the Small Holdings Movement has accomplished in one district of East Anglia.

This has been written by the Chairman of a County Small Holdings Committee, to whom, with other public spirited members of County Councils, the country owes a great debt of gratitude. They, in the face of many difficulties and, what is worse, much apathy and rooted disbelief in the possibility of progress, have established thousands of families on the land and made a substantial contribution to the solution of those social problems which are mainly rooted in land hunger. The 420,000 odd acres, which, as a result of the policy set in motion by the Small Holdings Act of 1908, are now carrying just over 30,000 families as independent land holders, produce a much greater gross output than formerly. That, in itself, is an achievement.

Yet the difficulties which small holders have met are notorious. The cost of land has often been high, and the cost of equipment out of all proportion to the resources of the new holders. A very serious grievance to many small holders is the fact that they are called upon to pay not only interest on the cost of purchase and equipment but also an annual sum in respect of a sinking fund, and that in spite of this sinking fund payment they will never approach the status of freeholders.

A member of the Cambridgeshire County Council writes to us as follows:—

“ The Act in question, i.e., The Small Holdings Act, 1908, has gone a long way to stay the depopulation of the villages in a few places such as this, where some 150 persons hold land under the County Council within a radius of three miles. Between 1909-14 remarkable results were obtained in Norfolk, Cambs., Hunts., the Isle of Ely, and Beds., in spite of opposition and inertia in many quarters. The War stopped everything, and the rash administration of soldier settlement



legislation obscured the good work which had been done before 1914."

"The Cambs. C.C. is the largest landowner in the county, and lets some 20,000 acres to 2,500 tenants, very few of whom could have got land without the Act. They do not desire ownership, as all hope to go up the ladder. Ownership tends to tie a man to the first rung."

*The Lessons Learnt.*

Experience proves, first, the reality of land hunger; secondly, that small holdings, provided by cutting up farms which their previous occupiers maintained were of the smallest economic size, can maintain a larger number of families and produce more food; thirdly, that the small holder requires for success guidance and access to capital at a low rate of interest. These points have been proved in some cases by success, in others by failure, both in their way equally convincing. Many of the strongest supporters of the movement, however, are coming to think that the present 50 acre limit of small holdings can only be temporary. There are some parts of the country where the economic unit is something a good deal less than 50 acres; but there are many parts where the economic unit undoubtedly is something between 50 and 100.

*From Small Holdings to Family Farms.*

The Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation, after declaring that, in their opinion, the productivity of European agriculture, particularly in Denmark, Germany and Belgium, where the output has been the greatest, has been largely due to the deliberate organisation of the family farming system, states:

"There is much to be said in favour of extending the definition of a small holding to holdings up to 70 or even 80 acres." (p. 88.)

To avoid confusion it is better to confine the term "Small Holding" to its present limitations, and deal frankly with "family farms" as being holdings of round about 100 acres, that is, actually holdings economically able to support a family employing hired labour.<sup>1</sup>

*A Striking Fact.*

We can do nothing better than quote the Tribunal more at length on the experience of other countries which have deliberately aimed at creating family farms as the normal unit of land-use. Paragraph 243 of its Report begins:

"It is a striking fact that the countries which have had most experience of the small family farm system, so far from receding from the system, have been, even before the War and still more markedly since, engaged in a policy of increasing the number of

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, on average land. In a few areas units of a few acres only are economically independent.

these holdings and improving the general system of community organisation in their support."

And later the Tribunal's Report continues :—

"How far is it possible to find a reconciliation or adjustment of the different factors and to strike the mean which constitutes 'a prosperous agriculture' in that larger sense which includes social as well as economic objects, viz., an agriculture distinguished by the large number of homes on the land, the large production of food and a profitable return on the capital and labour expended? Step by step, not one, but most countries, are seeking to build up a national agricultural policy which shall solve the problem. In Europe this is most markedly the case with Germany and Denmark. But in very different circumstances in the North American and Australian continents, the movement of organisation is tending in a like direction. The 'family farm,' 'the homestead,' and the 'small holding' in the New World and in the Old express an idea which is not simply economic, but social. It is very deep in its roots, and is persisting and growing despite fluctuating and often unfavourable economic conditions. Among well-informed observers the value of a combination of large, medium, and small holdings is generally recognised. Nevertheless the preponderance of the small farm is increasing and the movement in its favour is strengthened by the evidence that the 'family farm' is weathering the difficult economic conditions of the times. Thus, in agriculture, the tendency has been in the reverse direction from that in other industries, in which great aggregations of capital and labour and the submergence of the domestic industry and of the small independent workshop or factory have been so general."

#### *A Pointed Question.*

The Tribunal's conclusions on this point were far too weighty to be ignored, and we were compelled to follow up their line of argument on our own account.

Happily, during our Enquiry Dr. Laur in Switzerland and Dr. Larsen in Denmark published figures of the production, employment capacity, and capitalisation of farm holdings in their own countries, and these have been worked out for us in relation to English conditions by Dr. Ruston, the well-known lecturer in agricultural economics of the University of Leeds. Dr. Ruston's examination is of very great interest, and it will be found in full in the Appendix. We wish to call attention to the outstanding points. How far do these figures justify us in England, asks Dr. Ruston, in deciding to follow the examples of the Danes and Swiss and adopting a policy which involves breaking up large estates? If such a policy is adopted, what size of holding should be aimed at?

In answering this question Dr. Ruston brings out six points worth close attention :—

(1) The Danish figures prove that the gross output per acre from holdings of under 25 acres is 50 per cent. higher than that of holdings between 25 and 75 acres, and double that of holdings of over 250 acres.

(2) Holdings of under 25 acres have a similar advantage in number of men employed. Holdings of under 25 acres employ 11.3 men per each hundred acres, as against 7 men on holdings between 50 and 75 acres, and 5.4 men on holdings of over 250 acres.

(3) The holding of approximately 20 acres, so common in Denmark, is not the most economic unit. Its capitalisation is high, but some of it is non-productive, as labour both of men and horses is, to an extent, uneconomic.

(4) The fourth point is put most concisely in a Table :—

#### DANISH RESULTS.

Size of Holding.	Capital invested per acre.	Output per acre.	Cost of Upkeep per acre.	Net Balance per acre.	Normal Int. on capital invested.	Balance per ac. after allowing for normal int. on capital.
Acres.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Under 25	55 10 0	20 1 0	17 10 0	2 11 0	2 15 0	4 0 0
25 to 50	45 18 0	15 4 0	11 16 0	3 8 0	2 5 0	1 3 0
50 to 75	46 2 0	15 3 0	11 10 0	3 13 0	2 6 0	1 7 0
75 to 100	44 4 0	13 18 0	10 4 0	3 14 0	2 4 0	1 10 0
100 to 250	39 18 0	12 8 0	9 5 0	3 3 0	2 0 0	1 3 0
Over 250	39 17 0	12 4 0	9 4 0	3 0 0	2 0 0	1 0 0

From these figures Dr. Ruston concludes that the efficiency of the holdings is increased with their size up to a certain maximum. *This maximum was reached on farms between 75 and 100 acres, and then fell off steadily as the size of the holding increased.*

(5) Swiss holdings are, on the average, smaller than Danish. The gross output from holdings under 12½ acres is high. From the purely cash point of view, the man on 20 acres would be better off as a labourer; the man on 75—100 acres would be better off than as a labourer. But, as Dr. Ruston points out, however,

there are undoubtedly many men so constituted that they prefer to order their own lives in their own way rather than place themselves at the beck and call of another man, even if they had to sacrifice 4s. a week. We would emphasise his recognition that the "economic man" is still hard to find, while endorsing his argument for holdings of a size which satisfy the economist as well as the sociologist.

(6) Very slowly a tendency is at work in this country increasing holdings of about the 100 acre size at the expense of those under 25 and over 250 acres. Despite the Small Holdings Act of 1908, the area under small holdings is decreasing. (See Table N. Appendix I.) The total of statutory small holdings in England and Wales is 60,000 less than it was in 1875, and nearly 20,000 less than in 1908. Dr. Ruston concludes that the Small Holdings movement will only grow at its proper pace when the "small holding" is made an economic unit, that is, something more than a statutory small holding. In short, Dr. Ruston's examination leads practically to the same conclusion as that arrived at by the Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation.

#### *Ground for Thought.*

The other side of the picture must now be glanced at. A recent report by the Committee on public expenditure has called attention to the very serious deficit on working the existing Small Holdings Acts. This deficit is to a large extent, but not altogether, due to the abnormal conditions which obtained at the close of the War. In the Spring of 1926 the Exchequer will square up the accounts of County Councils, and to enable the County Councils henceforward to administer their small holdings estates on an economic basis, will assume liability for a debt of something like 10 million pounds. The position of County Authorities is perhaps most clearly illustrated in detail. One County Authority in 1921 was controlling just on 12,000 acres of small holdings. It charged its tenants a rent of approximately 53s. per acre. The economic rent of the holdings concerned was approximately £5 per acre. The average rent for small farms in the same county was 28s. per acre. Yet in spite of the much higher rent charged for County Council holdings, a loss was incurred by the county in that year of £31,772. To illustrate the distribution of this burden as between the pre-War Small Holdings Act and the post-War Sailors and Soldiers Act, it may be added that the post-War Act involved the purchase of 8,000 acres at a cost of £43 15s. per acre, and that the equipment of these post-War holdings cost a further £32 per acre. Dr. Ruston, in quoting these figures, adds that 18 farms in the same county have been bought by their former tenants since 1919 at an average cost, not of £75 15s., but of £29 7s. 3d.

per acre. It is not our intention to quote here more of Dr. Ruston's paper, the whole of which will be read. But we are impelled to direct to it the attention of anyone who believes that the true line of agricultural advance lies simply in an extension of ownership of small holdings by County Councils. If, as we are convinced, the present state of the nation demands the settlement on the land, not of 30,000 families in 17 years, but of many scores of thousands in the next few years, and if the economic argument for family farms rather than small holdings as now understood be sound, then extension of the present Small Holdings policy involves operations, financial and administrative, on the scale which County Councils, up to the present, have never contemplated. Already "the Cambridgeshire County Council is the largest landowner in the county." Is that to become the position of County Councils all over Great Britain, or is it better to regard the County Council Small Holdings movement as having been not, as Dr. Ruston concludes, "to a large extent a costly failure," but a demonstration, which had of necessity to be costly, that there are greater possibilities latent in English soil than are dreamed of in the studies of landowners or in the offices of large estates?

Here follow the two papers to which we have already referred; first, the sketch of the Small Holdings movement in East Anglia, and secondly, Dr. Ruston's paper.

## DIVISION II.

### *The Land and the Village.*

1892-1925.

The south end of Cambridgeshire bounded by Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire consists of three Parishes, Steeple Morden, Guilden Morden and Litlington, long narrow parishes with thin chalk land at one end next The Icknield Way, and heavy clay land at the other next the River Rhee. The middle land, sound arable land, produces fine wheat and barley. Hereabouts begins the Vale of Ringdale which Drayton described in his "Poliolbion," Song 21, in the year 1612, as follows:

"For the greatnesse of my graine, and finenesse of my grasse,  
This Ile scarce hath a Vale, that Ringdale doth surpasse."

Perhaps the proximity of the lower greensand to the surface was the secret of this ancient fertility, and in the middle of the 19th Century large areas were dug over to remove the coprolites.

The three churches are little more than a mile apart and their rival bells fill the air with sweet sound on Sunday.

The old cottages are mostly plaster walls and thatched roofs. The population in 1921 was :—

Steeple Morden	..	..	696	..	Area	3846 acres.
Guilden Morden	..	..	580	..	..	2599 ..
Litlington	..	..	413	..	..	2172 ..
			—	..		—
Population	..	..	1689	..	..	8617 ..

A change has come over the life of these villages since 1892. In that year a great part of the land in the two Mordens which had belonged to Lord Hardwicke's Wimpole Estate was sold, and split up among a number of owners, farmers and others.

A small farm, 57 acres, in the middle of the village was purchased by the Steeple Morden Benefit Society, a sick benefit club having some 500 members, mostly in the three villages.

It was a bold thing for a Committee of Agricultural Labourers to undertake, and dire was the destruction foretold by the farmers for the Club's future. For a year the tenant farmer remained the tenant of the labourers, and paid his rent with a sour face.

Then the land passed to the members of the Society who divided it among about 20 of its members at the same rent as the farmer had paid. In all the bad years that followed when wheat fell to 18s. a quarter no man failed to pay his rent.

This Society, called "The Dry Club," because it never met in a public house, and wasted no money on feasting, has prospered, and now has a Fund of over £6,000. It built four cottages on its new land and also owns 10 other cottages, among the best in the village. Its annual rent audit is a pleasant function where men are not afraid to talk. Its history records the exodus from the village. It has a member in Canada and quite a few in London and scattered among the Midland towns.

In 1908 came another change.

The Small Holdings Act, produced a demand from 25 men for 456 acres. A farm of 143 acres with a house, buildings, and four cottages was purchased by the County Council and let in 29 holdings. The rent of the arable land was 31s. 6d. per acre, Pasture 40s. per acre, Cottages and building £52 per annum. The whole lay adjoining the village on both sides of a hard road. The scheme was an immediate success and the cultivation of the farm, which was acquired in a high state of cultivation, has been well maintained. No tenant has failed and most of them have

now much larger holdings. This first success produced a strong fresh demand which the Council has supplied as follows :

		Acres.	
Purchase	Cheyney Water Farm	146	House, Cottages and Buildings.
Lease	Guilden Morden Glebe	133	No Buildings.
"	Ecclesiastical Commrs.	16	"
<sup>1</sup> Purchase	Station Road	64	2 New Cottages.
<sup>1</sup> Lease	Steeple Morden Glebe	28	No Buildings.
<sup>1</sup> Purchase	Steeple Morden	14	"
"	Morden Hall Farm	305	House. 2 cottages. Three sets of Buildings
<sup>1</sup> "	Beverley Corporation	174	Buildings.
"	Litlington Bury Farm	123	House, Cottage and Buildings.
<sup>1</sup> "	Hill Farm, Litlington	186	House and Buildings.
<sup>1</sup> "	Clare College, Litlington	30	No Buildings.
<sup>1</sup> "	Christ's College, Litlington	35	House and Buildings.
"	Shingay Gate Farm	292	House, 6 Cottages and Buildings.
Purchased by Herts. C.C.	High Farm, Steeple Morden	124	House, 4 Cottages and Buildings.
		<u>1,670</u> acres	<u>28</u> Houses.

This land is let in 145 holdings, of which 42 are held by ex-Service men. Some men hold land on two or more farms. All this land lies within a two mile radius of Steeple Morden Church.

No one can dispute the increased independence and welfare of the people which has followed these changes. The villages shops reflect the greater prosperity. The land keeps the young men in the village. The District Council has provided 6 new cottages and is about to build more. Private individuals have built several houses and in addition to the County Council's 1670 acres and 28 houses there are about 100 acres in private Small Holdings. The Poor's land has passed from a large farmer to a Small Holder at a much higher rent, to the benefit of the poor. The cultivation is very good, the number of cows, pigs and poultry has greatly increased. There is no talk of laying land down to grass. Rents are reasonable and well paid up. Market garden crops, chiefly Brussels Sprouts, Peas and Potatoes, are grown and increase in

<sup>1</sup> 531 acres acquired for ex-Service men.

acreage. The main crops are wheat, barley, oats and beans. The County Agricultural Committee carry out experimental potato trials and are this year carrying out a demonstration in Sugar beet on the County Estate.

There is a friendly feeling in the area between the remaining farmers and the Small holders.

This district is typical of the benefit conferred on many villages in Cambridgeshire, the Isle of Ely, Norfolk, Huntingdonshire and Bedfordshire. The change passed unnoticed and untold, ignored by the leaders of Agriculture and members of Parliament. The Cambridgeshire County Council has 2,550 tenants of whom about 1,250 are ex-Service men. They occupy nearly 20,000 acres, making the County Council far the largest landowner in the County.

The Isle of Ely has 14,000 acres including a large area of fruit growing Small Holdings near Wisbech let to about 2,500 persons, half of whom are ex-Service men.

Norfolk has a big estate, 28,217 acres let to 2,357 small holders among whom there are about 1,200 ex-Service tenants.

Bedfordshire lets 14,000 acres to 2,000 tenants, a great number being expert market gardeners in the Biggleswade district.

Huntingdonshire has nearly 12,000 acres, mostly in the rich black fen parishes of Ramsey, Ramsey St. Mary and Warboys. Here potatoes are a main crop and celery and carrots are grown. Small Holders do well on such land.

There is a large waiting demand for land, houses and buildings in all these counties.

The one crop of which Agriculturists take little account is the crop of men and women. Small Holdings are the best stimulant for this crop.

Small Holdings do not produce a paradise, they create a better condition of life for the land worker. The Small Holder is a hard worker, but a cheerful worker. He needs no highly paid supervision, no motor car, few luxuries. He gets the best result from the labour he hires because he works alongside. His wife and children help in the small things and in seasonal work. He employs labour and time now often unemployed or wasted.

Life is not dull to the man who has land and stock. The children can have milk and the man meat. Eggs are plentiful in the home. The first call on production is food for the family, at first cost.

This may be a simple statement, but it is sound life economics.

No questions of markets, middle-man, foreign exchange, or protection arise when men produce food for their own home consumption.



*Division III.**Small Holdings Economics*

By Arthur G. Ruston, B.A., B.Sc. (Lond.), D.Sc. (Leeds). Lecturer in Agricultural Economics, The University of Leeds.

In reading the Interim and Final Reports of the Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation, it is interesting to note that widely as the views of the members of that Tribunal differed on many points each member advocated, and advocated strongly, the extension of the Small Holding System in England.

“ We have given close attention to the experience of this country in the provision of Small Holdings during the last 15 years, and to the remarkable developments which have taken place in Germany and Denmark, and we wish to record our opinion that the Small Holding Movement is of the greatest value in maintaining the agricultural population, and that the time has come for a renewed and vigorous effort to extend the establishment of small holdings on the land.”

While every student of Agricultural Economics will be in perfect agreement with the first portion of the above finding of the Tribunal, there are many who undoubtedly will accept the latter portion only with reserve.

The work of Dr. Laur in Switzerland and of Dr. Larsen in Denmark is, in this respect, exceedingly interesting and instructive, and the statistical data collected by them from the carefully kept accounts of a large number of holdings of varying size, have brought out the weak and strong points of the Small Holding system in a remarkable manner. It is only after carefully studying trustworthy data of this description, and weighing up the “ pros and cons ” that one can finally decide how far we in England should be justified in following the example of the Danes and Swiss, and adopting a policy which involves the breaking up of the large estates.

If such a policy is adopted, and the tendency certainly points that way, what size of holding is likely to give the best results for the nation as a whole, the community at large and the individual farmer concerned? Questions of this kind, vital to the interests of the agricultural community, can only be answered after a careful study of the accumulated data collected from the trustworthy records of carefully kept farm accounts.

If a time comes when we must, as far as possible, be self-supporting, as far as our food supply is concerned, it is undoubtedly the

small holding which is wanted. The figures of Dr. Larsen answer that point quite conclusively, for the Gross Output per acre, corresponding to the amount of food produced for sale from the small holding under 25 acres, is nearly double that of the larger farms.

TABLE I.

AVERAGE DANISH RESULTS. 1917-1923. VARIATION OF GROSS OUTPUT WITH SIZE OF FARM.

Size of Farm.	Gross Output in Pounds per acre.
	£ s. d.
Under 25 acres .. .. .	20 1 0
From 25 to 50 acres .. .. .	15 4 0
From 50 to 75 acres .. .. .	15 3 0
From 75 to 100 acres .. .. .	13 18 0
From 100 to 250 acres .. .. .	12 8 0
Over 250 acres .. .. .	12 4 0

When it is realised that in 1923 the Net Outlay on the purchase of imported food material amounted in this country to more than £464,000,000, and the net balance between the exports and imports of all industrial products, whether raw material or manufactured goods, was less than £129,000,000 in favour of the exports, it will be seen that a time is coming even if it has not already come, when as a nation we shall have to face boldly the problem of our National Food Supply.

Is the time coming when we may lose our industrial supremacy, when the industries in the towns can no longer absorb our surplus population from the country; when the question of unemployment may loom large upon the horizon, and the question of the employment of labour be one of the planks upon which a national agricultural policy will be built?

The figures of Dr. Larsen show that it is the small holding which, unit for unit, is socially the best in this respect; the holding of less than 25 acres giving on the average employment to 11.3 men per 100 acres, as compared with 5.4 in the case of the holdings of over 250 acres.

TABLE II.  
DANISH RESULTS.

VARIATION OF WAGES BILL AND NO. OF MEN EMPLOYED WITH THE SIZE OF THE HOLDING.

Size of Holding.	Wages paid per acre.	No. of men employed per 100 acres.
	£ s. d.	No.
Under 25 acres .. ..	8 12 0	11·3
25 to 50 acres .. ..	5 15 0	7·8
50 to 75 acres .. ..	5 10 0	7·0
75 to 100 acres .. ..	5 2 0	6·5
100 to 250 acres .. ..	4 2 0	5·4
Over 250 acres .. ..	4 2 0	5·4

The individual farmer, however, will look at the matter from the personal rather than the impersonal point of view, and the economic rather than the social aspect of the case will appeal to him, and it is here that the figures of Dr. Larsen are so instructive, for they do not reveal the fact that the small holding of approximately 20 acres, so common in Denmark, is the most economic unit. It is handicapped by high capitalisation, particularly in the form of non-productive capital, by high working costs, by the uneconomic employment of labour, both men and horses, to such an extent as to more than over-balance the social advantages it enjoys.

TABLE III.  
DANISH RESULTS.  
CAPITAL INVESTED PER ACRE.

Size of Holding.	Land.	Buildings.	Working Capital.	Total Capital.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Under 25 acres	16 10 0	18 8 0	20 12 0	55 10 0
25 to 50 acres	17 5 0	13 5 0	15 8 0	45 18 0
50 to 75 acres	19 3 0	12 4 0	14 15 0	46 2 0
75 to 100 acres	18 18 0	11 18 0	13 8 0	44 4 0
100 to 250 acres	18 10 0	9 10 0	11 10 0	39 18 0
Over 250 acres	19 8 0	10 2 0	10 7 0	39 17 0

When once the land has been acquired, buildings must be erected and working capital found before that land can be efficiently farmed. A glance at the Table above will show that in the case of the small holding under 25 acres, the total capital to be invested in the farm is approximately *three and a half times* the value of the land, and roughly *twice* the value of the land in the case of the holding of 250 acres.

From the economic standpoint it is not so much the gross output that matters as the net ; it is not so much the sales of the farm, its production or productivity that stand out as pre-eminently important, but the margin between the production costs and sale prices.

" In this respect there is, on broad general lines, an almost uniform agreement between the results obtained by Dr. Larsen in Denmark, Dr. Laur in Switzerland, and those which we have obtained from a more detailed study of a smaller number of farms in Yorkshire. In none of these cases is the small holding of thirty acres so common on the Continent found to be the most economic unit. As can be seen from a study of Table IV after allowing for normal interest on the capital invested in the holding and charging the labour of the small holder himself, at the normal rate paid to the hired man

3s. 6d.	per day	in the year	1917-1918.
4s.	"	"	" 1918-1919.
5s.	"	"	" 1919-1920.
6s.	"	"	" 1921-1922.
4s. 10d.	"	"	" 1922-1923.

there has been during the last seven years an annual yearly deficit of 4s. per acre on the small holdings under 25 acres. The efficiency of the holding increased with its size up to a maximum which was reached on farms of between 75 to 100 acres, on which a surplus of 30s. per acre was obtained, and then fell off steadily as the holding increased, the surplus on farms of over 250 acres being approximately £1 per acre.

TABLE IV.  
DANISH RESULTS.

Acres. Size of Holding.	Capital invested per acre.	Output per acre.	Cost of Upkeep per ac.	Net Balance per ac.	Normal Int. on capital in- vested.	Balance per ac. after allow- ing for normal int. on capital.
Acres.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Under 25	55 10 0	20 1 0	17 10 0	2 11 0	2 15 0	0 4 0
25 to 50	45 18 0	15 4 0	11 15 0	3 8 0	2 5 0	1 3 0
50 to 75	46 2 0	15 3 0	11 10 0	3 13 0	2 6 0	1 7 0
75 to 100	44 4 0	13 18 0	10 4 0	3 14 0	2 4 0	1 10 0
100 to 250	39 18 0	12 8 0	9 5 0	3 3 0	2 0 0	1 3 0
Over 250	39 17 0	12 4 0	9 4 0	3 0 0	2 0 0	1 0 0

In Switzerland the holdings are on the average smaller even than in Denmark, and from a study of Dr. Laur's results (see Table V) it will be seen that, in spite of the high gross output from the holdings under  $12\frac{1}{2}$  acres, their high capitalisation and high labour and other production costs were instrumental in reducing the average net profits obtained on them to less than 3 per cent. on the capital outlay, as compared with more than  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. in the case of the holdings of more than 75 acres; from which it would appear that the efficiency of the normal holding increases with its size, certainly up to 75 acres. If Dr. Laur's results are plotted, it will be seen that there is a very marked falling off in the economic efficiency as the holding falls below 30 acres.

Place a man on a small holding of under  $12\frac{1}{2}$  acres, the records of Dr. Laur show that he would be £2 3s. 6d. an acre, or roughly 10s. a week, better off were he employed as a hired man on a farm, and were the money he has sunk in his holding invested in Corporation or other Trustee stock. It would be difficult to justify such an economic handicap on any social grounds.

Place a man on a small holding of just under 25 acres, the records of Dr. Larsen show that he would be 4s. an acre, £5 a year or roughly 4s. a week better off were he to hire himself out on a

larger farm and invest his money again in Trustee Stock instead of in his holding. There are undoubtedly many men so constituted that they would prefer to work for themselves as their own masters and order their own lives in their own way rather than place themselves at the beck and call of another man, even if by so doing they were sacrificing 4s. a week ; and undoubtedly this spirit of independence is a thing to be encouraged and fostered.

Place a man on a holding of from 75 to 100 acres. He not only maintains his independence, but will also be placed in a position in which he has a maximum chance of financial and economic success. Such a farm could still be run as a *family* farm and possess the social advantages we all wish to develop, high output and a maximum employment of labour on the land, compatible with economic efficiency. In the interests of the nation extend the Small Holding movement by all means, but in the interests of the small holder widen the term so as to make it include a holding of at least 75 acres, and remember that except on very specialised farms there is a very marked falling off in its economic efficiency as the holding falls below 35 acres.

In this respect a study of the following Table (VI.) illustrating the variations in the number of holdings of various sizes during the last 40 years is certainly instructive. It will be seen that in this country the tendency has certainly been in the direction of the gradual elimination of the larger holdings, and also of those which have been found in practice to be too small for economic working. In spite of the repeated efforts made to encourage the small holding movement, economic forces have slowly but surely worked in the direction of the medium sized farm, hovering round the 100 acres which our limited results suggest to be in this country the most efficient economic unit.

TABLE V.  
SWISS RESULTS.

Size of holding.	No. of hold-ings.	Capital invested per acre	Output per acre	Produc-tion costs per acre.	Net balance per acre.	Balance ex-pressed as interest on capital invested.	Normal interest per acre on capital interest per acre.	Balance per acre after allowing for normal interest on capital.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	Per cent.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
7½ to 12½ acres	662	149 18 8	22 11 7	18 15 1	3 16 6	2.5	6 0 0	2 3 6
12½ to 25 acres	2,457	116 16 2	19 0 3	14 5 6	4 14 9	4.0	4 13 0	0 1 3
25 to 37 acres	1,367	108 8 5	17 17 2	12 8 11	5 8 3	4.9	4 6 9	1 1 6
37 to 75 acres	1,247	96 11 10	16 2 3	11 1 1	5 1 2	5.2	3 17 3	1 3 11
Over 75 acres	364	75 4 3	13 17 7	9 11 10	4 5 9	5.6	3 0 2	1 5 7

TABLE VI.  
NUMBER OF HOLDINGS IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

Size Group.	1885	1895	1913	1921	1924
1 to 5 acres .. ..	114,273	97,818	92,302	81,217	76,859
5 to 20 acres .. ..	126,674	126,714	122,117	116,159	111,934
20 to 50 acres .. ..	73,472	74,846	78,027	80,967	79,537
50 to 100 acres .. ..	54,937	56,791	59,287	61,001	60,781
100 to 300 acres .. ..	67,024	68,277	69,431	67,842	67,411
Over 300 acres .. ..	16,608	16,021	14,513	12,947	12,861



The Minority Report of the Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation, signed by Professor MacGregor, makes very interesting references to this point.

"The grounds on which the small holdings policy can clearly be based are two.

In the first place, it is a policy for maintaining rural population; it does this by satisfying an ambition, and thereby impeding the rural exodus.

In the second place, it is in the interests of the efficiency of farming as a whole that qualified labourers should be enabled to start on their own account, and to rise into the ranks of farmers. Agriculture, it may be repeated, is an industry to which this latter idea is so specially applicable that an effective small holdings policy is a matter of social justice."

Going further into detail, he quotes the following figures with reference to the variations in the number and acreage of the small holdings under 50 acres in England and Wales between the years 1875 to 1919.

TABLE VII.  
NUMBER AND ACREAGE OF SMALL HOLDINGS  
IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

Year.	Number.	Percentage of all holdings.	Acreage.	Percentage of area under all holdings.
1875	333,630	70.7	4,182,346	15.4
1880	336,149	70.7	4,176,427	15.0
1885	314,419	69.2	4,203,742	14.9
1895	299,378	68.9	4,224,594	15.0
1908	287,170	66.8	4,368,330	15.7
1913	292,446	67.0	4,281,526	15.5
1919	272,568	65.5	4,150,813	15.5

"It will," he continues, "be seen that the area under small holdings remains a fairly constant proportion of the area under all holdings, and that this is also to a certain extent true of the numbers. The fact which is most difficult to explain is the decline of acreage since 1908, since it was in the beginning of this year that effective legislation came into force." Under the Act of 1892, practically nothing was done. The Act of 1907 came into force on the first day of 1908, and from that time until the outbreak of

the War 14,962 small holdings, of an average size of 13 acres, were established at the rate of just over 2,300 holdings per year, yet in spite of this the number of statutory small holdings in the country to-day is sixty thousand less than it was in 1875, and nearly twenty thousand less than it was in 1908, when compulsory powers for their creation were first acquired. In other words, of recent years, *for every two statutory small holdings established three have disappeared, to be merged into larger holdings.* Make the small holding an economic unit, and the small holding movement will grow; but the compulsory establishment by law of a system which, whatever social advantages it may enjoy, is based on foundations which are economically unsound, is doomed to failure from the commencement, and the utilisation of public funds for the establishment of such a system is as satisfactory a process as pouring water through a sieve.

A study of the financial returns of the Authorities responsible for the provision of small holdings is also interesting. In the year ended 31st March, 1921, one such authority had under its control 11,968 acres, the rent of which paid by the tenants amounted to £31,772 18s. 10d., corresponding roughly to 53s. per acre, as compared with an average rent paid on normal sized farms in the same country of 28s. per acre. The cost to the responsible authority amounted to no less than £57,131 os. 5d., and involved them in a loss that year of £31,772 18s. 10d., making the economic rent of the holdings concerned approximately £5 an acre, a burden which no agricultural land under present conditions could hope successfully to carry. The reason for the abnormally high rents can be seen from the fact that of the estates acquired under the Land Settlement (Facilities) Act, 1919, 8,119 acres were purchased for £340,100 or £43 15s. per acre, while, in addition, the cost of their additional equipment with the necessary buildings amounted to no less than £252,942, or £32 an acre. The cost of the holdings, land and buildings, to the Authority concerned amounted to no less than £75 15s. per acre. We have, at the present time, the accounts of sixty-four commercial farms under investigation in the county. Since 1919 eighteen of these have been bought by the former tenants at an average cost, not of £75 15s., but of £29 7s. 3d. per acre.

Undoubtedly many inexperienced men have been established upon small holdings at great expense to themselves and to the public, and have never had a dog's chance of success. If *suitable* men trained in the practical work of the farm could be placed on holdings *suitable* in size, there need be little fear of their not making good; and if, where necessary, cheap credit could be found, possibly out of the public purse, for carefully selected men deserving it, it would be money well spent.

The establishment of 656 men on just under 12,000 acres by the Authority already referred to has resulted in an annual loss of nearly £32,000 of the rate or tax payers' money, and in spite of the fact that this corresponds to a grant out of the public funds of approximately £1 a week to each of these men, it has been of little practical benefit to them.

Had a careful selection been made, and between 200 and 250 of the most suitable and experienced men been placed on holdings nearly three times as large, not only could the capital expenditure on buildings have been reduced by at least £80,000 and most probably by £100,000, but the men so placed should have needed no support out of the public purse, for they would have had a chance, and a good chance, to make their farms a financial success; while in addition at least £80,000, and most probably £100,000, of capital expenditure in the erection of superfluous buildings might have been avoided. Had that money been utilised in productive expenditure like drainage, it would have been put to good purpose.

A study of Dr. Larsen's figures shows that in Denmark, as in England, the small holder relies almost entirely upon the sales of produce of animal husbandry for his revenue. Evidently he manages his grass land *better*, and his arable land, particularly the area under corn, *worse* than his brother on a large holding, as can be seen from the following records extracted from Dr. Larsen's figures.

TABLE VIII.

	Yield of Grain per acre.	Food units of Grass and Forage Crops per acre.
	Cwts.	
Under 25 acres ..	16.2	1080
25 to 50 acres ..	16.8	965
50 to 75 .. ..	19.5	978
75 to 100 .. ..	20.2	840
100 to 250 .. ..	20.4	836
Over 250 .. ..	21.0	800

The skill of the smallholder in the management of stock, the value of the individual attention which he is able to give to them, points which we have noticed in our own records on the farms being costed through the Department in Yorkshire, are brought

out by a study of Dr. Larsen's figures, as are also the handicaps that the small holder has to suffer in the over-stocking of horses and the uneconomical use that can be made of the horse labour on holdings that are too small. (See Table IX).

The following extract taken from a report sent off on 12th December, 1924, to D.C.A., a smallholder farming 48 acres in the Doncaster area, may in this respect be of interest :—

“ In many ways the holding at Alverley is handicapped in the same way as are the small holdings in Denmark and Switzerland. Possibly one of the most striking cases is the way in which it is heavily overstocked with horses, with the consequence that sufficient work cannot be found to keep them really busy on the farm. The following comparison of the efficiency of the horse labour on Mr. ————'s farm and on the 54 farms already referred to is certainly instructive.

TABLE IX.  
HORSE LABOUR IN DENMARK.

Size of holding.	No. of acres per working horse.	No. of working days per horse per year.	Feeding units fed per head per year.	Cost of horse labour.		Cost per working horse per year.
				Per working day.	Per acre.	
				£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Under 25 acres ..	7.2	94	1,792	0 5 8	3 13 6	26 12 0
25 to 50 acres ..	17.2	131	2,450	0 5 5	2 16 0	35 16 0
50 to 75 "	17.2	143	2,676	0 5 6	2 5 3	39 0 0
75 to 100 "	19.2	157	2,748	0 5 5	2 4 8	42 8 0
100 to 250 "	23.5	179	2,850	0 5 0	1 18 4	45 0 1
Over 250 acres ..	27.3	212	3,204	0 5 0	1 17 10	52 10 0

TABLE X.

	D.C.A.	Average of 54 farms.
No. of working horses kept per 100 acres .. .. .	10	2.9
No. of working days per horse per year .. .. .	54	148.0
No. of working horses kept per 100 acres of arable land .. .. .	14.3	5.7
Cost of Horse Labour per working day .. .. .	10/-	4s. 10d.
Cost of upkeep per horse per year ..	£26 15 11	£35 15 4

" It will be seen that the horses are undoubtedly kept cheaply, but the fact that they can be found employment for little more than one day a week, makes the actual cost of horse labour per working day more than double the average."

The Danish records already referred to show that this is a common failure in that country, as can be seen from Table IX, obtained from a study of Dr. Larsen's figures.

The really small holding of under 25 acres is nearly four times as heavily stocked with horses as is the large holding for that country of over 250 acres. The influence of the individual attention which can be given on the small holding is seen from the fact that on these holdings the food consumption and the total cost of upkeep have been reduced by nearly one-half. The fact that the horses on the small holdings cannot be kept busy is brought out when it is realised that on the smallest holdings they worked 94 days per head per year, and on the largest 212.

The skill in management of these men is shown by the fact that in spite of the small number of days the horses were working, the cost of horse labour was only eightpence per working day more than on the largest holdings which could keep horses busy.

The value of the individual attention that is given to stock by the smallholder is seen from a study of Dr. Larsen's records of poultry and pigs. From these it will be seen that the smallholder stocks his land heavily with birds, on the holding of under 25 acres, possibly too heavily; watches his feeding remarkably closely, with a saving of 3s. a head, as compared to those on the holdings of over 250 acres, where the birds would be most probably looked after by hired labour; while the largest profits per bird and per pig were made on holdings, in the one case just under

and in the other case just over, 50 acres. (See Tables XI and XII.)

In conclusion, I think it must be admitted that the Small Holding system as at present adopted has been to a large extent a costly failure, mainly through following too slavishly the methods that have been adopted in other and principally smaller countries. Yet success could so easily be attained, and lies ready waiting to be boldly grasped.

Unless on a specialised farm, I would put no man—who expected to make a living by it—on a holding of less than 35 acres, and would hesitate to put him on one of less than 50 acres, and I would extend the working of the Act to make it applicable to at least a holding of 75 acres, and wherever possible, make it reach as near as possible to that limit, and lastly I would select and carefully select the men to be placed upon them.

There could be no possible objection by any party, political or otherwise, to the simple alteration in the working of an Act in this way; but its effect socially and economically would undoubtedly be enormous, and in my opinion would do more lasting good to agriculture in this country than any subsidy or even the modification of our fiscal policy, much as, in many ways, that may be desired."

TABLE XI.  
POULTRY.

Size of holding.	Number of birds kept per 100 acres.	EXPENDITURE PER HEAD.			PROFIT.		
		Food.	Labour.	Total.	Per holding	Per acre.	Per bird.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Under 25 acres ..	294	0 8 0	0 2 4	0 10 4	£ 9 0 0	£ 1 12 0	£ 0 4 11
25 to 50 " ..	132	0 8 10	0 1 8	0 10 6	13 10 0	0 19 8	0 5 6
50 to 75 " ..	122	0 9 10	0 1 9	0 11 7	17 0 0	0 14 0	0 4 6
75 to 100 " ..	72	0 10 2	0 2 1	0 12 3	13 0 0	0 7 6	0 4 2
100 to 250 " ..	39	0 10 10	0 1 10	0 12 8	15 10 0	0 4 10	0 4 3
Over 250 acres	30	0 11 0	0 2 3	0 13 3	17 0 6	0 1 6	0 3 10



TABLE XII.

## PIGS.

Size of holding.	Number of Food Units fed per pig.	PROPORTION OF FOOD FED.			Labour bill per pig.	Profit per pig.
		Meal.	Milk or whey.			
			Per cent.	Per cent.		
Under 25 acres	509	62·6	22·5	15·9	£ s. d. 0 19 6	£ s. d. 0 12 2
25 to 50 "	542	67·8	21·3	10·9	0 10 4	0 16 3
50 to 75 "	530	74·8	19·2	6·0	0 8 4	1 8 6
75 to 100 "	550	71·8	20·7	7·5	0 9 0	1 0 6
100 to 250 "	574	71·7	20·1	8·2	0 9 10	0 13 2
Over 250 acres	618	75·8	17·8	6·4	0 13 1	0 3 6

## APPENDIX III.

## FIFTY YEARS OF AN ENGLISH VILLAGE.

*Cottagers 1879.*

## Cottages—How occupied

1. Farm labourer and family.  
Worked in village.<sup>1</sup>
2. Farm labourer and family.  
Cottage burned down.  
Worked in village.
3. Farm labourer and family.  
At first he and four sons  
worked in the village,  
afterwards all sons went  
away to north of England.  
One has now returned to  
cottage.
4. Shepherd and family. 3  
sons working in village.
5. Road worker and sons. Sons  
worked a good deal of time  
on farms. (All sons went  
away to Birmingham as  
soon as old enough.)
6. Farm labourer and daughter  
and 2 sons. Father and  
sons working in village.
7. Woodman, 4 sons who  
worked in village.
8. Charwoman and daughter.
9. Farm labourer and family,  
worked in village.
10. Farm labourer and family  
(11), all gone away.
- 11, 12. 2 Farm labourers and  
families.

*Cottagers 1925.*

## Cottages—How occupied.

1. Farm labourer. Now work-  
ing at cement works in  
another parish. (Mother  
an Old Age Pensioner.)
2. Re-built 1887. Casual  
worker who gets Un-  
employment Benefit at  
times.
3. Eldest son (alone) Old Age  
Pensioner.
4. Eldest son. Old Age Pen-  
sioner. One son sleeping  
home, working away.
5. Sons, returned to take  
father's place, now he is  
nearing 70. One son has  
taken his place. The  
other son sleeping at home  
and working away.
6. Daughter (alone) Old Age  
Pensioner.
7. 2 sons. One works on  
farm at home. One on  
farm in another parish.
8. Widow.
9. Same (work away).
10. Same. Close on 90 years  
of age but still works.  
Daughter keeps house.  
Old Age Pensioner.
- 11, 12. Pulled down.

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<sup>1</sup>By village is meant land in the village or parish.

*Cottagers 1879.*

Cottages—How occupied.

13. Road worker.
14. Farm labourer, worked in village.
15. Farm labourer.
16. Farm labourer and family. Father and son worked in village.
17. Farm labourer and son, worked in village.
18. Farm labourer and family.
19. Widow.
- 20, 21. 2 farm labourers and families working in village.
- 22, 23. 2 Farm labourers and families working in village.
24. 2 Brothers. Hurdle and basket makers.
- 25, 26, 27. Woodman and 2 farm labourers and families.
28. Thatcher.
29. Farm labourer working in village.
- 30, 31. Shepherd working in village. Laundress.

*Cottagers 1925.*

Cottages—How occupied.

13. Now put with No. 14 as one cottage.
14. Farm labourer works away.
15. (Son) road worker. Mother Old Age Pensioner.
16. Son working on same farm. Mother an Old Age Pensioner.
17. Farm labourer. 4 sons. Father and 3 sons working at cement works. 1 son working in village.<sup>1</sup>
18. Widow of same (alone). Old Age Pensioner.
19. Man and wife. Man working in cement works.
- 20, 21. Farm labourer working in village. Now one cottage.
- 22, 23. Widow. Old Age Pensioner. (Alone). (Now one cottage).
24. Farm labourer who works away. Mother an Old Age Pensioner.
- 25, 26, 27. Burned down (partly) a few years ago, left with walls and chimneys standing. (Wilderness.)
28. Brother and sister. Brother a cripple and sister an Old Age Pensioner.
29. Widow. Son a farm labourer, sleeping at home and working away.
- 30, 31. Farm labourer now working as Motor Mechanic in town. (Now one cottage.)

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<sup>1</sup> Cement works are in adjoining parish.

*Cottagers 1879.*

Cottages—How occupied.

32. Farm labourer and family. He and 3 sons worked in village.
33. Shepherd worked in village.
34. Gardener.
35. Carpenter.
36. Shoemaker (Post Office).
37. Farm labourer
38. Farm labourer
39. Farm labourer
40. Farm labourer
- } Worked in village. {
- 41, 42. 2 Agricultural labourers and families working in village.
43. Farm labourer and family. Worked in village.
44. Farm labourer and family.
45. Farm labourer who got crippled. 2 sons worked on farm.
46. Gardener.
- 47, 48. Farm labourer and family } worked in village {  
Hurdle maker and family }
49. —————
- 50, 51, 52. Woodman, farm labourer, odd man with families.
- 53, 54. Farm labourer and family. Worked in village.
55. Farm labourer worked in village.

*Cottagers 1925.*

Cottages—How occupied.

32. Cement worker, working away.
33. Small shop.
34. Gardener.
35. Small holder.
36. Small holder.
37. Pulled down
38. Retired coal merchant. Old Age Pensioner.
39. Widow of farmer. Old Age Pensioner.
40. Farm labourer working for small holder.
- 41, 42. Condemned. Not occupied. Could be made into a good cottage for a small outlay.
43. Used as hovel.
44. Farmer's son.
45. Widow.
46. Boot repairer. He and his wife are Old Age Pensioners.
- 47, 48. Part pulled down  
Gardener.
49. Built 1887. Gardener and Motor Driver.
- 50, 51, 52. One pulled down, one used as hovel, one taken by school teacher.
- 53, 54. Now one cottage. Retired farmer. Old Age Pensioner.
55. Condemned, unoccupied, falling into decay.

*Cottagers, 1879.*

## Cottages—How occupied.

56. Shepherd and family. He and 2 sons worked in village.
57. Farm labourer worked in village.
58. Tailor.
59. Blacksmith.
60. Farm labourer and family. He and son worked in village.
61. Farm labourer and family. He and 2 sons worked in village.
62. Farm labourer. (Piece worker; away most of time.)
63. Farm labourer. Worked in village.
64. Farm labourer and family. He and son worked in village.
65. Farm labourer. Worked in village.
- 66, 67. Stone mason. Shoemaker.
68. Carrier.
69. Widow and daughter.
70. Farm labourer and son; worked in village.
71. Farm labourer and family. He and 2 sons worked in village.
72. Farm labourer.
73. Farm labourer and family. He and 3 sons worked in village.
- 74, 75. Standing in middle of large farm. Carter and Shepherd.

*Cottagers, 1925.*

## Cottages—How occupied.

56. Widow of same and daughter, both Old Age Pensioners.
57. Farm labourer (son of former) on same farm.
58. Now empty, rapidly falling into decay. (Big cottage with acre of ground).
59. Gardener.
60. Used as storehouse by butcher.
61. Gardener.
62. Partly fallen down. Not occupied.
63. Widow of same, with son who works on farm.
64. Widow of same (Old Age Pensioner.) Son works for small holder.
65. Farm tractor driver for firm.
- 66, 67. Now one cottage. Carpenter.
68. Coal merchant.
69. Widow.
70. Widow (alone). Old Age Pensioner.
71. Farm labourer (son) but not working for farmer.
72. Farm labourer
73. Builders' labourer. Working away. Mother Old Age Pensioner.
- 74, 75. One empty. One occupied by disabled soldier and family.

*Cottagers, 1879.*

Cottages—How occupied.

80, 81. Farm labourers and families. These were called Adam and Eve Cottages, \_\_\_\_\_place, Garden of Eden.

*Cottagers, 1925.*

Cottages—How occupied.

76, 77, 78, 79. New Council Cottages, 1921. Occupied by—

76. Stud Groom.

77. Retired shopkeeper.

78. Butcher.

79. Steam Roller Driver.

80, 81. Pulled down. Garden planted with trees (not apple trees).

## THE VILLAGE IN 1925.

Inhabitants about 260.

20 Old Age Pensioners.

19 Widows, 6 Widowers.

5 cottages occupied by Widow and Son.

6 Widows live alone. 2 Widowers live alone.

2 Widowers with daughter to keep house.

1 cottage. Two Old Age Pensioners (mother and daughter).

1 single woman. Old Age Pensioner, lives alone.

2 brothers occupy one cottage.

Brother and sisters occupy 2 cottages.

6 cottages occupied by married people with no family.

Farm houses, 7.

Private houses, 2.

Manor House.

Vicarage.

Church.

Chapel.

Village Hall.

School, Council.

2 Public Houses.

Water Mill.

Stocks which are railed in.

Since 1879 there have been six new cottages built. Eleven have been either burned down or pulled down. Six have been condemned; in two cases the reason why is not known. (Not now occupied.) In seven instances, two now go as one, in some cases they still have their separate identity. Three now used as out-houses for other cottages.

Allowing for six cottages built, we are left with 21 less than 46 years ago. There are 25 families who have had to find other accommodation in the period named. Two families then lived in some of the larger cottages.

About 1875 to 1877 several young men left the village; some went to Australia, some to New Zealand, others to Birmingham and other towns. Some families went to New South Wales and were the first settlers on the Lachlan River, Budgerabong. These made a great success. I have a copy of a paper published at the time of the death of the first settler who went from here to that part. He and the families that went with him owned a great stretch of the land; his funeral resembled that of a king.

Since 1879 55 young men have left the village, about six having gone on farm work.

Of all the lads who attended the village school at the same time as myself four only are left in the parish; one a small holder, one working for a small holder, two on an Estate Farm in another parish. In 1879, as near as I am able to find out, there were from 1,500 to 1,600 acres of arable farming out of a possible 2,300.

To-day there are about 350 to 400 acres of arable land, and about 130 acres of this is small holdings and allotments, and about 40 acres now being used as a model farm by the occupier of Manor House.

There are 13 men and boys employed on the land in the parish, excluding three labourers employed on the model farm and the small holders. There are two boys employed, the youngest boy being about 17 or 18 years of age, and the other 19 years of age.

Farmer and son on one farm; both work. 1 man and 1 boy employed.	Farm about 300 acres.
Farmer and 2 men on another farm.	Farm about 270 acres.
Farmer and son on another farm. 1 man employed.	Farm about 307 acres.
Farmer and son on another farm. 1 man employed at £1 per week.	Farm about 272 acres.
Farmer and 5 men employed on another farm.	Farm about 349 acres.
Farmer and 2 sons work part time on another farm. 1 man employed.	Farm about 216 acres.
Farmer, and 1 man employed, on another farm.	Farm about 73 acres.

*Land.*—Light limestone. Medium. Heavy clay. Good grass land, well watered, and can be called fairly good land for farming and corn growing. The small holdings are the shallowest ground in the parish.

, Cutting hedges and cleaning out ditches has gone out of date; this is plain by the number of men employed; they have often

to be carters, shepherds, and milkmen combined, and so have not much time for other work.

If ever the time comes when the wilderness and the solitary place shall be "glad," then this village will be the first to get gladness.

The farms belong to the occupier in five instances; I am not certain as to the other two.

The curious fact that puzzles theorists, economists, and may puzzle politicians, is that when farm labourers' wages were 12s. per week there were plenty of labourers to be got, it was no trouble to pick up extra hands for cleaning roots and haymaking. At this time there were many roots grown and about six times the amount of arable land. Now no men can be got to clean out roots or pick up hay, and some of this work will not be done. This should show quite clearly that wages alone will not settle the agricultural question. The muzzle must be taken off the ox that treads out the corn.





# PART 3.

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## LAND AND LANDLORDISM.

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## PART 3.

### CHAPTER V.

#### ARGUMENT.

*Division I.*—We have patched and so retarded decay, but we want a new foundation. The centre of our evils seems to be in under-capitalisation, which cannot be cured without a reform of land tenure.

*Division II.*—The law of property in land is based upon land holding in return for national service.

*Division III.*—No nation can afford to abandon the principles contained in the theory of landed property. In the mediæval manor idlers were deprived of their holding. To-day the nation cannot allow its real worth to be depreciated by the misuse of land.

*Division IV.*—Under-capitalisation is a vital bar to the efficient use of land. The final responsibility for agricultural efficiency rests on the landlord under the present system of tenure. Landlordism seems to have broken down in the discharge of its function of capitalising and leading the industry. The State has already undertaken much previously expected of landlords.

*Division V.*—The right functions of the State with regard to agricultural land are in brief to create the best conditions of tenure and provide the fullest opportunities for access, and to use its resources to assist full development; but this seems at present to be understood elsewhere better than here.

## CHAPTER VI.

### ARGUMENT.

*Division VI.*—The effects of land monopoly are often bad at the present time, and, if care be taken, the system of determining how land shall best be used can be much improved.

The three-partner system in agriculture can only be defended as long as all are pulling their full weight. Our system is never consciously copied elsewhere, and it is deplored wherever it has sprung up. While our landlords had ample means, and used them unstintingly in return for their great position, the system could be defended by its results. But as soon as means fail, enterprise and security are checked, and caution is the watchword rather than progress. The system cannot be bolstered up, and the handicap which it imposes on progress is fully recognised by those who speak with the greatest authority. The system did not carry us through the strain of the agricultural depression, and the War, and what has followed from it, have greatly intensified the difficulties. The revolution has been silent, but it must be realised. The workers suffer from it, and the land suffers from it. Landowners being unable to develop the true values of their estates tend to develop false values, to the detriment of output; for high amenity values make for low agricultural returns. The business side of farming is not attended to, for leadership is lacking.

We cannot afford to let things drift further towards confusion and inefficiency. A new policy must be laid down.

The appendices to this Part deal with the law of Real Property, the evidences of under-capitalisation under our present system, the net rent of agricultural land, and the recent changes which have taken place in land tenure in Europe.

## CHAPTER V.

### AGRICULTURE AND TENURE.

145. Part II of this Report has portrayed in close detail a gloomy and depressing situation which townspeople and countryside alike are in danger of regarding with fatalism. Even those who appreciate the gravity of the situation are often disposed to assume that there can be no remedy except Protection or a Subsidy, in some form or another, to agriculture. Equally common and equally dangerous is the idea that some form of assistance can be devised which will save agriculture simply by increasing the country's arable acreage. The failure of the Conservative Government's attempt in 1925 to convene representatives of the three interests in agriculture in order to arrive at a generally agreed policy illuminates the separateness of the interests involved and the stubbornness of the Protection-Subsidy demand. The Trade Unions, which include about one-fifth of the agricultural workers, but were asked to speak on behalf of them all, and the National Farmers' Union, which contains in its ranks something like one in three of all farmers in the country, both refused to commit themselves to a conference unless they were assured in advance that the Government would adopt their point of view. The attitude of the Farmers' Union was frankly that farmers wished to be let alone. They did not want to increase the arable acreage. They maintained either that they should be allowed to do what they regarded as economic, namely, to make the avoiding the possibility of losses the guiding principle of their farming operations, or, if the country insisted upon their doing what they thought was not economic, that they should be subsidised. They declared epigrammatically that the

nation could have as much agriculture as it was willing to pay for.

With this point of view, and its implications we shall deal later. It means bluntly that without a subsidy of some kind the under-utilisation of English land must continue. We do not believe that a subsidy of any kind is within the bounds of practical politics or that Protection of agricultural produce is ever likely to be voted for by a population so overwhelmingly urban as that of Great Britain. We put out as a counter proposition that the nation can have, if not as much agriculture as it likes, certainly much more than it has got if it is willing to plan and work for it.

### *Division I.*

#### *Tenure—the Real Issue.*

146. Many a Committee and Royal Commission has examined the state of British Agriculture and come either to the desperate conclusion that Protection must be advocated, although it can never become an actuality, or to the scarcely less desperate conclusion that the only hope lies in "the cumulative effect of minor reforms."

#### CUMULATIVE EFFECT.

What the advocates of accumulating minor reforms forget is that for many years past Parliament has been doing so. It has added one Act to another.<sup>1</sup> As has been said elsewhere, almost everything has been done except

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<sup>1</sup>The progress of the depression which began in 1877 was marked by a series of Royal Commissions and a subsequent, not necessarily a consequent, series of Acts of Parliament. There were Acts to deal with Game, to simplify the transfer of land, to prevent cattle disease, to relieve agricultural land of rates, and to give some measure of security or, at least, some amount of compensation to tenant farmers. The list of the Agricultural Acts of Parliament since 1880 is long reading. They have been passed by all parties, the Minister of Agriculture for the time being generally finding his greatest difficulty to be the maintenance of a quorum.

what can be calculated to be effective. What does the accumulation amount to? Clearly it is even now insufficient to fill in the depression. It is surely idle to heap up assistance without making any attempt to ascertain the causes of the subsidence, much less to remove those causes. It is not enough, in our view, merely to retard the decay of English rural life, and to put into a strong economic position a constantly dwindling minority of agriculturists. Decay must not be merely retarded, but arrested. What has been lost must be made good. If there be a remedy, it must be found, even if it be drastic. Indeed, a real remedy must be radical. It must deal with underlying causes and factors of origin. If the whole structure of agriculture is weakened by collapse of foundations, it is useless to patch the roof and walls; the foundations must be renewed. If rural life has sunk into a state of exhaustion, evidenced by apathetic reliance on outside help, recovery can come only if new stimuli can be applied, new forces released, and a new spirit of determination and confidence created.

#### MANY DOCTORS.

147. The many diagnoses of British agriculture made of recent years agree with remarkable unanimity on one point. All the doctors are of opinion that the main trouble is under-capitalisation. They agree also in declaring that if any attempt is made to make good this defect from outside the industry, the landowners' right to raise rents must be restricted. Purposeful action has in the past been baffled at this point. It is clearly and generally recognised that rent restriction in agriculture would remove the one economic incentive to expenditure on landed property; in other words, that it would aggravate the disease which it is intended to cure.

#### THE REAL ISSUE.

148. Ample evidence has already been given in this Report of the actuality of under-capitalisation, and, in



view of the consensus of opinion on this point, there is no need to labour it. We prefer to bring the issue into the open. It is in reality very simple. The main defence of landlordism is that it supplies agriculture with capital at a very cheap rate. If landlordism, in fact, does not supply the capital that agriculture needs, is there still any justification for the landlord's position in the industry? We premise that the landlord's position in agriculture is one not of privilege, but of utility.<sup>1</sup> The right to ownership of land (the precise interpretation of ownership in this connection will be discussed presently) rests on nothing but the performance of a useful function.

It follows that if this function is not now being adequately performed, and if the State is to act in place of the landlord, the right to landownership must be reconsidered.

#### THE FUNCTION OF LANDLORDS.

149. What is the function here so certainly implied and, in fact, universally acknowledged whenever the complicated question of land tenure is soberly examined? It can be most clearly put as a pair of related propositions:—

(1) The landlord is an intermediary. He holds land from the Crown in fee simple—the nearest approach to absolute ownership which the law recognises—on an implied condition that he gives service in return.

(2) His service, under modern conditions, is that of supplying agriculture with its permanent capital and, by virtue of his position as a man of education not tied down to the detailed working of the land, of leading farming forward on the path of evolution.

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<sup>1</sup> "The reasons which form the justifications of private property in land are valid in so far as the proprietor of the land is its improver."—*J. S. Mill*.

## THE CASE FOR REFORMING LAND TENURE.

150. A clear case for radically reforming the tenure of agricultural land arises, therefore, if it be proved, first that agriculture is suffering from lack of capital, from lack of leadership, and from a whole series of evils consequent on lack of capital and leadership; secondly, that, whatever landlordism has done in the past, it is not likely to be able in the future to supply adequate capital and efficient leadership; and thirdly, that agriculture, if it were adequately capitalised and vigorously led, could win a higher production from the land and maintain on the land a larger population.

The facts contained in Chapters III and IV seem to us conclusively to prove all three points. The case for rural pessimism is desperately weakened by the evidence offered from other countries. The evidence derived from Great Britain does not prove the case, and, in fact, there is decisive rebuttal in the ability of agriculturists who have imagination, scientific knowledge and enterprise, no matter whether their holdings are large or small, to withstand the stream of tendencies and to make a larger profit by immensely increasing the productivity of the land in their charge. But it is not enough for national safety to provide a basis on which exceptional people can do exceptional things. For the use of a nation's land the only tolerable basis is one on which good farming becomes not the exception but the rule.

In the next chapter we endeavour to state as fairly as possible the case historically, theoretically and practically against the system of landlordism, and in the remaining chapters we expound the system which we believe can and should be established in its place. But before going on to these steps in the argument it is necessary to bring into focus certain aspects of the problem which until they are fairly faced are apt to confuse discussion.

*Division II.**The Law of Property in Land.*

## THE CENTRAL THEORY.

151. First may be taken the actual legal position of land as property. Much has been said from time to time of the amazing complexity and cumbrousness of the English law on real property. The Law of Property Act, 1922, which was compiled, with Herculean labours, to simplify, consolidate and, on certain points, to reform the law, has had its appointed day more than once postponed, and is not yet in operation. The most authoritative handbook to this Act speaks of the existing law as based on a state of society (feudalism) which has, for over 200 years, ceased to exist in this country; and as now being a "barbaric patchwork" created by the attempts of lawyers from time to time to make it fit new conditions. (Underhill's *Law of Property Act, 1922.*)

Some of the reforms embodied in the Act are among those recommended by the Land Enquiry Committee of 1913 with regard to questions of tenure and title. But however intricate the law of property has been allowed to become, the central theory of law on the subject has never changed.

"An English subject," says Joshua Williams on *Real Property*, "may enjoy the absolute ownership of goods, but not of land. The law does not recognise absolute ownership of land, unless in the hands of the Crown, and the greatest interest in land which a subject can have is an estate in fee simple" . . . "By English law the King is the supreme owner or lord paramount of every parcel of land in the nation."

"An estate in fee simple is the most absolute property which a subject can have in land."

Joshua Williams is here quoted as being still the most generally recognised authority. But in fact no legal authority has ever contradicted or even questioned his

statement. In Appendix IV will be found extracts from the leading legal text-books in which such phrases as the following occur :

“ According to the doctrine of the Common Law there is no land in England in the hands of a subject but is held of some lord by some service or for some estate . . . Thus the king is lord paramount either mediate or immediate of all land within the realm.”—*Lord Halsbury*.

“ An estate in fee simple is an interest in land . . . At the present day it is practically absolute ownership.”—*A. F. Topham*.

“ At Common Law the ownership of land is never absolute, while the ownership of goods is never anything but absolute.”—*Strahan and Baxter*.

“ The King alone, as being the ultimate and supreme lord, had the absolute ownership of land.”—*W. D. Edwards*.

### *Division III.*

#### *National Service.*

##### LEGAL THEORY AND PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

152. We are not concerned to emphasise over-much this theoretical aspect of the question. The theory would be of historical rather than actual importance, did it not embody a principle which no nation, regardful of its own interest, can afford to let slip. The principle was perfectly clear in feudal times. It was submerged, but not destroyed, when the Enclosures were made.

##### ENCLOSURES—ECONOMIC BENEFITS.

The Enclosure Acts were justified by the fact that the old open-field system of farming had demonstrably become unable to produce the necessary amount of food for the growing population of the country. The result of enclosing the land undoubtedly was to raise farming efficiency. The error lay in allowing the land thus enclosed, owing to conditions made with regard to cost of fencing, etc., to fall rapidly into the hands of the large landowners.

It is interesting to note that in other countries, notably Prussia, common land was enclosed, for the same reasons as in England. But in those other countries the common land was turned into small holdings under conditions which allowed peasants who had previously been commoners to become smallholders.

#### A SOCIAL DISASTER.

153. But, even those persons who contend most strongly that the English Enclosure Acts were economically necessary generally admit that their social results were disastrous. The resentment which still lingers in the minds of country workers against the Enclosure Acts is remarkable. They set the seal on the divorce of labourers from the land, and on their separation into a wage-earning, non-land-using caste. The countryside as a whole is still suffering from the social disaster which Enclosures brought about, and is now awakening to the fact that for half-a-century the economic justification has failed to hold good. Thus is created the disposition to scrutinise closely the actual theory and practice of landownership. The principle that no individual can own land as he owns personal property has been allowed to slumber for a while. But it may properly be reasserted at any time.

The sore question of Enclosures which properly belongs to the next chapter is touched here only because it is still a living issue in the rural mind, and because of its responsibility for the disappearance of a British peasantry. In any land discussion both sides incline to quote history for their purpose. We believe firmly that history is on our side, but as far as possible we avoid historical disquisitions in view of the importance of keeping practical considerations to the forefront. One other historical point, however, must be dealt with as it is relied on to-day by the defenders of the *status quo*. It is the argument that no matter whether there ever was absolute ownership in land the land never belonged to the nation.

## GROUP OWNERSHIP—

154. Lord Ernle in *The Land and its People* points out that by the 14th century the Lord of the Manor had very generally withdrawn from the Village Farm a compact block of land for his own use. No part of the rest of the area, whether meadow, ploughland, pasture or waste was held in individual occupation. All was held by the partners in the village farm<sup>1</sup> and used in common under regulations which were binding on the whole village community. The partners were not a select few.

“Practically the whole of the inhabitants of the village, as freeholders, or tenants, or squatters who had made good their title to encroachments by length of occupation, had some interest in the soil other than that of wages. Few, if any, were landless wage-earners. Even the serfs had some stake in the community. . . .”

Lord Ernle however, is at pains to add that “the rest of the world were trespassers.” And, again, speaking of the Commons, he emphasises the restriction of common rights to the village farmers, “The general public had no share or claim to their use.”

## —AND NATIONAL OWNERSHIP.

155. This contention that “the rest of the world were trespassers,” and that the general public had no share in the commons, is now being oddly used in attempts to upset the principle of the ultimate ownership of land by

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<sup>1</sup> The persistence of the Celtic idea of clans or group-ownership despite the disturbances introduced by the Roman and Norman invasions, would be remarkable were the idea not so naturally based on social justice and industrial expediency. “The communalistic origin of property in land has been lately much contested. But in so far as agriculture is historically developed out of pastoral husbandry, there seems to be hardly anything more certain in the domain of archaic law than the theory that the soil was originally owned by groups and not by individuals, and that its individual appropriation is the result of a slow process of development.”—(Vinogradoff, “The Growth of the Manor,” p. 18.)

the nation. It becomes necessary, therefore, to amplify this idea of group-ownership. What seems perfectly clear is that all the land of all manors was the absolute property only of the Crown. The Crown stood for the whole nation. Lords of manors held land for military service to the King. They in their turn received service from their tenant labourers whose rent was paid "in the form of labour on the demesne for their holdings in the village partnership."

Labour rents were commuted to money rents as personal service ceased to be required. But the principle of national service as the payment for the use of land was never abandoned.

What was recognised was that only a limited number of people could live on and by the produce of a limited area of land. "Strangers" and "the general public" were any persons outside the limited band of actual cultivators and their dependents, grouped under the protection of their lord in a self-supporting and self-sufficing community. The principle of group-ownership evolved into that of national ownership inevitably as English villages, ceasing to be islands of cultivation in a sea of waste, merged into a coherent community.

#### IDLERS EXPELLED FROM THE FARM.

156. The village community has gone and with it most local privileges of land uses. The principle of what may be called "limited occupancy" remains. Without it agriculture would be impossible. The principle of granting use of land in return for national service remains. Without it a nation becomes the slave of a land monopoly. Just as the landlord's ownership is a form of national service, and as his right to own agricultural land rests on his performance of his function, so is the tenant's occupancy of agricultural land a form of national service, and so rests his right to occupy on his proper use of the land. Mediaeval Lords of the Manor, even while they were appropriating their demesnes for themselves, had no

illusions as to their own status. Nor would they allow their estates to be impoverished and the peace of their villages threatened by the slackness and incapacity of individual tenants. The Manorial Courts expressed village consciousness as well as the unconscious sense of national interest. In them, to quote Lord Ernle again, "Fines were imposed for slovenly work at harvest. The necessary contributions were levied for the repair of the stocks or the pound." Millers, bakers, brewers and ale-wives or tavern keepers were prosecuted for offences in connection with their callings, and "*idlers were deprived of their holdings, and, as a last resort were expelled from the Manor.*"

#### LANDLESSNESS AND LOW PRODUCTION.

157. Our purpose is to emphasise present-day necessities rather than historical precedents of legal theory. But we are bound to demonstrate from history the common-sense basis of the legal theory quoted in the last paragraph. Absolute ownership of land by private persons is not recognised, first, because the possession of a country's land is the first condition of a nation's existence, and secondly, because a nation, although it must entrust the working of the land to some rather than all its members, cannot afford the risk of any parcel of it being misused. As civilisation has become more complex an increasing proportion of our people have embraced other occupations than agriculture. But that is no argument for debarring a majority of those who work the soil from access to it on their own account nor is it a reason for allowing land to be misused or half-used. There is an intimate causal connection between landlessness and low production. Occupancy of land cannot be for all. But the number of occupiers must not fall seriously below the point at which maximum density of population coincides with maximum production. In France, under the operation of the Napoleonic Law of enforced division of inheritance among the children, the number of occupiers appears to be too large; in other words the "principle of limited occupancy" has been



forgotten. Many French holdings are too small to be economic units, and the effect on production is shown in Tables D and E (pages 138 and 139). Here, in Great Britain, the opposite tendency has been allowed to operate unchecked. If we are to get more out of our land we must put more people on the land and through them put into the land more of our national capital.

#### *Division IV.*

#### *Land and Capital.*

##### LAND NOT RAW MATERIAL.

158. Farmers who are rating reformers frequently use the argument that land is the raw material of agriculture. This argument has a certain plausibility lent to it by a dimly seen analogy. It would be quite as easy to argue that it was a manufactured article, in the making of which owner and cultivator have shared in proportion to the capital which each has contributed. It would be even easier to argue that land is the capital equipment and machinery for production which, in order to produce crops, has to be supplied with manure just as machinery has to be supplied with oil and steam or electric power. It cannot in fact properly be compared with any of the elements which go towards manufacture and all arguments based on likening it to one such element alone are fallacious.

##### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF UNDER-CAPITALISATION.

159. But in whatever aspect land be looked at, under-capitalisation is seen to be a fatal bar to its most efficient use. So far as it is raw material it is the only raw material of which the quantity cannot be multiplied, and, therefore, it is essential that it should be kept up to the best quality. If it be a manufactured article, we should not allow the contribution to its manufacture of either of the parties concerned to fall short. In so far as it is equipment or machinery, starvation of it must mean, as in business, a

minimum output, and, when we consider land not from any theoretical point of view but practically, the results of under-capitalisation are visible and tangible.

Arable land gives way to grass. Grass land is depreciated by water-logging consequent on choked drainage. Pastures are thick with weeds which are allowed to multiply in the farmer's desperate struggle to economise on his labour bill. The general tendency is to stint labour of its wage and yet to avoid the introduction of labour-saving machinery. Farm buildings are out of date, out of repair and out of scale. Mechanical and scientific equipment is not being installed in anything like proportion to modern requirements. The head of live stock is restricted and manurial values are consequently lost which, in their turn, would increase the capacity of the land for carrying stock. The general theory, accepted almost as a law of success in British agriculture, that a satisfactory income is to be derived, not from getting the most out of each acre, but from spending the least on each acre, could not have been formed except by under-capitalised farmers in an age when national attention was diverted from agriculture, and the essential conditions of land-tenure had been forgotten.

#### A DELICATE PARTNERSHIP.

160. The reasons for the breakdown of the landlord-tenant system of land tenure we propose to examine in detail in Chapter VI. Here must be touched one point only, the peculiarly delicate character of the "partnership" between owner and farmer. The landlord's function is to supply the permanent capital. The working capital is supplied by the tenant. Either party is peculiarly well able to hamper or injure the other. If the landlord stints capital expenditure, the tenant, lacking security of tenure and safeguards against increased rent, would be foolish to make good the deficiency out of his own resources. The landlord may let down the tenant by neglecting to replace the permanent capital values, represented by

drainage, buildings and long term improvements in general. The tenant on the other hand may let down the landlord by robbing the land, that is by taking for himself capital values which belong to the landlord, or by letting the land become foul and out of condition. In either case the other partner is prejudiced. But what is much more important is that the land itself, the fundamental asset of the nation, deteriorates, to the detriment both of contemporary population and future generations.

#### GOOD AND BAD FARMING.

161. Under the existing system of land tenure the landlord cannot escape final responsibility for agricultural efficiency. One of his responsibilities is to secure efficient farmers as tenants. A recent piquant controversy in the Press has raged round the statement that England is the worst farmed country in the world.

Lord Bledisloe and Lord Ernle have repudiated the paternity of this statement. Modified in an important particular it might have been fathered on almost any high agricultural authority of the day (see Section 95). What is generally acknowledged is that, though the best English farming is the best in the world, the gap between the best and the average is the widest in the world.

But landlords, generally speaking do not complain of any difficulty in finding efficient farmers as tenants. Their complaint is much more often that their tenants are always worrying them for new buildings and repairs. One of our witnesses, who ranks high in the farming community, said to us, "The way to be popular with landlords is to be a bad farmer." This is, of course, not universally true. But it is true wherever there is a landlord who will not, or cannot, spend on the land the money it needs, and at the same time, cannot, or will not, give the tenants the security which they must have if they are to spend money on long term improvements.

The "bad farmer" who is "popular with landlords"

is the farmer who recognises that his land is more cheaply rented than it would be if the owner of the land would spend more on it. His own resources are probably small. He risks but little capital himself and therefore, does not expect his landlord to do more than will enable him, in the words of a Midland agricultural worker, "to scrape along anyhow, with just enough to live on, like a man on the dole."

THE DIVORCE OF SCIENCE AND PRACTICE.

162. The exasperating thing from the national point of view is to see this gap set between the good farmers and the average farmer just when science has created potentialities of production from the land undreamed of by previous generations. Many diseases which caused untold loss to agriculturists up to the end of the nineteenth century have been mastered; mechanical means of performing the most difficult agricultural operations have been perfected. Experience gained in other industries in organising sales is at the disposal of the farmer. English Governments are spending more on research and propaganda than other countries, where precept and example are more readily assimilated by those actually engaged in cultivation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Expenditure of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Board of Agriculture for Scotland in certain years:—*

Financial Year.	Ministry of Agriculture excluding Fisheries Department and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.	Board of Agriculture for Scotland.	Total.
1913-14 ..	£ 258,158	£ 235,711	£ 493,869
1923-24 ..	4,627,205*	331,252	4,958,457
1924-25 ..	2,188,143†	446,692	2,634,835

\* Includes £3,000,000 for Foot-and-Mouth Disease.

† Includes £516,500 for Beet Sugar Subsidy.

## EXPERTS AND FARMERS.

The State expert in England has, generally speaking not won the confidence of farmers, though there are brilliant exceptions on either side.<sup>1</sup> Formerly farmers looked for guidance to their landlords. "There was an alliance of science with practice" which, in the middle of last century "bore rich and immediate fruit."<sup>2</sup> No parallel to "the enthusiasm of country gentlemen for von Leibig and his discoveries"<sup>3</sup> is perceptible to-day. The country gentlemen who founded the Royal Agricultural Society and the Royal Chemical Society had large minds and ample resources.

In what particular do their successors differ from them? The diffusion of scientific and practical information among agriculturists is a hundred times easier than it was 75 years ago. But it is not taking place from landlord to tenant. It is taking place, to some extent, through the organisation of farmers as a class. Of necessity the farmers' organisations depend on the State for the actual organisation of research, and to a large extent for the communication of its results. Pressure of circumstances is slowly making the expert more acceptable. But all this cannot disguise the fact that on the directing, as on the financial, side the "delicate partnership" has broken down.

## RENT MUST BE EARNED.

163. The truth seems to be that a land system that was practical, tolerable, and beneficial when landlords had

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<sup>1</sup> The following is taken from the evidence of one of the best known farmers in England. "I find the agricultural organiser of the county invaluable. Recently, for example, I wanted to make some badly farmed land, bought by me, more productive, and called in the agricultural organiser and said: 'I don't know exactly what grass to sow.' The organiser told me, and I am now enormously increasing the productivity of the land in question."

<sup>2</sup> "English Farming, Past and Present." Lord Ernle, p. 361.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 366.

money and were willing to spend it, and when farmers looked naturally for instruction and assistance to persons whose leadership they freely acknowledged, has become unpractical and intolerable to-day (see Section 181). Every attempt to devise other means of doing what the landlord no longer does, while leaving his position unchanged, breaks down on the necessity of guaranteeing to the community that the effect will not be to increase his rent. Where the landlord-tenant system is working according to the original plan, rent is not "unearned increment," so long as it is proportionate to the capital expended by the landlord and to the benefit received by the tenant. But the amount by which rent might be raised as the result of efforts made by the community as a whole to benefit the farmer would certainly be unearned increment, and the community's refusal to grant it cannot be gainsaid.

#### PATRIOTISM AND——

164. Before we pass on to a point which follows naturally on the last paragraph we pause for a moment to deprecate two retorts which will instinctively rise to the lips of some readers.

The first will spring from patriotic sensitiveness, to comparisons with other countries and to suggestions that Britain should adopt foreign ways of thinking and doing. Let us make quite clear that though we make comparisons with foreign countries we stand for British ways of doing things. We want to throw light from every available source on the problem of British rural land. We want to see British land better used than foreign land, British villages more prosperous, British families healthier and British landworkers more free than those of any other country. If Denmark, Belgium, Holland or Germany can by their example help us to achieve this object, fear of being un-British should certainly not make us unwilling to learn. We have taught them much in the past, we would like to be in a position to teach them again.

## —REVOLUTION.

165. The second retort may be that if the question of land tenure is tackled boldly and comprehensively the result will be "revolutionary."

We would strongly deprecate any such prejudiced approach to the problem. Many strongly conservative persons are now advocating the elimination of agricultural landlords by purchase and the general establishment of occupying ownership or peasant proprietorship. They recognise two things, first, that agriculture needs a new industrial basis, and secondly that landlords cannot be left in the position of rent receiving sinecurists. To their policy there are grave objections, which will be set out in Chapter X, but if we are revolutionary so are they. As a matter of fact they are revolutionary, and we are not. The policy we propose is a logical development of the landed system of our forefathers, and in many ways an actual return to it.

We may now turn to the last two main subjects of this chapter. The first is the extent to which the State can usefully intervene in agriculture (as distinct from its vital interest in tenure). The second is the practical attitude of the community towards the problems which necessarily spring from the essentially monopolistic nature of land.

## OFFICIALS AND OFFICIALISM.

166. Nothing is more absurd than that any section of the community should declare that the one thing it will not tolerate is officialism, even while it demands unceasingly State assistance. The National Farmers' Union has wisely avoided putting itself in this position, but its example is not always followed. Officialism is, no doubt, an evil, but officials there must be if and whenever the State undertakes to do anything, and particularly to spend any money, for any section of the community. To clear the air of confused ideas three points in connection with officialism may be taken :—

(1) Wages Committees are officialism. For that

reason in particular they are disliked by many farmers. But, although their present composition may be faulty, they have done something and may do more to raise wages. *They are demanded by that section of agricultural workers which is numerically strongest though economically weakest.*

(2) Farmers now complain bitterly that, during the War, they were compelled to plough land against their better judgment, and that in the management of their land generally they were interfered with by officials. That is true. It may also be true that some of the land ploughed would have been better left untouched. But "ploughing orders" were part of a great national policy necessitated by, *and effective in*, a great national emergency. Behind the officials was the public opinion of the whole nation. What counted was the success of the whole policy in increasing home grown food supplies and releasing cargo space for munitions.<sup>1</sup> Mistakes were inevitable in a hasty improvisation to meet the peril, then unforeseen, now clearly capable of recurrence.

(3) There are now a great many officials connected with agriculture. Some are employed by the State, others by the landowning interest. Taken together, they are more numerous than in most, or even, in any other businesses. It is a thing which farmers do not often realise that about 1s. in the £ on the rent they pay goes to officials—namely the land-agents and their staffs—and that, if this were not deemed necessary by landowners, there would be somewhere about £2,000,000 a year more to come back to the land in equipment and repairs. If the industry itself were given an opportunity of cutting down the number of officials is it quite certain that the publicly employed officials

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<sup>1</sup> See Lord Ernle's, *The Land and its People*, Chapter II, for the most authoritative account of what was required and achieved.



would go before those privately employed? Certainly, in many parts of the country to-day there are still farmers very ready to praise the work done by County Organisers, Research Officers and other officers of the County Councils and Ministry of Agriculture.

These points are made not to make out a case for officialism as such, but to remove some prejudices before considering what can be and what should be done by the State for agriculture.

### *Division V.*

#### *The Function of the State.*

167. One of the many valuable results of the investigations made by our Investigators abroad has been the clear idea gained on the true function of the State with regard to agriculture. Our reports make clear three main points. The first is that the State should not normally interfere to the slightest degree with the operations of farming and that it should not subsidise the industry or do anything to weaken the initiative and self-reliance of those engaged in it. The second is that the State, as in Prussia, can be an excellent landlord, tenants being advantaged by the State's power to deal with big problems in a big way. The third is that no European country under modern conditions can afford not to spend a good deal of money on, and to give a great deal of attention to, the well-being of its agriculture. What emerges very clearly is that modern nations are being increasingly compelled to organise means of controlling forces with which agriculture, by reason of its slow turnover, its small scale organisation and its scattered character, cannot cope.

In closer detail, the right function of the State with regard to agriculture would seem to be:—

(a) To create conditions of land tenure which will give actual workers on the soil the utmost freedom and encouragement.

(b) To preserve full opportunities of access to land for those who are best qualified to use it.

(c) To protect agricultural land from mis-use and to conceive clearly and steadfastly a policy for making full use of its agricultural land.

(d) To bring into agricultural use any land capable of cultivation and not at present cultivated.

(e) To organise, on behalf of agriculture, education, research and other activities which agriculture cannot generally organise for itself.

(f) To act in a sense as the representative of agriculture in dealing with other interests at home and abroad which are more compactly and therefore more efficiently organised, and

(g) To give agriculture the full benefit, when required of its national credit resources.

#### WHAT OTHER COUNTRIES DO FOR AGRICULTURE.

168. Definite instances from our foreign enquiries into Government action in agricultural matters, great and small, may be found suggestive.

##### *France.*

“The profits of a tax on gambling have been definitely set aside for work in connection with afforestation, the improvement of pasture land, pisciculture, and in the national forests, preservation of game.”

##### *Holland.*

“The hand of the Dutch Government is seen plainly, not in ‘promoting agriculture’—though it is its very good and prudently liberal friend—not in the control of foreign products, but in the arrangements which have been made whereby the products of Holland shall be worthy of it.”

The great recoveries of the land from the water and from inferior soils have generally been made by private enterprise, but the reclamation of the Zuider Zee is a State work, because it is a great national enterprise on which the Dutch have set their minds.

The work on the dunes is also done by the State, because this work is for the benefit not of persons who are settled on them, but of those whose farms are in the neighbourhood of the dunes.

*Germany.*

The State has good control of wireless, and aims at having relay stations all over the country so that even the smallest villages can be kept in touch with market prices. It keeps permanently in mind the possibility that wireless may assist in keeping the population on the land.

Power in Germany is almost entirely derived from water. The policy of the Government is to take no part in distribution, as private enterprise is usually better fitted to cope with individual needs, but it has undertaken to supply most of the power. This is done to make possible the equalisation of supply over different States. In the summer, for example, Bavaria generates more current than she needs. This she sends to the north, where there is then a shortage. In the winter, when her streams are frozen, she receives power from the north, where the rivers are flooded with winter rains. Almost every holding, however small, has both light and power. The Inter-State system was organised and the necessary work carried out immediately after the war, partly to provide work for ex-service men, and partly to overcome the scarcity of labour on the land.

In transport, too, the State has assisted agriculture. Some time ago the German nation carried hops from Bavaria to Hamburg free, to enable them, if possible, to capture the English market.

There is a most comprehensive system of inspection in South Germany, but little direct State inspection *except as regards forests and moorland*. Every professional organisation or co-operative concern has its inspectors appointed and paid by itself. The most important source of information for the farmers are the travelling teachers from the winter schools, who in summer travel round the country-side inspecting and teaching. These people are paid by the State, but are employed by the localities, co-operative, professional organisations, etc. They are teachers primarily—not inspectors; in consequence they can persuade the peasant to improve his methods much more easily than they could if they were merely inspectors. The intention is to make the peasant use his own initiative rather than force him against his will to effect improvements.

In North-East Germany, the assistance offered by the State to agriculture is in most cases given through the medium of the "Landwirtschaftskammern" (Chambers of Agriculture), and a short account of the functions and work of these Provincial Chambers of Agriculture will be of interest here.

These institutions, created by a law of the Prussian Government in 1894, are really official in character, though governed

by a body of local agriculturists, and thus resemble somewhat the Education Authorities of Scotland. In every province there are one or two *Landwirtschaftskammern*. The governing body at Stettin is composed of sixty-three members, who are elected by the popular vote of the province—each district selecting two or four members according to its size. The headquarters of this institution in Pomerania covers almost a whole street of very large houses, beautifully fitted out with every modern appliance, and containing special gardens where tests of seed, soil, manure and machines are constantly carried on. The principal function of these bodies is to improve by experiment, research and education the science of agriculture.

#### *Switzerland.*

The State compels a landowner who owns woodlands to employ for their management a State-trained forester.

#### *Denmark.*

The State in Denmark may be said to have seen its functions clearly defined in two directions. The first has been a long continued, in fact a never interrupted, policy of maintaining in existence a peasant population, a policy designed formerly to strengthen the King against territorial lords, and in recent years to lay the foundations of economic prosperity on the broadest possible basis. The second function, definitely taken by the State as its own, has been brought into prominence by Denmark's position as an exporting country. The object is attained by a thorough-going system of control which begins on the farm, and is maintained until the goods actually leave the country. The comprehensiveness of this control may be illustrated by quoting the rules to which butter of the "Lur" Brand must conform:—

- (1) It may only be made of pasteurised cream, heated to not less than 80° C. (176° F.).
- (2) It must not contain more than 16 per cent. water.
- (3) It must not contain other preservatives than common salt.
- (4) It must not be coloured with aniline dye.
- (5) It must not be adulterated and, more especially, must not be mixed with margarine.

Last, but far from least, *no butter of Danish origin may be exported unless it bears the Lur Brand*. In the same way cheese manufactured for sale in Denmark, or for export, must conform to a schedule which varies according to the kind of cheese in question.

The slaughtering of animals, the meat of which is to be exported, may only take place at slaughter-houses authorised by the Ministry of Agriculture, under the strict supervision of official veterinary officers who must inspect the animals both when alive and killed, must personally conduct or supervise the stamping and marking of the meat, must classify all meat according to certain rules, and are at all times responsible for the cleanliness and sanitation of the premises, and for the state of health of the staff.

It may in fact be said that Denmark has built up its export trade on a system of rigid regulation and comprehensive control. Holland has done very much the same.

#### TENURE FIRST, THEN ORGANISATION.

169. Denmark, more clearly than any other country, shows that the right kind of tenure is a condition precedent to the right kind of organisation. Royal support of the peasantry had kept the country sound at heart, but when Schleswig-Holstein was torn away nothing that impeded a rebirth of national vigour and prosperity could be tolerated.

The present-day control of exports is the latter phase of a national movement best described perhaps by citing two authorities, an Englishman and a Dane.

Mr. Christopher Turnor, in "The Land and Its Problems," says, "in Denmark, sixty or seventy years ago, the proportion of occupying owners to tenants was precisely the same as with us at the present time." *As a result of the reform of agriculture was instituted "a definite policy in which the Government and the agriculturists worked in complete accord . . . To-day in Denmark the position is reversed. There are only 12 per cent. tenants and 88 per cent. occupying owners"* (p. 81).

A Dane now resident in England is emphatic that without a definite and firm handling of the question of land tenure by the State there could have been no agricultural revival. "There was," he says, "a strong national feeling in the 'sixties in favour of (occupying) landownership. This feeling was shown to some extent

by landowners and was, in any case, brought to bear on them. Moreover, the position of landowners was uncomfortable. Tenants were life-tenants, and rents were low. The law of 1861 encouraged but did not force the sale of land to tenants; it allowed landlords, if they sold to tenants, also to make an addition to their demesne lands. As landlords on the whole were badly off, this inducement was powerful. That is how the process started, which in less than half a century turned 12 per cent. of occupying owners into 88 per cent."

#### THE MENACING DRIFT IN THE U.S.A.

. 170. Thought on the tenancy system is stimulated by considering in close conjunction how landlordism came into existence in England and how it is viewed in the New World. Sociologists in America, deeply concerned with "town-country antagonism, the exhaustion of farm land and rural depopulation in the Eastern States," deplore the "menacing drift towards tenancy." The fact that tenancy in the U.S.A. increased from 25 per cent. to 38 per cent. between 1880 and 1920 and that this increase is most marked in the South is attributed partly to rice, tobacco, and, in particular, cotton being good tenant crops, and partly to farming there being carried on largely by negroes and by whites who, "being weak and illiterate," are "no match either for their landlords or their merchants." Mr. G. S. Wehrwein in a recent article<sup>1</sup> finds something to admire in the English Agricultural Holdings Acts, but he declares of the U.S.A. itself:

"Since the presence of a permanent tenant class indicates inefficiency on the part of the farmer, the solution does not lie in changing their status but in removing their inefficiency."

He rejoices that tenancy has decreased in many North Eastern States, and in Canada (from 15.4 to 8 per cent.

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<sup>1</sup> Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics, January, 1925.

between 1881 and 1921). Another highly skilled American observer, Dr. E. C. Branson, whom we have already quoted, comes definitely to the conclusion, after examining farm life in various European countries, first, that farm tenancy means farm poverty sooner or later for tenants and landlords alike, and, secondly, that co-operation cannot succeed where tenancy is the general rule. "The farmer who farms by proxy is destined at last to lose his lands," says the Professor in a phrase which may exaggerate a little the facts but surely indicates the course that events will take.

#### DREAD OF TENANCY IN U.S.A.

171. Another high authority on land policy in the U.S.A. says <sup>1</sup>

"It is evident that Congress did not have, and does not have, a clear cut plan for disposing of, or handling, the public domain . . . We are still in need of a land policy. The problems which the legislation of the nineteenth century was designed to settle are with us yet. For example, easy access to land was always looked upon as desirable. Free land was put forward as *an antidote against tenancy*, but we made land free, and tenancy is higher than ever. Free land was designed to make farmers prosperous, but many farmers are not prosperous. The need of a land policy is not past though the public domain is about gone."

It will be many a year before the United States with its three million square miles of territory need face a land problem in any way like ours, but already it sees danger ahead. Thousands of acres of exhausted, farmed-out land bear witness to the improvidence bred by apparently inexhaustible resources and to the necessity of maintaining in the hands of the nation ultimate control of how land should be used. In North Carolina alone, says Professor Branson, "there are 13 million acres, cleared and cultivated once upon a time, but now abandoned to scrub-pines, black-jacks, sassafras, broomsedge and briars." President

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<sup>1</sup> Professor B. H. Hibbard, "The History of Public Land Policies." (1925.)

Roosevelt just before he died spoke of the urgent need for an American land policy to stop speculation in land and the exhaustion of the soil by "fly-by-nights" whose activities result in a hue and cry for Government aid and price-fixing.

Here is latent a profound political truth. *The lack of a national land policy may itself produce the necessity of a State aid to agriculture and State interference.*

If it be asked why the United States sought to avoid tenancy, an answer of peculiar interest to us in Great Britain is provided by the following description of American rural troubles.<sup>1</sup>

"The lands are swiftly passing," says the writer, "into the hands of those who are willing to carry them, for one reason or another, on the very low interest rate with which such investors must perforce be content. These reasons are partly the dignity which comes from such ownership, the credit which it gives, and many such imponderables; but mainly from a feeling that no matter what a man pays for good land, it is sure to increase in value. This is a deep-rooted feeling in good farming regions. And it is what is dividing the society of all such regions into the land-owning and the landless classes. It is destroying homes and putting places-to-stay in their stead. It is sifting rural society by leaving on the farms as tenants those who too often have not the intelligence or the enterprise to get into the towns and cities. It is effecting a fundamental change in American rural society."

It is easier perhaps to see that a tendency is bad when it is newly manifested than when its results are visible on all sides.

### *Division VI.*

#### *Monopoly.*

##### LAND MONOPOLY AND DIFFUSED OWNERSHIP.

172. If what has been said in section 151 represents fairly the legal position of land as property, something further should be said on the argument for private ownership of land purely from the practical point of view.

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<sup>1</sup> "Saturday Evening Post," July 11, 1925.



The argument, roughly, is that of its nature land is a monopoly: that no system of land tenure could destroy this monopolistic quality, unless it were possible to conceive of a country in which every citizen owned precisely his proportionate share of the land surface, or one the actual extent of which could be indefinitely increased by reclamation of land from the sea, or some other form of soil creation; that State ownership of land is simply a form of State monopoly which might easily become the assertion of monopoly in its most oppressive form, and that the only sensible policy is, therefore, to divide the land among a large number of private owners and allow the free play of economic forces to soften the force of monopolistic control. The argument is in many ways sound. In the past many progressive thinkers have accepted it, and have acquiesced in the virtual obliteration of the principle that real ownership of land vests only in the Crown.

#### THE NEW FACTORS.

173. The fact revealed by "The New Domesday" in 1875 that 2,000 persons "owned" half the agricultural land in the kingdom (*see* Paras. 55 and 56) has been disquieting, and it has been recognised that large estates give their owners undue power over the lives and liberties of their fellow citizens. But private initiative and enterprise and individual rights have, to a large extent, been safeguarded by the freedom of persons or corporations desiring land to set off one owner against another. Land has been wanted as a site; it has been obtained, if not here, then there, and if not at a fair price, at any rate, at one not always exorbitant. Abuses and difficulties there have been, but on the whole the demand for their redress has not been strong enough to change the whole system. The new factor which breaks up the argument for diffused ownership is not that ownership is nothing like sufficiently diffused—though that obviously is a point of vital importance—as that under the present system of slightly

diffused ownership accompanied by tenancy, the soil-land of the country is not being efficiently used.

#### THE DANGER OF UNCONDITIONAL OWNERSHIP.

174. Once that point is conceded, a score of other weaknesses reveal themselves in the argument. It becomes clear that an extension of ownership without conditions as to the use made of the land might put the community at large in a worse, not a better, position. It becomes clear also that no scheme of diffused ownership allows the right land to be left to agriculture and the right land chosen for the multifarious other purposes of modern civilisation.

Modern industrial towns are what they are, crowded, congested, inconvenient and expensive, because they have grown up in a blind struggle against a land monopoly little tempered either by diffusion of ownership or by community control. Moreover, land either for public or private purposes has often been obtained only at extortionate prices. Private land-owners have constantly held to ransom their fellow citizens, acting either individually or corporately. An accumulation of grievances might by itself force a change in land tenure. But that does not concern us for the moment. We are concerned to point out that in devising any new system of tenure of agricultural land, freedom of transferring land from agricultural use to site use must be secured. The present machinery for transferring land, accustomed as we are to-day to it, is essentially cumbrous and unsatisfactory. Under a new system of tenure it must work much more expeditiously and much more cheaply. It must also bring the suitability of land for any particular purpose and its use for that purpose into close harmony.

Above all must be avoided any substitution of a harsh and unimaginative monopoly of land by the community, or by part of the community, for the present insufficient diffusion of private-ownership.

If the principle of collective ownership of land is to be

reasserted, the utmost care must be taken to prevent any Government Department or any body of persons representing a particular interest from holding up the land against the legitimate claims of the community as a whole.

The point here summarily treated is not merely academic. It—like the other points dealt with in this chapter—has a very practical bearing on the form of the policy we propose in this Report.

## CHAPTER VI.

### LANDLORDISM—ITS GROWTH AND DECAY.

175. The three-party or three-interest system of land tenure in England is one which no one would dream of inventing were it not already in existence.

Some writers, with perhaps unintentional realism, describe this system as "the dual partnership in agriculture. Three interests—but two partners": here is a phrase which clearly recognises the exclusion of the third interest, the agricultural labourer, from land-holding.

It emphasises an actual dualism. But in it the term "partnership" is used in a sense so different from that in which any other business undertaking uses it that doubt inevitably arises whether the landlord-tenant relation is a partnership at all. If it be a partnership, it is one of a kind which no other industry has adopted, imitated or devised for itself.

Nor is this matter for surprise. The idea of partnership implies an equitable distribution of responsibility, risk and profit and a fair balance of the first two against the third, but only in the agricultural partnership has the major partner a right to a fixed sum whether the profit is or is not made. It is true that the major partner may increase his revenue by enterprising investment of capital, but on the other hand, without lifting a finger or spending a farthing, he is in the position to divert to his own pocket profits made by the skill, energy and expenditure of the other partner. Moreover, until recently he could change his junior partner almost at will. Legislation has been required to give the junior partner such security as is given by the right to compensation for disturbance up to the amount of two years' rent.

The conditions of the "agricultural partnership," in short, make caution, and even timidity, the most desirable quality in both partners. There is always a danger of the business concern thus controlled becoming one in which the major partner can go to sleep and yet paralyse the management.

#### OWNERSHIP WITHOUT RESPONSIBILITY.

176. The first thing noted by many foreign observers of English agriculture is that the land is owned by one set of men and farmed by another. This strikes them, not because tenancy is unknown in their countries, but because the percentage of tenancy is much higher here,<sup>1</sup> and landownership much more generally divorced from responsibility. The English agriculturist, if he pays attention to forms of land tenure abroad, is, in his turn, impressed by the fact that where tenancy exists the landowner, much more as a matter of course, works for the land if not on it, as hard as the farmers themselves. We, in England, treating landlordism with the respect due to a historic survival, are apt to assume that there is something in agriculture as an industry which makes it, if it alone, amenable to the three-interest partnership.

We seldom ask ourselves whether agriculture is or is not, in fact, the industry in which dualism of control is most obviously unworkable.

#### A LONG PROCESS IN ENGLAND.

177. But first it is important to realise that we in Great Britain are not dealing with a logical system deliberately created. The evolution of English landlordism has been complicated by all the play of chance and design in human affairs. There has been, perhaps, no more curious reversal of original political intention than that landownership, having been the basis of national service, should have become the one source of political

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<sup>1</sup> See Table O, page 144. Appendix VII. "Changes of Land Tenure in Europe" is relevant to the other side of the question.

power. Democracy has changed all that, but only in the last century and only after a tremendous struggle. But the results of landowner-made legislation are with us yet. Agriculture is more powerfully affected to-day by socio-political influences than any other industry.

Originally there was a working partnership. Agricultural communities were self-supporting. They did not need to buy food from others, nor to sell it. If their lord of the manor were an absentee, their surplus might be consumed on the spot by him and his retinue on a periodical visit. Later on food supplies were sent in payment of dues to the lord; only gradually was there any general sending of food to feed townspeople. But the lord on his part provided a measure of physical security in a world still needing physical force.<sup>1</sup> Without him his villagers were not assured of being able to till the land at all. Money rents came into custom only towards the end of the 13th century. Two centuries later manorial labour services had largely ended. "Free labourers" were emerging as a definite class. Holdings were held on lease, five years or seven, for a life, for a series of lives, or even in fee farm grants. The embryo of the present system was visible. The Black Death created an actual shortage of cultivators, and leases were granted as an attraction. But it was only when the great wave of Enclosures swept across England in the 18th century that landlordism, as we know it, emerged in full development. The definite establishment of landlordism and the definite segregation of labourers as a landless class were two results of the same process.

#### THE GROSS INJURY OF ENCLOSURES.

178. The purpose of Enclosures was not to establish landlordism as a general system. Yet that undoubtedly

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<sup>1</sup> The original meaning—and importance—of security is illustrated by the statement that the lands held by the Church in feudal times were the best cultivated because they were less disturbed than those of the great barons who were constantly fighting.

was their effect. It was when this effect became visible that Arthur Young, who had fought for Enclosures as the one means of ending the wasteful inefficiency of open field farming, made his famous confession :—

“By nineteen out of twenty Enclosure Bills,” said he, “the poor are injured and some grossly injured. The poor in these parishes may say with truth, ‘All I know is that I had a cow, and an Act of Parliament has taken it from me.’ A man will love his country better even for a pig.”

Previous to the Enclosures a few landowners held large estates, but a very large number of men had some personal stake in the country through ownership of strips in the open fields, or at least rights of common. But already the class of “free labourers,” a euphonious term for land workers who owned no land, was unduly large. The English labourer purchased his freedom four centuries earlier than in other European countries, but at the cost of separation from the land. The general establishment of landlordism, due immediately to the Enclosures and ultimately to the necessity of feeding the new industrial townships, made the decree of divorce absolute.

#### THE GREAT LANDLORDS.

179. The system of landlord-tenancy in Great Britain is, then, the fairly recent culmination of a tendency which newer countries<sup>1</sup> recognise in its early stages as mischievous.

There is nothing particularly venerable about it. But it would be absurd not to recognise that the system had its period of great usefulness and of high honour. The “stately homes of England” are now finding a new vocation as schools, golf club-houses and municipally-managed communal centres in garden suburbs.

But their beauty and unique charm derives from a past in which the best English traditions of personal culture,

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<sup>1</sup> See Sections 170 and 171 and Appendix VII.

public spirit and social responsibility were centred on them. It is true that many country houses have local memories only of exclusiveness and infertile pride. But they were part of a system that has real glories to boast, and their occupants were members of a class to which high tributes have deservedly been paid. Many a squire has been the father of a locality. He has displayed a genuinely affectionate, if proprietary, interest in every one of his dependents. He has spent himself freely for their welfare and set a standard, sometimes of culture, more frequently of honour, not unseldom of both, which they have admired and, so far as their means and abilities have permitted, imitated. In a real, even if restricted, sense, his sons learned the meaning of national service.

"In the surroundings of their home in the country, with its exercises, sport and pastimes, his (the Squire's) sons were prepared for responsibilities to come, as soldiers and sailors, parsons, judges, and ambassadors; so to display on the vast stage of public activity the qualities and talents slowly acquired in the well-used leisure of their country life. It was the land, and the life in the open, which counted. The towns might speed learning, provide the more showy and expensive forms of pleasure, and afford opportunities for winning place and acquiring wealth; but still it was the man of landed property who led."<sup>1</sup>

Changing times have turned into somewhat irritating pretensions many qualities which formerly were virtues. The patriarchal aspect of landlordism puts it out of tune with modern ideas of social independence. Politically, the system is even more certainly out-dated. It was all very well when England was governed by an oligarchy. But since the Reform Bill of 1832, landlordism has lingered superfluous on the stage.

The break up of landlordism does involve a real sacrifice of real pride of family and honourable traditions. The system which is to take its place must be

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Christopher Hussey in the "Quarterly Review," April, 1924.



the basis of a rural civilisation which will give opportunities of happiness and some measure of dignity, not to a happy minority, but to the majority of country dwellers.

#### THE EXPLANATION OF AN ANACHRONISM.

180. A distinction has already been drawn between the economic and the social results of Enclosures. The point must be pursued a little further. The increased production made possible by the Enclosures carried England through the crisis of the Napoleonic Wars. The high price of produce and the consequent competition for land during the wars hardened the casual results of the Enclosures into a system. By the date of Waterloo the agricultural hierarchy was definitely constituted. England remained to all intent and purposes a self-feeding country until 1840, when even a prosperous and confident agriculture was unable to cope with the increase of urban populations.

The social mischief wrought to English rural life began to be thought of only when the economic spurt began to die away. The wars were followed by twenty years' depression. But a fresh revival, the "Golden Age" of English agriculture, set in with the reign of Queen Victoria, survived without a tremor the repeal of the Corn Laws (despite the rainy seasons which "washed the Corn Laws away"), and lasted for forty years. Had the first forty years of Queen Victoria's reign happened to be years of agricultural depression, there can be little doubt that oligarchy in landowning would have gone down with the oligarchy in politics.

#### THE GREAT "IMPROVING" LANDLORDS.

181. Landlordism in the 19th century owed much also to the lingering memories of the great reforming agriculturists of the previous century. "Turnip" Townshend, the Duke of Bedford, Lord Egremont and preeminently Coke of Norfolk, who died only in 1842, landowners all, had displayed a real genius of enterprise.

Their influence helped to prolong the landed system even when it was patently an anachronism.

But the conditions under which the three-interest system can succeed must always be borne in mind.<sup>1</sup> They have been put by a modern authority when he says that it is difficult to make a success of the British system of tenant-farming unless the landowner *can afford* to take a long view and follow a continuous policy. The same point had previously been put by W. E. Lecky, when he said :—

“It is impossible to consider the history of English agriculture in the last century without arriving at the conclusion that its peculiar excellence and type sprang from the fact that the ownership and control of land were chiefly *in the hands of a wealthy and not of a needy class.*”

Devotion to the land, real knowledge and understanding of it, the lack of competing interests, and ample resources, were the qualities which enabled Coke and those who rank with him to succeed.

In Coke's sixty-six years' tenure of Holkham, he expended no less than £536,992. When he married, his young bride was warned that in going into the barbarous northerly parts of Norfolk, she would find “one blade of grass and two rabbits fighting for it.” Coke made the wilderness blossom and bear fruit. He raised the rental of the estate from £2,200 per annum to a figure which is sometimes given as £20,000 and sometimes as £50,000 per annum. Even to-day around Holkham Park may be seen still fertile the areas he reclaimed.

#### VALETUDINARIAN FARMING.

182. Even during the “Golden Age,” the nation's attention was being increasingly diverted from rural affairs. When depression came, the complaints of agriculturists, loud as they were, were scarcely heard in the towns. Landlords and tenants were left to fight their own battles. Many estates were heavily encumbered.

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<sup>1</sup> “The English Land System.” J. A. R. Marriott.

On them no substantial assistance could be given by the landlords. Many of their tenants were ruined. Where landowners had lived wisely during the good times, or where they drew wealth from other resources than the land, remissions of rent, generally refused at first, were presently conceded. And as the depression continued on many farms permanent reductions were made. In this way, many farmers were saved, but sadly often at the cost of farming itself becoming a chronic invalid. Henceforward far too many farmers adopted the temptingly easy policy of farming at low cost and making no demands upon the estate, and far too many landlords, by letting land at half its value or by supplying capital on uneconomic terms, abrogated their functions.

#### THE PIONEER SPIRIT.

183. It is noticeable that the fallacy of low farming never gripped the hard-headed Scots. They farmed high and they insisted on security of tenure. An illuminating comment is contained in a report of an investigator who visited the Lowlands for us last year :—

“ I had not before realised how new a country Scotland—or at any rate this part of it—is in the agricultural sense as compared with England. I think this also helps to set the pace—that the present tenants are, in so many cases, close relatives of the men who actually reclaimed the land. In England they are our ancestors rather than relations. Time after time a tenant remarked to me that his father or his grandfather reclaimed this or that part of his farm, and when his lease terminated had his rent raised 50 per cent. to 300 per cent. I have no doubt that the same thing happened in England, but 300 to 700 years earlier, and therefore not in the traditions of the present occupier's family.”

There has of recent years been more friction between landlord and tenant in Scotland than in England. Such friction has, in fact, been a sign of movement. A certain apathy among English farmers with regard to security has been accompanied by a marked increase of dis-

satisfaction with the present position among English labourers.

#### FALLACIES OF DEFENCE.

184. The defender of landlord-tenancy is in practice reduced to two arguments, the first being that landlordism saved English agriculture in the past, the second, that the landlord is a benefactor because he supplies capital at a low, even an uneconomic, rate of interest.

To the argument from past history ample justice has been done in the last few paragraphs. Its appeal to the historic sense will be allowed. But a nation cannot live on history. Historic arguments are valid only in so far as they fit present-day premisses. What may for brevity be called "The Coke of Norfolk argument" breaks down in the absence of evidence that landlordism has continued to be inspired by Coke's spirit, directed by Coke's ability, or supported by Coke's ample fortune.

The second argument contains a fallacy and a misstatement. It assumes that the amount of capital invested in the estate is the amount of money which would be realised if the estate were sold in the open market. It is also open to the fatal reply that British agriculture is suffering from under-capitalisation, and that the prosperous agriculture of other countries is not dependent on cheap, uneconomic capital.

#### IN SHORT.

185. Any impartial examination of the facts of British food-production and of British rural life, such as is attempted in Chapter III of this Report, demolishes any possible *a posteriori* defence of landlord-tenancy: the system is not justified by its results.

The *a priori* case against the system may be summed up very briefly:—British agriculture either is, or is not, capable of higher production. In Chapter IV we have given solid ground for belief that much higher production is possible. A system which, in essence, necessitates the

use of improvements by one man and payment for them by another, who has power to decide their nature or to forbid them, hinders advance. In so far as skill and enterprise in farming is developed by being rewarded, a system which enables a partner who shows no enterprise and possesses no skill to take the results of another partner's brains and energy, delays or prevents evolution. If absolute security is given to a tenant, the reality of the landlords' ownership is impaired. If absolute security be not given, the main inducement to progress is removed. If, moreover, a farm may at any time be put up for sale, the tenant, who has been given some measure of security and has, in consequence, added to the value of the farm at his own cost, may be compelled to buy, in open competition with outsiders, a value which he himself has created, at a price which exceeds its commercial value. No! If landlordism is to be defended, it cannot be on the ground that it *ought*, in the nature of things, to work.

#### AN APPEAL TO SENTIMENT.

186. But, it may be asked, is it not possible to assist agriculture to its feet by aiding landlords, or by ignoring landlords and supplying farmers with capital and direction from the outside? To this the first answer must be that the landlessness of the labourer is an integral part of the problem and that no solution is satisfactory which forgets him while remembering the farmer. The second answer is that modern public opinion will not tolerate, and ought not to tolerate, leaving landlords in the industry as functionless rent-chargers.

#### RENT RESTRICTION IMPRACTICABLE IN AGRICULTURE.

187. We have already referred to the way in which any serious proposals for giving outside assistance to agriculture must lead to provision for preventing an increase of rent by the landlord. There are still some few people who do not believe that landlords in practice do or can raise rents on account of extra prosperity

coming to the tenant. To them it may be as well to point out that the Development Act of 1909, expressly prohibited the Development Commissioners from spending money on schemes which would produce as a direct result an increase in the value of privately owned land. It is perfectly certain that no similar Act could nowadays be passed without a similar proviso. A quotation may perhaps be made from recent speeches made by the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Edward Wood. In the House of Commons on 18th March, 1925, on the Sugar Beet Subsidy proposal, he said :—

“ It is perfectly true, it is undeniable—I should not wish to deny it—that as a result of this policy, land may be, and probably will be, better to let. It is, therefore, quite likely that the result of this policy in certain cases may be to maintain rents or even to permit rents to be raised. I think that is quite possible and even probable, but I am bound to say that that does not shock me as much as it shocks honourable members opposite.”

Speaking at Banbury on April 8th, Mr. Wood was more explicit :—

“ As a matter of fact a great many of the difficulties, or a considerable part of them, were due to the fact that the land-owning system was breaking down. Landowners, in the main, in years past had discharged an essentially valuable function in providing capital, and this many of them could no longer do. They saw lodge gates shut and lodges and other buildings falling down, the land not properly drained, and the rest of it. That was because the capital which was required for the permanent equipment of the land in many cases was not coming forward. It was not there to come. It was a great problem, and he did not see any immediate solution of it. He was certain of this, that, if the fertility of the land was reduced, they would have to consider a movement from the industrial elements in the nation in favour of some rather drastic treatment of the problem, but if they got State capital, they would have to have State control.”

There is an attractive simplicity about the statements quoted, but defenders of the present system of land tenure would do well to realise that democratic control of public

finance means a decided and persistent refusal to devote money from the public purse to private pockets.

With these may well be bracketed the more considered judgment of Mr. Wood's second in command. In a letter to the "Times" of October 20th, 1924, Lord Bledisloe wrote :—

" There are thousands of acres of seriously neglected grass-land in the West of England and Wales, which might be made to yield at least three times the amount of meat or of milk that they are now yielding.

" But the farmers will not apply these dressings, because they know that the assessable value of their land (and perhaps consequentially its rent) will be raised. The same applies to the installation of labour-saving machinery or of plant for the conversion of farm products into marketable commodities."

Mr. Orwin and Mr. Peel are even more incisive :—

" For there is no answer to the argument that any benefit to the land will accrue, sooner or later, to the landlord . . . An all-round improvement in farming fortune produces a competition for farms which results, inevitably, in passing on some measure of the value of this improvement to the landlord ; how much of it passes to him, and how soon, will vary in different cases, but it is a question only of time and not degree . . . The State will always be precluded from taking direct action to foster rural industry so long as private property in land exists in conjunction with the system of tenant occupation."<sup>1</sup>

*But any proposal to restrict the landlord's right to raise rent meets the fatal objection that this means intensifying the present shortage of capital in the industry.*

*To the free working of the landlord-tenant system the landlord's right to raise the rent is essential.* Refusal of that right removes his one economic incentive to improve his land. The psychological effect would be even more powerful. Deprived of any opportunity of getting more out of the land he would inevitably sink less in it. He would decline rapidly to the position of a mere rent receiver,

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<sup>1</sup> " Tenure of Agricultural Land," Orwin and Peel, pages 8 and 9.

an obvious burden on those who expend energy and capital in working the land and also on those who purchase its produce.

## VILLAGERS KNOW.

188. Speakers who went out on our Land Enquiry Campaign were very generally surprised to find that village audiences to-day accept the necessity for changing the present system of land tenure in this country as already proven. This is less true, perhaps, of farmers themselves than of the other sections of the agricultural community. Very many farmers, clearly as they recognise the disadvantages of the present system, fear that "any fresh legislation will simply hasten the break-up of the big estates, will make it necessary for farmers to buy their farms and drive the landlord's capital out of the industry." The explanation of this point of view has very carefully to be considered. It is that the break-up of the old system, which is obvious to every rural worker, is being accomplished in the worst possible way.

This is apparent to clear-sighted landlords. "I recognise," writes one landlord, "the impossibility of continuing the present system much longer. It is dying rapidly, but I do not think any large proportion of tenant farmers will welcome the change. The change will be too slow to affect the present immediate needs for better wages for farm labourers who are now in a worse position by far than any other labourers in this country."

A few landlords, some of them avowedly Conservative, attended our Land Enquiry Campaign Meetings. Some of them told our speakers that they recognised the general breakdown of the present system of land tenure, and were very much interested in the proposals of Cultivating Tenure, and hoped only that the discussion of the policy would be kept out of a political atmosphere. On the whole, landowners who recognise the inevitability of a change, regret most the apparent unlikeliness of the change



as it is now being made substantially improving the lot of labourers.

#### PRESENT TENDENCIES.

189. In the change now going on there are two separate and opposite tendencies. The first is towards the industrialisation of estates.

It has probably not escaped notice that in the Autumn of 1924 the estates of the Duke of Rutland were formed into a Limited Liability Company. The capital of the Company was fixed at £500,000. Its assets are 19,300 acres of land in the counties of Leicester, Lincoln, Nottingham and Derby, together with certain investments. The Duke of Rutland is to be paid £496,163 in 40 half-yearly instalments of £12,404, and £163,837 in 40 half-yearly instalments of £4,096. The only directors of the Company are the Duke of Rutland and his son, the Marquis of Granby, and special voting rights are conferred upon the Duke of Rutland with a view to preventing any interference with his position as Governing Director.

This is, perhaps, the most striking instance yet recorded of compromise between feudalism and big business. Other estates, less dramatically, are being handed over to Limited Liability Companies.<sup>1</sup> It may be that they will

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<sup>1</sup> In 1909 the Warwick Estates Company was incorporated to acquire the life interest of the Earl of Warwick in the Warwick estates, and in the present era of high taxation such incorporations have become almost common. Nowadays the registration takes the form of an unlimited company which escapes *ad valorem* duty on its nominal capital. Several private unlimited companies were registered during the first half of 1925, with titled personages mentioned as the director or signatory. These included:—

Leconfield Estates Company (£400,000)—Baron Leconfield; Compton Estates Company (£300,000)—Marquess of Northampton; Leven Estate Company (£200,000)—Earl of Leven and Melville; Blenheim Estate Company (£200,000)—Duke of Marlborough; West Wycombe Estate (£120,000)—Sir J. L. Dashwood; Ledburn Land Company (£100,000)—Lord Dalmeny; Lucan Estates Company (£12,500)—Earl of Lucan.—*Manchester Guardian*, 20th July, 1925.

produce more food under the new dispensation. But as the economic argument for industrialised farming is primarily its ability to save labour, a change to it is gravely unlikely to benefit the labourer's lot. In any case, such a change should not be allowed to occur without very careful examination of what it means.

#### DRIPTING AND STEERING,

190. The other tendency, that towards the establishment of occupying ownership by piece-meal sales, has been referred to frequently in this Report, and reference here may be confined to a single quotation from Messrs. Orwin and Peel :—<sup>1</sup>

*The Fall of Landlordism.*—" Here is the proof of the ' silent revolution ' which . . . is going on to-day in rural England—the passing of the great landowner, the birth of the farmer-owner. Both of these are the victims of economic pressure, for just as the squire cannot afford to stay so cannot his tenant afford to leave . . .

" If this process of transfer of land to a class insufficiently equipped with the means to develop it, or even to maintain it, is likely to continue, why should the State stand on one side and content itself with the contemplation of the steady deterioration of its greatest wealth-producing asset—almost the only one which produces wealth without consuming it? Why wait until irreparable damage has been done instead of stepping in to obviate it? Is it not the more statesmanlike course to act at once, and instead of saying: ' We cannot watch this process going on,' to say, ' We will not allow it even to begin ' ? "

The trouble is that it has begun. The necessity for action is urgent.

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<sup>1</sup> " Tenure of Agricultural Land," by Orwin and Peel, pp. 22 and 23.

## LAND AND WHOLESALE METHODS.

191. Some of the foremost authorities on British agriculture favour the one of the two present tendencies, some the other.

Sir Rider Haggard pleaded for occupying ownership : Mr. Orr for industrialised farming. Lord Ernle, whose "English Farming Past and Present" is as remarkable for its charm of scholarship as for its unflinching scrutiny of facts, confesses in his preface that his motives in writing were two convictions which time had strengthened rather than weakened, the first being that the ownership of land by so small a number of persons in England was a danger ; the second, that a considerable increase in peasant proprietorship was socially, economically and agriculturally advantageous.

Sir Daniel Hall in his brilliant pre-war book, "A Pilgrimage of British Farming," praised and criticised farmers and landowners with convincing impartiality.

"But," he added, "large tenant farming has for the last century or more been the special characteristic of British agriculture ; under this method has been built up our supremacy in production per acre and in live stock (*sic*), and to-day it still seems the most effective form of dealing with the land on a wholesale scale" (p. 147).

In his post-war book, "Agriculture after the War," he takes as one of his fundamental propositions that :—

"the land of the British Isles is capable of much greater production than is at present obtained, and that, too, at a cost which is profitable to the community as a whole."

He continues :—

"The history of British agriculture for the last forty years has been one of continuous decline from the point of view of the gross production from British soil, and without considering the advances made by individual farmers or the progress in particular directions, such as fruit-growing and market-gardening" (p. 18).

He goes on to demand immediate reorganisation, the intervention of the State "to bring about progress not

decay," and the making of experiments in industrialised farming and small-holding colonies to provide trustworthy data on which the future land policy of the country could be framed. Favourers of either tendency may thus claim his support.

It is not unfair to assume that Sir Daniel Hall in correcting his pre-war judgment on British "supremacy in production" has also withdrawn his testimony to large tenant farming. But even if that testimonial still stood, the qualification contained in it must be emphasised. An effective means of dealing with land *on a wholesale scale* is not necessarily an effective means of dealing with land as it should be dealt with. The outstanding lesson derived from the comparison of agriculture in different countries as from history, is that land is not amenable to wholesale treatment. The wholesale treatment of land was denounced by Isaiah; the growth of *latifundia* was a symptom, if not a cause, of the downfall of the Roman Empire. The Jews who laid field to field, and the Romans who invented farming by slave gangs could have justified themselves very largely by the arguments used to-day in England in favour of prairie farming.

#### TENURE AND METHODS OF FARMING.

192. Between systems of land tenure and agricultural methods there is a vital connection. A particularly interesting treatment of this point is found in Sir William Ashley's able memorandum on Denmark, given as an Appendix in the Report of the Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation. The point may be illustrated by a reference already made in paragraph 170 to "good tenant crops." Or the spread of the Evesham custom in the fruit-growing districts of Worcestershire, and the demand for its adoption in the fruit-growing districts of Kent, may be adduced. But Denmark remains, perhaps, the best example.

The real prosperity of Danish farming is due primarily to the system of co-operation, in its full grant from purchase

of requirements to insurance of stock. That is beyond doubt. But behind the prevalence of co-operation is the agricultural atmosphere created by occupying ownership, safeguarded, be it remembered in the case of Denmark, by national insistence on good cultivation.<sup>1</sup> In this atmosphere co-operation has become natural and indeed inevitable.

The animal husbandry of Denmark is definitely a peasant type of farming. It does not maintain on the land as dense a population as the market garden type of farming common in parts of Belgium, where town and country are more closely intermingled than in any other part of Europe, but it is to a large extent arable farming and it demands a high ratio in the value of improvements to that of the land. Once the animal husbandry system of farming became the obvious way of using land, customary tenancy became an absurd way of holding it. The process which "began in the sixties, was continued in the seventies, and completed in the eighties,"<sup>2</sup> driven on by the educative force of the Danish High Schools and bringing into existence a whole network of co-operative agencies, itself abolished most of the large estates. The few large estates which remain to-day in Denmark serve a useful purpose, but they are not large estates as we understand the term, and they are certainly not landlord estates. They are "home farms" on which a limited number of the old landed proprietor class do what the best of English landowners have always done with their home farms, that is, they experiment with new crops, new varieties, new methods and new inventions.

*The lesson of real importance to be drawn from the agrarian history of Denmark is that as soon as the nation realised, after the loss of Schleswig Holstein, that its existence*

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<sup>1</sup> On this vitally important qualification, see Section 193 and Appendix IX.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Harold Faber, "Co-operation in Danish Agriculture," page 32.

*depended on agricultural prosperity, a whole train of Acts of Parliament was set in motion to break the remaining bonds of an antiquated system of land tenure, and so to release every motive towards high production farming.*

#### OWNERSHIP NOT A PANACEA.

193. It would be unwise to instance Denmark, with its 88 per cent. of occupying owners, without emphasising two modifying considerations ; the first is that the most recent agrarian legislation in Denmark itself has been directed towards creating, not absolute ownership, but a form of State tenancy which gives absolute security of tenure to the cultivator and his family so long as the land is properly farmed, and the second that occupying ownership is not the inevitable concomitant of prosperous farming, either in Free Trade or Protectionist countries. In Free Trade Holland, just 50 per cent. of the agricultural land is owned by its occupiers. In Belgium, which is largely Free Trade, so far as food is concerned, only 28 per cent. of the holdings are in occupying ownership. In Protectionist Germany, the proportion of occupying owners is over 86 per cent.

“The Dutch do not seem to be much impressed,” reports our Investigator in Holland, “by the notion of the magic of property turning sand into gold.” The moral of experience is not that ownership in itself is a panacea. A high percentage of ownership in France is compatible with a low general average of productivity. The result of weighing the evidence is to convince us that the gist of the matter does not lie in ownership or tenancy as such, but in giving the sense of absolute security to those who actually cultivate the land, and at the same time in insisting on good cultivation as the primary condition of occupation. The pre-war system of establishing small holdings in Denmark provides for good cultivation by a reserved power of calling in mortgages. The post-war system, established by the legislation of 1919, effects the same end more deliberately by retaining in the hands of the State the absolute ownership of the soil.

## BENEFICIAL PRESSURE UNDER LANDLORD-TENANCY.

194. The landlord-tenant system can, and sometimes does, provide for good cultivation. We have been able to examine a number of agricultural agreements. All of them contain certain good cultivation clauses. For example :—

“ To farm, manage, manure and cultivate the land in a good, clean and husband-like manner so as not to injure or deteriorate the holding, and particularly to cultivate the same upon such a system or rotation of cropping as that in every year not less than one-fifth of the arable land shall be a good and clean summer fallow, or sown with mangold, swedes, turnips, or green crop to be consumed by cattle or sheep.

“ Not to have more than three-fifths of the arable land in white straw crop in any one year.

“ Not to grow more than two white straw crops in succession, and those not of the same kind, and in the last year of the tenancy to sow clover, sainfoin or other grass seeds in the spring corn, as directed by the landlord, and to leave the whole of the lands clean and in good heart and condition in manner set out in the first schedule hereto.”

Or :—

“ to manage and cultivate the said land in a good and husband-like manner, and to maintain the same clean and in a good state of fertility, and in good condition, and so as not to injure or deteriorate the holding and so leave it at the termination of the tenancy. Cultivate the arable land on the four course rotation, and on quitting the holding to leave the cultivated land in such regular rotation and in entire fields. Not to mow any of the lands usually grazed . . . etc.”

The good intention of these clauses is perfectly clear. The reality of “ valetudinarian farming,” of which we have spoken in paragraph 182, is proved among other ways by the seldomness of their enforcement. One land-owner, in sending us a copy of his agreement, adds : “ Cultivation clauses have little effect under the Agricultural Holdings Acts, 1908–23, and need hardly be considered. I am just now letting a farm with the paragraphs marked omitted.” The paragraphs marked include the clauses on repair of premises by the tenant, on consuming produce off the farm and keeping accounts and

vouchers of all produce sold off the farm, and on good husbandry. Another landlord says that he has never enforced the clause dealing with thistles and docks and thinks it highly probable that his tenants do not know it exists!

#### SUPERSESION OF AGREEMENTS BY REGULATIONS.

195. It is significant that the County Agricultural Committees now have power to order the destruction of obnoxious weeds. Another customary clause in landlord-tenancy agreements is "not to plough any of the land scheduled as grassland and to pay £20 per acre rent for every acre so ploughed." We have not been able to find that any agreements specify a penalty to be enforced against a tenant who lays down arable land to grass. The fact that with reference to the clause against ploughing grassland, the Agricultural Holdings Acts permit the landlord to recover only the damages awarded by the valuer is not in practice of any real help to the progressive tenant. He is still, in fact, prevented by his agreement from ploughing land which would be ploughed if he had a free hand. But in attempting to illustrate the good points of landlord-tenancy, we have been led insensibly into stating the opposite. The point we have set out in this paragraph to emphasise is well put by Messrs. Orwin and Peel:—

"The only person who can apply the necessary pressure is the landlord, and the only basis for the proper direction of farming is the contract of tenancy. If the State were constituted universal landlord it would be possible to define the conditions subject to which the land was to be held so as to maintain the maximum possible amount of cultivation. In this way only can the community secure the fullest use of the land, namely, by laying down the conditions of tenure and leaving the farmer free to develop his enterprise subject to them. This is not Socialism, it is, in fact, the antithesis to the Socialism that aims at controlling the farmer's business methods."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Tenure of Agricultural Land," page 63.



## FAILURE IN CRISIS—

196. We must now extend the historical framework on which this chapter is constructed. Paragraph 182 brought us to the Golden Age of English farming which terminated abruptly at the end of the 1870's. 1877 was the year in which began the "invasion" of American corn. In that year English farmers obtained 56s. 9d. per quarter for their corn and in 1878 the price sank to 46s. 5d. But this was only a return to the prices of 1875 and 1876 and there was no particular cause for alarm. But the following years showed no sign of return to the figure of over 60s. and even over 70s., which had been obtained since the passing of the Corn Laws. On the contrary, a decline set in which had no parallel in the nineteenth century.

Previous to 1877 the lowest price on record was 39s. 10d. in 1852, a figure long remembered as portentous, but by 1884 English corn was getting only 35s. 8d. ; in 1889 it was 29s. 9d. and in 1894 bottom was reached at 22s. 10d. Never since 1884, except, of course, in the period from 1915 to the present year, has the English farmer obtained as much as 40s. a quarter for his corn.

The opening up of communications in Canada and the United States poured into our ports the grain grown on virgin lands at costs which bore no comparison to the costs of European growers. In the next few years all the plagues of Egypt seemed to be loosed on the unhappy agricultural community. While arable farmers were suffering from an unprecedented combination of diminished yield and lowered prices, stock farmers were harried by liver-rot, foot-and-mouth disease and rinderpest. In eight years only two summers had sun sufficient to ripen English grain and in those sunless years animals died apace. In the following ten years came an unheard of proportion of summer drought.

Beneath this bludgeoning of fate English landlordism bowed its head. A long series of Royal Commissions and

Departmental Committees on agriculture began. They reported innumerable facts. Any remedies they suggested were either not applied, or ineffective. A series of Acts of Parliament dealing with minor ills began. But things went from bad to worse. The low-cost, low-production theory of farming was born. The agricultural worker's standard of skill and efficiency was depressed by under-payment and lack of opportunity, and by a progressive decline in the quantity and condition of cottages. In the great crisis of English agriculture the leadership of landlordism definitely failed.

—AND SUCCESS.

197. Every nation is more acutely conscious of its own ills than of its neighbours'. But England had not a monopoly of the floods and droughts of 1875-1900, nor were other corn-growing countries in Europe hit less hard by imports of American wheat and flour. Germany faced the crisis and thought it out. It decided that the town artisan should pay more for his food in order that the basic industry of agriculture might be preserved. Holland and Denmark, on the other hand, found salvation not in Protection, but in the deliberate adaptation of agricultural means to new conditions. In Denmark this adaptation went hand in hand with the reform of the whole system of land tenure; in Holland it did not. Both countries remained Free Trade. The plain fact is that Denmark, Holland and Germany met the crisis by a national movement. Each met it in its own way. They thought out their problems and worked them out in the full conviction that agriculture must be saved and could be saved.

They put into their land not only fresh capital but enormous stores of energy. They countered the economic attack on rural life by measures which were economic in effect but social and political in their inspiration.

AN INDIFFERENT NATION.

In Great Britain, however, the need for a national movement in support of agriculture was not recognised. The

country as a whole, having a generation before lifted its eyes from the furrow to the factory, assumed, so far as it bothered about agriculture at all, that the system which had served the needs of agriculture in good times might serve it in bad. This was the fatal miscalculation. What was required was a fresh impetus, some force comparable to that exerted at an earlier date by Townshend, Egremont, Coke and Sinclair. It was not given by their successors.

#### LANDLORDISM ABROAD——

198. Landlordism did not everywhere fail. The reason why is well illustrated by extracts from our Investigator's Reports.

##### *North-East Germany.*

"In every district the owner leads the community in cultivation by himself cultivating for profit his estate. He is a most efficient and scientific farmer, and is often at pains to point out that landowning in Germany is a serious business proposition, leaving little or no time for sport. The most scientific and modern methods are applied by these owners large and small—for the times are hard, and the farming of the estates requires and receives their whole time and attention."

"When the estates are too large to be worked as one economic whole they are sometimes split up into smaller units under the management of skilled directors. These managers are employees of the landowner, who exercises general control over the whole system in a manner similar to that exercised by the managing director of a big industrial concern."

"We have been impressed by the very close personal relations existing between landowners and the peasants of the village."

##### *Holland.*

"*Grass Land Making as a Hobby.*—Many persons take a pride in making new soil. The late Baron van Dedem explained to the present writer how he had made in his time a hundred acres of grass land out of absolute wild."

"To make new grass land has been a kind of sport with well-to-do men."

##### *Denmark.*

"Almost all the large proprietors are themselves farmers and have a good influence, agriculturally, on the general community. As there are in the whole country only 419 holdings over 600 acres, large farming, although often excellent and

public spirited, is not the chief factor in Danish farming. The principal factor is small farming."

—AND AT HOME.

Happily there are now in England a certain number of landlords who are themselves admirable farmers. Lord Bledisloe, Mr. Ismay, Lord Guilford, Lord Folkestone are the first names to come to mind. But how many are they in all? Even to a less degree than the estate farmers in Denmark, whose farming, as theirs, is excellent and public spirited, are they the chief factor in their country's farming. Much more representative is "the English landlord," who, according to Sir Daniel Hall's dry comment, so "dreads the suggestion of dual ownership and the possible imposition upon the estate of a tenant whom he does not 'like,' that he has been content to forego the chance of development and of a considerable increase of rent in order to remain master on his own land."

Or that of Lord Ernle:—

"Something of the same apathy is certainly visible in the management of many estates. Much ought to be done, which is left undone, to put land to its most profitable use and to adapt its equipment to the requirements of diversified farming." . . . "They (the landlords), have not the money with which to make the necessary changes. To say this, however, is only to say that the modern system of farming has broken down in one of its most essential features."

PROPERTY AND PRIVILEGE.

199. The best landlords to-day are often among the severest critics of the system. How do open-eyed Conservatives think that the defence of the system is a natural outcome of their political faith.

Mr. Lort-Williams, K.C., who was Unionist M.P. for Rotherhithe, 1918 to 1923, wrote in the "Evening Standard" of March 11th, 1925:—

"Slums are not accidents. Rural depopulation is not due to an act of God . . . Landlordism is not a Conservative

principle. Landlords connote landless. Sanctity of property for which the Tory stands, does not mean the property of the privileged few." He continues, "Our land system has conferred great benefits in the past. It was a natural growth, and its decay is natural also. The profiteers who stand uncomfortably in the shoes of our landed gentry, are as great an offence to the landscape as they are a source of contempt and derision to gentlemen and ploughboys."

#### A LANDLORD ON LANDLORDISM.

200. A very well-known landowner has put down for us the results of his prolonged consideration of the question more judicially but not less decisively:—

"Let us run through the position of the traditional partners in the agricultural community.

Take the *Landlord* first:—

1. No class suffered more heavily in the War both in loss of sons and increase of expenditure unaccompanied by a corresponding increase in income. Rents up to between 15 and 20 per cent. and often less. Expenses, tithe, income tax, repairs, cost of labour up to 60 per cent.

2. Before the war the home farm was always a byword for inefficient management and poor farming. Now landlords are farming rather more of their own land than they used to do—doing it at a profit in some cases, but on the whole you can't say that the farms farmed by the fair sized landowners are a model for other cultivators to imitate as they are on the continent. There is still, in fact, in the districts where the old landowners survive, a divorce of landownership from land cultivation, which is a condition needing special justification if it is to be encouraged to continue.

3. There has been no change in general in the attitude of landowners to their duty as leaders of agricultural progress and development; on the continent they belong to the class which gets up at 6 and goes to bed at 9; here they belong to the class which gets up at 8 and goes to bed at 11. They haven't noticeably resisted the extraordinary increase in the pursuit of amusement which has

swept over the whole country since the war. As the ordinary landlord is a man without fixed hours of work, the extra calls of golf, tennis, shooting, hunting, dancing have found him a rather easy victim.

4. There have been many sales of estates which have been largely bought by the tenants. . . . It is interesting to look into this a little. Some land was sold because families were killed out—more because men could not afford to keep it on and were tempted by the high post-war prices to take the cash and let the credit (of landowning) go.

Sales will go on as long as death duties are proportionate (as I fear they must be) to the capital value of each hereditament taken separately, and not to the annual value of the whole estate. But a great deal has been sold and will be sold because there is no point now either socially or from a view of enjoying life in holding an estate.

Now a poor man can get golf and tennis anywhere, and a rich man, if he wants fishing and shooting, can always get it within motoring distance whether he owns land or not.

So, unless a man has a high impulse of duty making him cleave to the position he has inherited with all its burdens and responsibilities, he has very little to gain by continuing to be a big landowner when, as often happens, he can increase his income by selling out.

5. Still more is he tempted to sell and clear out because the old traditional leadership has passed from his class.

(a) Fifty years ago the landlord (not very many but quite a number) were the leaders in the spread of agricultural science. That is now done by the County agricultural organiser and his staff.

(b) As to local government the farmers are deliberately capturing the seats on the County Councils and the District Councils in order whenever possible to prevent anything being done for the general good of the

community—if it is going to put anything on the rates. The landlords who were generally more open-minded are being pushed off.

(c) The Bench which used to be a Squire's preserve is being democratised (and a good thing too).

6. And having lost old traditional leadership the landlord has not made himself leader in any of the new provinces of work that have opened up.

(a) He complains that he hasn't enough money to provide up-to-date farm improvements, but has he tried to amend the Settled Land Acts so that he could use money from the sale of the settled part of his estate for the development of the rest?—No.

(b) Has he tried, with the aid of many of his rich friends who might help, to capitalise agriculture?—No. But in Germany the landowners' banks (out of which the Raffeisen and Schulze Delitzsch banks arose) had a capital of £130,000,000 before the war!

(c) Has he popularised profit-sharing schemes or tried to run estates as large industrialised farms?—Only quite sporadically.

(d) When anyone tries to get a co-operative bacon factory started, will the local landowners call a meeting of farmers and make them put their backs into the scheme?—They will not, though they are quite intelligent and pleasant about the scheme.

(e) When applications are made to the Committee which recommends credit for agricultural co-operative ventures, who comes before the Committee to support and justify the advances?—Not the landowners ever. I may add that I believe the average landowner could name more sorts of roses or rhododendrons than wheats or barleys or potatoes or poultry . . ."

#### LANDED ESTATES AND DEATH DUTIES.

201. In the complicated question of rents and expenditure on capital equipment and improvements is

involved the large question of death duties. Among landowners and their agents complaint is constant that death duties press with particular harshness on landed property. Lord Bledisloe said in 1922 that the rates of estate duty then levied permit no landed estate of average size and rental to remain in one family for more than two generations unless it were buttressed by external financial resources. The Central Landowners' Association has declared that estate duties press with special severity upon agricultural property for two reasons :

1. Agricultural property is valued for estate duty purposes on the basis of the amount which would be fetched by each separate part of the estate were it offered in the open market, and

2. The selling value that is arrived at is much greater than the capitalised value of the net income enjoyed by the owner.

As a result, therefore, either agricultural landowners are compelled to insure heavily against the estate duties which their successors will have to pay, or their successors, if they are not able to draw on other resources, have to sell part of the land to pay the estate duties themselves. In either case the effect is to diminish the amount of capital at the disposal of the landowners and thus to prejudice capital equipment.

#### A SUBTERFUGE.

202. It is perfectly true that the effect of death duties as at present levied on agricultural estates, is to increase the evil of agricultural under-capitalisation. It is idle, however, to suppose that any Government will go back on the principle of social justice embodied in the death duties generally, or give any substantial relief to landed property as distinguished from other property.

The story of what happened during the passage of the Finance Bill of 1925 is significant. On the day before the introduction of the Budget the Central Landowners'



Association issued a manifesto claiming special treatment for landed property. The Budget provided that death duties should be raised on all estates of over £12,500, landed and otherwise. While the Finance Bill was in Committee the Chancellor of the Exchequer made a concession to landowners by relieving agricultural estates of over £12,500 of the increase in death duties charged on other property. In a memorable phrase Mr. Winston Churchill declared that he was not "attempting to give any positive benefit in respect of agricultural land" but was "conferring upon them" (*i.e.*, agricultural landowners) "a non-addition to the burdens they bear."

A somewhat remarkable fact worth noting is that in the agitation for this concession the main argument used was that the increased death duties would bear hardly upon the new class of occupying owners. A comparatively simple calculation will show that very few of the new occupying owners would benefit by special treatment of estates of over £12,500.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the assumption that the average capital of owner occupiers is £25 per acre, the following table shows the probable capitalisation of owner occupiers in England and Wales. The actual number of holdings is taken from the Ministry of Agriculture's statistics. It is assumed that the average holding in each category is the mean between the limited figures, *i.e.*, that the average holding 5-20 acres is 12½ acres.

5-20 acres,	18,635	holdings,	say	12½	acres	=	£312	10s.	No change.
20-50	13,069	"	"	35	"	=	£875	"	"
50-100	10,769	"	"	75	"	=	£1,875	"	"
100-150	5,844	"	"	125	"	=	£3,125	"	"
150-300	7,170	"	"	225	"	=	£5,625	"	"
Over 300	2,954	"	"	"	"	=	"	"	"

It will be observed that by this calculation the estates of occupying owners would not reach £12,500 unless they own 500 acres. *i.e.*, a very small proportion of the whole. Even if a higher figure of capital per acre is taken, the number of occupying owners with over £12,500 would not be very much increased. The figure of £25, however, is probably a fair average. Many farmers have more than £25 per acre invested, but, on the other hand, many farmers also have heavy outstanding mortgages which would reduce the amount of their estates.

## AN IMPOSSIBLE DISCRIMINATION.

203. The discrimination made by Mr. Winston Churchill raises an issue which, when it is fully understood, can only be settled in one way in a democratic country. Nothing can be more certain than that large landed estates will not be let off more lightly than other large estates. The owners of other forms of property have a perfect right to insist that if they have to pay on the full value of their property the landowner should also pay on the full value of his property. The effect of the discrimination will be to "push the most vulnerable and least popular person in the industry into the foreground of public discussion and criticism." It is absurd to suppose that the decay of the whole system of landlordism can be arrested by conferring on landlords the benefit of a "non-addition to the burdens they bear."

## TWO MORALS.

204. There are two morals to be drawn from discussing this aspect of the question. Neither of them give pleasure to defenders of the old order, but neither can be rebutted. The first is that in the principle of Death Duties is embodied an assertion of democratic principle which in itself upsets the old landlord-capitalist basis of the agricultural industry. The Death Duties may, in fact, be regarded as the financial instrument which democracy has unconsciously used to establish the political principle contained in the Reform Bill of 1832. The second moral is that if agriculture is to be reconstituted industrially, the inconsistency between the annual value of land for agricultural purposes and its capitalised value for sale must be abolished.

## EFFECT ON LANDLORDISM OF THE WAR.

205. The question of Death Duties cannot, in fact, be taken by itself. It is simply one of the factors in the break-

down of landlord-tenancy. This whole question may be best approached by putting the question: "Why do our proposals go so much further than the proposals of the Liberal Land Enquiry Committee in 1913?"

The answer is clear and, as we think, convincing. It is contained partly in the revelations made by the war with regard to the danger of our national dependence on imported food; partly in our post-war realisation of the topheaviness of our present social structure; and partly in the rate at which the decay of landlordism has advanced since 1913. The first two points have already been dealt with in detail in this Report; we propose in the following sections to treat of the third.

Very briefly, the proposals of the 1913 Report were that farmers should be given more security and that the labourer's lot should be bettered by the development of small holdings, by the provision of better housing and by the raising of his wages at the cost, where necessary, of the rent charged. The Agricultural Holdings Act of 1923 gave the farmer greater security. The whole housing question has been set on a new footing by post-war housing legislation. So, too, the wages question has been established on a new basis by the institution of Wages Committees.

#### A CHANGED POSITION SINCE 1913.

The effect of giving greater security to farmers has not been what was anticipated in 1913. What is wanted is not more security of the old kind, but a new kind of security (*see* Section 433). Wages Committees have done their best, but the level of agricultural wages is still too low for national welfare. Housing schemes undertaken on a scale unthought-of before the war have been unable to make any sensible impression on the rural housing shortage. These points have been considered in conjunction with the largely decreased ability of landowners to perform their

functions in the industry of agriculture. The moderate resources at their disposal in pre-war years have been heavily reduced. The "silent revolution" had not then begun. It is now not a question of assisting landlords to justify their ownership of agricultural land. It is a question of finding the right system of land tenure to replace landlordism. If the changes in land tenure which we recommend in this report are not carried out within a reasonable time, we feel certain that more drastic and more dangerous changes will be made by the operation of economic forces on national opinion.

#### COST OF UPKEEP AND COST OF LIVING.

206. The root of the trouble is the uneconomic position of landlords. In Appendix VI will be found a statement of the principal outgoings on landed estates in respect of taxation and upkeep. It will be noticed that some of these charges are unavoidable and irreducible, while others may be substantially reduced if the landowner is careless of, or forced to disregard, future rental value. Each and all of these outgoings have increased since pre-war years, with the net result of very largely decreasing the landlord's net income. The effect of decreasing net income at a time when the cost of living is very largely increased must inevitably lead to the landlord reducing his expenditure on maintaining rental value. In other words, *a decrease in expendible income definitely results in further decapitalisation of the land.*

We have been given a great deal of evidence on this point. A few selected instances may serve to show the facts in concrete form.

#### PRE-WAR AND POST-WAR INCOMES.

207. The first example is that of an estate in the Home Counties, the figures concerning which are supplied to us

with reference to each £1,000 of gross rental. A very simple comparable table is thus constructed.

	1914.	1925.
	£	£
Gross rental .. ..	1,000	1,000
Repairs and materials .. ..	200	400
Tithe and Rates .. ..	175	240
Estate Labour .. ..	100	175
Total Outgoings .. ..	475	815
Net Rental .. ..	525	185

A number of items are not taken into account in the above simplified table, *e.g.*, Management and Insurance, and the Net Rental shown is still subject to Income Tax. The "Expendible Income" would be less by the amount of Income Tax.

It will be observed also that on this particular estate rents have not been raised since 1914.

#### TWO ESTATES, PRE-WAR AND POST-WAR.

208. The figures of two estates in the South of England are rather more detailed.

##### *Estate A.*

	1913.		1924.	
	£	Per cent.	£	Per cent.
Gross Rental .. ..	8,216	100	10,154	100
Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements .. ..	2,063	25	3,379	34
Rates .. ..	33 <sup>8</sup>	4	43 <sup>1</sup>	4
Taxes .. ..	539	7	1,979	20
Tithe .. ..	755	9	1,031	10
Management .. ..	44 <sup>0</sup>	5	586	5
Fire Insurance .. ..	113	1½	201	2
Total Outgoings .. ..	£4,248		£7,607	
Net Rental .. ..	£3,968	48½	£2,547	25

*Estate B.*

	1913.		1924.	
	£	Per cent.	£	Per cent.
Gross Rental .. ..	2,590	100	3,784	100
Repairs, Maintenance and Improvements .. ..	609	24	1,193	32
Rates .. .. .	63	2	105	3
Taxes .. .. .	169	6	735	19
Tithe .. .. .	195	7	318	9
Management .. ..	130	5	157	3½
Fire Insurance .. ..	97	4	143	3½
Total Outgoings ..	£1,263		£2,651	
Net Rental .. ..	£1,327	52	£1,133	30

On both the above estates rents were raised 15 per cent. between 1913 and 1924. Every effort was made to carry out necessary repairs and improvements. No insurance was effected against the incidence of Death Duties. The owner's net income was reduced on the one estate from 52 per cent. to 30 per cent. of the gross rental, and on the other from 48½ per cent. to 25 per cent.

An important footnote added by our informant should be quoted :—

“ No deductions have been made for interest on family charges, mortgages, money raised for Death Duties and such like, but if these were included, instead of showing an available surplus of from 48½ to 52 per cent. it would only be from 18 to 25 per cent. pre-war and from nil to 20 per cent. post-war.”

## A SCOTTISH ESTATE.

209. As showing the tendency over a longer term of years, another table may be given, this time from Scotland :—

	1900.			1914.			1924.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Gross Rental ..	2,936	4	9	2,902	14	6	2,379	14	8
Repairs .. ..	1,135	6	11	686	0	7	605	14	5
Rates .. ..	610	5	4	589	15	11	653	6	0
Taxes and Title ..	197	0	5	250	3	10	375	5	1
Management and Insurance .. ..	169	13	5	183	9	11	251	4	1
Miscellaneous ..	101	6	2	137	9	3	105	7	2
Total Outgoings ..	2,213	12	3	1,846	19	6	1,990	16	9
Net Rental .. ..	722	12	6	1,055	15	0	388	17	11
Less Income Tax	72	12	6	120	10	4	356	4	9
Expendible Income	£650	0	0	£935	4	8	£32	13	2

These figures deserve careful examination and some further explanation. The rental remained at the figure shown for 1900, namely, £2,936, until 1915, when it was lowered by the valuation of holdings under the Scottish Small Holders (Scotland) Act of 1911. Many of the holdings on the estate are very small. The rents of the larger holdings were, in fact, increased in the 1900-24 period by about 20 per cent.

It will be observed that in the first 14 years of the century, the landlord increased his personal income by nearly £300, but only because the cost of repairs was reduced by about £450. Next will be observed that the cost of repairs in 1924 was lower than it had been in 1914 in respect of the general increase in the cost of carrying out works of any kind. The burden of Rates was not

appreciably increased. The landlord's personal income from the estate after paying Income Tax was in 1914 about enough to pay the tax on a medium power motor-car. Had he been spending on his estate the amount he had spent in 1914, to say nothing of 1900, he would have been heavily out of pocket.

#### DETERIORATION AND DEPRECIATION.

210. It is not to be maintained that the personal income of all landowners has fallen away to the extent shown in the instance above, but if all the examples given by us are taken together, a fair impression will be gained of the tendency on Estates throughout Great Britain. The Journal of the Surveyors' Institution (April 1922) in a valuable statement of "Burdens upon Urban and Rural Property" declared :—

"Instances, which could be repeated indefinitely, have been provided where the balance of income remaining to the owner, after paying taxes and the cost of upkeep, has been only a few shillings in the pound, while in some cases an actual deficit has been shown. As a result, labour has suffered in the less intensive cultivation of land and management of stock, and *in the postponement of improvements*. It has even been necessary in many instances to restrict ordinary repairs and maintenance to those absolutely required to prevent serious structural dilapidation and waste . . . The condition of property in rural districts is deteriorating, and . . . the accumulated wealth of the nation is being depreciated by that cause."

#### THE WORKER SUFFERS.

211. It is, of course, true that many landlords are not dependent solely upon the income derived from their land. But very few landlords are in a position to resist sheer economic pressure. The income of the average landlord is now considerably lower, at a time when the cost of living stands in the ratio of 175 to 100 pre-war. Only by cutting heavily into his expenditure on the estate can he bring his expendible income up to the 1910 level. Even at that cash level his purchasing power would be only a



little more than half. We may be permitted to quote once again from the Journal of the Surveyors' Institution :—

“ The result has been that little or no capital has been available for drainage, buildings and other improvements necessary to maintain production, and still less to secure the increased production shown by the War to be needful in the interest of national security. Labour has suffered accordingly, both in the less intensive cultivation of land and management of stock, and in the postponement of improvements to a more favourable season.”

This statement of facts appears in the course of an argument for reducing the present contribution of landed property to the national exchequer. We quote it as valuable evidence on points of fact. We have already given our reasons for looking towards a different solution of the problem.

#### AGRICULTURE AND LIMITED LIABILITY.

212. A link should be made between the facts quoted in paragraphs 207-211 and the tendency referred to in paragraph 189 towards the industrialisation of estates. The advantages of limited liability in respect of taxation are obvious. When an estate is incorporated the expenditure allowances against profits or rentals are on a more generous scale; deaths no longer become the occasion for forced sales; insurance against death duties is no longer necessary and the former proprietor may become the managing director, drawing a salary, and thus pay income tax only at the earned rate.

#### FALSE LAND VALUES—SPORT—

213. There is a certain ironic justice in the fact that landlordism as an institution is hard hit by the discrepancy between the sale value and the agricultural value of landed estates. The difference between the capitalised value of net income and the sale value may be accounted for sometimes by potential building values, but most often it represents the value given to land by use for

purposes other than agriculture. Only custom stales the wonder with which we ought to regard the general willingness to pay more for land than it is worth, and only a false sense of rural values induces us to tolerate the absurdity.

It is not necessary to be in any sense "unsporting" or to be in any way lacking in love for the delights of the hedgerow and stream-side to regard the pitch to which the organisation of sport has been carried in many parts of the country as inimical to national welfare. Mr. Christopher Hussey has stated in the article previously referred to (Section 179), that shortly before 1914 the following sums were expended on some of the "more popular forms of sport."

	Invested.	Spent Annually
	£	£
Fox Hunting .. ..	15,400,000	8,750,000
Shooting .. ..	4,075,000	8,130,000
Fishing .. ..	550,000	590,000
Cricket and Football ..	10,750,000	11,700,000

More was spent on hunting, fishing and shooting by some few ten-thousands of the well-to-do than by the urban millions on games within their reach. Mr. Hussey declares that sport has risen to its sacrosanct position in the minds of country gentlemen since the decline of the landowner's administrative importance. It is not long since the letting of deer forests and grouse moors was still regarded by the older gentry as a vulgar and plutocratic innovation.

"So long as sport is spontaneous and personal, it is the finest exercise a man or boy can have; when it becomes organised and fashionable, it is admitted to be 'hardly sport.' It is worse if it occupies the capital, energy and attention which are due to the land."

"The true landowner is too busy to hunt or shoot often. It is only the parvenu, or decadent youth, who sees in sport the supreme purpose of country life; yet this is the type of person who is gradually succeeding to the famous estates of the country."

—AND GAME.

214. The excessive development of sport and its preservation for the benefit of the wealthy few would have been wholly impossible in any country where landowners as a rule were actively engaged in farming or even in actively promoting the welfare of farming, or in any country where a general system of small ownership or even small tenancy prevailed.

"Last year," says one of the scores of witnesses who has called our attention to the damage done by game, even now after the passing of numerous Acts of Parliament to prevent it, "rabbits which come from the woods adjoining my farm did damage to my corn crop amounting to over £250. The tenant has a right, certainly, to snare these rabbits, and it looks well on paper, but it does not work out in practice."

The Land Enquiry Committee in their Report of 1913, gave scores of illustrations of damage done by game. The position to-day is substantially unchanged. The farmer has a right to kill ground game on his land but he has not the right to enter coverts and places where they breed, nor has he the right to kill winged game. Many farmers dare not now exercise the rights they have, and no "ad hoc" legislation on game will in reality remedy the abuse. The only true remedy is a rural revival and a restoration of a true sense of country values.

INTERFERING WITH THE FARMER.

215. It is sometimes asserted that any land can have a sporting value without in any way impairing its agricultural value. This statement is absurd enough to anyone who knows rural facts.

Sir Daniel Hall, for example, after mentioning a case of a landlord threatening to turn a tenant out if he did not

take his fowls off the stubbles, and thus leave the shed corn for the partridges, adds :

"In the south and east of England the game sometimes are allowed to *interfere seriously with the farming.*"<sup>1</sup>

It may be as well to quote one sentence from "Facts About Land," the book already referred to as containing the "Reply" of the Land Agents' Society to the 1913 Report.

"No doubt a lower rent is sometimes paid for land on which game is raised. This simply means that compensation for possible damage is made in advance." (Page 228).

This is frank enough, and it seems almost unnecessary to add the obvious corollary that the tenant is often expected to farm his land in a way which will not subject him to loss as a result of game infestation.

#### WHAT IS PRESERVED ABROAD.

216. Our investigators abroad look in vain for anything comparable to the system of game preservation in England, or indeed, to the horror with which our English countryside regards, or professes to regard the crime of vulpicide.

In *Holland*, for example, the fox is an animal whose appearance is sufficiently rare to cause mention in the Press. There is no hunting on horseback, except for a few drags in Gelderland *on the waste*.

"Where conditions are still a little feudal," reports our Investigator, "large proprietors desire to have some game . . . but high agricultural authorities received with astonishment a statement of the number of hunts in England, the heavy losses through foxes, the burden cast upon poultry-keepers by the cost of enclosing poultry at night, and depriving hens and especially ducks, of their natural food by locking them up till 6 or 7 in the morning, and the discredit following upon vulpicide . . ."

"Here," said an official, "agriculture is the principal thing; hares and rabbits have to go away. *We do not protect game, we protect agriculture.* We also protect insectivorous birds. In England you are too well off . . ."

<sup>1</sup> A Pilgrimage of British Farming, page 147.

In *Belgium* also game is not allowed to take precedence of the interest of food production. In *Denmark* there are practically no rabbits except on one island, very few foxes, and partridges, and hares are protected only as rare and interesting creatures.

In *South Germany* the State lets out amalgamated shooting rights, but peasants get compensation for any damage done by game, and there is no deliberate preservation of game.

The Dutch comment that in *England* we are "too well off" is natural. Is it true? The fact, surely, is that we are in the position not of a man who can afford to waste his estate, but of one who is careless of the distinction between assets and income.<sup>1</sup>

We do not want to leave ourselves open to the charge of proposing to do away with sport. What we do propose is to give the fullest possible opportunity of sport and recreation to the largest possible proportion of dwellers in rural areas, and to create conditions which will themselves destroy the false public opinion which allows land to be diverted from its primary use to a secondary.

There are shooting rights on most kinds of land which can be exercised without in any way hampering the farmer. There is, for example, the rough, rather casual, shooting with a dog, which some country dwellers vastly prefer to highly organised shoots; or partridge shooting on arable land, in which the only possible damage is that done by the guns walking through the roots. The partridges themselves do no damage to the crops, and, in fact, consume large quantities of harmful grubs.

There is, too, a considerable amount of land with a sporting value which can be realised without much detriment to such agricultural value as it possesses. There is even some land which has not and never can have an agricultural value, but which has or may have a sporting

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<sup>1</sup> The false idea of sport, evidenced by and engendered by the rearing of tame pheasants, and the curious idea that the fox is a sacred beast, are both new in *England*. The Parish Account of *Ashburton* in *Devonshire*, for example, between 1760 and 1820 showed the payment of rewards for killing 18 foxes and 4 vixens, to say nothing of 153 badgers.

value. In some cases, as for example Bolton Moors, the land carries a very large head of grouse and a number of sheep. Our Investigator in that part of the country reports that in his opinion the grazing of sheep, and the grouse did not clash except as regards the date of burning the heather. The owners of these moors, of whom the chief is the Duke of Devonshire, derive no direct income from the grazing rights, the value of which is included in the rents paid for the farms which surround the moors, and have "gates," i.e., the right to graze so many sheep on the moors. Our investigator considers that the moor as a whole is not an economic proposition for reclamation.

This may be true of a good deal of other land in the country, not at present used at all or primarily for agriculture, but the trouble is that no attempt is made to ascertain from time to time whether modern developments make possible the use of this more or less waste land for purposes of food production. The number of sheep run on the moor can only be increased as a result of increasing the capacity of the surrounding sheep in winter. But all these points should be treated together as part of a general survey of the use and capacity of all land in the country.

#### GOLF ON GOOD LAND.

217. It would be unfair to speak of the diversion of land from agriculture to game preserving without reference to another non-agricultural use of the land which has become extraordinarily prevalent in recent years. Of playing fields in general, both public and private, there is an acute shortage. That shortage could be made good without serious detriment to agricultural production, if a thought-out co-ordinated plan for using the land of the country as a whole were formulated. But there is no shortage of golf courses, and it is unfortunate that golf demands a larger area of land per foot pound of energy expended in exercise than any other game.

Golfers in recent years have absorbed thousands of acres of good agricultural land, and this utilisation of good pasture land or potential arable land for golf, while thousands of acres of thin, sandy soil lie idle, is bad for the game as well as for the nation. Golf has appropriated also a sensible proportion of the great parks of England, which, in the last few years, have fallen on evil days. The carefully calculated undulations designed, or taken advantage of, by "Capability Brown" and his successors in the noble art of landscape gardening, have proved useful in a curiously unexpected manner. But these parks would have been of much more advantage to the nation had they reverted to food-production, and golfers who are, generally speaking, well able to travel a fair distance for their exercise would have found better golf on land which has more kinship with the "links" which gave birth to the game.

#### PATRIOTISM, GAME AND GAMES.

218. The Selborne Committee, although it assumes, in our opinion unwisely, the necessary permanence of the three-interest system in agriculture, puts admirably the basic principle and its application:—

"The State, must, in short, take every means in its power to give confidence and a sense of stability to landowners, farmers and agricultural labourers. It must then tell those classes exactly what is expected of them, and appeal to their highest instincts of patriotism to put personal predilections aside, and to unite to carry out a policy on the success of which the safety of their country may some day depend. The standard set before their eyes should be the highest—not to be content till the whole soil of the United Kingdom is producing the greatest possible return of foodstuffs or of timber. It must be clearly understood *that henceforth bad farming is a danger to the State, and that the waste of good land on game or games is inconsistent with patriotism.* There will be plenty of room for game or golf in moderation, but too much game or golf links carved out of fat land, make an inroad on the production of foodstuffs which can no longer be defended."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Committee, page 24.

## TRUTH IN ADVERTISING.

219. A study of the advertisements which appear week by week in the leading agricultural newspapers illustrates the extent to which business considerations in agriculture are overlaid by other considerations. Here, for example, is a series of consecutive advertisements extracted from *The Agricultural Gazette* (April 10th, 1925) :

*West Sussex*.—Gentleman's superior grass farm, 110 acres ; very exceptional residence ; 7 bed ; bath ; 3 reception . . .

*Hants*.—Gentleman's Queen Anne residence with . . . 125 acres.

*Bucks*.—Gentleman's superior agricultural estate, 500 acres.

*Near Bath*.—Rich all grass farm, 50 acres ; gentleman's picturesque residence.

*Wilts*.—Gentleman's superior farm, nearly 300 acres ; exceptional and perfectly appointed residence.

*Herts*.—Nearly 160 acres ( $\frac{1}{2}$  grass) gentleman's superior residence.

*Sussex*.—Gentleman's pedigree stock estate. . . . Very fine residence.

*Devon*.—Gentleman's grass farm, 170 acres, perfectly appointed residence and cottages.

*Herefordshire*.—Gentleman's superior estate ; nearly 250 acres ; magnificent residence with electric light ; perfect condition ; cost £18,000.

*Somerset*.—Gentleman's rich dairy farm ; 180 acres ; intersected trout stream ; fine Tudor residence.

Other examples of the same kind could be picked from the same page. Similarly in the advertisements inserted by those wanting farms are found :—

Required to buy immediately. Gentleman's grass farm, 100 to 200 acres ; must have really good house (8-10 bedrooms) ; up to £9,000 for suitable property.

Urgently required to purchase ; A first class dairy farm with superior house (about 7-9 bedrooms) ;



suitable for gentleman's occupation ; about 80-140 acres. (*Farmer and Stockbreeder*, October 27th, 1924).

Greater confidence could be felt in the present condition and the future prospects of English agriculture if the typical advertisements of farms to let had a good deal more to say about fertility, pig-styes and cattle-sheds, and a good deal less about Tudor residences and trout streams.

#### A SYMPTOM.

220. Bearing more directly on the question of sport is the following :

Good Hampshire farm to let. 650 acres ; sporting reserved by landlord. A tenant is required who will not interfere with the landlord's shooting. (*Farmer and Stockbreeder*, October 27th, 1924).

It is almost possible to imagine the land itself crying out for a landlord who will not interfere with the tenant's cultivation. Here are six hundred and fifty acres of good Hampshire land at the absolute disposal of some landowner who, at a time when the country is labouring under the weight of an adverse trade balance and an unprecedented mass of unemployment, seeks not for a good farmer who will increase the production of food stuffs and employ more labour, but for someone who will accept toleration of rabbits and pheasants as the first condition of his tenancy.

This advertisement may be exceptional, but it is a symptom of a morbid condition.

#### THE BURDEN OF AMENITY VALUE.

221. A highly-skilled foreign observer, Dr. Hermann Levy, pointed out some years before the War, when referring to the high amenity value of land in England and the consequent differentiation between the annual value of English land for agricultural purposes and its capitalised value when sold, that :—

“ There is indeed small chance for a man who desires to become owner of a little farm. Besides its worth for production he must be prepared to pay the luxury price.”

So long as an amenity value attaches to agricultural land, so long will any deliberate attempt to set agriculture on an economic basis be fruitless. Into the amenity value enter several elements. The monopoly value affects all the values. But when agricultural land is used for agriculture alone, a tendency towards diffusion of ownership is set working which reduces the monopoly value to a negligible amount. When, however, land is regarded as a pleasant plaything or the raw material of social success, a wall of false values is erected which the agriculturalist is least able to surmount. *The conditions which make for a high amenity value make also for low agricultural returns.* Land is cheaper in England than in some neighbouring continental countries. That is true. But the value of land in, say, Belgium is the true value. It is fixed by a business calculation of the profit to be derived from working it. Here land is often sold at a false value and the "small" man often cannot buy it because the economic environment of English farming will not permit him to make a return on the sum invested. He suffers directly because of the competition for land by persons who are mainly interested in "exceptional residences." No man can buy entry to the county club by a cash payment. Men can and do buy that entry, if not for themselves, then for their sons, by becoming landowners. Should a landowner be dispossessed in the public interest, he has a right to compensation for the real value of the land taken. He can have no right to compensation for an unreal value which has been allowed to grow up contrary to public interest and prevents or delays the recovery of agriculture.

#### HOME DEVELOPMENT.

222. Attention has been called in Chapter III to the amount of land in Great Britain which is put to no economic use. While other countries, by reclamation and by a programme of planting, have been bringing a steadily increasing area into production under the plain necessity of preserving some reasonable correlation between the

country's population and the total area of productive land, Great Britain has been letting land slip back to heather and bracken or to marsh. The sections given to Afforestation in Chapter IV contain overwhelming evidence of our failure to realise our assets. The great cause of Imperial development demands, in our opinion, home development as its first step.

#### DROWNED ACRES.

223. So too with regard to "Drowned Acres." Elsewhere in this report we emphasise the vital necessity of a comprehensive Survey of English land, and without such a Survey it is impossible to state accurately the extent of land which should be growing crops but is abandoned to water. But beyond doubt, the extent is considerable. "The condition of the Norfolk coast line from Cley to Weyburn and the pitiable waste of foreshore along the estuaries of Suffolk, Essex and Thames Haven are a national reproach." So begins a long letter from Mr. H. M. Wallis in the *Times* of August 24th, 1925. He points out what we have already demonstrated in Chapter III, that Britain has no national policy for adding to its productive area, as have other countries which, much less than we, are affected by the pressure of population on home-grown food supplies. Other estimates made by *Times* correspondents, or editorially, are to the effect that there are 200,000 acres of land uncultivable simply because they require draining, and that there are over a million drowned acres in this country. In the East Riding of Yorkshire alone, it was alleged at a meeting of the Royal Agricultural Society that there are thousands of acres derelict because nothing has been done in the last half century to clean out the beds of Yorkshire rivers.

We do not commit ourselves to any estimate of the amount of land which should be reclaimed. We believe that an efficient Survey would disclose astounding facts. The great difficulty met with in carrying out "combined drainage schemes" under the Land Drainage Act of 1918,

or other Acts, is the multiplicity of interests which have to be persuaded or, in the last resort, coerced. Another formidable difficulty lies in establishing the responsibility either of persons or authorities. The reclamation of the Bedford Flat by the Earl of Bedford in the 17th century added no less than 450,000 acres to the cultivable area of England. The Bedford Flat now contains some of the most fertile land in England. No private landlord for many a decade has undertaken any considerable scheme of reclamation. On the contrary, some land is going back bit by bit to marsh or waste, or "rough pasture." Landlordism is impotent. But it stands between the nation and a great national problem.

#### FAILURE IN ORGANISATION.

224. Yet another sign of the broken main-spring of rural life may be found in the conspicuous failure of agriculture in this country to adapt itself to modern business conditions. The Findings of the Hutchison Committee in Chapter VIII under the heading of Co-operation, give a very valuable outline scheme of co-operative marketing. Some such scheme as this ought to have been evolved by the industry itself. One of the arguments for landlordism is that the landlord, being a man of broader views and wider education than the farmer, is able to think ahead and to think further afield. The present position of farming on the marketing side is evidence that he has not done so. A reasonable allowance for cost of distribution, wholesale and retail, must be made in every industry, but there is no other industry in this country, nor is there an agricultural industry in any other country which allows the middleman to take out of it a sum considerably more than twice as great as the total of wages paid in that industry.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Section 14 and Appendix X for the conclusions of the Linlithgow Committee, e.g., "the spread between producers' and consumers' prices is unjustifiably wide . . . Distributive costs are a far heavier burden than society will permanently consent to bear."

## LEADERSHIP.

225. Only now is the rural community beginning to realise that farming cannot be a successful industry unless it is an efficient business. There is nothing magical about the beginnings and development of co-operation in other countries. Nor is co-operation the beginning and the end of businesslike marketing. The reports of our foreign investigators add a little to what has been made abundantly clear by the Linlithgow Committee and the Agricultural Tribunal, that the bounty which agriculture really requires can be paid by the industry to itself and that the protection which it really needs is from the muddlement and disorder of its own marketing arrangements. It may have taken a Fielding to state a figure,<sup>1</sup> but the existence of an unwarranted gap between producers' and consumers' prices must have been apparent for many years past to the leaders of agriculture. Who have the leaders been? They ought to have been the landlords. The greatest difficulty that co-operation now has to meet is that many farmers are in the grip of agents and dealers, who have acquired their power by being the effective suppliers of capital to farmers. Marketing and credit are interdependent. Their organisation requires brains and leadership. In other countries they have found both. It would appear that English farmers have looked for them in vain. They are not now looking for them among the landlords, nor do they expect to find them there again.

## LORD BLEDISLOE ON LANDOWNERS.

226. If proof still be required that landlordism has definitely failed in its function of leadership, a perusal of Lord Bledisloe's Presidential Address to the Agricultural Section of the British Association in 1922 may be confidently recommended. His argument, it need hardly be said, is not wholly ours. It is not that a clean end

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Fielding's estimate of the "gap" in respect of the four main food commodities was £175,000,000.

should be made of landlordism and a new system of tenure established which will not be subject to the vices of the old and will provide a firm basis for the reconstruction of rural life. It is an appeal, made by one who refers to himself as an "ordinary country squire intensely proud of the traditions and deeply conscious of the potentialities of the class to which he belongs," to other landowners to pull themselves together and recover their position in the industry by resuming their historic function. But, in fact, his Address is one of the most sweeping and scathing indictments ever made against a powerful class. The paper itself should be read. The extracts we quote cannot do justice to the speaker's purpose, but they indicate the facts on which the appeal was based.

#### PROPERTY DEFENDERS.

227. "The landowner may be stupid or reactionary," says Lord Bledisloe, "but he inspires respect for his honesty, patriotism, and unselfish devotion to duty," . . . "He owns at least two-thirds of the capital embarked in the industry of agriculture. He may derive 2 per cent., or less from his capital so invested, and live an inconspicuous life of comparative poverty. . . ." "But unless he is himself a farmer (which is seldom the case) he lives a life detached from the industry carried on upon his estate, and often ineffectually seeks relief from his growing poverty by attaching himself to a Property Defence League. He becomes, in fact, a mere property defender, which in a highly democratic State carries little conviction to a preponderantly urban proletariat. . . ."

"The agricultural community in Britain to-day above all else needs enlightened leadership, just as agriculture needs efficient organisation. . . ."

#### NEITHER KNOWLEDGE NOR INCLINATION.

228. "During the last half-century he (the landowner) was wont, at least in his youth, to serve his country in the

Navy, the Army, or some other financially unremunerative branch of the public service, or to participate unpaid in the conduct of local government. He employed an estate agent (often a person of no agricultural training), who stood between him and the agricultural activities of his estate, in respect of which he was himself often deplorably ignorant, unbusinesslike, and unprogressive. . . ."

" . . . especially in consequence of the agricultural depression during the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the landowner lost faith in himself and in his true vocation, and had neither the knowledge nor the inclination to give his tenants the lead which they required." . . . "The prime condition under which farm tenancy can prosper is the owner's knowledge and management of his estate, similar to that exercised by the manager of an industrial company in relation to his business. . . ."

"Whereas at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century certain progressive English landowners were definitely and admittedly the leaders of the industry, to-day, and for the past sixty years, landowners have ceased to lead." . . . "Land to-day in the hands of British landowners is more than ever an amenity, and although there are many whose serious impoverishment operates as an inducement to put their estates upon a business footing, they are sadly conscious that they have not the knowledge to do so."

#### THE UNNATURAL DIVORCE.

229. "Throughout Eastern Europe, too, and particularly in Roumania and Czecho-Slovakia, there has been a land revolution. Great estates have been forfeited and their land subdivided, solely because the owners have not during the last generation been active participators in the work of production."

"The absentee landlord, a *rara avis* in all Continental countries except Italy, is another example of the baneful

effects of his non-industrial character in this country. Oblivious of the true meaning of "manor"<sup>1</sup> and "man-sion," he often separates himself entirely, not merely from the industry, but from the locality in which he comes to be regarded as an unsympathetic stranger. . . ."

". . . the divorce of landownership from land cultivation is unnatural." ". . . the unification of the rôles of the landowner and farm tenant is a condition precedent to the full, confident and enterprising development of the agricultural industry on economic lines. . . ."

#### PROGRESSIVE DETACHMENT.

230. "The history of agriculture in the United Kingdom for the last seventy years does not redound to the credit of either landowners or of Statesmen. The landowners, who should have given a lead to the industry, failed to do so, largely because they have not as a class been trained for their proper profession, and because in a greater or less degree they have regarded the land as an amenity, but never as a great national problem for the solution of which they were themselves primarily responsible. . . ."

"It is an unfortunate fact which emerges from the annals of the English countryside throughout several centuries that the attainment by the landed proprietor of such a measure of wealth has produced an inclination to exchange the position of wealth producer for that of rent receiver, and to become progressively detached in activity and interest from agricultural pursuits. Groping after political power, clambering after social elevation, excessive indulgence in sport and the adaptation or sacrifice of landed property to its demands, and the pursuit of careers evoking a stronger appeal to national sentiment or conspicuous achievement, have all operated to detach the owners from the soil."

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<sup>1</sup> From Latin *manere*, to remain.



## A DOOMED INSTITUTION.

231. Lord Bledisloe's words, powerful as they are, were doomed, when he delivered them, to fall by the wayside and upon stony ground. Decay is far advanced in a system which was never economically sound and which, having been justified in the past by accidents of history and personality rather than by essential virtue, has in a democratic age no moral support in public opinion. Even if landlords as a class were fully alive to the import of Lord Bledisloe's message, the majority, because they have neither the knowledge, the habits nor the means necessary to play the part which they are called upon to resume, are incapable of response. The minority, whose spirit Lord Bledisloe so finely expresses and represents, will, as they realise that a doomed institution cannot be rehabilitated, work most vigorously to create a worthy substitute.

## THE NEW LEADERSHIP.

232. Leadership in agriculture there must be. To whom, then, is it to pass, and what is the goal to which it shall be directed ?

We have already suggested that the signs of the times indicate not only that landlordism is breaking up but that it is being broken up by forces which leave no assured foundation for the future. To the National Farmers' Union, which represents one in three of those who are now farming the land ? Or to the Trade Unions which include one in ten of agricultural workers ? As landlordism disappears, is the future of agriculture as an industry, and of agriculturists in all their social and economic relations to be dependent on a pull-devil-pull-baker conflict between a limited number of highly organised employers and an even more strictly limited number of organised employees ? Or is it not possible now to lay foundations well and truly on which may be erected a structure thoroughly democratic and soundly adapted to its industrial purpose ? If this last can be done, there is hope for British agriculture,

and through agriculture for the whole nation. If it cannot be done, the outlook for democracy in this country is gloomy indeed.

#### COMBINING THE ADVANTAGES OF TENANCY AND OWNERSHIP.

233. In the belief that agriculture can be refounded, we put forward the policy of Cultivating Tenure. It is a democratic policy. It aims at multiplying the holders of land to the limit of economic success and to do so as rapidly as possible. Its purpose is, while increasing the population maintained on the land, to decrease as speedily as possible the number of land workers who have no direct interest in the management of the land. It is designed to give holders of land the highest incentive to good cultivation, that which comes from known security of tenure for themselves and their children; to preserve to the whole community the right (which is also a duty) of ensuring good cultivation in order that the supply of home-grown food may be increased and the vigour of the race maintained; and to provide a basis for building up a practical system of rural education, agricultural credit and organised marketing.

It recognises every legitimate right of private property. It provides for giving those who are now owners of land just compensation for the true values of their property. It does not recognise values which are definitely anti-social; it lays down as a principle that the actual worker of the soil should not be burdened into beggary and bankruptcy by having to pay for the nation's past negligence.

The policy in question was described, when its general outline was first announced (November, 1924), as being one which combined the advantages of tenancy and ownership. Large as this claim is, we think it is justified. The new order is new, but it is based upon the old.

"The nation," says Mr. Christopher Hussey, "must think several times before it breaks with the past of its countryside."

It has thought several times. The time for action has come. A study of the facts which this Report has attempted to put together, not because they are new, but because they are true, should convince any man who believes that progress is achieved by effort, not apathy, that the nation must break with its rural present.

(Four Appendices follow. The text of the Report is resumed on Page 297.)

## APPENDICES.

### APPENDIX IV.

#### THE LAW OF REAL PROPERTY.

The facts as quoted from Joshua Williams in paragraph 151 are not contradicted nor even questioned by any authority on the subject. It may be useful, however, to append the following further authoritative statements on the law of real property :—

(1) "*The Laws of England : Being a complete statement of the whole Law of England,*" by the Rt. Hon. The Earl of Halsbury and other Lawyers, Volume 24 (1912).

"Technically, land is not the subject of absolute ownership, but of tenure. According to the doctrine of the common law there is no land in England in the hands of a subject but is held of some lord by some service or for some estate; and this tenure is either under the King directly, or under some mesne lord or a succession of mesne lords, who, or the last of whom, holds of the King. Thus the King is lord paramount, either mediate or immediate, of all land within the realm. The tenure of land is based upon the assumption that it was originally granted as a 'feud' by the King to his immediate tenant on condition of certain services, and, where there has been sub-infeudation, that the immediate tenant in turn re-granted it; and although for most purposes this system, known as the 'feudal system,' has lost its practical importance, it still determines the form of property in land." (Pages 138-139.)

"An estate in fee simple approaches as near to absolute ownership as the system of tenure will allow. It is capable of existing as long as there are heirs-at-law of the owner for the time being, and since the law does not expect that there will be a failure of heirs the duration of the estate is, in theory, unlimited. If, in fact, the owner dies intestate and without heirs, the land, save so far as it is required for payment of his debts, escheats to the lord—usually the Crown—under whom it is held. But this is the only way in which the estate can now determine." (Page 164.)

(2) "*A General View of the Law of Property*," by J. A. Strahan, M.A., LL.B., assisted by J. Sinclair Baxter. (1919.)

Ownership of Land and Goods.—“ . . . The most characteristic distinctions between property in land and property in goods at common law are these: (1) At common law the ownership of land is never absolute, while the ownership of goods is never anything but absolute. . . .” (Page 19.)

Tenure of Land.—“ By the theory of English Law the ' King is sovereign lord or lord paramount, either mediate or immediate, of all and every parcell of land within the realme.' In other words, however great the interest of any English subject in any parcel of English land may be, he is still regarded not as an absolute owner but as merely a tenant or holder of his land from the Crown or from someone who himself holds from the Crown, in which the ultimate ownership of the land resides. There is no such ultimate ownership residing in the Crown as regards goods. This is commonly summed up by saying that land is, and goods are not, the subject of tenure.

“ At one time this doctrine of tenure was a matter of vast practical importance. It imposed obligations on the owner of an interest in land so heavy as to constitute it a real diminution of the right of ownership. These obligations have been almost entirely abolished, and the ultimate interest theoretically residing in the Crown is now only the ghost of a real interest long since passed away. But the former existence of these obligations and of this interest has deeply influenced the conception of ownership of land. Ownership of goods is regarded purely as a right; ownership of land is still regarded as a duty as well as a right. Being a duty, the law has been most careful to see that there is always someone in existence to discharge it. This . . . has profoundly affected the whole system of conveyancing. It has also caused the law to impose ownership of land on persons not desiring it.” (Pages 19-20.)

Estates in Fee Simple.—“ An estate in fee simple is the largest interest in land which can be owned by any subject. When it is in possession—that is, when there is no smaller freehold interest preceding it, or where its owner is not deprived of the use of the land by the subsistence therein of a chattel interest belonging to somebody else, it amounts, for all practical purposes, to absolute ownership. Its owner can use the land as he likes, and dispose of the right to use it as he likes, and the right is unlimited in duration. . . . The only qualification of the ownership lies usually in the lordship residing in the Crown, which, as we have already seen, is now of a very shadowy and unsubstantial character.” (Page 36.)

(3) "*A Compendium of the Law of Property in Land and of Conveyancing relating to such Property*," by William Douglas Edwards, LL.B. (1922.)

Feudal Principles.—(Tenure).—"The feudal law of property, or 'feudal system,' was established in England under the Norman kings, was based on the principle that the land of every subject of the Crown was held by him of (that is, under or by virtue of a grant made by) a superior owner, who, in his relation to the landholder, was called the lord, and to whom the landholder was bound to render services by way of return for his enjoyment of the land. The King was the supreme lord, of whom all land was held—either immediately, where no person was interposed as lord between the Crown and the landholder, or mediately, where the land was held of an intermediate lord, who himself held, either mediately or intermediately, of the Crown. The interest of the landholder never amounted to absolute ownership; for, in every case, the lord retained a higher degree of ownership in the land, by virtue of which he was entitled to the services of the landholder, and resumed the possession of the land on the termination of the landholder's interest. The King alone, as being the ultimate and supreme lord, had the absolute ownership of land." (Page 11.)

Estate in Fee Simple. . . "is practically equivalent to absolute ownership, though, owing to the feudal principles of tenure (as described above), it is, in theory, a limited interest only." (Page 26.)

(4) "*Real Property.—An Introductory Explanation of the Law relating to Land*," by Alfred F. Topham, LL.B. (1911.)

"Land cannot be owned by an individual other than the King. The early feudal law assumed that all land was owned by the King, and in theory the same rule still applies. The rule underlies the whole of the English law of land and accounts for many of its peculiarities. . . ." (Page 2.)

"An Estate in Fee Simple is an interest in land which, after the death of each tenant, can descend to his heir. It is, therefore, perpetual, and at the present day is practically absolute ownership.

"Thus a tenant in fee simple is usually spoken of as the *owner* of the land, sometimes even in legal writings and Acts of Parliament. The term 'owner' will frequently be used in this book; but the reader must remember that the word is being used as a shorter way of saying 'tenant in fee simple.'" (Page 4.)

"In one sense all land is freehold, for each area of land is owned by the Crown, and is held by one or more freeholders of the Crown." (Page 9.)

"A tenant in fee simple of land is now practically full owner of the land." (Page 20.)

## APPENDIX V.

## EVIDENCE ON UNDER-CAPITALISATION.

Some Extracts from the Reports of Royal Commissions, etc.

*Report of Agricultural Policy Sub-Committee, 1918.*

*Para. 18.* " There is much excellent estate management and much high farming in the United Kingdom to-day, but there is also much slack estate management and bad farming, or management and farming which, while profitable to the persons interested, do not take national requirements as to food production into account. That this is so is known to all who have studied the present conditions of British agriculture. The causes of bad estate management and farming are lack of suitable education or of capital (often found in combination) on the part of landowners and farmers . . . "

*Para. 10.* " The effect of the period of depression on the investment of capital in agricultural land must also be noted. In the 'sixties and 'seventies the agricultural landowners had invested capital freely in the industrial equipment of the land—in farm-buildings, farmhouses, cottages, drains, roads and fences—but that capital had often been borrowed for the purpose. The interest received from this investment of capital in all cases diminished, and in many cases disappeared, in the period of agricultural depression. It is not wonderful, therefore, that those professions whose advice is sought in such matters—solicitors, bankers, land agents—thought it their duty to discourage as much as possible the investment of fresh capital in agricultural land. As for the money market, it wrote down English agricultural land as a field of investment to be shunned by all sensible persons. In these circumstances, it shows commendable enterprise on the part of the landowners that they continued to find for permanent improvements in the bad years as much capital as is recorded in the Report of the Royal Commission of 1893 on Agricultural Depression."

*Para. 11.* " British agriculture was in this position when war broke out in August 1914. . . . "

*Para. 214.* " The landowners of Great Britain constantly require long credit loans for the industrial equipment of their land for agricultural purposes. Comparatively few can erect expensive farm buildings or cottages or drain their land or construct or furnish water supplies out of income. They must borrow money either from their bankers on the security of their

personal property, the extent of which is well known to the Bank manager, or they must effect a mortgage on their land, or they can borrow from the Land Improvement Company under the Improvement of Land Act."

*Para. 216.* "In order to give the best return land must be properly equipped, and it is therefore in the national interest that facilities should be given to ensure the steady flow of capital for the purpose of such equipment. We think that a means should be found to enable funds to be available for these purposes at the lowest rate compatible with the State Credit, and that the Board of Agriculture should do everything in its power to simplify and cheapen the procedure."

*Para. 224.* "At present the Agricultural Co-operative movement in the United Kingdom is hopelessly under-capitalised. Farmers do not take enough shares in the Central Trading Bodies. . . . And yet behind the whole movement are the tremendous credit and security afforded by the productivity of our soil, the potential increase of which is so great. It is submitted, therefore, that if the credit can be mobilised and fertilised by loan capital there is no reason why ultimately the organised agriculture of the country should not become self-supporting."

*Report of Committee on Cost of Living of Rural Workers, 1919.*

*Para. 205.* "The general conclusion as regards the financial position of farmers is that in 1918 the average gross return was about 28s. per acre, or, including house-rent and the value of home-grown produce consumed, about 34s. per acre, out of which interest on capital and remuneration for services had to be paid. It is evident, however, that this return was partially due to a compulsory lowering of the standard of farming by a lessened use of fertilizers, feeding stuffs and labour, and that a consequent depreciation of the land has occurred, which must be made good by a considerable outlay of capital and labour in the immediate future if the productiveness of the soil is to be maintained."

*Interim Report of Royal Commission on Economic Prospects of Agricultural Industry, 1919.*

*Para. 16.* "Neither farmers nor landowners are disposed to provide capital for the farm buildings, implements, drainage, cottages, fencing and roads necessary for permanent tillage without some confidence in the future stability of prices of cereals."



## • APPENDIX VI.

## NET RENT OF AGRICULTURAL LAND.

Reference has been made in Paragraphs 7 and 205 to the various computations made by individual landowners and their agents and also by such authoritative bodies as the Surveyors' Institution, the Land Agents' Society and the Central Landowners' Association to the burdens which at present fall on landed property.

The context in which the term "net rent" has been used in the Report requires that it should be clearly defined. The net rent is the actual sum remaining in the landlord's hands :

- (1) After meeting charges necessarily incidental on his property as "landed property"; but
- (2) Before meeting charges incidental on all income in the form of cash dividends etc.

From the gross rent, therefore, is to be deducted

- (a) Cost of management.
- (b) Cost of renewals, repairs and reinstatements necessary to maintain rental value.
- (c) Land Tax.
- (d) Tithe.
- (e) Insurance, and possibly
- (f) Income Tax, Schedule A, copyhold charges where existing.

Mr. Turnor in "The Land and its Problems" says that "examination of the account books of typical estates shows that after paying taxes, rates and the cost of upkeep of farm houses and buildings, the landowner is left with only 3s. 9d. in the £ as effective income, and often much less."

## OFFICIAL RETURNS.

It is necessary to examine carefully the various items included in the gross expenditure of the average landowner. A list of such outgoings was given by the Surveyors' Institute in their Journal of April, 1922. In this issue was published a memorandum by the Council on the effect of the present burdens upon urban and rural property. This memorandum indicates the principal outgoings, in respect of taxation and upkeep, which fall upon landed estates.

## 1. Death Duties.

- (a) Estate Duty, the rate of which depends on the value of the estate.
- (b) Legacy or Succession Duty, the rate of which depends on nearness of kindredship.

2. **Income Tax.**
  - (a) Schedule A.
  - (b) Schedule B.
3. Local Rates .
4. Tithe.
5. Land Tax.
6. Repairs and Reinstatements.
7. Insurance.
8. Management.

It is added that in addition to the above there are many calls upon the purse of a country landowner, in respect of subscriptions, pensions, etc., which are practically obligatory.

As an Appendix to the Memorandum the following Table was given to show examples of the expenses and outgoings incidental to ownership of "ten representative rural estates in different parts of the country."

## APPENDIX II.—RURAL PROPERTIES.

Gross Rental	Rates and other public burdens borne by the Owner.		Cost of Management.		Renewals, Repairs and Reinstatements necessary to maintain Rental Value.		Income Tax and House Tax.		Net Return.		Return per £ of Gross Rental without deduction of Super Tax.								
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.		s. d.							
8,848	0	0	1,571	0	0	440	15	0	4,296	0	0	1,986	0	0	264	0	0	0	9
14,000	0	0	2,750	0	0	250	0	0	1,950	0	0	3,240	0	0	810	0	0	8	4
1,507	6	1	537	0	8	76	13	2	152	18	8	349	15	2	390	18	5	5	2
7,615	10	3	1,745	17	3	495	0	5	2,755	14	4	1,336	0	5	1,282	7	6	3	4
2,812	11	7	515	9	3	237	19	10	1,140	9	10	498	19	8	417	13	0	2	11½
1,755	16	7	395	0	10	189	2	5	754	19	0	248	9	5	223	4	11	2	0½
6,053	14	10	1,180	3	10	177	13	3	1,800	17	3	1,336	9	0	1,558	11	6	5	1½
17,739	0	1	1,454	0	8	550	17	7	6,117	0	11	4,793	1	0	4,824	0	11	5	5½
8,237	12	2	2,122	9	5	197	18	11	1,792	16	6	1,556	14	10	2,567	12	6	6	2
3,146	4	11	1,238	4	0	227	18	9	1,531	1	6	593	5	4	444	4	8	2	10

These returns, however, do not correspond with the definition of Net Rent given above. The "Net Return" given in the Table is arrived at after deducting income tax, and, apparently, under the heading of "Public Burdens borne by the Owner" a number of other charges which should more properly be considered private charges, such as rates on the Mansion House and other private buildings.

The figures, however, may be made of some value as an indication. By taking the "Gross Rent" less "Renewals, Repairs, etc.," and "Cost of Management" we arrive at the following figures:—

Gross Rent.	Net Rent.	Net Rent as percentage of Gross Rent.
£ s. d.	£ s. d.	Per cent.
8,848 0 0	4,111 5 0	47
14,000 0 0	11,800 0 0	84
1,507 6 1	1,277 14 3	85
7,615 10 3	4,364 15 6	57
2,812 11 7	1,434 1 11	51
1,755 16 7	811 15 2	46
6,053 14 10	4,075 4 4	67
17,739 0 1	11,071 1 7	62
8,237 12 2	6,246 16 9	75
3,146 4 11	1,387 4 8	44
Average .. ..	.. ..	61·8

In April, 1924, the Land Agents' Society, in conjunction with the C.L.A., drew up a Memorandum for submission to the Committee on National Debt and Taxation. As an Appendix to the Memo. it gave rather interesting figures:—

## TEN AGRICULTURAL ESTATES IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

## ANALYSIS OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE.

	Acres.		£	s.	d.
Area .. .. .	16,760	Gross Rental	20,381	9	2
		Expenditure.	£	s.	d.
Tithe Rent Charge .. .. .			1,997	17	6
Land Tax .. .. .			137	1	11
Rates on Cottages and Allotments .. .. .			261	8	11
Insurance .. .. .			201	12	6
Repairs and Replacements .. .. .			6,113	13	10
Management .. .. .			1,452	15	2
Sundry Compulsory Charges .. .. .			289	17	3
Pension to old Employees .. .. .			307	6	10
			<hr/>		
			10,761	13	11
			<hr/>		
Net Income .. .. .			£9,619	15	3
			<hr/>		

*i.e. 47 per cent. of Gross Rent.*

## PRIVATE RETURNS.

Apart from these official statistics we have received closely worked-out accounts of many private estates in the country. The following Table refers to a large estate in Scotland :—

*Percentage Landlord receives in Net Rent.*

	1912-13.	1917-18.	1920-21.	1924-25.
	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.
Overall ..	44	50	21	42
District A ..	42	48	19	41
"  B ..	75	71	—	61
"  C ..	39	48	24	41
"  D ..	72	66	54	58

The next two sets of figures are taken from estates in the South of England :

Estate A.			Estate B.		
1924.			1924.		
	£	Per cent.		£	Per cent.
Gross Rental	10,154	100	Gross Rental..	3,784	100
Repairs, main- tenance and improvements	3,379	34	Repairs, main- tenance and im- provements..	1,193	32
Tithe .. ..	1,031	10	Tithe .. ..	318	9
Fire Insurance	201	2	Fire Insurance	143	3½
Management ..	586	5	Management ..	157	3½
Rates .. ..	431	4	Rates .. ..	105	3
<hr/>			<hr/>		
Total Outgoings	5,628		Total Outgoings	1,916	
Net Rental ..	4,526		Net Rental ..	1,868	
=45 per cent. of Gross Rent.			=49 per cent. of Gross Rent.		

## TWO ESTATES IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND.

Estate A.		£	Estate B.		£
Gross Rent ..		8,814	Gross Rent ..		9,427
Expenditure.			Expenditure.		
Cutton Corn Rent, etc.		366	Rents .. ..		72
Fire Insurances .. ..		140	Fire Insurance .. ..		163
Tithe .. ..		900	Tithe .. ..		1,100
Management .. ..		450	Management .. ..		400
Land Tax (Tenants pay)		—	Land Tax (the estate pays) .. ..		241
Repairs, etc. .. ..		663	Estate wages .. ..		478
Timber used for estate		320	Estate bills .. ..		154
			Estate materials .. ..		168
			Timber used from estate .. ..		390
			<hr/>		
Net Rent ..		£2,839	Net Rent ..		£3,166
		£5,975			£6,261
<hr/>			<hr/>		

=68 per cent. Gross Rent,

=66 per cent. Gross Rent.

## APPENDIX VII.

## CHANGES OF LAND TENURE IN EUROPE.

Few people in England know how wide has been the sweep of agrarian reform in Europe during the first quarter of the 20th century. In some countries the War hastened tendencies which were already at work : in others it overthrew a dead weight of oppression which had previously made any movement towards reform perilous or impossible ; in others it added strength to an already powerful case for reform.

## THE NEW COUNTRIES.

The most striking feature of the rural movement in the new countries has been the continuity and identity of its aim among peoples of different race. To quote a writer who has made a special study of the subject in Czecho Slovakia :—

“ The day of the great manor has passed, and the farmhouse now rules the countryside. Favouring conditions have enabled the peasants to accomplish in a few years, what political economists for a century have been unable to achieve through their teachings. For many decades we have heard it said on all sides that the land belongs to him who will work it, but this theory was not translated into reality until the tiller of the soil found himself free to use his hitherto fettered strength. Then he rose in his might and took what he conceived to be his own.”

The following paragraphs give a short outline of the principal changes which have taken place in different European countries.

## BALTIC STATES.

Since obtaining their independence the people of Latvia have expropriated the landlords, taken over the control of all waste mineral and forest lands, assumed the ownership of water rights and divided the cultivable land into small privately owned farms.

The Esthonian Government also seized a great portion of the properties of all the great land owners and compensated them on the 1914 basis.

## CZECHO SLOVAKIA.

Before the war most of the land in Czecho Slovakia was in the hands of large proprietors. The great mass of the peasants either had “ too little to afford them a livelihood, or none at all.”\* More than a quarter of Bohemia and one-third of Moravia was owned by less than 2 per cent. of the land owners. The country people, according to Miss Textor, were so poor that they left the

\*Page 13. “Land Reform in Czecho Slovakia,” by L. E. Textor.

soil in great numbers. Twenty-three per cent. of the natives lived abroad.

"Such were the social and economic conditions which made land reform a crying necessity for the new Republic . . . There was . . . a powerful feeling on the part of the people that the time had come to right a great historic wrong."<sup>1</sup>

The Republic of Czecho Slovakia came into existence in October, 1918. One of its first acts was to deal with the land question. The main law by which land was to be expropriated was passed in April, 1919. Further laws during the next three years completed the machinery. The owners of great estates were not allowed to alienate, lease, mortgage or divide their land without the consent of the proper authorities. The Government might expropriate this land at any time. By great estates was meant units comprising more than 350 acres of arable land or 600 acres of mixed land. These figures represent the amount which the owner of an expropriated estate might retain. In June, 1919, a decree was issued providing that an estate which was mismanaged might be placed under compulsory administration by the Department of Agriculture.

The land expropriated was divided up among the peasants according to set rules. Preference was given to ex-soldiers and to those with agricultural training and experience. The amount of land given to individuals was defined as being "enough to support a family and. . . not more than a family can cultivate without steady outside help." According to the "Gazette de Prague" of October, 1924<sup>2</sup>, "by the end of the year (1924) 400,000 families will have received allotments of agricultural and building land, this number representing about 16 per cent. of all persons actively engaged in agriculture in Czecho Slovakia. . . The measure (of land reform) is working smoothly and is free from class prejudice."

#### DENMARK.

In spite of the fact that Denmark was a neutral during the war and a country which recognised generously the claims of small owners before the war, it did not escape a post-war extension of agrarian legislation. Church lands and entailed feudal estates have been compulsorily acquired. The State has also assumed a heavy financial burden in the way of erecting buildings and providing credit for small holders.

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<sup>1</sup> and <sup>2</sup> "Land Reform in Czecho Slovakia," by E. L. Textor. Pp. 15, 17.



## GERMANY.

For the last 50 years Germany has been a country of small peasant owners cultivating at least three-fourths of the land, and large land owners. Before the war the policy of the Government was directed not only to the maintenance but also to the increase of this class of the people by a scheme of land settlement, but this scheme was largely a failure. Since the seventies and eighties of last century migration from the rural districts to the towns continued to increase in spite of the fact that down to 1910 over 32,000 new holdings had been created. Since the revolution considerable development has taken place. The Land Settlement Law of 1919 contained drastic measures for dealing with the land of large estates and dividing it among small men. The several States were created administrative authorities responsible for calling into existence public utility companies. These Companies could obtain land in various ways. State domains could be taken on the expiry of existing leases. Moorland insufficiently utilised could be seized and the utility companies were given a right of pre-emption in all sales of land of over 75 acres. In case a sufficient amount of land was not forthcoming by these means it was provided that one-third of the cultivated area of the estates (in certain District Unions) which exceeded 250 acres and formed more than 10 per cent. of the cultivated area could be drawn upon. The estates subject to pre-emption and expropriation in the first instance were those (1) inefficiently cultivated, (2) recently cultivated by peasants (3) excessively large. It is not yet possible, however, to say what success has attended these efforts.

## HUNGARY.

Similar reforms have taken place in Hungary. Up to the end of 1924 nearly 8,000 acres of arable land have been allotted to 250,000 cultivators. After the completion of the Land Reform scheme, (which is expected to be in 1927), Hungary will possess over 5,000,000 acres of large agricultural estates, over 2,000,000 acres of medium sized and 10,000,000 acres of small holdings.

## POLAND.

In 1920, the Diet ordered the expropriation and sub-division of Church land, State lands, and the lands of public and semi-public bodies; also of all private properties badly managed or divided into plots without authorisation and acquired between 1st August, 1914, and 14th September, 1919, by persons whose usual occupation was not farming, or by persons unable to pay the price except by means of profit resulting from speculation. Properties which within the previous five years had changed

hands more than twice were also seized. Moreover, all other privately owned land had to come within this new law after the lands already mentioned had been disposed of. A maximum limit of holdings was prescribed, ranging from 135 acres in urban and industrial districts to 400 acres in other parts of the country.

The lands in mortmain were expropriated without compensation; private owners were to obtain on "compulsory purchase" half the average value of land in the districts.

#### PORTUGAL.

In 1920, according to Mr. J. A. Venn, public bodies were authorised to take over all uncultivated lands and to sub-divide and dispose of them by auction or contracts of lease subject to redemption by the purchaser.

#### ROUMANIA.

The first step in the direction of freedom for the peasantry was taken in 1864. By the law of that year a limited system of small holdings was set up. A serious peasant revolt took place in 1907, as the result of which considerable reforms with regard to standardisation of wages, provision of grazing facilities and feudal customs, were made. Later the private ownership of land exceeding 10,000 acres in area was forbidden and a movement took place towards setting up small holdings of between 10 and 20 acres in area. By this law a limited system of small holdings was created. But the land-hunger of the peasants was far from being satisfied. The agrarian question was very much to the fore on the eve of the world war. It was not, however, until 1917 that the big step in land reform was taken. The following passage from Mr. I. L. Evans' recent book on Roumania shows clearly the spirit of the times:

"Influenced in part no doubt by fear, and perhaps in even greater measure by the consideration that if they attempted to keep everything they would quite possibly succeed in keeping nothing, the landed classes resolved voluntarily to make the sacrifices that had for many years already been demanded of them by all the most enlightened elements in the country."

The Special Constituent Assembly convoked by Parliament in June 1917, amended Article 19 of the Constitution, which regulated the position of private property in the country. A definite scheme of expropriating large estates and dividing the land among the peasantry was laid down. As the result of this revolution the land held by large owners fell from 20,000,000 acres to 5,000,000 acres, while that of small land owners increased from 30,000,000 acres to 45,000,000 acres.

Speaking of the " sudden emergence of the peasant triumphant " in Eastern Europe, Mr. Evans says: " In reality, however, the question is by no means of recent origin, and one may perhaps be pardoned for saying of this peasant revolution what one of the great French historians said of the French Revolution of 1769: ' Q'il n'y eut jamais d'événements plus grands, conduits de plus loin, mieux préparés et moins prévus'."

#### RUSSIA.

Before the war the tendency towards abolishing Landlordism was in evidence. The State attempted to reorganise tenure and cultivation by:—

1. Handing over Crown and other State lands to the peasantry.
2. Enforcing the amalgamation and re-distribution of existing holdings, and
3. Relaxing the powers of the " mir."

Under this policy millions of small farms were being established on their own holdings; the area of the land farmed by large proprietors was diminishing and leasehold was on the increase. But the revolution led to a complete reversal of this process, for not only was the land of the nobility and large owners seized but it was actually divided up for communal cultivation. The Government indeed went so far as to sub-divide the newly won freeholds of the larger peasants. After the famine, however, in the spring of 1922, the Government conceded freedom of cultivation to individuals and communes, forbade partitioning of meadow-land and acknowledged the right of competent individuals again to lease farms.

#### SWEDEN.

Before the war Sweden was a land primarily of small farms. Holdings up to 125 acres covered nearly 80 per cent. of the total cultivated area. The land problem here, therefore, has not been so vital a question as in other European countries, but during the last 25 years an effort has been made to promote the gradual rise of the landless labourer to a state of independence. By a law of 1904, the State has granted credits and other facilities to labourers in order to assist them in obtaining small holdings. Crown lands in Southern Sweden and Crown forests in Norrland have to some extent been divided for this purpose.

Mr. Venn states in his " Foundation of Agricultural Economics " that in all the new States of Central Europe expropriation simply ran its course in 1918, sometimes as the climax of a gradual process of curtailing the private ownership of large estates, in others as a sudden and irresistible movement.

# PART 4.

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# PART 4.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ARGUMENT.

*The aims of the policy are first set out, and the conditions believed to be necessary for their success. For the State to play its part adequately its overlordship of land must be resumed.*

*Division I. describes the resumption of land and its transfer to Cultivating Tenants and sets forth an offer to present freeholders. Methods are explained for fixing the landlord's annuity, and giving security to a good cultivator.*

*Division II. justifies basing what the Cultivating Tenant is to pay and the landlord to receive upon the agricultural value of his land, at the same time safeguarding the owner's right to present building values. The landlord must not, however, gain from past neglect of the property, nor must the Cultivating Tenant lose; and, conversely, the landlord must not lose, nor the tenant gain unfairly on account of the landlord's past generosity.*

*Division III. discusses the administration of the scheme and it is shown that there must be a new elected authority with representation of other elements, full representation of country interests being assured.*

*Division IV. sets out the working of the scheme in practice, and shows how land will constantly come in hand for helping men up the ladder of land holding.*

*Division V. shows that the interests of cultivation, however important, must not outweigh the need for organised expansion of our urban centres and that this need can be safeguarded and guided. It shows how full justice can be done to the previous owner, and yet values created by the community regained for them. The financial gains to rate-payers and to Cultivating Tenants are described.*

*Division VI. shows by a series of examples how the scheme will affect different classes of persons, and makes it clear*

that the principles of good cultivation, security for the good cultivator, and a good chance for the man who can make the best use of it can be carried out in every case.

Division VII. shows why the scheme must be universal and not partial.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ARGUMENT.

The Superstructure of Reform is set out under five main headings, which are :—

Agricultural Credit, which is dealt with in three divisions—short term credit, long term credit and commencing credit. Mortgages are also dealt with.

Research and Education, which shows the need for better methods particularly by the smaller cultivators; and how with greater opportunity our schooling can be made more effective.

Marketing and Transport, which sets out a plan for the better guidance of co-operative enterprise.

Rural Industries, Forestry and Social Life, which sets out the principles to be applied in developing these activities.

Survey and Reclamation, which shows that only by a thorough Survey can a programme of progressive development of our national resources be worked out, and establishes the need for reclamation as part of this programme.

Chapter IX. deals with rural housing, game and other questions.

In Chapter X. reasons are given for rejecting, as a solution, either State-aided farm-purchase, Protection, Stabilisation, or any policy involving dual ownership.

Chapter XI. gives estimates of the increased production which may be expected under Cultivating Tenure, and outlines the benefits which would accrue to the rural community and to the whole nation.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE POLICY OF CULTIVATING TENURE.

#### PREFACE.

234. As a preface to setting out the policy of Cultivating Tenure in the form of proposals for legislative and administrative action, may be set down in briefest form the necessary aims of a national rural policy, together with two postulates and one axiom.

*The aims* of a national rural policy must be :—

- (1) To produce the maximum amount of foodstuffs, timber and other natural products from the whole of the land of the country.
- (2) To raise to the maximum the population which the land can support at a proper level of subsistence.
- (3) To increase as far as economically possible the number of persons living on the land, both as earners of a living wage and as independent workers on the soil with prospects of advancement.
- (4) To put within reach of rural communities adequate opportunities of education, recreation and social life.
- (5) By the thorough development of economic resources to make available for rural dwellers means of livelihood subsidiary, supplementary or alternative to agriculture.

*The postulates* of action are :—

1. That the maximum production of food or other products from the land can be obtained only when those who work any parcel of it have perfect confidence that



they themselves shall enjoy the rewards of applying to it their labour, enterprise and capital.

2. That on account of the fundamental position of agriculture in national life, it is both the right and the duty of the community to :—

(a) Create conditions of land tenure which will give actual workers on the soil the utmost freedom and encouragement.

(b) Preserve full opportunities of access to land for those who are best qualified to use it.

(c) Protect agricultural land from misuse, and to conceive clearly and steadfastly a policy for making full use of its agricultural land.

(d) Bring into agricultural use any land capable of cultivation and not at present cultivated.

(e) Organise, on behalf of agriculture, education, research and other activities which agriculture cannot generally organise for itself.

(f) Act in a sense as the representative of agriculture in dealing with other interests at home and abroad which are more compactly and therefore more efficiently organised, and

(g) Give agriculture the full benefit, when required, of its national credit resources.

*The axiom* of political action is that the nature of land, in so far as it is used for agriculture, is such that absolute property in it cannot be granted or recognised by any nation, and that the holding of any portion of it must be conditional on full use being made of it for the national service which it can best render.

The policy of Cultivating Tenure may now be set out in language which attempts to define our proposals clearly and concisely, but not with the precision of the Act in which we hope they will, in due course, be embodied.

## THE POLICY.

*Division I.**Transfer to New Tenure.*

## RESUMPTION OF LAND BY STATE.

235. On and from an appointed date the State shall be deemed to have resumed possession of all land in the United Kingdom which at that date is used for or capable of use for the production of foodstuffs, timber or other natural products.

This definition shall be regarded as excluding all land which is used as a site for buildings, for the curtilage of buildings, or for gardens attached to or belonging to dwelling houses, and all land in public ownership or dedicated to public use, and all land legitimately used by any individual or company or corporation for the purposes of a business other than agricultural. All land included by the definition is hereafter to be referred to as "Cultivable Land."

## TRANSFERENCE TO CULTIVATING TENANTS.

236. On and from a date to be appointed the State shall have the right to transfer any cultivable land to any person competent to use it to the advantage of the community as a whole.

Every farm holding shall be transferred forthwith to its then tenant, subject to a decision by the competent authority, hereafter to be defined, that the tenant is a person competent to use it for its full productive purpose. The land shall henceforth be held in Cultivating Tenure, as hereafter to be defined, and its holders shall be known as Cultivating Tenants.

This transference shall not be carried out until arrangements are made for a payment of just compensation to the present landowner in the form of an annuity equivalent to

the present fair net rent of the land. On and from the appointed date all sales of cultivable land shall be prohibited.

#### OPTION TO LANDLORD.

237. The landlord may, subject to the payment of proper compensation and to any relevant conditions in his lease or agreement with the tenant, take over and himself farm any land which has customarily been occupied as a home farm, or any land which the competent authority considers should in the interests of good cultivation be cultivated by him, and he shall henceforth be the Occupying Owner of that land, provided that proper compensation as defined in the Agricultural Holdings Acts shall be paid to the tenants of such land.

#### OCCUPIER-OWNED LAND.

238. All cultivable land which, at the appointed date, is held in freehold and occupied by a *bona fide* agriculturist, shall be left in the hands of its holder.

The right of the State to secure the proper use of the land for productive purposes shall apply to this as to all other cultivable land, and, accordingly, the competent authority, already referred to, shall have the right to purchase any occupier-owned holding which is found to be badly farmed in order to transfer it in Cultivating Tenure to a person or persons able to farm it well.

An occupying owner shall have a right to transfer his holding to Cultivating Tenure by selling his interests in it to the State on the terms described in Section 241 of this Report. The terms there described shall apply to the purchase of occupier-owned holdings taken over as badly farmed.

An occupying owner shall have the same right of bequest as a Cultivating Tenant (see Paragraph 247) and shall be eligible to benefit by the system of Credit established and by other schemes undertaken by the State on the basis of Cultivating Tenure. The State shall have a right of pre-

emption if an occupying owner at any time wishes to give up his holding, or if he dies without an heir competent to farm the land.

#### LAND OF SPORTING VALUE.

239. With regard to any land mainly used for sport, either the competent authority, or the State, shall have power to take it over on an annuity based on its net value for the best use to which it can be put.

*Note.*—This matter will be referred to in Chapter IX. when the question of Game and Sporting Rights is more closely gone into. Here it is necessary only to refer to the Sections on Afforestation and Reclamation in Chapter IV. The power of taking over such land is given to the State as well as to the proper authority (*i.e.*, a County Authority, *see* Sections 263 to 288), in order that any land which is cultivable, but not cultivated, may be brought into use, and that a national scheme of Afforestation, accompanied by the creation of forest workers' holdings, may be made really effective. We believe that the Forestry Commissioners' task of acquiring sufficient land in advance of their present programme of planting might be considerably facilitated by giving them the power of acquiring land now in the market and now devoted to sport by payment of an annuity equivalent to the net income derivable from it.

#### HOLDINGS PURCHASED BY SITTING TENANTS.

240. Occupying Owners who as sitting tenants have since April 1917 bought their holdings, shall have a right to claim special terms for the transference of their holdings to Cultivating Tenure, these terms being that the State should buy them out, on their application to the competent authority, by a capital sum based on the price actually paid by the occupying owner. Application for transference on special terms must be made within two years from the appointed date.

*Note on Sitting Tenant Purchasers and Occupier Owned Land.* The avoidance of capital purchase is an integral part of our policy. The exception here is justified by the fact that only in this way can justice be done and full production be secured from the land. Many occupying owners have become so most unwillingly: they have been the victims of irresistible pressure. The community suffers with them. The letting down of a large

area of land and its inevitable impoverishment owing to its purchase at an inflated value is the fact to be faced.

The pressure to purchase was applied with particular severity during the period of inflated prices which followed the Great War. No other business man was in quite the same position as the farmer even at this time. No one but the farmer was faced with the necessity of having to pay a great price for the privilege of continuing in business, and keeping a roof over his head. The farmer's position was fundamentally different from that of other business men, and a decisive factor of difference was land monopoly.

Elsewhere in this Report has been emphasised the heaviness of the charges falling on the cultivator as the result of forced purchase and here need be repeated only that—

(a) Mortgage interests and repayment charges are often higher than the previous rent.

(b) A farmer who lost his farm had no chance of obtaining another as tenant.

(c) Outsiders whose main interests in life were not agricultural, were in competition with farmers for land.

(d) The farmer had to sink his capital and burden his future income by paying amenity and monopoly value for what to him had a purely commercial value.

(e) In the price he paid was often included value added to the holding by his own exertions and expenditure.

The disastrousness of forced purchase may be illustrated by two typical cases :—

(1) A labourer in East Anglia reports as follows :—

“Half-a-mile from here an occupying owner employs two men and one boy on a farm of 325 acres. He and his son both work to some extent, but hardly work half their time ordinarily, and sometimes do nothing for several days.”

(2) One of our Investigators reported :—

“In this area is to be found farm after farm bought by their occupiers during the period of high prices, skinned of stock and robbed of fertility because of the occupiers' efforts to pay off their liabilities.”

We have had considerable hesitation on whether a term for special assistance should be set. The period April 1917 to June 1921 has been already delimited by the Agricultural Credits Act of 1923 as one for special assistance. By this Act occupying owners who bought in the special

period had put at their disposal funds at a lower rate of interest than that frequently charged on the mortgages incurred. There is, however, a very strong case for extending the period. As we point out in Paragraph 26r such figures as are available for 1924 show a considerable rise in prices for farms. The occupying owner who bought in 1924 may have as strong a case for special treatment as the occupying owner who bought in the 1917-1921 period. Nor, unfortunately, is there reason to believe that the forces compelling purchase on unfair terms have yet ceased to operate.

In considering the case for special treatment emphasis should be laid not only on the actual circumstances in which farms have been or are now being bought, but also on the national interest in securing good cultivation of all land.

The general case for bringing owner-occupied land under the scheme is very strongly based. Our Enquiry Campaign Meetings brought to light a large number of complaints in villages that among the worst farmers of the district were some of the occupying owners. It is essential also to prevent the growth of a new kind of fictitious value such as would attach to a minority of land held in freehold when other land was held in cultivating tenure. If, say, 20 per cent. of the country's cultivable land were held in freehold as interpreted to-day, great abuses would arise from land speculation and considerable harm would be done to the ultimate purpose of the Cultivating Tenure policy.

On the other hand there is excellent reason for making some distinction between land held under occupying ownership and land now held in tenancy. Men who have bought land in order to cultivate it have a better moral title to its undisturbed possession than men who enjoy ownership at the ultimate expense, little as they may have realised it, of the active workers of the soil.

#### PURCHASE PRICE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED HOLDINGS.

241. The State shall be under an obligation to take over the holding of any Occupying Owner who applies for

its transfer to Cultivating Tenure, or any holding which becomes vacant through the death of an Occupying Owner without an heir competent and willing to succeed. In transferring any owner-occupied holding to Cultivated Tenure (except those referred to in section 240 of this Report), the price payable shall be the amount of the valuation made at the time of the operative Act coming into force, plus the then value of improvements made since the basic valuation or minus any depreciations.

#### LANDLORD'S ANNUITY.

242. The owner of any land (not being owner-occupied land) transferred to Cultivating Tenancy shall be guaranteed by the State an income equivalent to the net rent now received by him from the land in his possession, due regard being paid in settling the amount, to the wages of labour and to any liability attaching to the Cultivating Tenant as a result of negligence on his (the landowner's) part, or that of his predecessors, or to any special value remaining in the land as a result of his or their expenditure.

#### METHOD OF FIXING LANDLORD'S ANNUITY.

243. The precise figure of the landlord's annuity shall be fixed by Commissioners, or a Land Court, as defined in paragraphs 283 and 284. The Commissioners, or Land Court, will fix the annuity in respect of each farm or holding so that the annuity may represent the FAIR NET RENT receivable for the holding in question. To arrive at the Fair Net Rent, deduction must be made from the gross rent received for the cost of management and repairs and other charges necessarily and properly incident to the ownership of the property. In order to be just to any landlord who has charged less than the rentable value of the property, or has expended on the permanent equipment money for which he has not recouped himself in rent, or in order to enable the State to charge a lower rent to

the Cultivating Tenant or Tenants of any land which has been over-rented, either the landlord or landlords on the one hand or the tenant or tenants on the other may apply in respect of these matters for an adjustment of the gross rent before the net rent is calculated from it. But the Fair Net Rent shall normally be regarded as the gross rent less the percentage allowed over a recent period of years under the heading of "necessary expenses" by the Income Tax Commissioners.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Note.—A note must here be added on the relationship of rent to wages. We have pointed out elsewhere in this Report (paragraph 74) that there is no apparent connection between the intrinsic profitability of agriculture in any county and the wage fixed for that county. Wages on the whole are higher in pastoral counties than in arable. A higher wage rate does not seem to compel a farmer to cut down the amount of labour employed. Agricultural wages have, in fact, been raised to a living level, and are maintained at that level, where alternative employments are open to men living in rural districts. We have found no evidence to prove that British agriculture cannot pay a living wage to the men it employs. We have no hesitation whatever in declaring that the first principle of agrarian policy must be a living wage for agricultural workers. We want to avoid any quarrel about mere words. By a living wage we mean a livelihood; it is immaterial whether it be called a living wage, a good wage or an economic wage, and whether it be paid wholly in cash or not, and whether it is paid wholly by an employer or partly by an employer and partly by direct use of land. Nor do we believe for a moment that starvation wages are remunerative in agriculture. The under-payment of labour has driven scores of thousands of the sturdiest and most skilful workers from the land; has depreciated land which requires the application to it of skill as well as of capital; and has lowered both production and productivity. We propose, therefore, in the following paragraph, that when the Court is fixing Fair Net Rents it should consider the minimum wage fixed for the area and should take that into account in assessing the annuity which the landlord is to receive and the rent which the Cultivating Tenant is to pay. It is not contemplated that the Court will simply make an arithmetical deduction, but it will reckon as one of the transferable burdens which pass to the Cultivating Tenant the liability imposed by the necessity of paying a living wage to any labourers employed by him.



244. Before the Fair Net Rents are fixed in any area, a minimum wage for agricultural workers shall be fixed for that area. When the Fair Net Rent is fixed for any holding, the Cultivating Tenant shall have a right of appeal against it on the ground that he cannot pay the minimum wage to labour at the rent fixed. If he proves that the rent fixed makes it impossible for him to pay the minimum wage, the Court shall reduce the Fair Net Rent, and consequently the landlord's annuity, by the amount required.

#### REDEMPTION AND REALISATION OF LANDLORD'S ANNUITY.

245. The landlord's annuity shall be, in principle, perpetual. But the State may make such arrangements as are equitable, by sinking fund, drawings or other means, to redeem the annuities at any time in any way equitable to all parties. The annuity shall be paid in income bonds or in such other way as is necessary to enable the recipient to realise its value at any time in the open market.

*Note.*—Landlords might be given the option of payment either in Bonds paying a fixed interest or by a guaranteed annuity. The method of amortising or funding the annuity payments must be governed by the state of the country's finances at the time of Cultivating Tenure coming into force.

#### FIXED RENT.

246. Subject always to good husbandry, tenure under Cultivating Tenure shall be for life, with power to transmit to heirs. Unless and until there is a break in tenancy caused by the surrender of a farm, either voluntarily or as a result of action against bad husbandry or of failure in the family succession, the rent initially fixed for a holding shall remain unaltered. (In the event of a catastrophic change in the value of money, Parliament would no doubt intervene to alter the rent.)

#### RIGHT OF BEQUEST.

247. A Cultivating Tenant shall have power to devise to his widow, or her widower, to son, daughter, grandson,

or grand-daughter, or, by leave of the proper authority, to a near relative who, before the testator's death, has been resident and working on the farm or under training for succession. A Cultivating Tenant during his or her lifetime may transfer a holding to persons within these same degrees of relationship, and under the same conditions. This provision allows for retirement from farming, and for transference of title from, say, daughter to son-in-law.

No agreement shall be made for any payment to the transferrer by way of rent or its equivalent. In all cases of bequest or of transfer the successor must be competent to cultivate the land properly.

#### COMPENSATION FOR ADDED VALUE.

248. A Cultivating Tenant may surrender a holding at any time. At the surrender of a holding, the outgoing holder shall have a right to full compensation for the fair value of improvements made by him. (See Para. 250, note). If the holding becomes vacant owing to the death of a Cultivating Owner without heirs competent to farm it, the value of the late holder's improvements shall be paid to his estate.

#### PAYMENT OF FAIR NET RENT.

249. The Fair Net Rent payable by the Cultivating Tenant shall be paid by the Cultivating Tenant of that holding to the local Collector of Taxes.

#### REASSESSMENT OF RENT ON BREAK IN TENURE.

250. Whenever there occurs a break in tenure, the Fair Net Rent shall be reassessed by the competent authority. The new assessment would be based on the value of the holding to a competent cultivator desiring to make the

best use of it while paying to any persons employed on the holding an adequate wage.

*Note on Compensation for Improvements.*—A proper incentive to full cultivation of land cannot be provided unless any farmer is able to realise what he has put into the land at his own cost, if, at any time, he desires to change his holding, or take to other means of livelihood. The life of agricultural improvements varies widely; some are quickly exhausted; others subsist for a long term of years. The only reliable test of value is the value of the improvements to an incoming tenant. Our proposal is that an outgoing should be able to realise the value added by him to the land and its equipment in so far as that value is unexpired, and in so far as it can be realised by an incomer. Considerable latitude could be left to the responsible authority as to the way in which such compensation should be paid. In some cases the incomer might pay a lump sum to the outgoing. In other cases the incomer might pay for the extra value given to the holding by its predecessor by an addition to its annual Fair Net Rent. It is, of course, to be understood that any farmer who does not take the new title to be conferred under Cultivating Tenure will go out according to his agreements and the present Agricultural Holdings Acts.

#### PROOF OF GOOD HUSBANDRY.

251. It has already been provided that on the appointed date the then tenant shall become the Cultivating Tenant subject to proof of his being competent to farm the land properly. In many cases such proof will readily and quickly be given. In other cases there will be a doubt, and a period of grace should be given to allow present tenants who cannot be regarded immediately as good cultivators to prove that they are or can become efficient in the management of their land. The good farmer would thus secure the Cultivating Tenure of his farm immediately. The bad farmer would be given time to amend his way, reform his methods, or prove that the bad condition of his land was due to circumstances which, while he was a tenant, were outside his own control.

A LANDOWNER WHO HAS READ THE REPORT IN DRAFT MAKES THE FOLLOWING NOTE ON THE PROCEDURE BEFORE THE COMMISSIONERS.

251A. As I see it the procedure will be as follows, and I do not think that it will generally be either cumbersome or prolonged.

1. There will be opportunity for adjudicating whether the present gross rent is a fair one. The fact that one presumably sensible man is content to pay it and another to receive it will make this stage unnecessary in nine cases out of ten. But it may be that the tenant, for instance, has been turned out of a farm, and has had to bid very high to get another. He may be able to show that this offer was, say, 10 per cent. above what any local farmers offered who knew the land, and that he has hardly been able to pay. In this case he will be able to allege that he is *over-rented*. Conversely the landowner may allege that his rents were not put up post-war as much as neighbouring rents and that the offers he gets whenever farms are vacant show that some or all of his farms are *under-rented*. This is the first stage.

2. Then comes the question what should be the allowance off gross rents made for repairs and maintenance. The owner will produce returns of his income, tax allowances both for recent years and before the War. (It would not do to fix the net rent solely on consideration of post-war expenditure, as many estates which were very well kept up before the War have been more or less left alone since. The owner has rested on his oars hoping that prices would come down). This will indicate the sort of average expenditure that has taken place on the property. The Commissioners will compare this with the average percentage known to them on other similar properties, and if the actual expenditure is about this average and no tenant alleges neglect, this percentage deduction will be confirmed in their award. The comparison with known

averages is necessary to avoid the penalisation of a man who may have been over-generous.

3. But after ascertaining the average actually spent and comparing it with the average spent on good properties, there will be an opportunity for any tenant to allege that the buildings, cottages, etc., on his farm have not been kept up as they should have been. This stage is necessary to prevent a man benefiting who has starved his property. Presumably while the Commissioners have been getting to work, the new Authority will have been elected and appointed, and they will have begun their survey. The survey will cover the condition of farm-houses and cottages, and if there is in any case more to put right than falls within current repairs and renewals, the tenant will be served with a notice of what requires to be done before the certificate of good cultivation can be granted. These notices can be produced before the Commissioners, and will be a definite indication of the degree of neglect of the farm and the cottages upon it, and it will be possible, easily, to make allowance, permanent or temporary, off the net rent, to compensate for the extra expense the Cultivating Tenant will be put to in bringing things up to the mark.

4. Adjustments for tithe and similar burdens will generally be simple, as they are a simple matter of arithmetic.

5. Either landlord or tenant will have an appeal to the Court against the award, arising out of any of the above procedure.

#### PRIMARY DUTIES OF THE PROPER AUTHORITY.

252. The primary, and the ultimate, duty of the proper authority will be to secure the good cultivation of all cultivable land in its area. To this end it may terminate the tenure of any occupier of cultivable land who is proved to be unwilling or unable to farm it satisfactorily, subject to payment of equitable compensation,

On any holding coming to hand, the Authority shall decide how best it should be used in the national interest ; whether, for example, the holding in question should be divided into smaller farms (or possibly, but improbably, merged into another holding) or let as a unit. In any case it shall be the duty of the Authority to place on the land the person or persons able and willing to make the best use of it.

It shall also be a duty of the Authority to ascertain the unsatisfied demand for Small Holdings in its area at the inception of the scheme and to register requirements in order to meet them as land comes in hand. They can also, without any unfairness to those who are to receive their titles of good cultivation, make a start in providing land for small men. (See note to next paragraph.) It shall further be a duty of the Authority to provide land for every qualified agricultural labourer who claims half an acre of land as his statutory right (See Section 376).

#### SURVEY OF RURAL CONDITIONS.

253. A preliminary duty of the County Agricultural Authority shall be to obtain accurate knowledge of rural conditions in its area. In Section 365 will be found our proposals for a Survey of all land in the country. The physical Survey there spoken of is urgently required, as it is impossible to set our country house in order without accurate acquaintance with its condition. The task of the County Agricultural Authority with regard to the Survey will, in the first instance, be sociological.

NOTE.—The two most important matters which would need attention in this Survey would be the condition of the farm cottages, with which we deal later, and the demand for land for small holdings. Provision of small holdings to those men who primarily require them, namely, the agricultural workers, has been arrested for so long that we do not think that the natural requirements of smaller men for land could be met at any one single date. It

must be a gradual and progressive process covering a period of years, but the beginning of our scheme gives an opportunity for making a start which must not be neglected. All the people who wish to reach a high position on the ladder cannot be put into the position they finally desire straight away, but many can at once be given a secure grip of some of the lower rungs.

The following matters can therefore be justly taken into consideration without any unfairness to the present tenants :—

First, are there sufficient allotments, and are the allotment fields sufficiently convenient to the cottages? If not, better places must be taken which are convenient.

Secondly, are there men who desire to exercise the right, which we suggest should be statutory, to half an acre of land? If so, this should also be taken with due regard for not unfairly reducing the remaining area of any particular farm.

Thirdly, are there men so certain to make good as small holders that they should be given a start by receiving a few acres to cultivate in their spare time? Regard will be had in giving these men a start as to whether, under the provisions for Credit which we suggest later, they could equip their land with the necessary buildings, for we do not propose that either the Authority or the nation should be burdened at the inception of our scheme with a provision of elaborate buildings which would have to be left on a non-economic basis.

### *Division II.*

#### *Annuity and Rent.*

254. Into the outline of policy must here be interpolated a few paragraphs of explanatory matter, dealing in particular with the reason for proposing, firstly, that landlords should be paid out by an annuity based on the net rent now received for the land, and secondly, that the actual net rent should be adjusted in certain particulars. It

will be convenient also to give a concrete illustration of what Cultivating Tenure will mean to a farmer and, to facilitate that illustration, an average figure of Fair Net Rent.

#### ANNUITY AND NET RENT.

255. The reason for proposing an annuity payment is that the urgent need of agriculture is a sufficiency of capital; that the capital improvement of its land is the soundest investment the State can make, and that the State's credit resources should therefore be used to assist the cultivator rather than to pay a lump sum for the purchase of the freehold.

The reason for basing the annuity on the Net Rent value requires rather more detailed treatment.

The State, if in the national interest it decides to take back into its effective ownership all cultivable land, is bound to compensate landowners for real values, but it is not bound to pay for values which are injurious to agriculture as an industry or are in any sense anti-social. Land to-day has two values, one, a definite, ascertainable, agricultural value, the other an indefinite, speculative value. The second is compounded of monopoly value, amenity value, prestige value, excess sporting value and potential site value. But it is realisable only when land is put on the market piecemeal, for only then is the essentially monopolistic character of landownership enabled to exert much influence on its price. This duplication of value lies at the root of the agricultural and rural problems. The merging of the two values in the selling, as distinct from the rental, value of farm land, has, at one time or another, unduly enriched landowners who sold. Lately, by the operation of death duties, it has impoverished and crippled the landowners who have not sold. Only confusion of thought can lead to the demand that land should be treated more favourably than other forms of property because of this result of its double value. The true solution is to relieve agriculture from the burden of unreal values, and



at the same time to remove what has become the greatest obstacle to the healthy development both of towns and villages in this country. The real present value of cultivable land is its value for agriculture, coupled sometimes with a small element of value derived from timber and such sporting value as is consistent with the full agricultural use of the land. There may be, in addition, a real potential value, being the present value of any parcel of land as a site for immediate or future building. All other values are unreal. We propose to recognise real values and no others.

#### SPECULATIVE VALUE.

256. The composite value which is the sum of real and unreal values may, for brevity, be called "speculative value." The influence of this speculative value has been particularly strong and particularly disturbing to agriculture in this country because of the wealth of our urban populations, their proximity to rural areas, and their habit of spending in the country the wealth made in the towns. The slowing down of industrial expansion, with its consequent unemployment in towns and adverse balance in trade, following on the War, with the emphasis it threw on the dangers of our insular position, turns the minds of the country back to its rural problem. Solutions which do not go to the root of the matter are useless. If an agrarian policy is to be effective, it must find means of separating soil value from speculative value, and of ensuring that the cultivator shall be concerned only with the former.

Private rights in speculative values cannot be allowed to stand in the way of public necessity. Access to land, better wages for land workers and fair profits for cultivators—all factors in greater production and a greater population on the land—must not be sacrificed to the payment of unreal values. Neither the nation as a whole nor newly established Cultivating Tenants must be burdened with charges which cannot be *legitimately* met from the proceeds of agriculture. To establish a universal system of Occupy-

ing Ownership by purchasing the land or enabling the purchase of the land at its speculative value would do nothing to remedy the trouble. The pressure of the speculative value would still be exerted on the new owners, and this would as certainly lead to the breakdown of the system and to the neglect of good farming for land speculation as it has to the breakdown of landlordism. The experience of the County Councils in working the Small Holdings Acts conveys the same warning as the "menacing drift to tenancy" (*See Section 170*) in parts of the U.S.A.

#### ELIMINATING FALSE VALUES.

257. The points contained in the preceding two sections put, in a highly condensed form, the argument which runs throughout this Report. In its simplest expression it is, that if English rural life is to be revitalised the industry of agriculture must be put on a sound basis. Human life is a complex of economic and social factors. The social factors are of vital importance. What is at stake is not merely the prosperity of agriculture, but our rural civilisation. But social factors cannot operate in conditions of general depression and discouragement. Depression can be relieved only by relieving agriculture from the weight of false values. False values can be eliminated only by refusing to recognise them and making their reappearance impossible. Landlordism has broken down because of its intrinsic defects. Landowners should get the real value of their property—and no more. The actual cultivators of the soil should pay a rent which represents its real agricultural value—and no more. They should be given (*155 et seq.*) the fullest security of tenure compatible with the State's right to ensure full use of the land. Present contingent values should be recognised in a way which does not make the cultivator pay for them. But any future values which result from the activities of the community

as a whole must be secured for the community. In so far as the community supports and assists agriculture, the consequent increase in the value of land must go to it, not to private individuals. Subject to this condition, national credit can properly be used for the support of agriculture, and national energy devoted to building up marketing, transport and other machinery for giving the growers of home-grown food their proper share in the prices paid for it by consumers. If the landlord has charged a fair rent and expended on the holding the amount required to maintain its rental value, the actual net rent will be Fair Net Rent. If, however, the cultivator has, on gaining possession of the holding, to make good out of his own pocket deterioration caused by the previous landlord's inability or unwillingness to maintain its rental value, that prospective expenditure should be allowed for in the rent he has to pay under Cultivating Tenure. The wages of labour are the first charge on the industry, and provision for that must also be made. On the other hand, if it appears that the landlord might, in view of the ratio of his expenditure to the gross rent, have obtained a higher net rent than he actually had obtained, the Fair Net Rent would be greater than the actual net rent.

#### ARITHMETIC AND INTENTIONS.

258. Elaborate computations have been made by individual land owners or their agents on their behalf, and also by such authoritative bodies as the Surveyors' Institution, the Land Agents' Society, and the Central Land Owners' Association, of the burdens which at present fall on landed property. Some of these burdens, e.g., tithe (see, however, paragraph 391 on Tithes below), land tax, rates, repairs, renewals and reinstatements necessary to maintain rental value, will necessarily pass to the cultivating tenant. Others will not so pass. Clearly, the incidence of income tax and death duties will be radically

altered. Some, e.g., cost of management (an item frequently estimated at 5 per cent. of the gross rental) will be eliminated in their present form. This may be said here in anticipation of the sections dealing with the cost of administering the scheme of Cultivating Tenure that it will get rid of an uneconomical method of managing separate and to some extent competing estates.

The computations referred to above have generally been made with the intention of proving that landed property is unfairly burdened in comparison with other forms of property. Some of them would make it appear that the net rent on an average estate is as low as 25 per cent. of the gross rent. The figures given in paragraphs 206-209 may be consulted and other authoritative examples will be found in Appendix VI. Approaching the problem now from an angle diametrically opposed to that at which they previously entered it, the same authorities might now suggest that the net rent is considerably higher than the figures at which they previously arrived.

#### AN AVERAGE FOR ILLUSTRATION.

259. We have devoted a great deal of time to the figures which have been published and to others which have been furnished to us privately. We conclude that, *so far as it is possible to arrive at an average figure*, the transferable charges in respect of an average holding on an average estate amount to something like 35 per cent. of the gross rent. A Cultivating Tenant, on an average holding whose net rent was fixed at 65 per cent. of the gross, would, on this calculation, be no worse off than he now is as tenant, if he continued the late landlord's average annual expenditure on repairs and maintenance. Actually, however, he would be very much better off because he would be free to improve, secure against eviction or overhead sale, and be assured of the full value of improvements effected by him. He would, in fact, be put in the position of any other business man who has to calculate

what capital expenditure will be remunerative. He would be saved from the present unbusinesslike arrangement by which farming improvements are determined by one man and paid for by another.

The landlord, on the other hand, being relieved of the transferable charges—which he is bound to incur as a landlord but would escape as the receiver of an annuity—of the quite numerous incidental and consequential expenses, would be at least as well off as now if he were to receive 65 per cent. of his gross rent as an annuity.

We do not, however, attach great importance to this average figure. The annuity and net rent must be decided in respect of each holding with reference to its special circumstances. The value of the average figure is to enable the process of transfer to be visualised. We use it always subject to this limitation.

#### NON-AGRICULTURAL VALUES.

260. Later paragraphs will deal with the policy to be followed with regard to those non-agricultural values which, as they can be realised without detriment to the agricultural use of the land, should properly be represented in the landlord's annuity. It should be noted here that some of them are properly speaking transferable and others are not. If values are transferred, the Cultivating Tenant should pay for them. If he cannot realise them he should certainly not be compelled to pay for them. That is the principle to be followed, and reference to the paragraphs dealing with Game and Sporting Rights and with contingent values (*i.e.*, potential building values which may be realised after the transference of land to Cultivating Tenure) will make clear how it is applied. Very briefly may be said by anticipation that the landlord's annuity will be increased by the value of any sporting rights which the Cultivating Tenant desires to enjoy for himself; that the same principle applies to the use of timber; and that

the landowner will benefit by contingent building values up to the value at the time of transference, whenever they may be realised.

#### A CONCRETE EXAMPLE.

261. The position of a farmer under Cultivating Tenure, as compared with his position under tenancy and any scheme of occupier-ownership achieved by purchase may now be illustrated. Now let the case be taken of a farm the tenant of which pays his landlord £100 per annum in rent. Were this farm now to be sold in the open market it might, and probably would, fetch between £2,000 and £3,000, the figure varying according to, first, the quality of the land, its accessibility to the market and other factors which constitute rural agricultural value; secondly, its desirability for residential, sporting or other uses not agricultural. Let the mean figure of £2,500 be taken.<sup>1</sup>

#### IF THE FARMER BUYS.

If this farm were bought either in the open market or by the State under a scheme of general purchase and re-sale the annual charge incident on the farm could not be less

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<sup>1</sup> The average number of years' purchase reported by farmers to the Hutchison Committee was about 25, but many witnesses gave a much higher figure. An occupying owner in Yorkshire said: "Farms are being sold (*i.e.*, in 1923), at about 45 years' purchase. County Councils buy at 120 years' purchase."

Another occupying owner in Wales gave the instance of his own farm: "Pre-War rental, £75, bought after outbreak of War at £3,400, *i.e.*, 45 years' purchase. Farms are selling in this district privately to tenants at 30-45 years' purchase. Twenty-five years would be reasonable if buildings, etc., were in good condition, and sufficient."

A tenant farmer in Somerset said that farms are selling at from 30 to 40 years' purchase.

Another farmer in Wales said 40-70 years' purchase.

Yet another in Cornwall said 27-30 years' purchase was the practice.

*(See over. This footnote is continued on next page.)*

than £125. Unless the State were willing to incur a loss on the transaction (and there has been no responsible proposal that State purchase should be carried through with a loss), the cultivator would have to pay £25 more in

*(Continuation of footnote from previous page.)*

"An Economic Survey of a Rural Parish" (J. Pryse Howell, Oxford Institute for Research in Agricultural Economics, 1923) gives illuminating details of sales in the parish being investigated "during the last few years." The following may be noted:—

1. Acreage 110. Rent £36. Dwelling-house condemned by sanitary inspector. Outbuildings dilapidated and inadequate. Bought at 26 years' purchase.

2. Acreage 27. Rent £18. Dwelling-house and outbuildings in fairly good condition. Bought at 39 years' purchase.

3. Acreage 13. Rent £13. Dwelling-house in very bad condition. Outbuildings dilapidated. Bought at 29 years' purchase.

4. Acreage 52. Rent £46. Dwelling-house and outbuildings in fairly good condition. Bought at 24 years' purchase.

5. Acreage 21. Rent £19. Dwelling-house condemned by sanitary inspector. Bought at 20 years' purchase.

6. Acreage 72. Rent £30. Dwelling-house condemned by sanitary inspector. Bought at 25 years' purchase.

7. Acreage 22. Rent £22. Dwelling-house and outbuildings in very bad condition, condemned by sanitary inspector. Bought at 16 years' purchase.

8. Acreage 60. Rent £20. Dwelling-house and outbuildings in fairly good condition. Bought at 25 years' purchase.

9. Acreage 70. Rent £40. Tenant has spent £200 on repairs. Bought at 27 years' purchase.

10. Acreage 45. Rent £28. No dwelling-house. Outbuildings dilapidated. Bought at 26 years' purchase.

We have obtained a mass of information of farm sales effected in the years 1913, 1918, 1919, 1922 and 1924 in different counties of England and Wales. We find that the average for the five years taken together is, in the case of different counties, 21 years, 23 years, 22½ years, etc.

Such figures as are available for 1924 show a considerable rise over 1922, due undoubtedly to the keen competition for farm lands evident in the last year.

*But, be it observed, these figures represent so many years' purchase not at actual income, but at gross rent. On the basis of the calculation in Section 259, 25 years' gross rent is equivalent to 38½ years' net rent.*

annual charges than he now pays in rent. Moreover he would have to carry the cost of repairs and other transferable burdens. If the tenant bought without State assistance the annual charges would certainly be higher than £125.

#### UNDER CULTIVATING TENURE.

262. If the proper authority decided that the previous rent was fair, and that no liability attached to the land by reason of neglect by the landlord, it would, on the supposition put in section 259, fix the landlord's annuity at £65, and the Fair Net Rent at the same figure. The farmer, therefore, would be £35 a year better off under Cultivating Tenure than he now is. He would have to carry out his own repairs and improvements, but in so doing would have absolute freedom and security. He would be at least £60 a year better off than he would be under any scheme of State purchase or State-aided purchase.

#### *Division III.*

#### *Administration.*

263. In approaching the question of the administration of Cultivating Tenure it is necessary to trench for some distance on the whole question of Local Government, on ground, that is to say, which is encumbered with the debris of many controversies and is even now the battleground of a protracted and voluminous enquiry.<sup>1</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> The Royal Commission on Local Government held its first sitting on April 12th, 1923. The seventh volume of evidence taken by it was published in September, 1925, and brings the tale of closely printed foolscap pages to 1,542. The Commission has now issued its report on the first part of its reference. Later on it will proceed to deal with its other points of reference.



history of Local Government in England has for some generations largely consisted of attempts to simplify its machinery while constantly adding to the variety and responsibility of its work. On a cleared ground it would be comparatively easy to outline a method of administration which could, with reasonable hope of success, be relied upon to be both efficient and impartial. But, as things are, we must begin by setting out as clearly as possible the objects to be secured and the limitations which have to be recognised.

#### NATIONAL ENERGY AND DEMOCRATIC CONTROL.

264. We start with the conviction that as has happened in Germany, Holland and, most markedly, in Denmark, so in England an agrarian revival must be carried forward by a great popular movement. National energy and the backing of national credit must be applied to the whole agricultural problem. The direction of Cultivating Tenure must therefore be in the hands of a body elected on the widest possible franchise.

#### NOT A SIDE ISSUE.

265. The second consideration is that the work to be performed for agriculture is too great to be regarded as a side issue in the affairs of a body which is engaged in a dozen other activities. It must be in the hands of a body which is able to devote sufficient time to its details.

The administrative body for Cultivating Tenure should therefore be, if not an *ad hoc* body, one with a substantial degree of independence.

#### WEIGHT FOR RURAL VOTES.

266. The third consideration is that in a nation where so small a proportion of the population are engaged in agriculture, some means should be devised of giving predominance on the agricultural authority to the experience and judg-

ment of persons whose interests are, in the main or altogether, rural.

In practice that means taking steps to give rural voters, despite their inferiority in numbers, particular weight in the polling for the agricultural body.

#### THE UNIT OF AREA.

267. The fourth consideration is that the unit of administrative area should be small enough to avoid centralisation and its attendant evils, and yet large enough to escape the dangers of favouritism and personal prejudices.

The unit of area indicated would seem to be the administrative county.

#### POPULAR COUNTY AUTHORITIES.

268. The first application of these principles is fairly simple. The administrative body should be popularly elected on the widest possible franchise. Each administrative county should have its own representative body. Each county should be autonomous to the largest degree compatible with safeguarding the interest of the nation as a whole. In some way (which must be defined) rural areas must be rescued from urban preponderance. To some extent (which must also be defined), the administrative bodies must be exempt from other kinds of administrative work. We can start then with the conception of County Agricultural Authorities, each definitely charged with the welfare of agriculture in its county, and each given wide powers to enable it, in respect of its own area, to perform the duties which, by our postulates set out in paragraph 234, are those which the community can and should carry out for agriculture.

#### FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AUTHORITY.

269. At the beginning of the scheme a much greater volume of work will have to be carried out than will be necessary once the scheme has been established. Part

of this non-recurring work, namely, the settlement of Landlords' Annuities and of Fair Net Rents will be judicial rather than administrative. As such it will not form part of the County Agricultural Authority's work.

The routine work of the County Agricultural Authority (C.A.A. for brevity's sake) will be to organise any public services which affect agriculture. Agricultural Education needs the technique of the educationist rather than of the agriculturist and should be left to the County Council. But the C.A.A. will also take over all the functions of the existing County Agricultural Committees in relation to Small Holdings, proceedings under the Agricultural Holdings Acts, Diseases of Animals Acts, etc. It will organise and arrange for the necessary surveys and inspections of land on which will be based decisions as to good and bad farming. It will dispose of any land which becomes vacant through death, bankruptcy, voluntary surrender or enforced termination of tenure by reason of proved inefficiency in farming. It will be the means of bringing agriculturists into touch with the Credit Scheme to be established. It will promote co-operative marketing of produce and purchase of requisites. It will initiate and carry through, in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture, schemes for reclaiming waste-land.

In conjunction with the Forestry Commissioners, it will organise afforestation. It will provide small holdings, allotments, co-operative settlements, demonstration and training farms as required, and, generally, it will deal with all matters connected with increasing the yield of the soil and its population-maintaining capacity.

Set out in this way the C.A.A.'s list of functions looks formidable enough. To those who are familiar with the multiplicity of duties which existing Local Government bodies have to perform, the list will appear less frightening. It might easily be maintained that in bulk and variety the work of County Education Committees is already more onerous than that of the C.A.A. is ever likely to be.

The existing County Agricultural Committees are Committees of the County Councils with one-third of their members appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture. They carry through a great deal of work under difficulties caused largely by the slowness of hold most of them have on the general agricultural problems of the county. The work of the County Agricultural Authority will be greater in bulk. It will not necessarily, on that account, be the more complicated.

#### INITIAL WORK.

270. The initial work will be the actual transference of tenanted holdings from the old system of land tenure to the new. To carry through the non-recurring administrative work, temporary Commissioners (see Section 283) should be appointed. For the non-recurring work of a judicial character a Land Court (see Section 284) will be temporarily required.

#### THE C.A.A. AND THE COUNTY COUNCILS.

271. The two points which in Section 268 were left for further examination must now be faced. Need the County Agricultural Authority be wholly independent of the County Councils? To what extent can they in fact be independent considering the points of contact between their work and that of the County Councils? That is the first problem to be solved. The second is: How can special weight be given to agricultural interests in electing thoroughly democratic County Agricultural Authorities? To answer these questions something further must be said on County Councils in theory and fact.

#### COUNCILLORS AND VOTERS.

272. Among the members of County Councils in the United Kingdom there are to be counted many of the most devoted public workers in the country. But it must be

confessed that the office of County Councillor has not stirred the public imagination. The poll at County Council elections is sadly small. At the same time, villagers are profuse in complaints against their County Councils. The root of the trouble seems to be that, though there have been popular elections, there have not on the whole been popular candidates. County Council work demands time. Attendance at the County town is an expensive business for persons living miles deep in the country. As a result, the tone of some County Councils has been in general reactionary. In the course of our enquiry meetings we found that the vote of village audiences was unanimous against handing over the administration of Cultivating Tenure to the County Councils. So strong was this feeling that even when our speakers suggested ways and means of making the County Councils more thoroughly representative of the popular will, the village audiences refused to be persuaded.

#### TO AVOID OVERLAPPING.

273. It is obvious that if the functions of the County Agricultural Authorities were perceptibly to overlap the functions of the County Councils, or if the administration of Cultivating Tenure were entrusted to a body which would attract popular interest to the detriment of County Councils, either the new rural policy would be handicapped by antagonism not earned on its merits, or the whole County Council method of administration would be dangerously weakened. To avoid either or both of these contingencies it is essential, if possible, to devise a method of administration which will not antagonise County Council interests and will throw renewed vigour into the affairs of the County Councils themselves. Before describing the way in which we think this can be done, we must touch shortly on the general question of *ad hoc* and general authorities.

## PRECEDENTS AND PRACTICAL CONVENIENCE.

274. The tendency of local government affairs in the last fifty years has been towards the elimination of *ad hoc* authorities. But in the previous half century the reverse tendency was at work. The turning point was the Royal Sanitary Commission of 1871 which laid down the perfectly definite principle that:—

“ There should be one Local Authority for all Public Health purposes in every place so that no area should be without an Authority or have more than one.”

This note has been struck before, notably by J. S. Mill in 1861, but since 1871 it has set the pitch of the legislative tune. There has been a steady process of unifying the administration of public services, with the result that now there is no great service, except the Poor Law, standing on its own basis. And that exception seems to be doomed. There is no precedent for a public service working in the unit of a County area but not under the control of the County Council. It may be added that there is also no precedent either for a service working under the County Council but not financed from the county rates, or for a service financed from the county rates not being under County Council control.

There are, however, signs that consolidation cannot be carried to its logical extreme and there may be a reaction to the contrary tendency. Scotland, indeed, has never accepted the principle so whole-heartedly as England, as is evidenced by the continuance in Scotland of *ad hoc* Educational Authorities. It may be added that wherever the extent of an administrative area is dictated by physical or economic rather than political or historical considerations, a definite trend towards *ad hoc* authorities is evident. Drainage authorities are an example on a small scale. On the large scale obvious instances are the Metropolitan Water Board and the Port of London Authority, bodies which cover areas of practical convenience and necessity in a region where Local Government in general is confused

by the arbitrary character of the boundaries of the County of London. What we desire to point out is that despite modern tendencies towards consolidation of executive authority, the *ad hoc* principle is sometimes accepted as necessary and practical, and that there is then no responsible suggestion that the special bodies should be merged in the general. The undesirability of having two separate administrative authorities in the same areas remains unquestioned.

To revert for a moment to our particular problem, it would appear from the general argument that if an *ad hoc* body is required for the County administration of Cultivating Tenure, special pains should be taken to make an organic link between it and the County Council, and to meet its expenses otherwise than from the County rates.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFUSION.

275. A further point to be noted and taken into account is that the County Council Register of Voters is narrower than the Parliamentary Register. We shall propose the use of the County Council Register as a matter of necessity. We anticipate, however, and hope that anomalies of registration are doomed to extinction.

Yet another complication is derived from the fact that the areas represented by County Councillors do not necessarily coincide with any other units of Local Government. County Councillors do not represent rural districts or parishes. The Home Office is empowered to fix and to vary from time to time the number of County Councillors in a County. The County, for County Council polling purposes, is divided on the basis of the numbers thus fixed. One County Councillor may represent a large and populous parish; another may represent a group of sparsely inhabited parishes. Rural districts and urban districts contain an indefinite number of County Councillors' districts, and there is no essential reason why the boundaries of a rural or urban district should coincide

with the boundaries of a group of County Council constituencies. Nor, to touch on yet another method of dividing Counties, is there any essential reason why the boundaries of a Parliamentary division should march with the boundaries of a group of rural or urban areas or with County Council sub-areas. Still another complication is the fact that, contained within County areas but administratively not part of them, are County Boroughs, the growing number and importance of which threaten to undermine the practicability of the County Council system.<sup>1</sup>

These facts have to be faced in approaching the problem, because the complexities and anomalies of the present system of Local Government are in themselves a severe handicap to any clear and logical scheme for the creation of a new Authority.

#### THE DIFFICULTY OF REPRESENTATION BY RURAL DISTRICTS AND URBAN DISTRICTS—

276. The solution which seems to us best is made considerably easier to understand by a preliminary examination of alternative schemes.

We examined a method by which the County Authority would be elected by all Parliamentary electors in the County (*i.e.*, exclusive of County Borough areas but inclusive of Municipal Boroughs) on the basis of one member for each Urban District and two for each Rural District. This seemed to be a just and effective scheme until details were worked out for representative Counties. It was then found that in a number of Counties, bodies thus constituted would be quite unwieldy, and in Counties where there was

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<sup>1</sup> This was the prime cause of the establishment of the present Royal Commission on Local Government. In 1889 the County Boroughs in England and Wales had 29 per cent. of the population of the country and 25 per cent. of the rateable value. In 1921 they had 38 per cent. of the population and 36 per cent. of the rateable value.



great urban development, the rural members would be outweighed. For example, Middlesex would have 31 Urban members and 8 Rural; Lancs. 114 Urban and 38 Rural; and the West Riding of Yorks. 132 Urban and 58 Rural.

In the face of such figures, it is clearly impossible to constitute the Authority on the basis of direct representation for each Rural and Urban District, although such a method would have the great advantage of giving direct local interest in the Authority's work.

—OR BY COUNTY PARLIAMENTARY DIVISIONS.

277. An alternative proposal, which we very carefully considered because of certain outstanding merits, was that County Parliamentary Divisions should be the electoral units, and that in each such unit persons should be elected to the C.A.A. in the proportion of 1 to every thousand agriculturists resident in the area. The Parliamentary Register would be used, but candidates should have an agricultural qualification, that is to say, they were to be persons normally dependent on agriculture for a livelihood. Under this scheme, agriculturists living in the area of Parliamentary Boroughs would be represented in the same proportion, but their representatives would be nominated by the Borough Council, not elected. The threshold of representation, in so far as County Boroughs were concerned, would be 500 agriculturists.

Oxfordshire may be taken as a sample to show how the scheme would work out in practice.

This county, at the 1921 census, had a total population of 189,615 persons. The agricultural population was 17,128. In the county are two County Divisions and one Parliamentary Borough. One of the County Divisions, Henley, has an agricultural population of 8,030, and would therefore be entitled to 8 elected members on the C.A.A. The other, Woodstock, has an agricultural population of

8,600, and would therefore also be entitled to eight elected members. The Parliamentary Borough of Oxford has only 490 agriculturists resident within its boundaries, and would therefore not be entitled to any nominated member on the C.A.A. In this case, therefore, the C.A.A. would consist of 16 members. To take two other counties of a very different character, Kent would have 50 elected members and 3 nominated members. The West Riding of Yorkshire would have 37 elected members and 8 nominated members.

It was also part of this scheme that the Ministry of Agriculture should be required to nominate a number of persons in a proportion of not less than 1 to 4 of the total elected and nominated members of the Authority.

#### ARGUMENT AGAINST THE ABOVE PROPOSALS.

278. The second scheme outlined above would, in our opinion, be perfectly practicable once it were agreed that an *ad hoc* body working independently of the County Council were the right solution of the problem.

We concluded, however, after the most careful examination of these and other proposals, that any peculiar advantages they promised were more than outweighed by the drawbacks of complete dissociation from the County Council. Contained in them, however, are certain points of importance, and the scheme of administration, put forward in the sections subsequent to this, will be more easily understood after considering them. It should be added that both the schemes given above took as a *sine qua non* first the necessity of paying reasonable expenses to members of the authority, and secondly the necessity for taking the poll in such a way that every rural voter should be enabled to vote. Both schemes, moreover, agreed in giving the vote for the C.A.A. to all rural voters, not merely voters actually engaged in agriculture.

## GOOD POINTS RETAINED FROM THE REJECTED SCHEMES.

279. These important points are preserved in the scheme finally devised and for convenience may here be justified.

(1) The payment of members' expenses, including payment for lost time on a reasonable scale, is essential if persons of limited means and limited leisure are to be enabled to stand for election.

(2) The present means of getting villagers to poll for County Council elections are anything but satisfactory. It should be possible, without great difficulty, and without raising any controversial issue, to have the poll for the C.A.A. taken in every rural schoolroom before a presiding officer appointed by the Returning Officer, i.e., the Clerk of the Peace for the County. The presiding officer might be assisted by a person nominated by the Parish Council or Parish Meeting, and duly sworn before a Justice.

(3) Bodies representative specifically of conflicting interests necessarily lose much of their effectiveness in sectional rivalry. The County bodies of which we are thinking must be of maximum effectiveness and must work for a common aim. The welfare of agriculture is the concern not only of farmers and labourers but of every rural dweller. There are many industries whose prosperity depends on that of farmers. Tradesmen whose turnover is affected by the wages paid in a district, professional men who have keen intelligence and a lively interest in the welfare of an agricultural area, and women generally, should have a voice in the election of those who are responsible for local prosperity.

Yet a fourth feature of the second rejected scheme is embodied in our final proposal, namely, that the number of members to be returned for each area should be governed by the number of agriculturists resident in the area. It will simplify matters further if we add that the proposal that candidates should have an agricultural qualification was, after careful consideration, dropped. Difficulties of definition would prove too great in practice.

## THE SCHEME OF ADMINISTRATION PROPOSED.

280. The scheme which seems to us the best that can be devised in the present state of local government may now be set out in concrete terms. The guiding principles are: first, to create direct popular interest in the County Agricultural Authority, secondly, to revive popular interest in the County Councils, and to create an organic, though not a functional, connection between the County Councils and the County Agricultural Authority.

Each Rural District in an administrative county shall elect a member or members to the County Agricultural Authority. There shall be one member for each thousand agriculturists resident in the Rural District, the number of agriculturists being taken as the number returned at the last Census. No Rural District with less than 500 agriculturists shall be entitled to an elected representative on the Authority. Urban Districts or Boroughs shall be entitled to nominate one representative to serve on the C.A.A. if, in their areas, they contain more than 500 agriculturists. If there should be in the boundaries of any Urban District or Borough more than 1,000 agriculturists, the Urban District Council or the Borough Council or Town Council shall be entitled to nominate a further member for each thousand or part-thousand.

The scale of representation, both for Rural Districts and Urban Districts, therefore, will be as follows:—

For 500 to 1,000 agriculturists	...	1 member.
„ 1,000 to 2,000	„	... 2 members.
„ 2,000 to 3,000	„	... 3 „

and so on with one member extra for each additional thousand or part-thousand agriculturists. The election shall be on the County Council register. Representatives of the Rural Districts on the County Agricultural Authority shall be directly elected at the same polling as members of the County Councils. The R.D. representatives, together with the members nominated by U.D.'s and Boroughs, with more than 500 agriculturists apiece shall

constitute half of the members of the C.A.A. Of the other half, two-thirds (i.e., one-third of the whole body) shall be nominated by the County Council, at least half of its nominees being members of the County Council. The remainder (i.e., one-sixth of the whole body) shall consist of persons appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture after consulting recognised organisations of agriculturists in the county.

*Note on Simultaneous Voting.*—It will be observed that this scheme adopts for the first time in English practice a method of voting practised in the U.S.A., namely, that of electing persons for more than one office at the same polling. We understand that this method works without any difficulty in the U.S.A. despite the handicap caused by the large number of immigrant aliens imperfectly acquainted with the English language and American institutions.

We must repeat that the County Council register is taken not as ideal, but as a matter of practical necessity.

#### PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION EXPENSES AND POLLING PLACES.

281. As far as is practicable Rural Districts, in polling for the County Agricultural Authority, shall be grouped to allow for voting under the system of Proportional Representation.

Members of the County Agricultural Authority shall be paid their expenses incurred in performing the duties entailed by their membership, together with a reasonable allowance for lost time.

There shall be for every election of County Agricultural Authority members at least one polling place in every parish of every Rural District, and in every hamlet or place provided with an elementary school. (See Section 279).

#### ILLUSTRATION

282. In Appendix VIII will be found a detailed illustration of how the scheme here suggested would work in

representative counties. It will be seen that Cambridgeshire, for example, a county which has now 62 members on the County Council, would have a County Agricultural Authority consisting of 34 persons, 16 of these being representatives of the 6 Rural Districts in the county, one being the person nominated by the Town Council of Cambridge which included in its area 889 agriculturists. Five or six members will be County Councillors nominated by the County Council to serve on the Agricultural Authority; 5 or 6 would be other persons nominated by the County Council; and 6 would be persons nominated by the Ministry of Agriculture after consulting the N.F.U., the Workers' Union and other recognised agricultural organisations in the county. Similarly, in Devonshire, where there are now 101 members of the County Council, the Agricultural Authority would consist of 102 persons. Without going into all the details it may be pointed out here that the Devonshire County Council would nominate 34 persons of the C.A.A., 17 at least of them being members of its own body. Another 17 would be nominated by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Counties vary enormously in their general composition. To take two other of the sample counties mentioned in the Appendix: the Isle of Ely, owing to the intensive cultivation generally prevalent, has an unusually high percentage of agriculturists in areas which are technically Urban Districts. But these districts, although urban in name, are rural in character and rural in essential interests. Owing to the distribution of agriculturists throughout the county, the C.A.A. would contain 8 nominated members representing Urban Districts and the Borough of Wisbech. The directly elected members would be 13. In Cumberland, on the other hand, there would only be 1 nominated member representing an Urban District, and 18 members elected by the Rural Districts. In Devon, there would be 4 members of the Authority nominated by 2 U.D.Cs., namely, Tiverton and Torquay. There would be 47 elected members representing the 18 R.D.Cs. It will be found on

the whole that putting the threshold of representation at 500 agriculturists meets the necessities of the position with real fairness. In a few counties, as, for example, Lancashire, or the West Riding of Yorkshire, there would be in the aggregate a considerable number of agriculturists resident in Urban Districts which do not obtain recognition as agricultural areas under this scheme. The Ministry of Agriculture nominees will in every county be charged with representing the interests of these scattered urban-dwelling agriculturists.

#### THE TEMPORARY COMMISSIONERS.

283. The Commissioners to be appointed to carry through the initial transference of cultivable land from the old system of tenure to the new, (see paragraph 270), fall now to be treated of more in detail. Three Commissioners shall be appointed for each county. One of them shall be a person of legal knowledge and, if possible, judicial experience, appointed by the Lord Chancellor. He would naturally act as chairman. The other two shall be appointed by the Ministry of Agriculture, one to represent the landlords' interest, the other the tenants' interest. The names of all persons appointed must be laid before Parliament before the appointment is confirmed. The function of the Commissioners shall be to arrive at a just figure representing the fair net rent of each holding in the county area. They will be empowered to negotiate with tenants and landowners, on estates where there is a willingness on both sides to agree to a figure, and to make an award. Where no agreed figure can be arrived at they will make an award after hearing all available evidence. They will forward their awards to the Ministry of Agriculture which will confirm them if, in its opinion, they are fair to the public interest.

#### THE TEMPORARY LAND COURT.

284. A Land Court shall be established as a temporary body to decide disputes on matters of law or of fact arising out of the Cultivating Tenure Act and referred to it by

the Commissioners, or by the County Agricultural Authority. Appeals may be made to it direct either by a landowner or a tenant who feels aggrieved by a decision of the Commissioners.

It will be noted that the permanent institution of a Land Court is not contemplated. It does not appear that any questions will arise out of the Cultivating Tenure Act other than those which can be dealt with by the ordinary Law. The Land Court will be set up merely to settle points which are outside the experience of ordinary law courts and will not again arise once the new system of tenure has been established.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A note may be made here of certain precedents for the administrative machinery proposed in the preceding paragraphs :—

1. *Authority for Survey, etc.*—The Agricultural Policy Subcommittee of the Reconstruction Committee recommended that there should be a general survey of agricultural conditions throughout the country; that a panel of Assessors should be formed in groups of counties, one-third appointed by the Minister of Agriculture, one-third by the Chairmen of County Councils in the area, and one-third by the President of the Surveyors' Institute; that a Review Committee should be composed of three persons, the "greatest authorities on agriculture and estate management obtainable." Assessors would deal with cases referred to them of land found to be undercultivated or badly cultivated. Three years' notice would be given to the holder, and if no improvement was made evident at the end of two years, three members of the panel, not resident in the county, would examine and report. If, as a result, bad management, etc., was proved it was contemplated that the Board of Agriculture might temporarily supersede the landowner in the management of estates, or that a manager should be put in charge as trustee for the owner. Various measures were proposed to deal with bad farming and the report may still be profitably read. It may be noted that among its recommendations are that the principle should be laid down that it shall be the duty :—

(a) of every landowner to manage his estate, and,

(b) of every tenant to cultivate his land according to the approved practice of the best agriculture.

2. *Land Court.*—The Scottish Land Court was created by the Small Landholders (Scotland) Act, 1911, for the purpose of



## RIGHT OF APPEAL.

285. The right of appeal shall be given to the Ministry of Agriculture acting in a judicial capacity against any decisions of the C.A.A. in respect of bad cultivation.

*Note.*—The Ministry of Agriculture would in cases of this kind hold a similar position to that of the Ministry of Health, which acts in a judicial capacity in respect of houses condemned by local authorities as unfit for habitation, etc.

## EXISTING SMALL HOLDINGS.

286. County Councils as landowners will be in precisely the same position as other landowners. In other words, County Council Small Holders will be given the opportunity of becoming Cultivating Tenants at a Fair Net Rent. The Commissioners will, in the first instance, have power to negotiate between County Councils and their Small Holders for the agreement of a figure. Failing an agreement the figure will be fixed as provided generally under the scheme.

hearing and determining all matters, "whether of law or fact," arising out of the various Landholders Acts. The Court is composed of not more than five persons, appointed by His Majesty on the recommendation of the Secretary for Scotland.

"The Chairman shall be a person who, at the date of his appointment, shall be an advocate of the Scottish Bar of not less than 10 years' standing, and shall forthwith on his appointment have the same rank and tenure of office as if he had been appointed a Judge of the Court of Session."

A Principal Clerk to the Court is appointed by the Secretary for Scotland.

The Land Court may appoint or employ assessors, surveyors, etc., etc., as required.

The Chairman's salary shall not exceed £2,000 per annum. The other members receive not more than £1,200 per annum. The Chairman has the right to a retiring annuity as if he had been appointed a Judge of the Court of Session. All such salaries and remuneration and expenses of the Land Court are paid out of monies provided by Parliament.

## NO EXPENDITURE FROM RATES FOR AGRICULTURAL ADMINISTRATION.

287. Part V of this Chapter will deal with the cost of administering Cultivating Tenure. It should be made perfectly clear here, that the County Agricultural Authority will have no call on the County Rates. Agricultural Education, we have already suggested, should be part of the County's educational system. As such, it will be paid for out of the composite fund, from which the expenses of County Education are now met, being drawn partly from the County Rate, and partly from Government Grant. All other expenses of Agricultural administration in the counties will be met from the fund, afterwards to be described, put at the disposal of the County Agricultural Authority.

To return for a moment to the question of Agricultural Education, it should be clear that the C.A.A. will advise and recommend; the County Council will be the executive Authority and will be responsible for expenditure.

If there are any other services in which the County Council and the C.A.A. will co-operate, the rule will be that, work which demands expenditure from the County Rate will not be for the C.A.A. to perform.

## COUNTY AUTONOMY.

288. It is important to note the wide liberty under the scheme left to County Agricultural Authorities to forward the development of agriculture in their own areas in accordance with local needs and possibilities. The fresh stimulus given to agriculture and the force of public opinion will do vastly more than can be done by direction from Whitehall. The Ministry of Agriculture will be represented on the County Authority by its nominated members, but the mainspring of action, and the main impetus to progress will be that the County Authority is elected by the people of the County expressly to promote the County's agricultural welfare. Democracy is itself its own best safeguard, and although Parliament

may reserve certain powers to the Central Government, we urge that these should be regarded altogether as emergency powers, and that in constructing the scheme the whole emphasis should be laid on the autonomy and full responsibility of the county as a unit.

#### *Division IV.*

##### *The Scheme in Practice.*

289. The County Authority's duty—its primary and its ultimate duty—that of securing good cultivation of all cultivable land in its area, will necessitate bringing all farmed land under systematic survey. This survey will be carried out by the Authority's officers, whose work will be similar to that of land agents employed now on large estates. It will be the duty of the C.A.A.'s Officer to report any holding which apparently is not being satisfactorily used. It will not be his duty nor will it be the duty of any officer or member of the Authority, or any other person, to dictate to the farmer the agricultural methods he should pursue. The standard of husbandry will be judged by the circumstances of the district.

It is important to bear in mind that such surveys or inspections and such judgments are now part of a skilled land-agent's or of a competent landowner's work, and also that the existing Agricultural Holdings Act provides machinery for proceeding against bad farmers.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> What happens now is that a landlord who wishes to get rid of a bad tenant without paying the compensation stipulated for in the Agricultural Holdings Act, applies for a certificate to the County Agricultural Committee. Members of the Cultivation Sub-Committee then inspect the farm, accompanied by officers of the County Council. Their report is presented to the County Agricultural Committee itself. The tenant is invited to be present at the inspection. He may appear himself before the main committee. The County Agricultural Committee decides the case on its merits. The procedure under the Cultivating Tenant scheme would be somewhat similar.

Land would be regarded as properly cultivated unless and until it were proved to be badly cultivated. On a farm being reported, the C.A.A. would arrange for the necessary inspection, would provide for the farmer's case being fairly heard, and would give a decision with due regard to the interests both of the farmer and of the community.

#### LAND FALLING INTO COUNTY AUTHORITIES.

290. The land which will come into the hands of the County Authority for allocation will be of considerable amount, and the various ways in which it will come to hand may here be specified. There will be five main sources :

(1) Land surrendered by a Cultivating Tenant who gives up farming.

(2) Land coming to hand at the death of a Cultivating Tenant without competent heirs.

(3) Land held to be badly farmed.

(4) Land given up by farmers because they wish to farm a smaller area, or to mount the ladder to a larger farm.

(5) Land taken (in default of other land for the purpose being available) under the Small Holdings Act.

By the operation of these five causes, a considerable acreage will every year be at the disposal of the County Authority. Calculations, based on information given us in confidence, of several large estates, seem to show that after making full allowance for holdings where sons or other relations succeed their fathers without question, not less than 1 per cent. of the cultivable land of the country would come to hand in each year. The percentage might be higher—even considerably higher. That means that the C.A.A.s would have at their disposal in the course of an average twelve months at least 260,000 acres in

England and Wales, apart altogether from land taken over as badly cultivated. This figure should be compared with the 416,000 acres which is the total now held by County Councils as a result of their activities under the Small Holdings Acts since 1908.

#### VARIETY OF SIZE IN HOLDINGS.

291. The moral of the last paragraph is that the County Authorities would be able to cope effectively with the real demand for Holdings of various sizes. In many counties land will tend rapidly to pass to Cultivating Tenants in units of family farm size, rather than small-holding size. There will also be a powerful demand for Spare-time and Part-time Holdings, either as leading towards whole-time farming, or as desirable in themselves for men who will continue to be wage-earners. Elsewhere the trend may be to large scale farming, with well-paid labour. Public opinion will reflect local conditions, and local fashions in farming, in so far as the "fashions" are based, not on current fallacies, but on local potentialities of soil, climate and market. Principles of economic balance will be free to assert themselves. If local wages are low, hours will tend to be shortened and provision of Small Holdings will be accelerated. Where wages are good, the demand for Small Holdings will be less general. But the ladder of advancement must be available for all. Countrymen must have an opportunity of "getting on," by getting on to the land, not by getting out to the towns. The co-ordination of agricultural credit and agricultural education with a flexible system of land tenure will give enterprising and capable farm-workers a real chance. The ladder offered them must have its lower rungs firm, accessible and well placed. Only so can there come about the necessary increase of family farm holdings and the consequent increase of population on the land. Only so can the present dangerously high proportion of agricultural labourers solely dependent on wages be

reduced. And only so can the anomalies of rural wages be corrected.

#### BAD FARMING AND BAD LAND.

292. One further point must be touched on to avoid possible misunderstanding with regard to land taken over because it is badly farmed. The land which will come to hand for this reason will not be simply the bad land. Bad farming in England is not wholly, or even mainly, to be found on poor land. Nor is good farming always to be found on good land. Some bad land will undoubtedly have to be dealt with by the County Authority. It will be able to deal with such land much more adequately than the present system of landlordism. The Authority will often echo the dictum of the Oxfordshire farmer whom we have already quoted, "Good land is where the good farmer is." In its decisions will be reflected the almost unanimous opinion of agricultural labourers, who, to-day, will point to land, now thick with thistles, docks or rushes, as good as or better than much of the best-farmed land in the area. It will be able to discriminate between land which is naturally poor and land which is suffering from inattention and neglect.

#### SIZE OF HOLDINGS AND "LED" OR "OFF" FARMS.

293. No general ruling shall be made limiting the size of a holding in Cultivating Tenure. Our Enquiry Campaign meetings prove clearly that there is a strong demand for limiting the number of acres which any one man may farm. The existence of this demand is natural enough. But we take the view that in agriculture, as in other industries, there should be rewards for enterprise and scope for ambition. The principle contained in the policy of Cultivating Tenure is that a man should have effective control of that amount of land of which he is master and no more. Some land, as we have already suggested, may in the future be farmed most satis-

factorily from every point of view<sup>1</sup> in large scale mass production units. Even if there is not much land of this sort, it is essential to allow for its use in this way if that use proves to be the best. Any hard and fast limitation of acreage would make such use impossible. Moreover, it must be remembered that there are often farms which can be more economically worked together than separately. The most obvious instance is that of a sheltered vale farm which winters cattle and sheep for a high-lying down-land grass farm. Actually, though not perhaps technically, such farms constitute a single holding. On points of this kind considerable discretion should be left to the Agricultural Committee. A test to be applied to all such questions is whether the land is being properly farmed or not.

This may be said without any prejudice to the fact that if a large farm comes to hand under the scheme, the County Authority will have it in its power to decide whether it should continue to be used as a single unit or be sub-divided. The County Authority will have behind it the collective shrewdness of agriculturists in the area and there could be no stronger safeguard against either undue concentrations of land in single hands or useless sub-division of land which ought to be worked on a large scale.

#### MULTIPLE HOLDINGS.

294. A clear distinction, however, must be made between large holdings and multiple holdings. The grievance against multiple holdings, or led farms as they are called in Scotland, is very strong. There are cases of 20 or more holdings nominally tenanted by the same

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<sup>1</sup> A most important point of view, it need hardly be said, is the number of persons occupied on a given area. A large area thinly farmed and thinly worked would not be regarded as being put to its best use if it could be better worked and more productive.

farmer, actually left in charge of a bailiff.<sup>1</sup> These holdings are not in any sense economically inter-dependent. Very often, though this is true more of England than of Scotland, they are farmed in the thinnest and least labour-employing manner.

A fair solution here seems to be that if at the appointed date a farmer is farming say two or more separate holdings, and if all these holdings are well farmed, he may apply for, and receive, a Cultivating Tenure title in respect of them, and may bequeath one of these holdings to each of any sons who are competent cultivators. The title to the other holdings would consequently lapse to the C.A.A. at his death. In other words, the efficient farmer of led farms will not be disturbed so long as he lives. He will be able to leave a farm to any son, and those sons will be able to bequeath the land to their heirs. If at any time the County Authority finds that any of the holdings are badly farmed, it will treat them in the same way as any other badly farmed land.

#### RELEASING A TENDENCY.

295. The preceding sections point to the dangers which would certainly beset any rigid and stereotyped system of administration. The scheme we suggest is flexible. It allows the maximum amount of adaptation to local circumstances and gives the autonomous County Authority power to use full discretion. We feel justified in anticipating that there will be behind the scheme the driving force of democratic common sense and that this will ensure the seizure of every opportunity to increase the number of agricultural holdings and consequently to diminish their average size. We have already pointed out that 83 per cent. of the land of Great Britain is in holdings of more than 50 acres, and that this distribution of agricultural land is strikingly different from the dis-

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<sup>1</sup> Denmark has some time since made farming through bailiffs illegal.



tribution of agricultural land in the other countries of North-Western Europe. We have maintained that the root cause of this mal-distribution of land is the prevalent theory of low production farming working hand in hand with under-capitalisation.

Attempts to increase the total number of small-holders have been countered by other forces. The establishment of a proper system of Agricultural Credit, to work in conjunction with a flexible arrangement for allocating land to those who can farm it best, should release the tendency to family farming which the Agricultural Tribunal and other first rate authorities agree in considering the most wholesome tendency which could be manifested.

### *Division V.*

#### *Cost of Administration and Site-use of Land.*

##### DISPOSAL OF LAND FOR NON-AGRICULTURAL PURPOSES.

296. In considering the methods by which any land once scheduled as cultivable shall be dealt with, if required for building or other non-agricultural uses, consideration should be given to some of the questions considered in Chapter V. What is there pointed out is the danger of any policy which would give the agricultural interest power to veto the "alienation" of land from agricultural use, that is, from soil-use to site-use. Diffused ownership is a protection against land monopoly to an extent that varies with the thoroughness of the diffusion. Necessary to the wholesome development of our present-day civilisation is not only the full use of our soil-land but the right use of our site-land. The present system of land tenure fails to ensure the former, and so inadequately ensures the latter, that Town Planning regulations, which may very appreciably modify the right of a land owner to "do what he likes with his own," are now generally recognised as a

necessary and benevolent form of "interference" or communal control. But in the present stage of its development Town Planning will affect only a minute proportion of the country's cultivable land, and then only by scheduling certain parts of it as *suitable* for sites and others as destined to be permanently agricultural. Our problem now is to give freedom to non-agriculturists to acquire such parcels of land as in the interest of the whole community should be used, not for bearing crops, but for bearing healthy homes, beautiful gardens, efficiently planned factories and safe and convenient means of communication.

If the disposal of land were left simply to the County Agricultural Authority there would be a real danger of monopoly and of awakening a serious town-country antagonism. The proposals we put forward in the succeeding paragraphs do, in our opinion, avoid the danger; they are fair to the cultivator and to the community as a whole.

#### COUNTY LAND OFFICE.

297. The disposal when necessary, for non-agricultural use of all land held in Cultivating Tenure shall be in the hands not of the County Agricultural Authority, but of a County Land Office. This Office shall be a department of the Board of Inland Revenue. Its work would be similar to that of a land agent acting on behalf of a great estate. It would have something to sell, and would sell it, generally speaking, at the best price obtainable. It would, however, be able to take a much wider view of development of land within the County than can be taken to-day even by agents of the largest estates. Any conflict of opinions or of interest between it and the County Agricultural Authority would be settled by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health jointly, and the wholesome influence of public opinion, exerted through County and Parliamentary representations, would keep businesslike handling of a business matter in harmony with public interest.

The County Land Office would have a technical function to discharge and would be staffed by properly qualified professional men. Action by it would affect the Cultivating Tenant in the same way as any tenant to-day is affected by his landlord's decision to build on, or sell for building, any portion of farmed land. The estate agent's duty is to sell land, of which his principal is willing to dispose to advantage and to make the necessary adjustments and compensations with tenants who are farming it. Under Cultivating Tenure the terms of compensation and valuation of improvements would be agreed whenever the County Agricultural Authority granted the Cultivating Tenure title. The improvements would be the property of the farmer, not, as now, partly his and partly the landlord's, and the County Land Officer, when agreeing a price with a would-be purchaser, would take account of the compensation due to be paid out of the purchase price.

The cost of County Land Office Administration would come out of the proceeds of sales.

#### NON-AGRICULTURAL VALUES AND THE COMMUNITY.

298. Our Report on Urban Land will deal more fully than here is either necessary or desirable with the details of, and with the larger issues which lie behind, arrangements for the site-use of land. We are here dealing only with the first transference of land from agricultural use to some other use, and in doing so must emphasise the essential justice of providing that the values which accrue to agricultural land by reason of its suitability for other uses should be enjoyed by the whole community, not by any individual who happens to own land in a spot which is advantaged by the activities either of other individuals or by the expenditure of public money. The method we propose will enable a wider view to be taken of the manner in which land should be allocated for the various purposes of civilised life. The present evils are a matter partly of

social injustice and partly of social unwisdom. Thousands of houses are built in positions which make healthy homes impossible. Hundreds of factories and workshops are set on cramped and inconvenient sites, deprived of access to the facilities they need for their business. Extreme monopoly prices are every day exacted by persons, or combinations of persons, who control all the land in areas where sites for residence or business are desired. The monopoly sometimes makes sites in any given area actually unobtainable. The present system of land disposal, urban as well as rural, is condemned as much by its inefficiency as by its inequity.

The phrase "site-use" implies the consideration of many questions which occupy the borderland between the urban and the rural problem. This borderland is every man's land, as on it lie innumerable factors of health and prosperity, both personal and social.

Cultivable land may be brought into site-use for private houses or public housing schemes ; for schools and playgrounds and social centres ; for garden suburbs and garden cities ; for agricultural industries, rural industries and, to some extent, industries not at present regarded as rural which will be encouraged to move into rural areas to the lasting benefit of their employees and of the economic self-sufficiency of rural life. Wide questions of co-ordinating transport, of using local raw materials, of harnessing water power and giving access to natural resources, must be considered in logical relation to agriculture and each other.

Our proposal means that a would-be purchaser of land may apply to the County Land Office and a price would be negotiated on business terms in accordance with town-planning schemes where they existed and with town-planning considerations where they did not. Notice would be given to occupiers of any land sought to enable them to state objections or offer alternatives. Inasmuch as the State would no longer receive annual Fair Net Rent from an agriculturist in respect of the land disposed of, the value of the annuity charge on the site would have

first to be extinguished. The first charge on the surplus would be the compensation payable by the County Agricultural Authority to the disturbed agricultural tenant. The balance would go to a central land fund, the first charge on which in its turn would be the administration of Cultivating Tenure in the various counties.

#### LAND OWNERS AND SITE VALUES.

299. The building value of any land at the date of its transference to Cultivating Tenure should, in our opinion, rank as a real value for which the land-owner is entitled to compensation. That we have already laid down as a general principle, provided that it can be realised without burdening the cultivator with a charge greater than the land's agricultural value. Our proposal, therefore, is that any land in respect of which the land-owner at the time of transference claims a building value in excess of its agricultural value shall be assessed at a datum line price. This datum price shall represent the then building value of the land. If the datum price is realised by the sale of the land within a reasonable period, the former owner or his heir shall be entitled to receive the difference between it and the capitalised value of the annuity in respect of that land. After a certain term of years, say, something between twenty and forty, the right to claim contingent values on their realisation shall be extinguished.

*Note.*—We are anxious not to confuse the issue by insisting on the length of the period. The principle is the point of first importance. It is interesting to note that Messrs. Orwin and Peel in "The Tenure of Agricultural Land" exclude from the working of their scheme all lands, whether agricultural or not, included within cities, towns, boroughs and urban districts. In this way they avoid, only to some extent, the difficulty of agricultural land with building values. Where land coming under the operation of their scheme does possess a building value, they propose to make no attempt at assessing the additional value claimed, but suggest that its acquisition by the State at its agricultural value should be deferred for, say, ten years. We cannot contemplate an arrangement by which the tenant's right to cultivating tenure would be deferred for ten years. It is worth considering, however,

whether landlords might not retain power after our scheme has been brought into operation to negotiate the sale of land lately in their possession for purposes other than agricultural. The County Agricultural Authority would be able to claim, out of the proceeds of the sale, the necessary amount of cash with which to compensate the disturbed cultivating tenant.

#### THE CENTRAL LAND FUND.

300. The Central Fund accumulated by the work of the County Land Offices would begin to grow from the beginning of the scheme. It should be able to meet the whole cost of the County Agricultural Authorities' work, in so far as this cost is not met by the provision made in the following paragraph. It should be borne in mind that the C.A.As. would take over from the County Councils a good deal of work now being paid for partly from the County Rates and partly by Exchequer Grants. The County Land Fund would therefore relieve, to some extent, both the County rate-payers and the tax-payers. As the Fund accumulates it should be possible for it to make a very substantial contribution to the sums now actually expended by the Government in relieving County Rates in respect of roads, education and other charges.

#### COST OF MANAGEMENT.

301. The figure of 5 per cent.<sup>1</sup> is not infrequently allowed as the cost of management of a fairly large estate. On this

*Note.*—A precedent for this proposal is contained in the Irish land legislation. Under the Irish Land Act of 1907 the Irish Land Commission, to which the exclusive right of mining and taking minerals, etc., was reserved under an earlier Act, might dispose of mining rights at its discretion. But the vendor of the estate (or the person entitled to the estate if the land had not been sold) *would be entitled to receive 25 per cent. of the profit accruing to the Land Commission from the transaction.* The most recent Irish Land Act, that of 1923, provides that where any rights vested in the Saorstát Eireann are at any time in the future let, leased or sold, the person who would have been entitled to them if they had not so vested, *shall be entitled to receive such share of any rent, purchase money, or any other net profit received in respect of these rights as shall hereafter be determined by the Oireachtas.*

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see Appendix VI.

basis the present cost of managing tenanted farms throughout England and Wales would be about £2,000,000 per annum. This considerable expenditure on salaries and office expenses is paid, though most tenant-farmers doubtless do not suspect it, by farmers themselves. It is, therefore, not a transferable burden in the sense in which this term is used in section 259. But the solid advantages conferred on farmers by Cultivating Tenure justify, in our view, a contribution from them to the necessary cost of its work.

It is impossible now to say whether that cost would be more or less than the £2,000,000 mentioned above. We think the present cost of management higher than will be necessary under unified management. Farmers should not be asked to pay a sum equal to 5 per cent. of present gross rents. But we think it fair that they should be asked to pay part of that amount. We propose, therefore, that Fair Net Rents should exceed the Annuity charge by the amount of 3 per cent. of the gross rent, and that the Treasury should hold the sum thus collected for the expenses of the C.A.As. Apart from the justice of this proposal, there is the definite advantage that it would give the Cultivating Tenants of a county the right to watch closely the expenditure of their County Authority.

### *Division VI.*

#### *Visualisations.*

##### I. LAND WITH BUILDING VALUE.

302. From the data given may now be projected a visualisation of the system we have in mind. Let the special case of land with potential building value be first put on the screen.

A landowner X— now owns ten thousand acres of land. When the transference of his estate to Cultivating Tenure is being made, he claims that 500 acres of this land has a building value greater than its agricultural value.

This may have been created by work done by himself or his predecessors in developing the estate. Or it may be due to the activity of his neighbours in constructing roads, and providing means of transport; of the Government in carrying out works of national importance; or of a neighbouring town, or in fact of many agencies working together or independently.

The County Land Court will judge his claim and, after fixing the annuity value of his agricultural land, will assess the present building value of the 500 acres now in question. This later assessment will give the datum line price. The difference between the capitalised value of the annuity and the datum line price may, for convenience, be referred to as the land's contingent value.

It should be reiterated that this later assessment will not in any way affect the Cultivating Tenant's Fair Net Rent.

If the suggestion made in the note to paragraph 299 is accepted, X— would, at any time during the next twenty, thirty or forty years have the right to negotiate with outsiders for the sale of any part of the 500 acres. In any case the County Land Officer would be able to accept any good offer for the land, and, whether the initiative had been taken by X— or not, the first charge on the sum realised would be the payment to the disturbed farmer of compensation on the scale agreed between him and the C.A.A. Let us suppose that a sale is effected of 10 acres of land charged with a Fair Net Rent of £1 per acre, and given a datum line assessment of £60 an acre. X— will, therefore, receive the difference between the capitalised value of the annuity, say £22 per acre, and £60 an acre, *i.e.*, £380 for the 10 acres less the amount of compensation to the farmer. The County Land Officer would realise the sum of £600, and £220 would go to the Exchequer to make good the £10 per annum of Fair Net Rent lost. If the County Land Officer sold the land for £600 the Central Land Fund would gain nothing by the transaction. If, however, the land had appreciated



in the interval since the datum line price was fixed, and if, consequently, the County Land Officer realised £800 for the sale, the Central Land Fund would profit to the extent of £200. A small percentage charge on the transaction would be made to cover expenses.

The principle here suggested will, we think, commend itself as being fair both to the landlord and the community. The nation, in effect, would say to the present landowner: "This system of agricultural landowning is inefficient, and it must go." To the owner of cultivable land which has acquired a site value, it says: "Human life and industry have too long been held to ransom by your control of the land monopoly. Your power to exploit this monopoly has been allowed to grow. We cannot undo the past, nor do we wish to penalise you for a position which the community has allowed you to assume, but it shall go no further. We recognise present values. We are determined that they shall not be further inflated for private profit."

## 2. NORMAL CASES.

303. The general scheme may be visualised at two stages. First, at its commencement, and secondly, when it is in normal working order.

Q— is now the tenant of a farm who wants to give up. He notifies the County Authority that he has no wish to become a Cultivating Tenant, and leaves under the conditions laid down in his present Agreement.

S—, however, has every intention of continuing farming. He will apply forthwith for a good husbandry title to his land. If he fails to apply within a certain period he shall be deemed to have applied. The C.A.A. will have his holding or holdings visited by one of its officers, a qualified surveyor, land agent, experienced farmer or other competent person, who would judge the condition of the holding by good local standards. In the meantime the temporary Commissioners will have endeavoured to negotiate between him and the late

landowner the amount of his Fair Net Rent. If the Commissioners are unsuccessful, the financial question will be referred to the temporary Land Court. The C.A.A. will act on its officer's visit. If the survey is satisfactory, S—, will receive his title to the land as soon as the C.A.A. is satisfied that the demand for small holdings in the parish is met.

### 3. A CASE OF BAD FARMING.

R—'s survey is unsatisfactory. He will be put on terms of yearly tenancy. In the following year he may apply again for his title and in the interval opportunities will be afforded him to improve the condition of his land. If then he fails to satisfy the County Authority that he is able to make proper use of the land, his tenure of the holding will be brought to an end, and his place taken by someone better able to use the land. The County Agricultural Authority might in special cases extend the yearly tenancy.

*Note.*—The officers of the C.A.A. will be able to give applicants to Cultivating Tenure considerable assistance in being able to put the farmer in touch with educational agencies and the agricultural credit scheme. In some cases undoubtedly farmers will find that the root of their trouble is the occupation of a holding too large for the capital at their disposal. The remedy is obvious. The C.A.A.'s officers will have a definite commission, namely, to eliminate bad farming. They will offer every facility to farmers who are handicapped under the present system. They will bring really bad and incompetent use of land within the scope of firm action.

### 4. A CULTIVATING TENANT WITHOUT SUCCESSOR.

304. T— has been farming for some years as a Cultivating Tenant. Before the change in tenure his rent for 250 acres was £300. Since the change he has been paying a Fair Net Rent of £195. He has not only maintained the rental value of his holding by doing the repairs which his landlord previously did, but he has added to its value by doing repairs more thoroughly and by carrying out several improvements which, before the change in tenure, he dared not undertake for himself and could not persuade

his landlord to undertake. He is a widower and has no sons who wish to carry on the farm. He dies. His farm therefore "comes to hand." The first duty of the C.A.A. is to consider how it may best be used. There are a number of applicants willing to pay a rent of £250 p.a. That figure is found, on examination, fairly to represent the then value of the farm to an incomer. The C.A.A. will be able to pay to T——'s estate the unexhausted value of T——'s improvements with the prospects of satisfactory increase in the revenue derived from the farm. Instead of letting the farm as a whole, the Authority may use part of it for a demonstration farm. Or it may equally well divide it into two or three smaller holdings to meet the need of agriculturists who are climbing the ladder.

#### 5. A CULTIVATING TENANT WITH A SON TO SUCCEED.

305. W——is in much the same position as T——, but with the important difference that on his death he leaves a widow and a son well qualified to farm the land after him. The C.A.A. satisfies itself that the son is a good farmer. It transfers to him the good husbandry title and the son takes possession, paying the same Fair Net Rent as his father.

Visualisations might be multiplied, but we think that the scheme is now presented in a sufficiently concrete form to enable it to be judged on its merits. Only one further special case may be illustrated.

#### RECONDITIONING LAND.

306. B—— is now a thistle farmer. At the end of a fair test period his case would seem to be hopeless and his occupancy of the holding he has so much misused has terminated. The C.A.A. will then have to face the same problem as is now faced from time to time by landlords. It will have to take over a holding which has been farmed out and is foul. It needs reconditioning. A landlord to-day faced by the problem not infrequently

finds it beyond him. He has not the resources necessary to put the land again into good heart. The C.A.A. will have larger resources at command, being well aware that wise expenditure will ultimately be remunerative. It will have a choice of course. It may put the land for a year or two in charge of an Agricultural College, or a County Agricultural expert, and when it is reconditioned, dispose of it to the new Cultivating Tenant. That is the procedure adopted with considerable advantage on the large agricultural estates owned by the State in Prussia. Its advisability here may be questioned. An alternative would be to hand it over in Cultivating Tenure to an enterprising farmer who would recondition it on the consideration of his Fair Net Rent being reduced or remitted for some years or to Small Holders on the same terms.

We believe that cases of this kind will be greatly reduced in number by making ability to farm land properly the title to its use. The present inability of any landlord to recondition such land as we are here thinking of is one of the many causes making for low production. On the other hand a general system of low production, go-easy farming multiplies instances of the kind. In so far as extraordinary expenses cannot, under any system of land-owning, be met out of current agricultural revenue, they definitely lower the productive power of all land in the same ownership by diminishing the amount which can be returned to the land in the way of improvements. In practice the landlords, who to-day can restore to good heart a farmed-out holding, either draw on outside resources or on the proceeds of land sales. We believe that agriculture can stand on its own feet in this matter as in others, and we maintain that necessary expenditure for reconditioning land may properly be defrayed from the Central Land Fund. It is perhaps, necessary to repeat that, although we make this specific provision for dealing with cases of this kind, we are convinced that they will be much less numerous under the new system than under the old.

*Division VII.**Why the Change of Tenure should be Universal.*

307. We are definitely of the opinion, arrived at after very considerable discussion of alternatives, that the new system of tenure must be universal, that is that it must apply to all land now held under the landlord-tenancy system, and that its application must be simultaneous on all estates.

## THE CASE FOR GRADUALITY.

308. The case for "Graduality" has been very ably put to us, and we recognise that strong cases for exemption of this estate or that might be made. There are landlords who still equip and develop their estates almost, if not quite, in the manner practised by the best of their class in the Golden Age of English agriculture. On some of these estates there is a fair probability that good leadership and adequate capitalisation will last for more than one generation. There are other estates where the friendliest relations exist between the owner and his tenants. The owner of these estates may display no qualities of leadership; the production from his land may be low; the number of men employed per 100 acres may be small; and the labourers who are employed by the farmer may be as badly off as regards wages and access to land as those on much less "happy" estates. These arguments and others have been very sympathetically considered by us, in view of the greater ease with which any policy which accommodates itself to natural timidity and caution could be carried.

## DISCRIMINATION IMPOSSIBLE.

309. None the less, we are convinced that the case for exceptional treatment breaks down in face of national necessity. However narrowly the conditions for exceptional treatment might be defined by Act of Parliament or by Regulation, they would inevitably, in practice, be

gradually broadened, so that very large areas would be exempted. A Court or Tribunal would tend to take the view that unless something almost amounting to criminal carelessness or incompetence were proved, it would be better to leave things alone. "It is also so much more easy to visualise (and, we may add, exaggerate) the loss which may follow to a neighbourhood from a landlord's surrender of his farm," says a landlord who has written a memorandum for us on this point, "than to realise the gain which must gradually accompany the increase of independence and initiative and opportunity which the scheme of Cultivating Tenure will produce. These exemptions would be frequent and the result would be an unworkable patchwork between the new and the old."

The sentences here quoted put most concisely an important element, in our judgment. If Graduality were the method to be adopted, the process of bringing the cultivable land of England under the right form of tenure would deteriorate into a campaign of attack on particular individuals with whom, as individuals, we have no quarrel, for they are but the victims of forces which they did not themselves let loose, and certainly cannot control.

#### THE EXAMPLE OF IRELAND.

310. Warning should be taken from the history of Irish land legislation. The slowness, the cumbrousness and the expensiveness of Irish land legislation were largely due to the desire to allow for exceptions. Pleas were urged for Lord A, for example, that he should be excepted because he was universally popular; for Lord B because he kept the best pack of hounds in the south of Ireland; for Sir C. D. because he built good cottages on his land. The result in the long run was not to exclude Lord A, Lord B and Sir C. D. from the operation of laws which, if they were to be effective at all, had to be universally applied. The result was to delay the solution of Ireland's difficulties at the expense of the British Exchequer.

## THE WORKER'S CASE.

311. Moreover, the argument for exceptional treatment almost invariably ignores the labourer. If estates were described as good because on them labourers were better paid, better housed, and given a real opportunity for advancement, it would be found much more convincing. In fact, that is not the criterion adopted, and it seems to us impossible to make an exception of, say, the E— estate if that means, as it must mean, that men employed by E—'s tenants are to be cut off from the advantages which Cultivating Tenure brings to men employed by farmers who are not E—'s tenants.

## DUAL OWNERSHIP.

312. Yet again, the argument for Graduality ignores the whole question of rent restriction and dual ownership. The State may very properly make great efforts for agriculture if it is assured that the advantages so conferred will not drain away into the pockets of private owners of land. On the basis of Cultivating Tenure these great efforts will, we hope, be made. But the foundations must extend under the whole of the building. The superstructure of reform which we sketch in the next chapter of this Report cannot be safely erected on a patchwork foundation of concrete and shifting sand. If to this it be answered that the good landlord would retain his position on condition that his rights to raise rent were restricted, then we run inevitably into the fallacies of dual ownership.

## A NEW NATIONAL SPIRIT.

313. In sum, the case against Graduality is overwhelming. Exceptions would be justified only by the co-existence of a number of factors. It would have to be shown that the owner had adequate capital resources for the up-to-date equipment of his farm; that he was using his resources for this purpose; that he had undergone a training enabling him to direct the use of this

equipment, and the general methods of farming employed, in the best possible way ; that he was building up a system of Small Holdings for labourers ; that he had mastered new methods of trading and marketing and was using his influence in his neighbourhood to get them taken up, and that there was a certainty that these conditions would be fulfilled when his estate passed by succession into other hands. There are, no doubt, such cases, but they are not sufficient in number to justify the introduction into the system we propose of elements of doubt, delay and invidious discrimination, which a lack of uniformity would inevitably entail. In our considered judgment it is better to start with a task of greater volume and mass, rather than by timidity and reluctance boldly to face a great issue, to prejudice the prospects of gaining for our land problems a new national atmosphere and a new national spirit.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SUPERSTRUCTURE OF REFORM.

#### THE FIRST STOREY.

314. The previous chapter has outlined the system of tenure which, in our opinion, must be the basis of rural reconstruction. We may now turn to the superstructure which may be erected on that basis. Once a system of land tenure is established which encourages energy and enterprise and opens up to the humblest member of the industry a career worthy of his ability, much can be done with hope which at present can be undertaken only in despair. Rating reform, credit supply, organisation of marketing, and other methods of assisting the industry in its day-to-day working, can excite little but passing interest among agriculturists until it is made certain that any benefit gained by farmers and labourers will not go into the landlords' pockets under the operation of the law of rent. Efforts to achieve these reforms have, in the past, been weakened by the lack of such certainty. The creation of such certainty by Cultivating Tenure will powerfully encourage the long pull, the strong pull, and the pull all together which agriculturists are constantly being exhorted to make. Moreover, if money can be properly expended by the community as a whole on agricultural development, it is much more likely to be expended with the approval of urban, to say nothing of rural, voters when the expenditure goes obviously to increase the value of a national asset.

The first storey of the superstructure must be an effective system of agricultural credit.

*Division I.**Agricultural Credit.*

315. Before outlining our proposals for establishing a system of agricultural credit, some remarks of an explanatory and justificatory character must be made.

## THE NEED FOR A CREDIT SYSTEM.

316. The provision of a sound, adequate, and effective system of agricultural credit is essential for the industry of agriculture. We maintain that the breakdown of the landlord-tenant system of tenure is evidenced by the under-capitalisation of agriculture, and has resulted in an aggravation of that condition. Many farmers, failing to get sufficient capital from their landlords, have been compelled to try to get it elsewhere. To a large extent they have fallen into the power of dealers and other traders whose methods of supplying credit are not always conducive to the good of the industry. There is thus the problem of mis-capitalisation, as well as the problem of under-capitalisation.

*Under-capitalisation is a direct cause of bad farming.*

*Mis-capitalisation is a direct cause of bad marketing.*

The required system of agricultural credit, therefore, is one which will supply on a sound basis, a sufficiency of money to enable the farmer to farm his land well in the most up-to-date way, actually to own the stock on his farm, and to give him freedom in disposing of his products.

## CREDIT IN AGRICULTURE AND OTHER INDUSTRIES

317. A recent number of the *Agricultural Gazette* (May 27th, 1925) puts admirably the difference between agriculture and other industries, both in their nature and in their present position :—

“ Where the agricultural business differs from all others is in the certainty that it can never become obsolete or superseded ; the demand for the products of the soil must

exist as long as mankind exists : we are just as far from synthetic food as in the time of Joseph and his brethren. It differs also in the permanent, irremovable character of the security which it offers to those who can provide the credit.

“ The most outstanding change in farming which recent years have witnessed is the disappearance of the old-time landlord, who provided the capital which made available the brains of the farmer and the muscle and skill of the farm worker. The War only speeded up a process which was already in full swing, a process of which the Death Duties were the chief, but not the only cause. . . .

“ Moreover, the business of land-owning, regarded as many of the great landlords of the past regarded it, was a continuing one, in which capital was sunk, often with a view not to immediate but to far distant profits. This business is going, or rather has gone ; and its return is not to be looked for. What we are seriously concerned with to-day is what is to take its place.”

#### EXPERIENCE ABROAD.

318. Two recent Government Committees—the Committee on Agricultural Credit (1923), and the Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation (1924)—have drawn attention to the inadequacy of the capital employed in agriculture in Great Britain as compared with other industries, and the part played by Credit in agriculture in this country and abroad. They point out that in foreign countries agricultural credit is, in most cases, obtained by methods of co-operative association, methods especially applicable to countries where a large part of the land is owned by farmers. Whereas the British tenant-farmer resorts to his landlord, or to the ordinary Joint Stock bank, or to dealers, the Danish, German, and American farmers resort to co-operation, with the mortgage of their land as the basis of their credit system. In Britain, the amount of credit obtained for long term improvements usually depends on the willing-

ness of the landlord to create mortgages on his individual liability, and further, to meet these charges, he must rely on the energies of his tenants.

A study of the different systems of credit, especially in foreign countries, proves that they have taken many years to become established, and that they rest, to a very large extent, on a co-operative principle.

The Agricultural Credits Act of 1923 endeavoured to adapt that principle to English conditions. The result has been most disappointing.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *March 27th, 1925. Question in the House of Commons. Major Sir Archibald Sinclair.* To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state how many credit societies have been formed in each county of England, Scotland and Wales; how much money has been paid into the agricultural credits account; and what advances have been made to agricultural credit societies under the provisions of the Agricultural Credits Act of 1923.

*Mr. Wood.*—Agricultural Credit Societies have been registered in the following counties:—

	No.
Cornwall .. .. .	2
Bedfordshire .. .. .	2
East Sussex .. .. .	1
Kent .. .. .	1
Lancashire .. .. .	1
Inverness and Ross (Beaully District) ..	1
Renfrewshire .. .. .	1
Kincardineshire .. .. .	1

The Paymaster-General was authorised by the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury in March, 1924, to transfer a sum of £440,000 to the Agricultural Credits Account, and £60,000 to the Agricultural Credits (Scotland) Account.

The advances made to Agricultural Credit Societies up to the present in England and Wales amount to just under £2,000. No advances have yet been made to Credit Societies in Scotland.

To avoid confusion, it should be added that Section I of the Agricultural Credits Act deals with quite a different point, namely, the relief of farmers who purchased their holdings between April, 1917, and June, 1921. Under this Section the Public Works Loan Commissioners had advanced in May, 1924, £3,432,806 to 896 farmers.

## THE CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLE OF CREDIT.

319. Regrettable as that result is, its connotations have to be recognised. What is the reason for the failure? Not simply national temperament. There is not so much difference in the disposition of agriculturists in England and in Germany that the success of Raiffeisenism and kindred principles in the one country and their absolute failure to obtain a footing in the other can be explained geographically. The co-operative system is sound and extremely convenient where small farming is the rule and reliance is necessarily placed on personal credit. It spread widely throughout Germany and other countries. Its unacceptability to English rural minds argues a general feeling of rural insecurity.

## AGRICULTURAL BANKS.

320. But it should not be implied that agricultural credit has been supplied in other countries only under the co-operative principle. Some countries, including some of the Dominions of the British Empire, have established Agricultural Banks, or have invented other modifications of a normal banking system for the special needs of agriculture.

Our first conclusion is that the natural development of a business-like organisation of agricultural credit has been paralysed by the assumption that the credit needs of agriculture are still being met by the landowner. There is no fundamental reason why a scheme of agricultural credit, at least as sound as that in any other country, should not be set up in Great Britain.

## THE USE OF CREDIT TO AGRICULTURE.

321. We do not assert that credit by itself can convert an unprofitable industry into a profitable one. Nor that many farmers, given security of tenure, will not farm admirably on their own resources. But we do believe

that proper facilities for agricultural credit must be provided to enable the results of science and education to be applied. It is noteworthy that the development of credit facilities for agriculture abroad has, generally speaking, kept pace with the linked development of agricultural science and increased productivity of land. It is, in our view, more than a mere coincidence that the productivity of English land has been stationary, despite scientific discoveries, while no effective means of providing credit has been devised.

#### CREDIT AND CULTIVATING TENURE.

322. Under the scheme of Cultivating Tenure it will not be possible to base credit supply on the mortgage of holdings. The Cultivating Tenant will have no right of free sale, and therefore cannot mortgage his land. Personal credit must, apart from chattel mortgages, be the basis, and at the back of the Agricultural Credit System must be a State guarantee. Such a guarantee can wisely be given if the State has in its hands the ultimate disposal of land, and the power of securing good cultivation.

#### AGRICULTURAL CREDIT IN DENMARK.

323. The credit position in Denmark is, in this connection, as in others, very interesting. The land in occupying ownership is mortgaged fairly heavily. Power to foreclose is given to the Credit Associations. But, we understand, mortgages are, in fact, not foreclosed unless bad farming is proved against the mortgagor.

What is said above applies to the Danish Small Holdings created before 1919. Under the Small Holdings legislation, 1919, the position is even more interesting, because it illustrates the close resemblance which obtains between the system of land tenure evolved in Denmark after so many experiments, and our proposed system of Cultivating Tenure.

The following extract from a letter written by Dr. O. H. Larsen, the well-known Danish Agricultural Economist, puts the gist of the matter very clearly :—

“ If a small holder who has got his farm in accordance with the Acts of 1919 wants to have a higher loan than the mortgage belonging to the State, he must go to an ordinary savings bank or co-operative society. Perhaps he can give some security in stock and equipment, but he *can never mortgage the land belonging to the Government.*”

“ If he wants a larger loan it will be necessary for him to give security by two or three sureties, but if he is well known he will often get a small loan for short time without special security in a local case.”

The State mortgage referred to in this quotation is the mortgage on the buildings, towards which the State can grant a loan up to nine-tenths of the cost. It should be remembered that the machinery of ordinary savings banks and co-operative societies is very highly developed in Denmark. (See also Sections 402, 403.)

#### PRESENT WASTE OF CREDIT VALUE.

324. A point of vital importance in considering the inter-action of the agricultural and land questions is that much land is now under mortgages, raised to a very large extent not for agriculture but for other purposes. When figures are given showing that in other countries farming land carries mortgages as high as 40 per cent. to 50 per cent. of its value, it is easy to forget that in these cases the mortgages are incurred for the development of agriculture itself. If, as we believe, all the agricultural land of the country should be used to its full capacity for agriculture and, if, as we also believe, all the agricultural land should be freed from false and fictitious, i.e., non-agricultural, values, then clearly the position of the agriculturist will be strengthened by a system of tenure which makes impossible the present diversion of the credit value of land to other purposes. At the present time a large part of the credit value of land is wasted.

## MORTGAGES ON AGRICULTURAL LAND.

325. One difficulty which has to be faced is that some land may be under mortgages to an amount which exceeds its net rental value. There is no reliable information at present to be obtained on the extent to which this may be the case. *Prima facie* it seems unlikely that many, if any, landowners are, in fact, paying more in mortgage charges on their land than the revenue derived from it. No wise advisor of investors would encourage a mortgagee to risk an amount greater than two-thirds of the present real value. Mortgages beyond this amount must be regarded as being highly speculative. The ever-present possibility of recent years that the State might raise additional revenue by specialised land taxation has been an additional reason for caution on the part of mortgagees. When the system of Cultivating Tenure is instituted it will be possible to ascertain the extent of mortgages on agricultural land, and it would, in our opinion, be reasonable to indemnify first mortgagees up to a reasonable limit. It is clear that the mortgagee would lose his personal covenant, and also that the method we propose of giving the landlord the real contingent values of land scheduled as cultivable must be adapted to meet the fair mortgaged claims.

This problem had, of course, to be faced under the Irish Land Purchase Acts. Under those Acts owners are entitled to sell their lands without obtaining the consent of their mortgagees, but except where sale prices are fixed by the Acts, the mortgagees get notice of the purchase price and can object to them if they are shown to be inequitable. Mortgagees receive notice of the proceedings for sale, and, when the purchase money has been advanced and lodged in Court for distribution to the parties who may be found legally entitled thereto, the mortgagees attend and prove their claims before the Examiner who investigates the title. The claims are paid out of the purchase money in so far as the money is available to meet them.



Under the Acts prior to the Act of 1923 (Saorstát Eireann) the mortgagees are paid in cash, although in some cases the purchase money of the lands is advanced in stock. Under the Act of 1923 mortgagees claiming against the purchase money, which is advanced in  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Land Bonds, are paid their claims in bonds equal in nominal amount to their claims in so far as the purchase money is available to meet such claims.

We do not believe that many cases of hardship will arise. In any case such hardships cannot be weighed in the balance against the present accumulated hardships of rural life, and the present danger to national stability, and great nations cannot be deflected from pursuing great policies by the possible grievances of problematical minorities. Whatever, for instance, may be the case for or against Prohibition in the United States, no one would argue that the interest of persons who had mortgages on drink-trade premises should have been allowed to tie the hands of the American nation. The first thing is to ascertain the facts; the second, to deal with this particular problem as it has been dealt with in Ireland, and if proved necessary, to indemnify sufferers. Clearly we cannot indemnify up to the full value of mortgages whatever they may be, but if a first mortgage can show that our proposals will leave him without adequate security up to two-thirds of the present value of the land upon which he holds a mortgage, we think it would be just for the State to supplement his security up to this amount.

#### OUTLINE OF PROPOSED CREDIT SCHEME.

326. The following scheme for agricultural credit under Cultivating Tenure is put forward in broad outline. Ample help in working out details would be available, once any Government in this country announced its intention of providing for British agriculture not less favourable credit facilities than are provided for agriculture in other countries.

Cultivating Tenants may require credit of three kinds.

(1) *Long Term Credit.*

(a) For works which will permanently improve the productivity of the land, such as drainage, reclamation, erection and extension of farm buildings, cottages, etc.

(b) For agricultural industries, such as creameries, sugar beet factories, bacon factories, auction marts, etc., whether co-operative or otherwise.

(2) *Commencing Credit.*

To provide a sufficiency of working capital to new entrants to the industry, with particular reference to agricultural labourers.

(3) *Short-term Credit.*

Up to a period of one year for the turnover of crops, or for one, two or sometimes three years for the turnover of stock.

#### SHORT TERM CREDIT.

327. Short-term Credit may be left to the Joint Stock Banks, which, in our opinion, are best able to deal with day to day and week to week requirements. They have experience of the business. They have branches in every market town, large and small, and there seems to be an increasing tendency to encourage the managers of local branches to develop this form of business with farmers.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It is significant that when the United States, after the War, turned its attention to agriculture seriously by founding a Federal Loan Bank with the accumulated funds of the War Finance Corporation, the American Joint Stock Banks discovered that they could finance farmers on a much more generous scale than they had previously done.

One or two sentences from "Banking the Farmer," in the Economic Review of October 10th and 17th, 1924, are quotable:—

"The farmer used to go to town when he had harvested his crop and sell it quick, because he had to. . . . Tens of thousands of organised farmers, who had behind them as collateral, millions of acres, live stock, farm equipment and harvested crops, were yet unable to get the money they wanted. They went from Wall Street to Washington, and Eugène Moyer, head of the War Finance Corporation, listened to their story and

The Report of the Committee on Agricultural Credit (1923) estimates that the five leading Joint Stock Banks lend £20,000,000 per annum to farmers for current trading, and that the usual interest charged is 1 per cent. over Bank Rate with a minimum of 5 per cent.

#### THE JOINT STOCK BANKS.

328. English Joint Stock Banks, although farmers are apt to complain that their administration has been largely centralised in London, and that the personal knowledge of locally born and locally bred managers has largely been lost, are, we believe, anxious to do all they safely can for farmers and to extend their business in country areas. But their reading of "safely" is governed by the industry's own lack of confidence. As the theory of low cost farming has spread among their clientèle, they, not unnaturally, have become more chary of granting overdrafts.

The governing factor in the extension of the business of banks in rural areas is a restoration of confidence in the agricultural industry itself. To enable the Banks to work in with other arrangements for agricultural credit, we consider that County Loan Boards (Sec. 330) should be authorised to answer any enquiries from the Banks as to the commitments of would-be borrowers. The whole intention of an agricultural credit system should be to

considered both the cause and the collateral good. He loaned many millions of the nation's money, and showed the banks another way in which they could be of help to the farmer. It took a jolt to teach Money that Agriculture was entitled to help. The banker was awakened by the fact that he did not want Uncle Sam in the banking business. . . ."

The President of the American Bankers' Association has said:—  
"Banks do far more for their own prosperity by aiding the development of efficient methods of farm production and finance than by foreclosing mortgages."

It may be added that the last report (November 30th, 1924) of the War Finance Corporation, shows great progress in the rehabilitation of the farmers' financial position.

reinforce the Banks, not to supersede them. We see no need for the creation of a State Agricultural Bank in this country. We believe that a State Bank would not be managed so efficiently as the Joint Stock Banks now are, and that everything is to be gained by taking advantage of the accumulated and growing interest of the Banks in agricultural business.

The proposals we make in the following Sections for Long Term and Commencing Credit, in conjunction with the establishment of Cultivating Tenure, will, we believe, restore confidence and set in motion forces which will very largely extend rural banking business.

But with regard to Long Term Credit, it has to be remembered that the Joint Stock Banks are not prepared to engage in this business as it would lock up funds for too long periods. It does not appear that they can adapt themselves to it.<sup>1</sup>

#### LONG TERM CREDIT.

329. With the items enumerated under the heading of Long Term Credit in paragraph 326 must also be considered the need of farmers to improve their land by works which require fairly considerable capital expenditure, the advantages of which are more rapidly exhausted than "works of permanent improvement," and also needs which may arise to finance a change in farming system, to increase stock, provide new machinery, etc. These credits are now urgently needed. The growing failure of the system of landlordism to supply them has meant actual and measurable deterioration of many holdings.

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<sup>1</sup> A significant note is given in the "Times" of May 15th, 1925, from that newspaper's Budapest correspondent:—

"For some time it has been recognised here that what is needed to complete the success of the League Reconstruction Scheme is long term agricultural credits."

To complete the work of national reconstruction here referred to, the Hungarian Government made an agreement with the National Bank by which, with the co-operation of the other leading Hungarian Banks, a National Land Security was created.

## COUNTY LOANS BOARDS.

330. We consider that the best machinery for the application of this system of credits should be a County Loans Board which would work under the County Authority. The County Loans Board would enquire into all applications for credit made to the County Authority, and would issue certificates for approved grants.

## A CENTRAL AGRICULTURAL LOANS BOARD.

331. An Agricultural Loans Board comparable to the existing Public Loans Board should also be established. This Board would receive certificates from the County Loans Board, and would arrange for the credit to the farmer. The Board itself would obtain money by the issue of Agricultural Loan Stock, similar to the present Local Loan Stock, in amounts convenient for placing with Insurance Companies or otherwise on the money market.

This stock would take the place of private mortgage, and would unquestionably be equally acceptable as mortgages have been in the past.

## NO LARGE LOAN REQUIRED.

332. If farmers and smallholders avail themselves of these credits a very considerable sum of money will be required. We do not believe that it would be to the interest of the State to raise a large loan for this purpose, and therefore wish to emphasise the importance of the system suggested in the last paragraph. We consider that the demand for long term credit would be gradual, and that money loaned would be continually repaid, as is the case now with the system of credit under the Public Loans Board.

The County Loans Boards would be entrusted with the duty of safeguarding these loans as far as possible, by giving long term credit only for work which would permanently improve the productivity of the land. The State may incur bad debts, but against that risk the property of the

State would be increased in value owing to the improvements effected. Credit for agricultural industries under the Trade Facilities Act should be extended.

#### BACKING UP CO-OPERATIVE CREDIT.

333. Before leaving the question of Long Term Credit we should include what are sometimes called Intermediate Credits, and Credit for such purposes as were provided for in Section 2 (1) of the Agricultural Credits Act, 1923. This Section has been very largely inoperative. But the principles embodied in it are sound, and we propose that the County Loans Boards should encourage the formation of Agricultural Credit Societies of a co-operative character, and should have power to issue certificates for loans for purchasing stock, machinery, etc., as enumerated in Sec. 2 (1) Agricultural Credits Act, 1923.

We consider that Co-operative Societies should play a larger part in Short-term and Intermediate Credits, and that every effort should be made by the County Loans Board to inform the farmers and smallholders of the advantages of dealing direct with such Societies. The County Loans Boards should organise and supervise the Co-operative Societies in their districts.

*Note.*—We have already given our reasons for thinking that when Cultivating Tenure is established the "will to co-operate" will be created. To encourage the formation of Co-operative Societies, we consider that the Government should support them more generously by advancing £1 for every 10s. share taken up by members of a Society, and by permitting the creation of fully paid-up shares, carrying interest and being convertible into borrowers' shares, with only 5s. paid up, if the holder at any time desires to receive a loan from the Society.

#### COMMENCING CREDIT.

334. Even more important in some ways than Long Term Credit is the provision of credit for new entrants to the industry. What is desired is to provide new farmers, especially those rising from the ranks of agricultural labourers, with a sufficiency of working capital to enable them to make full use of their holdings.

These loans should be provided by the State at the lowest possible rate of interest. Sinking fund payments should be deferred for a period of from two to five years, and repayment spread over ten or twenty years. The loan would be secured by all the stock and equipment of the farm, the County Authority having the power to terminate the tenancy if the interest or Sinking Fund were not properly paid.

The State would be guaranteed to a large extent against loss by the fact that only agriculturists who were likely to make proper use of the land would be approved by the County Authority.

Applicants for farms should be responsible for, or a proper guarantee should be produced for, at least 30 per cent. of the capital required. It would, in our opinion, be absolutely fatal to the success of the scheme to give agriculturists the idea that they have only to apply for credit to get what they require, without any responsibility or thrift on their part ; or the outside world the impression that any element of reckless finance was being imported into the development of agriculture.

But to say this is not to admit anything against an adequate scheme for providing commencing capital. How English farm labourers, on the wages which they have received in the past, have been able to save money at all is a mystery. But, somehow, some of them have saved. Some may have no definite wish to change their status, but it would be hard to find any country parish without a certain number of men who, if they had holdings put at their disposal to-morrow, together with a loan of say, £2 for every £1 supplied by themselves, would not accept the offer and make good. This may be denied by some whose souls are set on maintaining the present rural order. It will not be denied by any who know farming systems abroad, and who believe in the potentialities of the British race. If in our countryside the true agricultural mentality is to be revived, opportunity must be given to many men now working as wage labourers to

acquire farm holdings with sufficient financial backing to give reasonable prospect of success. Even more important is it that such opportunity should be given to the children of labourers, village-born, in this third generation of popular education. Later on when the co-ordination of educational facilities with the provision of small holdings of different sizes becomes effective, applicants would increase both in number and in competence. Such a system, we are informed, has worked well in the past in Scotland and also in the Dominions.

#### THE CREDIT SCHEME AT WORK.

335. Let the scheme for agricultural credit now be visualised as a whole. The process would be something as follows :—

In each County Agricultural Authority's area would be established a County Loans Board, responsible to the Central Agricultural Loans Board.

The Cultivating Tenant would state to the County Agricultural Authority the amount he required, and the purpose to which he intended to apply it. The County Agricultural Authority would refer the application to one of its officers, who would take into account the applicant's reliability and competence, the suitability of the improvement suggested and the possible adequacy or possible extravagance of the demand. The Authority, on the officer's recommendation, would agree, reject, or possibly modify the proposal.

The County Agricultural Authority, using its knowledge of farmers in the County, would recommend approved applicants for credit to the County Loans Board which would then proceed as described in Section 330.

#### OFFICIALS AND EFFECTIVENESS.

336. Consideration of the system here proposed should not be confused by loose thinking about officialism. The landlord's agent now is an official, sometimes highly



efficient, sometimes not. His bias, in discussing improvements with a tenant under the previous system, is nearly always towards immediate economy. He is seldom in a position to consider ultimate benefits. His judgment is warped by the knowledge that his principal cannot, or does not want to, spend money on improving the holdings on his estate, whatever may be the eventual increase in rentable value. Ample evidence as to this point has been given in previous chapters of this Report.

We do not in any way want to increase the number of officials. We do emphatically want to increase the effectiveness of whatever work must be carried out by officials. The officer of the County Authority would be a qualified land agent or surveyor, or a highly trained and experienced agriculturist, and his bias would be rather in the direction of encouraging remunerative expenditure than of discouraging it. His criterion would be the extent to which expenditure would benefit his county and the whole country.

#### CREDIT SCHEME AND RENTS.

337. It is not unusual now for landowners to instruct their agents to make improvements if the tenant agrees to pay 5 per cent. per annum on their cost. This would not be unfair, if this 5 per cent. were not paid as an addition to a *gross* rent, the amount of which assumes that all improvements are carried out by the landlord. Under Cultivating Tenure the cost of all improvements would be additional to the *net* rent. The farmer would, in the first instance, decide whether he would carry out any wished-for improvements at his own cost, or apply for a loan under the credit scheme. If he adopts the first course he would have every inducement to make the improvement in an economical manner, and at the same time he would be assured that on a break of holding he would receive for himself or for his successor the unexhausted value of the improvement.

If he makes the improvement with a loan under the Credit Scheme he will still have the incentive to economy. The annual charge in respect of the loan will run on the holding for a number of years based on the prospective life of the improvement and agreed when the loan is made. If there is a break of holding before the loan is paid off, the next cultivating tenant will, in taking on the holding, take on also the liability for current annual charges, and benefit by the unexhausted life of the improvement.

#### CREDIT AND GOOD HUSBANDRY.

338. Just as there is a necessary connection between the capitalisation of a farm and its productivity, so must there be a working connection between the scheme of agricultural credit and the machinery for judging good cultivation. In the probationary period of three years any belief that the bad state of the farm is due to the failure of the late owner to equip it adequately, will certainly be expressed, and will certainly gain attention. It will be within the competence of the County Agricultural Authority to make arrangements for improving the equipment and the condition of the farm, knowing that, under either the present cultivator or his successor, such expenditure will result in an increased value. At all times, decisions on an application for a loan will take into account the cultivator's farming ability.

#### *Division II.*

##### *Research and Education.*

339. Another activity of the County Agricultural Authority, also intimately connected with good cultivation, will be its interest in the rural education of the County and its own system of demonstration, training and research stations.

## SCIENCE AND THE FARMER.

340. On the whole, Great Britain to-day does not compare badly with other countries as regards the actual machinery for agricultural research. Invaluable research work has been done, and is being done, at Rothamsted, Wye, Reading, Oswestry and other centres, but, as has been pointed out by a recent Minister of Agriculture, the defect has been, and still is, in the line of communication between the researcher on the one hand and the farmer and general public on the other. In that line are more gaps than one. Skilled observers agree that the most serious is that which separates the practice of the best from that of the average English Farmer. This gap, to a large extent, coincides with the break in the line of scientific communication. We have been much impressed by what our investigators in other countries have reported on the very different attitude of cultivators generally abroad, to scientific advances and works. The happy intimacy which may exist between official instructors and cultivators is, perhaps particularly noticeable in Belgium, and certain extracts from our Belgian Investigator's Report on this point, given in Appendix XII., will be found of general interest. The Belgians have an effective system of agricultural publicity, which has gained the ear of every peasant. No Englishman, however patriotic and however well aware of recent advances here and there, will maintain that our countryside is permeated with a belief in the practical advantages of scientific progress.

## FARMERS AND EXPERTS.

341. The true cause of the gap is sometimes hotly discussed. No one blames farmers as a class more severely than the keen and go-ahead farmers who seize every opportunity of gaining scientific knowledge. On the other hand, men who are in a real sense agricultural experts are often the first to call attention to the so-called expert's frequent inability to impress the practical farmer

with his own value. One eminent agriculturist in the South of England said to us :—

“The economic value of research is not realised, generally speaking, because farmers will not listen to advice, nor will they apply for help.”

On the other hand is the evidence.

“The so-called expert in England has not carried the agricultural workers with him to anything like the same extent as in the Dominions and the European countries adjoining these Islands. Sometimes it is because he has not known his job, and more often because he has been above it.”

It is not for us to attempt, even if we desire to do so, to allocate the blame. We are concerned merely to point out the existence of the gap and its serious consequences.

#### DEMONSTRATION AND TRAINING.

342. The fact that in our scheme farms would be visited from time to time by experienced agriculturists makes possible, as no other scheme would appear to do, continued contact between the laboratory and the field. The present system of agricultural centres and stations should be extended so that all cultivators may find, within reasonable distance, sources of practical and scientific advice on soils, manures, breeds, seeds, farming methods and marketing necessities. Demonstration and training farms should be set up, and special provision made on these farms for an exchange of labour for maintenance so that labourers with ambition could qualify as good husbandmen. It is to be hoped that sons of farmers would attend such farms, that so might be broken down the barriers of agricultural caste. Attention might well be given also to developing in this country the Danish practice of farmers sending their sons as working apprentices and improvers to other farmers of experience and skill. But no *ad hoc* devices will by themselves fill the gap. The frequent failure of agricultural education to percolate far from the colleges is largely due to the lack of incentives in rural life.

## A LABOURER'S VIEW.

343. Agricultural workers, as we have already pointed out, are to-day keenly alive to the prevalence of bad farming. That does not necessarily mean more than natural intelligence and an almost instinctive feeling for the soil. One of them puts the other side of the picture forcibly when he writes :

“ The average labourer is just as ignorant re the possibilities of half an acre as is the average farmer re the possibilities of 100 acres. Half an acre of land . . . may mean 10s. a week to a labourer without his having to work hard during the evening . . . . But many labourers are against the idea. Their idea of a plot of land is something to be dug by hand and planted with potatoes. And they get quite enough of digging during the day. They must be taught how to use these plots. I have seen plots used to great advantage on these soils, medium and heavy clay. The heavier soils are often almost ideal for fruit growing and the hardier kinds of poultry do well enough under such conditions. And I have known a thin soil made to grow huge crops of all kinds simply by liquid manuring, the pig sty having been constructed so as to allow the liquid to drain into a receptacle from which it can be easily carried into the garden . . . .

“ These, and a score of other things need to be brought to the notice of labourers, which could easily be done by means of demonstration and experimental farms, and by wireless, literature, etc.”

But there are still villages where cottagers may not keep pigs, and many where thought of how to use half-an-acre would be wasted time in the absence of any prospect of getting it.

## EDUCATION AND OPPORTUNITY.

344. Demand for and appreciation of education will come when horizons of opportunity open to farm labourers.

The influence of the Danish High Schools on Danish agricultural activity, and the reaction of agricultural activity on these schools is a remarkable example of the inter-action on human life of economic and spiritual forces. But in considering rural education in England, the lee-way to be made up has to be reckoned with. There is ample material for popular agricultural education. There are new methods to be used. Beyond the newspaper and the book there is the cinema and, most promising of all in view of the standing difficulty of collecting adequate audiences in small villages and hamlets, there is broadcasting. There seems to us no reason why the very best lectures on agricultural topics should not be delivered in hundreds of villages at the same hour. When farmers have every incentive to make the most of their land, and labourers are able to regard themselves as farmers *in posse*, then will come a live demand for education, and in the rural economy there will be no room for the farmer whose attitude to his craft is more resistant than that of his men.

#### THE VILLAGE SCHOOL.

345. The village school is fundamental to any scheme of rural regeneration. All schools are made, not by their buildings, but by their teachers. It is plainly desirable that the ambitions of village school-children should not be unwisely directed to urban life. The village school-teacher must not, even unconsciously, inculcate suburbanism rather than ruralism. A rural school policy must aim at discovering and developing a "country sense" in teachers. From that will follow that rural schools should be supplied with books which inculcate an interest in and love of rural life, that the syllabus of village schools should have a rural bias, and that school gardens should be provided. But the guidance of young minds to rural ideals will depend much more on the teacher's personality than on furniture and equipment, and it is with the teacher that reform of rural education must start.

Village teachers in the past have suffered severely from the discouragements of an apathetic agriculture. The Education Act of 1870 came into force just when the great depression in agriculture was starting. Their pupils have been handicapped by the general prevalence of low wages and a low standard of agricultural intelligence and practice. But Canute failed to stop the tide. In the same way teachers in rural schools, even those with the "country sense," will fail to cultivate such a love of country life as will attach the ablest boys to the soil, so long as the economic conditions do not open out to those boys such pathways for their ambition as lure them to the towns, leaving behind them husbandless girls whom they would have married. If the girls follow, as in many cases they do, the countryside is even more denuded of its best stock.

When agriculture offers, as we confidently expect it to offer under Cultivating tenure, adequate wages, a desirable life and a fair opportunity for the enterprising boy to become a farmer, agriculture will retain in the rural areas all the labour it needs.

#### STAGNANCY AND MIGRATION.

346. No agriculture is able to absorb, nor is it desirable that it should absorb, all the youth of the villages. A system of scholarship premiums, working hand in hand with care for rural industries would give openings in the rural trades auxiliary to agriculture. But the efforts put forth for the improvement of agricultural conditions are put forth not only in the interest of the countryside, but also of the towns which have, or ought to have, in the country the reservoir of their health and sanity. The general needs of the community and the ambition of the enterprising country boy are not in opposition; it is the stagnancy of country life, and particularly the unprogressive economic conditions of 'agricultural interests' that have been, and continue to be, the cause of excessive migration. Our object is to apply a wider intellectual stimulus. We are

not recommending such an education as would debar the brightest, or any, children from the opportunities anywhere open to them. A vocational education, towards the hoe and the plough, would be a retrograde step. When, however, we review the education conditions of rural areas, we are arrested by two striking features :—

(1). The inequality of opportunity as between the country child and the town child, and

(2). The inadequacy of the appeal made through country life to the imagination and interest of the country boy and girl.

The first may be summarised as a total of over-crowded, ill-ventilated, ill-lighted and insanitary school buildings ; discouraged teachers ; an organisation comprising so many small schools as to be wasteful of the energy and devotion of the teaching staff ; little provision of the means of special medical treatment, and a dearth of higher schools. Rural education, on its administrative side, needs a far-reaching reorganisation with a view to making better grading possible, collecting together enough children to create a spirit of competition, and establishing centres where handicraft, domestic, and other subjects can be provided without prohibitive expenditure. The 'bus, the bicycle, and the motor-car are all coming to the Authority's aid.

#### NATURE AS TEACHER.

347. The appeal to Nature as a means of freshening the "intellectual atmosphere" is supported by the best educational theory and practice, which insists on the widest use of immediate environment. It is infrequently remembered that universal school attendance has been accompanied by loss as well as by great gain, and that quickened intellectual appreciation of plant life, animal life, the soil, the atmosphere, the return of the seasons with their renewal of life—the 'changing God,' as Thomson called them—on the part of plough boys, shepherd boys, and fishing boys, is required as compensation for the



' field experience ' which the earlier generations acquired through contributing to their own support at an immature age.

#### CONTINUED EDUCATION.

348. The task of the community should not, however, end with the close of compulsory school life at 14 years of age. It must be a sustained effort supported by means of village playing fields, village halls, libraries, continuation schools, adult education, farm institutes, houses with sufficient gardens, and finally an organiser, who would be responsible over a wide area for initiating and bringing into co-operation means of such culture (including amusement) as would transform the mental attitude of the agricultural labourer and his children. Intellectual interest is not the concern of only a few years of primary education ; it should expand and satisfy as the years accumulate.

It is easier to envisage the task than to find men to operate it. Teachers who express a preference for village schools should be offered training if they so choose, in specialised training colleges, where their choice or predisposition could be strengthened by instructors with knowledge and experience of rural life and of the art and science of agriculture, and who possess also the gifts of exposition. The Ministry of Agriculture might co-operate with the Board of Education and put forward instructors who have both a sound knowledge of the sciences underlying agricultural practice, and experience in their application. They would aim at teaching, and, it might be, inspiring, adults who as parents or professional teachers would have power to tire or quench the enthusiasm of children. The success of townsmen in country schools has shown that country birth and rearing are not indispensables of the country school-teacher. But all teachers in villages are in some degree cut off from intellectual reinforcements and refreshments. Itinerant teachers of rural science would have a mission of endless possibilities. It is the men and women that count rather

than the plan; it is not the amount taught, but the character of the teaching, that will effect the desired revolution.

### *Division III.*

#### *Marketing and Transport.*

349. The constant reference necessary in any examination of the present condition of English agriculture to the gap between what the producer gets and what the consumer pays forbids quick dismissal of the question of marketing and transport. The Findings of the Hutchison Committee on these subjects may to advantage here be quoted, and reference made to the conclusions of the Linlithgow Committee, summarised in Appendix X.

The Findings of the Hutchison Committee on Marketing and Transport were :—

1. By far the heaviest charge on the prosperity of agriculture is the cost of distributive services, wholesale and retail.

2. The existence of 'rings' of dealers is proved up to the hilt in the live stock markets. They are powerful also in other markets. *Ad hoc* legislation is not likely to be effective. Organised co-operative marketing is the one hope.

3. Farmers are to a large extent in the hands of traders. The only practical remedy is the same as that against 'rings.'

4. Railway rates must be reduced.

5. A system of parcel post for agricultural produce should be given careful and adequate trial.

6. Organisation on the part of the farmers for collecting farm produce and putting on rail in bulk is an essential complement to concessions by the Railways. In this increased telephone facilities and use of wireless should take part.

## CO-OPERATION.

350. On Co-operation the Findings present a coherent and carefully articulated scheme.

(1). This country is more backward than any other country with which comparison can fairly be made in the scientific organisation of marketing. The farmer is helpless against highly organised wholesale and retail trades. Commercial combinations can be met only by producers' co-operation.

(2). Study of co-operation in other countries shows that the first stage is propaganda, and that State help comes in only when the farming community has accepted co-operative principles. The necessity of organising for an export market does not in this country make co-operation so obviously necessary. The farmer, however cannot compete in his home market against the organised imports of other countries unless he too is organised.

(3). The time has come to establish co-operative machinery on a firm business basis. There should be :—

(a) A network of societies for the purchase of farmers' requirements closely supervised so as to secure good management, working through a Central Purchasing Agency which should be in close touch with the Co-operative Wholesale Society by means of intertrading.

(b) A system of trading federations organising the sale of farmers' produce on commodity lines (bacon, wool, dairy produce, fruit and vegetables, eggs and poultry, meat, etc.) in close touch with and representing local societies of producers, and also (as nearly as the circumstances in each case allow) in direct touch with consumers.

(c) A federation of the Central Purchasing Agency and for the trading federations for common purposes.

(d) State supervision, exercising in particular the following functions :—

(i) To secure that men with the very best commercial brains work together as a team in devising

and supervising the policy of the movement, and to provide their necessary expenses.

(ii) So long as educational and propaganda work are necessary for the formation of local societies, to provide the necessary funds for this work and to see that they are efficiently expended.

(iii) To provide credit facilities for local societies for general purposes and in particular for buildings and equipment.

(iv) To watch over the interests of the consumer.

Our comment on these Findings is that they, and still more the results of the Linlithgow Enquiry, will rust in neglect unless some body of responsible persons is charged with carrying them out. We propose therefore that on the institution of cultivating tenure, the Government shall set up a Commission, comprising business men of proved ability, with wide powers to deal with the obstructions which prevent agriculture short-circuiting and simplifying its distributive services. Under the impetus of the new spirit in agriculture cultivators will be keen to handle their own problems. Our suggestion is not so much that something should be organised for them as that skilled guidance and direction should be put at their disposal. The Commission would in fact be one of a new kind appointed not to hear evidence but to indicate the points at which acknowledged abuses should be attacked.

#### RAILWAY RATES AND METHODS.

351. The present grouping of railway systems makes particularly necessary the overhaul both of rates and facilities for carrying produce to market and equipment and material on to the land. Sir Wm. Beach Thomas has lately referred to "the incredible inefficiency" of a certain railway system, which "has gone far to kill particular intensive industries."<sup>1</sup> The trouble is that the railway system of this country has, not unnaturally, been infected

<sup>1</sup> "Observer," Sept. 20th, 1925.

by the spirit of indifference which has determined the attitude of the community towards agriculture during the past three-quarters of a century. Railway transport has been developed with a view to assisting every industry except agriculture. The big money has been found in the great industrial centres or even in through-transport of foreign produce from the ports, and the thin seams of wealth to be found in the agricultural districts have not been worked. The Post Office principle of a flat rate should be introduced into railway working, and if a State guarantee is required to cover possible loss at the start of the new rate, it should, we think, be given. Money would be better spent thus than in relieving the urban unemployment which is aggravated by rural decay. There is at the same time something in the plea set up by the railway companies that they cannot give traffic facilities unless produce is delivered to them in bulk. This points to the vital need for co-operative marketing, so that farmers may be able to meet the fair demands of the railway companies.

#### CASH ON DELIVERY SYSTEM.

352. We consider also that the Cash on Delivery system should be given a fair trial. The Post Office has more than once refused to put such a scheme into operation, but the arguments for its adoption are so strong that, even if certain difficulties have to be overcome, it should be given a trial. A particular advantage of such a scheme is that in addition to helping small agriculturists it would also be very definitely to the advantage of families living in towns and requiring fresh English-grown produce.

#### LIVE STOCK INSURANCE.

353. Professor John Share-Jones of the University of Liverpool submitted to us a valuable memorandum on "A National System of Live Stock Insurance," which we hope will win the attention it deserves.

The recommendation of the Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation may also be noted: "Experiments in certain

districts should be undertaken with a view to a national system of live stock immunisation and insurance."

#### TOWARDS CO-OPERATION.

354. "The will to co-operate"; that phrase must be repeated as the key to the question of agricultural marketing. Subject to this we wholly endorse the Hutchison Committee's Findings quoted above. The direct effect of unorganised marketing arrangements is even now scarcely recognised.

Under present conditions the agriculturist, at the mercy of the middleman, often refrains from producing essential food supplies because he has no means of getting them to markets which may not be 50 miles away, or of receiving a fair proportion of the selling price in the market. On the other hand supplies of no better quality are transported hundreds of miles from Denmark to the same markets, the Danish producer making a good profit out of the transaction.

The failure of the Agricultural Organisation Society after the herculean work of a small group of men of the highest public spirit proves not that British volunteer work is inferior to that of foreign, but that the response has been chilled by the atmosphere of agricultural discouragement. Close, business-like organisation of marketing is an essential part of the superstructure to be erected on the basis of virtual ownership. Co-operation must enter largely into it, but to overcome the distrust felt by many farmers for a system which has not yet been able to prove itself effective, the State must be ready to clear away the heaviest impediments in the co-operator's path. Once co-operation is established it will run itself as it does in other countries, with general support and a minimum of State intervention.

On the whole question here briefly touched on the Report of the Linlithgow Committee is a mine of information, and for the convenience of busy readers we give in Appendix X. a summary of their conclusions and

recommendations. They point to much that urgently needs doing, but we cannot find that any practical attention has so been paid them.

#### *Division IV.*

##### *Rural Industries.*

355. The findings of the Hutchison Committee are again of service in treating of Rural Industries. They are contained very concisely in two paragraphs.

(1). The general stream of economic tendencies has been against rural industries, but there are economic factors on their side. A deliberate effort to revive rural industries will succeed where they are based on local markets and use of local material. Forestry is of particular importance in this connection.

(2). Failure to use local water-power is evidence of harm wrought to rural industries by migration to the towns of the most vigorous and active members of rural communities. Rural life lacks confidence in itself, and educational work directed to indicating rural possibilities is of real value. The Rural Industries Intelligence Bureau is apparently earning its grant from the Development Commissioners. Its work should be closely co-ordinated with the rural social agencies.

#### THREE CLASSES OF INDUSTRIES.

356. Our comment can be confined to emphasising the distinction between agricultural industries, rural industries and industries rurally situated, and to bringing electricity into the argument.

Industries, properly called agricultural, such as bacon and milk factories, will be brought into existence by success in organising agricultural marketing. Taste and fashion must, to some extent, be guided away from present channels if other rural industries, using local materials, are to be re-established.

## ELECTRICITY IN RURAL LIFE.

357. The third class of industries is favoured by the development of modern transport and modern methods of transmitting power. This generation is sadly familiar with the squalor of urban industrialism. Few movements have more social importance than that which, in recent years, has, however sporadically and hesitatingly, been establishing in rural areas factories which, not many years ago, would inevitably have been built in the towns. But there is still no general recognition of what may follow from laying cables through rural areas and giving facilities to tap them at cheap rates. In this connection the Report of the Committee on Coal and Power should be closely studied. Suggestive notes of the use of electricity on farms will be found in our investigator's Report on Denmark. (Appendix XIII.)

## ACCESS TO WATER.

358. There ought, in addition, to be wide facilities for access to water, either for power or for use, in manufacturing processes. This could be obtained by extending the powers given under the Acquisition of Land Act, 1919, to the acquisition of easements and rights of way where the Tribunal finds that the granting of such easement or right would be of benefit to the local community. The power might even be extended to the acquisition of sites for factories and for transport purposes. It may be objected that the granting of such powers would lead to the destruction of rural beauty. A fair reply to this argument is that rural beauty is not dependent on either depopulation or poverty. In practice, it is singularly unlikely that a thought-out policy for establishing factories in the right places and providing efficient means of transport would depreciate landscape more than the present haphazard and casual manner in which land is secured for industrial and other non-agricultural purposes.



## THE FISHING INDUSTRY.

359. In connection with rural industries it is necessary to pay particular attention to the fishing industry in Scotland. Over 70,000 persons are engaged directly in the industry, not to mention the wide range of other trades indirectly affected by it. It has been estimated that £10,000,000 of capital is sunk in the trade. Over 26,000 fishermen are in-shore men living in country districts. Of these over 7,000 are actually crofter-fishermen. Since 1913 the numbers employed in the fishing industry have decreased by about 25 per cent. During the same period the proportion employed in the trawling industry has actually increased, which means that this total loss in the number of fishermen has fallen entirely upon the countryside. Here then is a great rural industry which, like many others, has suffered from marked decay during recent years.

It is not possible in this Report, however, to deal at length with the steps necessary for its revival. Let it suffice here to say that, as the object of our policy is the revival of rural life, an industry which bulks, in Scotland at any rate, so largely in the rural economy as does the fishing industry, must be embraced within the sweep of our proposals.

## SOCIAL AGENCIES.

360. The Hutchison Committee recommended that the Rural Welfare Section of the Ministry of Agriculture should be re-established to co-ordinate all efforts directed towards the reconstruction of the social life of villages. We endorse this recommendation also, subject to the purpose of the central body being to foster co-operation between the various voluntary bodies, whose work in the last difficult few years has been invaluable. The Women's Institutes, the Village Clubs and the Rural Community Councils, to say nothing of the avowedly juvenile organisations, the Boys' and Girls' Clubs, and the Scouts and Guides and the Young Farmers' Clubs, have earned national gratitude.

Curious notions of brightening the lives of villagers are sometimes expressed. The best of all ways of getting villagers' lives brightened is, we think, to base village life on a sound social and economic foundation. But provision for social gatherings and village meetings of all kinds is necessary. Many villages are so impoverished that the capital cost of establishing such a communal centre cannot at present be met out of local resources. Subject to efficient local management grants should be made for the erection of halls, club-houses, institutes or libraries.

#### AFFORESTATION.

361. The Hutchison Committee put the case for the afforestation high (but not too high), when it described it as "a policy for creating and preserving assets." It went on to declare that economies at its expense were peculiarly fatal.

The deplorable present position of forestry in this country has been described at some length in sections 130-141. The first step towards devising a remedy is to recognise that few private owners can afford to lock up capital for the period needed for tree-planting to fructify. The State can afford to look 40 or 50 years ahead. It, in fact, cannot afford not to do so. We propose, therefore, that following on the Land Survey, the whole problem of wasted land should be examined by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Forestry Commission acting in conjunction, with the definite purpose of bringing under timber every acre of land in Great Britain which is suitable for forestry and is not suitable for food production.

#### SCATTERED WOODLANDS.

362. The action to be taken with regard to woodlands, which, be it remembered, are frequently situated around the larger country houses or interspersed with agricultural land, as coverts, spinneys, shelter-belts, etc., needs rather fuller explanation.

Several points must be regarded. One is that on well-managed estates to-day, woodlands are, to some extent at any rate, worked in with landlord's repairs. Another is

that woods are often worth more to a farmer for the repair of fences, buildings, etc., than to the landlord as timber. The third is that the smaller woods have often been planted as features in the landscape, or as game covers. The game they shelter frequently do damage to the man who is farming in fields around them. Often, on the other hand, they have the genuinely agricultural function of providing shelter on windswept areas.

Under Cultivating Tenure, therefore, the policy should be :—

(1) All woodlands required by Cultivating Tenants, at the time when the change in tenure is made, shall be transferred on the same terms and under the same conditions as cultivable land, i.e., the Annuity and the Fair Net Rent would include the value of the woodlands.

(2) Subject to claims made for woodlands made by Cultivating Owners jointly or severally, present land-owners shall be able to retain, together with their mansion house, any woodlands which customarily go with the mansion, or are required for its amenity.

(3) Any other woodlands shall be vested in the County Agricultural Authority to be disposed of or used at its discretion.

(4) The Forestry Commission shall have power to acquire any woodlands, being unprofitably used, by agreement with the C.A.A.

*Note.*—The position of the Forestry Commission should be made clear. The Commission would be submerged, if it were asked to take over all small woodland areas. When it was first established it worked on the theory that an area of 400 acres was a practical forestry unit. Experience has convinced it that the minimum area, generally speaking, should not be less than 1,000 acres. On the other hand, cultivating owners will be able to make profitable use of just the woodlands which are too small for the Commission. The energies released by Cultivating Ownership will tend to bring back into agricultural use any fertile land which for game purposes has been planted with trees.

## HEDGEROW AND FIELD TIMBER.

363. Experience in other countries illustrates the necessity of providing against farms being denuded of timber. Farmers who under the present dispensation have bought their farms, are tempted in moments of difficulty to cut down and sell trees which alive were both serviceable and beautiful. One of the good points of tenancy on a good estate is that the tenant, by friendly agreement with the agent, may cut timber which interferes with his cultivation. But he may not cut it to sell. This is the precedent which we think should be followed under Cultivating Tenure, and we therefore add a fifth point to the four set out in the preceding section.

(5) The right to cut hedgerow timber and all other trees growing on any farm held in cultivating Tenure, shall be reserved to the County Agricultural Authority, which shall permit any Cultivating Tenant to cut trees for his use on the farm, or any which impede his cultivation.

*Division V.**Survey of all Land.*

364. To anyone who attempts to think out rural problems it must be very soon apparent that before reconstruction can go very far, accurate knowledge must be obtained of many things which are at present vague and uncertain. We have had occasion to point out that no one knows how many acres there are of land now idle because of lack of drainage; that no one knows accurately even the present acreage of forest in this country; that even the number of persons who own the surface of Great Britain has not been ascertained since the year 1875; and, to be brief, that on a large number of points there is a grave lack of that knowledge which necessarily precedes action. The United States of America make a survey of its 365 million acres once in every 10 years. With us the need for a

Survey is at least as great. We have said that the institution of Cultivating Tenure does not create the need for a Survey, but it certainly does create an opportunity. We propose, therefore, that at the earliest possible moment a general Survey of the use and capacity of all land in the country shall be undertaken. For this purpose there should be appointed in the first instance a Survey Commission. The Enclosure Commissioners provide a fairly obvious precedent. The Survey Commission, like them, might consist of three whole-time officers appointed directly by the Crown. Their functions would be to provide the necessary assistance to the County Agricultural Authorities to enable each of them to ascertain accurately the facts of the land in their area, its extent, its use, and its capacity, and in some cases the historical element would come in as, for example, land now flooded which was once cultivated, or land now going to waste or under game preservation which formerly produced food.

#### PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

365. The need for, and the possibilities of, a Survey may best be illustrated by returning, for a moment, to the question of afforestation. We know, by observation, that there is much land now producing nothing but rabbits or game which is intrinsically superior, to all outward appearance, to land which in Holland, Denmark and Belgium has been profitably planted. It is easy to point to areas recently taken in hand by the Forestry Commission which have lain barren and derelict for many scores of years. What we want to know is how much of our land is permanently infertile; how much is really suitable for agriculture of some kind; and how much is really unsuitable for agriculture, but quite promising for afforestation. Once that knowledge is obtained, the sheer waste of national resources involved in the present neglect will surely be intolerable to the minds of the nation.

But when the physical fact is ascertained, the social fact then has to be brought into account. Afforestation, stability,

to keep to our particular instance, will be affected by such consideration as the proximity of the land in question to centres of population, its possible connection with colonies of smallholders, or its potential development hand in hand with the establishment of rural industries using water or other power. The Survey will naturally and necessarily pay particular attention to the possibilities latent in water-power now running to waste. An effective Survey must, in fact, be a work requiring the co-operation of geologists, agricultural chemists, meteorologists and sociologists. This detailed Survey will take time. Our proposal is, therefore, that the Commissioners should first carry out a physical Survey of the whole country, treating this in broad outline ; that the County Agricultural Authorities, immediately on their appointment, should undertake a sociological Survey of their counties, that is, that they should acquaint themselves with the essential facts of agricultural production and population in their counties and, in particular, should ascertain the demand for small holdings, and the housing conditions of their villages. A closer examination of both the sociological and the economic features of rural life should follow, and for this it should be within the power of the Survey Commission to give assistance to the County Agricultural Authorities.

#### RECLAMATION.

366. A short paragraph on yet one other highly important subject may conclude this chapter. It is not necessary to prove the possibility of bringing many thousands of acres into use for productive purposes. The facts at home and the successes gained abroad combine to throw the onus of proof on those who say that for some peculiar reason reclamation works here are impossible or unprofitable. We have already called attention to what needs doing and how other nations are doing it. Much of what has been said under the head of survey is of vital preliminary importance. We would add only a simple parallel.

## ABROAD.

367. The first side of the figure is derived once again from Denmark and Holland. "When Slesvig was lost," writes a Danish correspondent, "the country was exhausted. A couple of years passed by before the paralysis of discouragement could be shaken off. But the reaction came and the result of this was, besides a lot of other things, the formation of the Danish Heath Society on March 28th, 1866. 'Outside lost shall inside gain' were the appealing words used, and they caught the population.

"At that time, about 3,000 square miles (about one-fifth of Denmark) was waste land. Of this nearly 2,000 square miles have now been cultivated and turned into woods and farms, and the work is still going on. . . The work still goes on hand in hand with planting and manuring experiments and water level regulation. Where the heather was the only flower are now found lovely farms with trees, orchards and flower-gardens. England gets a quantity of fine bacon, butter and eggs from these farms."

With this should be set the story of Holland's reclamation of barren sand, heath land and drowned acres. We have already referred to the Dutch enterprise and we would not take room to refer to it again here. But in Appendix XII will be found an exceedingly interesting report from one of our investigators of what the Dutch are doing and how they are doing it.

## AT HOME.

368. The other side of the figure is again composed of elements to which reference has already been made. The large percentage of young men between the ages of 18 and 25 among the urban unemployed is, from many points of view, the most serious factor in the whole unemployment problem. The demoralisation of long unemployment is realised as acutely by themselves as by anyone who attributes the demoralisation mainly, if not entirely, to their receipt of Unemployment Insurance Benefit. Failure

to find work over a long period in itself lowers earning capacity. Many of them would gladly undertake reclamation work were it properly organised. It may be that the land reclaimed will not immediately show a profit. But we see from the latest Return that in the five weeks ending August 29th, 1925, a sum of well over 4½ million pounds was expended on Unemployment Benefit. All thinking men would vastly prefer that the largest possible proportion of such a sum should be spent not in mitigating the results of worklessness, but in paying for work which may for the moment be unremunerative, but would, in the long run, richly repay the expenditure incurred.

Such work of reclamation could, of course, be undertaken and carried through before the institution of Cultivating Tenure. We earnestly hope it will. So, too, we hope that a much enlarged programme of afforestation may be set afoot and that the other matters with which we have dealt under the heading of "The Superstructure of Reform" may be handled firmly and quickly. Our contention is that the weight of inertia in rural matters will not be lifted until new forces of vigour and enterprise are released by the establishment of Cultivating Tenure.



## CHAPTER IX.

### *Division I.*

#### *Housing.*

##### HOUSING AND OTHER SPECIAL PROBLEMS.

369. Housing is not so much a part of the rural land problem as a related problem, which must be solved in conjunction with it. In Section 82 we have pointed out that housing reform starts at the wrong end if it improves urban conditions but leaves rural conditions to deteriorate. Such reform aggravates migration from country to town. The same Section also points out that the supply of cottages for agricultural labourers has never been on an economic basis. An agricultural labourer has not been expected to pay the real rental value of a house. His wages have not enabled him to do so and they do not now enable him to do so. Fundamentally that is the reason why so few houses built since the War under State-aided Schemes are occupied by agricultural workers. The extra assistance given to parishes defined as "rural" in the last Housing Act does something towards enabling Rural District Councils to build for agricultural workers. But it is idle to deny that agricultural wage earners are still suffering from the housing shortage even more acutely than townsmen.

##### HOUSES AND WAGES.

370. In essence the position is as it was in 1913, when the Land Enquiry Committee came to the conclusion that it would only be remedied by ensuring that the labourer shall have such a rise in wages as will enable him (a) to live in a state of physical efficiency and (b) to pay a commercial

rent for his cottage. To this conclusion we return. No industry can long continue to pay wages on the assumption that an adequate supply of nominally rented houses is available, if, in fact, that supply has dried up. Yet that is the present position. We do not believe that the final solution lies in State-aided housing schemes, but, in order that the present State assistance should be applied where it is most needed, we suggest that any Rural District Council which has committed itself to an expenditure under the Housing Acts of 1923 and 1924 to the amount of a penny rate should, in respect of any other houses built by them in "rural parishes," be able to claim a fifty per cent. Grant in Aid of such additional expenditure, subject, of course, to proof that the houses are needed by the population of the locality. This provision would be helpful in present conditions and we hope that it will be made without waiting for Cultivating Tenure to come into force.

#### HOUSING UNDER CULTIVATING TENURE.

371. It is a vital part of our case that the real wages of agricultural workers will rise under Cultivating Tenure. It follows that the house supply problem will be thus brought nearer to solution in rural parishes. But to deal with the housing problem as a whole is not part of our reference. We hope that one of the manifestations of increased vigour in rural life will be not only a higher rent-paying ability, but an increase in the number of craftsmen and in general handiness. The survey to be made by C.A.A.'s, when they take over the administration of Cultivating Tenure, will specifically include the housing demand in each parish. Whatever the shortage then is, special measures must be taken to meet it under whatever policy the general housing situation of the country then demands. It is not for us to go into questions of building labour, or supply of materials, or any of the details which are properly part of the housing problem. But it is for us to suggest what measures are necessary to ensure proper

attention being given to the rural part of the problem. We suggest, therefore, that for the direction of any State-assisted housing policy, the Ministry of Health should join with the Ministry of Agriculture in establishing a Rural Housing Board, the function of which would be to apply the national housing policy to the peculiar rural conditions. Funds derived from the Central Land Fund should be put at its disposal.

#### RURAL TIED COTTAGES.

372. There is a special aspect of the rural housing problem which has to be very carefully considered, the vexed question of tied cottages. (See Sections 81 and 82). The case for tied cottages is economic. The case for freedom in the home is human. In so far as State assistance is given to cottage building, the need for cottages which are not tied should first be met. When that need is met, and when, therefore, abuses cannot arise owing to the general housing shortage, Cultivating Tenants might, under the long-term Credit provisions, borrow money for building farm cottages. But in any case the tenants of tied cottages should be better protected than they now are.

#### PROPOSALS ON TIED COTTAGES.

373. We make therefore the following proposals :—

1. The rent to be charged for cottages which are tied to a farm shall be fixed when the Cultivating Tenure in respect of that farm is granted.

2. The maintenance of farm cottages shall be treated as an essential part of good husbandry.

3. The occupant of a tied cottage shall not be liable to ejection except after giving a full month's notice.

4. No cottage not situated on a farm shall be tied. (In effect this means that the employer of an agricultural labourer should not be able to get possession

of a village cottage unless he could prove that there was equivalent alternative accommodation for the tenant.)

374. In effect the above provisions would mean that farmers who need tied cottages for their business on the farm would still have them. Cattlemen, horsemen and others who wished to be near their animals would take tied cottages with their eyes open, but would always have a month's security for their homes. New tied cottages will in any case be built by Cultivating Tenants or Occupying Owners willing to build at their own cost. When the general housing position in the parish justifies it, their building could be facilitated by loans.

It may be said that there are cottages situated actually in villages which are to all intents and purposes farm cottages, and it may seem a hardship that farmers may not have these cottages at their absolute disposal. But farmers certainly have to face in the near future a strong movement for freeing all agricultural workers' cottages from employers' control. The soreness in the villages must be healed. Its cause is largely the buying up of village-cottages by neighbouring farmers and if any distinction is to be made of the cottages which a farmer must have at his disposal it must be based, so far as we can see, on the definitely ascertainable fact that they are on the farm.

#### HOUSES AND GARDENS.

375. In dealing with allotments earlier in this Report, we said that allotments are essentially an urban, not a rural, expedient. In the past, many a country village has benefited by the provision of allotments, and we have no intention whatever of decrying their value. But in other villages the need has been met only by the provision of allotments so far from the workers' homes that they have been practically useless. In other villages again, the demand for allotments has been broken down by inability to obtain land within reasonable distance.

There is no need to repeat all that has been said about the landlessness of agricultural workers. Only the prevalence of false rural values can explain country cottages without a rod of land in a country which puts hundreds of thousands of acres to no economic use.

We propose, therefore, that the maximum density in rural housing schemes shall be four houses per acre. That will ensure to each cottage space for a garden, to say nothing of a fowl-house and pig-sty. There are critics who declare that labourers often do not want gardens and that they are so tired at the end of their day's work that the last thing in the world they want to do is to dig. That is undoubtedly true of some men. It is not true of all. But not all the virtues of a garden are destroyed if it remains undug. A man is a happier man—which means in the long run a better citizen—for possessing a rood to call his own. To women, room for a perambulator, or for drying clothes, or for a hundred and one other household expansions, is a priceless boon. When it is said, therefore, that no rural cottage should stand on less than a quarter of an acre, it is not contended that every agricultural worker should be under a moral obligation to plant potatoes and cabbages. He may prefer to plant a few fruit trees and to eat of their fruit in due season. What should be insisted on is that he be given the opportunity of exercising a choice.

#### A STATUTORY HALF ACRE.

376. The preceding section can refer only to houses henceforward to be built. All agricultural workers will be entitled to benefit by the statutory right to half an acre of land after a number of years' service on the land. This provision has been mentioned in Section 252, and here it should be made more explicit. Its purpose is to provide an additional safeguard against landlessness. We believe that in cultivating tenure a sufficiency of land will normally in all countries come to hand for adequate provision of spare-time or part-time holdings. We believe

also that the popularly elected County Agricultural Authority will seize opportunities offered for the creation of such holdings as they are required. But the man who has worked for, say, five years on the land should feel not only that he has a chance of getting a little land of his own, but that if he wants it he has a right to it. The period of qualification is a matter for discussion. We are inclined to think that five years is not too short.

#### WOMEN AND HOUSING.

377. It is impossible to think soundly on the housing question without taking account of women's interest in it. As Mrs. Wintringham says in Appendix XI, the home is the woman's workshop. Whatever the Authority charged with the care of the housing question may be when Cultivating Tenure comes into force, women should be fully represented on it. The County Agricultural Authority should not, in our view, undertake definite housing responsibility; it will have its own work to do. But obviously it cannot separate itself from consideration of the housing question in its area, and it is clearly desirable that it should co-operate as closely as possible with the Rural District Councils and any other bodies with executive housing powers or duties. Women will be able to influence the C. A. A.'s in this direction, and the stimulus given to rural life by Cultivating Tenure should, as one of its results, mean the election of more women on all bodies with executive housing powers and duties.

#### RURAL METHODS FOR RURAL PROBLEMS.

378. There can be no doubt that one of the errors in meeting the post-war rural housing need has been the stereotyping of a few fixed ideas all over the country. Local types and local methods have been overwhelmed. Often even labour has been imported from distant towns. There can be no healthy revival of rural house-building unless the use of local materials and of local labour is revived, and unless, as a natural consequence, a return is

made to local methods of building and local types of houses.

The above considerations apply to cottage building anywhere in rural parishes, and they apply with particular force to buildings to be erected on small holdings or family farms. We think it worth while considering whether the interests, to say nothing of the wishes, of countrymen would not be served by giving "new farmers" facilities under the scheme of Commencing Credit to borrow money for the erection by themselves of the buildings required on their holdings. In Denmark the homes and farm buildings of the family farms are now, generally speaking, admirable. But when the Danish policy of increasing the number of family farmers was initiated, many of the buildings first erected were practically useful rather than outwardly impressive. The holders got on to the land—that was the thing of first importance. As prosperity came they enlarged and improved their homes and buildings. That is the natural method. To insist that no small holding is tolerable without having on it a farm-house which conforms with every ideal may be to burden rural revival with an intolerable weight. Agricultural labourers to-day who succeed in getting a small holding allocated to them by the County Council have to pay annual charges, which are often crippling, for the luxury of enjoying buildings of a special and rather unnatural standard. At the same time, County Councils have been unable to recoup themselves by the rents charged. The difficulty is that buildings erected and owned by a Public Authority must be irrevocable. The irony is that small holders who cannot face the cost of such buildings, or who actually break down under their weight, are driven out of this country to Canada or outside the British Empire altogether, where at the beginning of their venture they are housed in rough-and-ready buildings. We are not advocating rural squalor; we are suggesting that rural regeneration should take account of processes natural to rural life.

In Denmark, pleasant, practical, economical plans for

small-holders' houses and buildings are available, and there is no reason why plans suitable to modest needs should not be similarly available in this country.

### *Division II.*

#### *Continuance of Certain Acts.*

##### SMALL HOLDINGS ACTS.

379. Yet one more safeguard for the would-be small-holder must be provided. We propose that the Small Holdings Acts which, at the institution of Cultivating Tenure, are on the Statute book should not be repealed. Their powers should be held in reserve to be used by the C.A.A., as successor in this respect to the County Council, if by any chance the amount of land coming to hand in its area is at any time insufficient to meet the demand made for small holdings.

##### WAGES COMMITTEES.

380. We propose also that Agricultural Wages Committees should remain in existence for the time being. They are a necessity under present conditions. We believe that Cultivating Tenure will release forces which will rapidly remove agriculture from the category of industries which need Trade Boards or Wages Committees. But we would emphasise that the goal aimed at is not the regulation of all relations between master and man and agriculture, but that agriculture should become able to pay a living wage, and that the agricultural worker, in addition to his wage, should normally possess a portion of land.

### *Division III.*

#### *Game and Shooting Rights.*

381. Earlier sections of this report have dealt with the harm done by game to food-crops in this country, and the falsification of rural values which partly follows, and partly springs from the preservation of game on cultivable land,



The application of the principles of Cultivating Tenure to this particular part of the problem is quite clear. It is that the cultivating tenant should have full control over all his means of production and that no sporting rights can, against his will, be exercised to the detriment of his land.

The question, however, to be decided, is the degree to which, and the manner in which, values created by game preservation and the letting of shooting rights should be recognised in assessing the Landlord's annuity and the tenant's fair rent. The two principal factors in the decision seem fairly clear. The first is that any actual sporting value which is transferred to the tenant and will be realised by him should be recognised in the rent he pays and in the annuity the landlord will receive. The second is that no Cultivating Tenant should be saddled with sporting rights which he does not wish to exercise and, as a corollary, that no Fair Net Rent should be increased by the value of Game which the Cultivating Tenant would rather be without.

#### NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL SHOOTING.

382. But before an attempt is made to combine these factors the great difference between sporting conditions in different areas must be pointed out. There is a far-reaching distinction between deliberately breeding and preserving winged or ground game, and the natural and casual sport of shooting over land for wild pheasants, partridges, hares or rabbits. Both these forms of sport, moreover, should be distinguished from shooting over moors or other land which has little or no agricultural use or value.

#### NATURAL SHOOTING GOES WITH THE LAND.

383. Of these three forms of shooting the second may be first dealt with. Here the position is clear. Often the shooting value is purely nominal, as, for instance, in the fox-hunting districts of the Midlands, where the foxes act

very efficiently as poachers, or in the intensively cultivated areas where small holders take very good care that there is nothing to poach. Elsewhere it amounts only to a small sum per acre. Generally speaking, natural sport has not been detrimental to agriculture, and, consequently, the agricultural rent of the land has not been reduced in consideration of the tenant allowing the landlord or his sporting tenants to shoot over the land. As the Cultivating Tenant will in future enjoy whatever sport the land affords, its value should be added to his Fair Net Rent, and to the Landlord's Annuity. In very few cases will he refuse. In many cases, no doubt, he would take over the natural sporting rights and let them. Often, in fact, he would let them to the late landlord, or even to his late landlord's shooting tenants if they had proved themselves congenial.

#### WHEN SPORT IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH CULTIVATION.

384. Towards shooting of the first kind, namely, the deliberate breeding of game which may be detrimental to agriculture, a very firm attitude must be adopted. The sporting values thus created are artificial and mischievous. It is against public policy that compensation for them should be paid.

We propose, therefore, that the County Agricultural Authorities in assessing the Fair Net Rent of any land and the Annuity in respect of it, shall include the natural sporting value, but no other sporting value.

To meet the objection that the Cultivating Tenant of land on which past breeding and preservation of game have accumulated a heavy head of game might profiteer by letting his shooting to outsiders, the late landowner should, for a period of three years from the change of tenure, have the option of hiring the shooting from the Cultivating Tenant, at the natural shooting value. The late landowner would thus be enabled to shoot off the game, or to make friendly arrangements with the farmers under the new system.

## GROUSE MOORS AND DEER FORESTS.

385. As has been provided in Section 239 either the County Agricultural Authority or the State will have power to take over grouse moors, deer forests, and other land mainly used for sport. The purpose of this provision is to ensure that any land devoted to sport, but capable of more productive use, should be so used.

As such land is not let on an agricultural tenancy, an entirely new set of factors has here to be considered.

The land concerned is sometimes too wild and high for even the summer grazing of sheep. Even as deer forest it would be of no value, supposing the deer were to be rigorously excluded from the lower land to which they have recourse in winter.

On the other hand, there are some deer forests on land which is fit for summer grazing and even for wintering sheep. In many of these places the deer go down and damage the crops of the small holdings in the area.

Much deer forest and grouse-moor-land can be used for sport without detriment to its sheep-grazing value. But the sportsman does not want to have as much of it burnt as does the grazing tenant, and he may not want it burnt at the same time. A neighbourly spirit sometimes at present solves the conflict. A careful shepherd does not let his dog roam all over the moor; he does not gather his sheep in the particular district where the sportsman wants to shoot on the day of the shooting, or the day before; he agrees to a sensible working arrangement as to the areas concerned, for he knows that burning, properly carried out, is not only essential to the health of the grouse, but advantageous to sheep-grazing. Roads for motors have been made, lodges have been built, and drains constructed, all of which improvements have meant increased revenue for local authorities. Moreover, a certain number of families are dependent on the use of the moors for sport. The roads are useful for the sheep farmer and the scattered

local population ; the drains are of value to the sheep as well as to the grouse.

#### MEN, SHEEP AND DEER.

386. That is the one side of the picture. But it is only one side. On the other is the fact that considerable areas of land, especially in Scotland, have during the last century been cleared almost entirely of cultivators, and now do not even afford grazing for sheep, all for the sake of sport. Here is a bitter grievance still in the teeming tenement houses of Glasgow crying aloud for redress. Moreover, in the neighbourhood of deer forests damage is constantly done to crops by straying deer. Sheepfarmers are compelled to fence in their sheep, but there is no similar law in regard to deer. Again, though in some cases equitable arrangements are made between shooting and grazing tenants, in many others the "neighbourly spirit" on the part of the shooting tenant is not conspicuous. Sometimes the grazing rights of the tenant have been seriously interfered with ; sometimes the landowners have refused to allow heather burning where it would be for the benefit of the grazier.

#### PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS.

387. Pending the closer study of the subject which we hope to give in considering the particular application of the Cultivating Tenancy principle to Scottish conditions, we propose that :—

(1) Any Cultivating Tenant shall have power to recover damages for losses inflicted on his property by straying deer.

(2) The right to burn heather shall pass unconditionally into the hands of the Cultivating Tenant.

(3) The C.A.A. shall have in its power to declare that any land now used as a deer forest or otherwise for sport is suitable for pastoral or arable use. On such a de-

declaration being made, the land may be taken over at a fair valuation such as is provided for in the case of all land held in occupying ownership. But there will be this highly important distinction between the fair valuation of occupier-owned farm land and that of land the sporting rent of which has been the sole or main element of the income derived from it. The valuation of farm land will include no sporting value except the natural sporting value. In valuing land which has had no agricultural value in the past, the sporting value created by its owner shall be taken into account.

#### FISHING RIGHTS.

388. The exercise of fishing rights does not injure agriculture as shooting often does. The assessment of their values as between riparian Cultivating Tenants, some of whom might wish to fish and others who might not, would be a matter of considerable difficulty, and we suggest that the present system should not be disturbed, except that any Cultivating Tenant should have the right to bring before the County Authority any case of interference with agriculture, and that the County Authority should have the power to transfer fishing rights to the Cultivating Owner if the complaints were justified and if other remedy could not be devised. It might be added that wherever fishing rights were sold, the first offer of them at a fair valuation should be made to the riparian Cultivating Tenants. County Agricultural Authorities should also have power to assist associations of local persons formed to acquire fishing rights and to observe certain rules necessary in the interest of fishing. In any arrangement made with regard to fishing rights, however, it is essential to protect the community's right of access to water for power supply or for other purposes. Rights of private sport cannot in any circumstances be allowed to prevent the use of natural resources for economic development of the countryside.

*Division IV.**Telephones.*

389. The importance of improving communications in rural areas is obvious, and in so far as any forms of communication are controlled by the Government there is a fairly obvious opening. The telephone service is a clear case in point. Under the heading of "Marketing and Transport" reference has been made to the necessity of farmers making up their goods in bulk if they are to get good treatment from the Railways. In this connection, as in others, the telephone is essential. Up to the present the telephone service has been inclined to base its expectation of revenue on installations rather than on calls. This stage corresponds to the stage reached by the Postal Service before Rowland Hill. It is impossible to imagine to-day a Postal Service in which letters would be delivered only to subscribers and then only on the payment of a sum that varied according to the distance of the subscriber from the Post Office.

It ought to be possible for every Cultivating Tenant to communicate by telephone from his own house with the nearest railway station, with his neighbours who can join with him in making up truck loads, with corn merchants, etc. We propose, therefore, that there should be a flat rate for all calls within a fairly generous radius, that there should be a telephone at every rural Post Office and railway station, that the charge for installation should be low, and that the revenue should be based on calls. The flat rate principle has made the modern Postal Service possible. It must be extended to make telephone facilities of general service.

*Division V.**Taxation, Rating, Tithe.*

## TAXATION AND RATING.

390. We do not intend in this Report to deal with questions of taxation and rating. This is not because

these questions are not important, but because they cannot be satisfactorily handled so long as the present system of tenure remains.

Landlords confess that the relief given under the existing Agricultural Rates Relief Acts comes in the end to their own pockets. That it should do so is indeed inevitable, and what has happened under the Agricultural Rates Act must happen as the result of any attempts to free agriculture from oppressive burdens whether they are just or unjust. We are in agreement with the principle of taxing land values in so far as any parcel of land acquires site value as the result of the community's activities and expenditure, but to say that all land derives its value from the presence of a community in its neighbourhood is to stretch a literal truth much too far. Land as site is one thing. Land as soil is another. Rules and methods which apply to one do not necessarily apply to both. When the system of tenure is changed the present methods of rating and taxation can be reformed to the benefit of those who are actually working upon the land. We would go further and say that means should be found so to adjust taxation and rating that improvements, whether they take the form of buildings or of increasing the capital value of the land itself, will be to the utmost degree encouraged. The modern system of land and improvement valuation in Denmark is an interesting move in this direction. The important thing to notice is that it was not introduced, and in fact it could not have been introduced, until a satisfactory form of land tenure had become practically universal. The move was made, when it was made, largely by agriculturists themselves.

#### TITHE.

391. For obvious reasons Tithe is another question with which we are not attempting to deal. The present Government has undertaken to settle the question and it seems likely that before twelve months are out a solution will have been reached which, if it is not universally

welcomed, will, at any rate, take the Tithe question out of the range of current controversies. The Tithe Rent Charge is an anachronism and an anomaly. The uncertainty of its incidence is harmful to agriculture and its abolition is very much to be welcomed.

392. In this Chapter we have dealt with several topics in accordance not with their intrinsic importance, but with the closeness of their connection with the main subject of our Report. They are somewhat miscellaneous in character. That is inevitable. The Rural Land question comes in contact with other problems at many points. It may well be that with some of these other problems we have dealt inadequately or not at all. We hope, however, to have made clear principles which may be applied to them.



## CHAPTER X.

### EXAMINATION OF ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS.

393. No body of men can work at the intricate problems of rural life without being convinced that the greatest difficulties to advance lie not in misdirected energy but in apathy and inertia. For this reason we approach any other constructive proposals put forward by persons who see the need for reform with full desire to do justice to them.

The policy we have set out in the last three chapters was not arrived at without careful consideration of the benefits promised by these other policies. It will be observed, for example, that in building up our case we have insisted that there are certain advantages in the landlord-tenant system, and that there are also advantages in occupying ownership. Our reasons for considering that the whole system of landlordism must go has been made abundantly clear. In this chapter we must put together many scattered indications of our reasons for rejecting what is commonly called occupying ownership as a solution and we must go on to discuss as briefly as possible certain other policies at present offered for consideration.

#### FARM OWNERSHIP.

394. The advocates of the policy known as Occupying Ownership, Small Ownership, Peasant Proprietorship or Farm Ownership, are actuated by a variety of motives. Some are purely economic; some purely political; the majority are a mixture. The first question to be put is whether the intention is to perpetuate the present size of British holdings; then must be asked whether the State is directly or indirectly to purchase the land and to re-sell, or whether the policy is to facilitate purchase of farms by

giving purchasing tenants access to credit on easy terms.

These questions must be answered before the real scope of the policy can be understood. When they are answered, then the terms of purchase or of borrowing may be elucidated. But it is useless to talk of details until the real aim of the policy is understood.

#### AIDED FARM OWNERSHIP.

395. The term *Occupying Ownership* is so commonly used to express the present position of farmers who own their land that another term has to be found for the policy of *establishing Occupying Ownership as the general system of land tenure for Great Britain*. Of the other terms mentioned above, *Farm Ownership* is to be preferred as the one which does not confuse the issue by begging the question. But *Farm Ownership* cannot be established generally without State compulsion or State aid. The State, in fact, must come in if *Farm Ownership* is to be in any sense a policy. Compulsion is not advocated; State Aid, in one form or another, is. The term to use must therefore be *Aided Farm Ownership*.

Early chapters of this Report have given the data for judging whether ownership can or cannot be expected to produce more food and to maintain more people on the land. It seems clear that there is no necessary correlation between the proportion of *Occupying Ownership* in any country and the level of its farming efficiency. Those countries where agriculture is most progressive have, generally speaking, *Peasant Proprietorship* as the predominant system of land tenure. But the explanation may lie, not in proprietorship, but in peasantry. Tenants are sometimes reported as farming better than freeholders; freeholders on the other hand are not unseldom declared to be the worst farmers in a district. Correlation, in fact, seems to be not between ownership and population so much as between small farming or family farming and productivity as well as population.

## DECAPITALISED FARMERS.

396. The overwhelming difficulties in which many farmers who have bought their farms since the War have been involved explain some of the instances, but not all. Burdens, less heavy, but still serious, would hamper farmers who bought under any policy of Aided Farm Ownership which did not throw a very considerable loss on the State. Purchase of farms at artificial amenity value by working farmers is nearly always a disaster. The buyers have to sink their savings; they have sometimes to sell essential stock or equipment to make up the difference between what they have to pay and what they can borrow. They may let their fields as accommodation land for high rents to graziers who do not cultivate or manure. They may under pressure of immediate necessity force crops from the soil without returning to it any equivalent. Sooner or later the heart is taken out of the land. There are freeholders who are doing well; there are some who are doing vastly better than their tenant neighbours. But there are too many who have been decapitalised with disastrous results to themselves and the land. The root of their trouble is that their working capital is tied up. Whom they have to pay, State or mortgagee, is immaterial.

## LITTLE DESIRE FOR OWNERSHIP.

397. Nor must it be imagined that there is a great and burning desire for actual ownership among farmers. The fact that practically no advantage has been taken of the provisions of the Small Holdings Act of 1908 for the actual purchase of their holdings by small holders is significant. The attitude of farmers generally to purchase was well put in the Report of the Departmental Committee on Tenant Farmers and Sales of Estates (1912):—

“Of all the remedies, which were advanced by the witnesses which came before the Committee, to alleviate the grievances under which the tenant farmer was alleged to be suffering, none was advocated so strongly as a scheme by which the tenant should be enabled to purchase his farm by the advance

of money by the State. It is clear from the evidence that the main thing which the tenant farmers desire is to be able to remain on their farms, and it is usually when a farmer is unable to remain as a tenant, owing to the breaking up of estates, that he desires to become an occupying owner. *There is little desire for ownership in itself, and it is only advocated as an alternative to being turned out of his home*" (p. 12).

The Committee concluded that only a small proportion of farmers would be able, or willing, to avail themselves of the provisions of a scheme for State-aided purchase of farms.

#### A DELUSION.

398. Even supposing that a large proportion of farmers desired a scheme for State-aided purchase, no clear and coherent scheme has yet been put forward. One proposal is that the State should purchase land and re-sell to tenants, reserving, presumably, the power to foreclose on the land if instalments of purchase price were not regularly repaid. Another proposal, and that the one most commonly favoured when generalities are under discussion, is that the State should lend the purchase money at a low rate of interest to farmers who arrange to buy farms from present landlords. This proposal is at first sight attractive, but, less perhaps than any proposal now before the public will it stand examination.

In the first place the farmer would be compelled to buy his land at its speculative value; as we have already pointed out, twenty-five years purchase of the gross rent is equivalent to at least thirty-eight years purchase of the net rent, i.e., to its real value for the farmer. Is there any business but farming in which such terms would be obtained?

In the second place the offer of money at a low rate of interest inevitably increases the price which a purchaser is willing to pay. If a farmer, for example, knows that he can get money at 4 per cent. instead of 6 per cent. he will be prepared to go up to £6,000 in a bid for property for which at 6 per cent. he would give only £4,000.

Aided Farm Ownership, therefore, whether it be effected

by cheap money or by State purchase, means burdening agriculture with false capital values. If the State is to pay the difference between the commercial value and the conventional value of land the whole community will be burdened with a huge debt. If, on the other hand, the burden is to be transferred to the new owners they would start with an immense handicap, and the result must inevitably be not only continued low production and depopulation, but early reversion to the system which it is now desired to replace.

#### MOTIVES AND METHODS.

399. Advocates of "Farm Ownership," whose ruling motive springs from recognition of the dangers entailed in the present concentration of land-ownership, should be clear not only of their motives but of their methods and their aims. Do they really mean to perpetuate the division of Great Britain's 56,000,000 farming acres into 490,000 agricultural holdings? And to keep those 490,000 holdings in the hands of something like 360,000 farmers? What modification of "absolute ownership" is necessary to prevent the system of tenancy thrown out of the door returning by the window? If land may still be mortgaged and sold, will not it fall into the hands of persons who will let others do the work of farming while they draw a rent? What safeguards will they devise for good husbandry? What incentives will they create for closer settlement? These questions are even more important than the harsh financial dilemma put in the last paragraph. And behind all them lies the question whether Farm Ownership means, as it appears to mean, giving now at long last absolute ownership of land to individual subjects.

The result of our enquiries is to convince us that to perpetuate either the present size of holdings or the present discrepancy between rental and capital values means continued disaster for British agriculture. To establish occupying ownership simply for present tenant farmers would be to abandon hope of better farming throughout

the country and would bolt the door, already shut, against the labourer. To start a new system of peasant proprietorship by loading the new "peasants" with the burden of unreal values would be to destroy it at birth.

Honest answers to the questions here put will, we believe, lead to modifications of the idea of ownership, and eventually to acceptance of the root principles of Cultivating Tenure.

#### EVOLUTION OF DANISH TENURE.

400. But, it will be said, Occupying Ownership is the system of tenure on which the prosperity of Denmark has been built. The reply to this is fourfold. First, that the holdings in Denmark were, at the beginning of its agricultural revival, generally speaking, of peasant size; secondly, that the establishment of Occupying Ownership has been accompanied by a steady process of breaking up the largest holdings; thirdly, that two-thirds of the population of Denmark are directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture; and fourthly, that *the Danish system of land holding has evolved into a form of qualified ownership*. This last point is of particular importance and has so far been far too little emphasised in this country. The Danes always conceived ownership not so much as an end in itself as a means to increasing the output of food-stuffs and the density of the population.

The Laws of 1899, 1904 and 1909 created small holdings to be held in absolute ownership. But all the time there was movement of thought towards modifying the ownership of farms in two ways. The political modification aimed at was to reserve to the State definite rights over the farms created by it. The economic modification was to enable new smallholders to retain for working purposes more of their capital. This movement came to a head in 1919, when three Laws were passed to take more land for smallholdings and small farms and to establish on those new holdings families, not as absolute owners, but as "limited owners."

## AN UNEXPECTED PARALLEL.

401. It is of particular interest to us, and of considerable importance as confirming the soundness of our conclusions, that the principles of Cultivating Tenure were worked out after close study of English conditions and necessities, before the particular provisions of the Danish 1919 Laws were known to us. In Appendix IX will be found more details on Danish smallholding legislation than we feel justified in inserting in our text. But we must here call attention to the salient points of Danish practice as they affect our thesis<sup>1</sup>. There are several points of interest in the law of 1909.

## DENMARK : SAFEGUARDS IN THE LAW OF 1909.

402. The form of tenure created by the Law of 1909 is generally referred to as absolute ownership. But the interest of the State is safeguarded to a large extent. For example :—

(1) In each "county" a committee is to be formed to assist in the establishment of holdings under the Act *and in their control*. The committee consists of three members, two elected by proportional representation and one nominated by the Agricultural Department. (Section I.)

(2) The use of State credit for the establishment of the new smallholders is an essential part of the scheme. But no person can obtain a loan from the State on more than one property. Nor can anyone who, having acquired a property under the Act has transferred it to someone else, again avail himself of the Act. (Section xiv).

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<sup>1</sup> Readers who are particularly interested in Danish Smallholdings Legislation will find a great deal of excellent matter in "Rural Denmark and its Lessons," Rider Haggard, 1917 (Longmans, Green and Co.), and in Sir William Ashley's appendix, pp. 258-264 to the Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation's Final Report (1924).

(3) The holding must be used for ordinary agricultural purposes, the necessary live and dead stock must always be kept, and the buildings must be properly maintained. The owner is bound to allow the County Committee to ascertain whether these obligations are being fulfilled. For this purpose the property will be surveyed at least every third year by one or more members of the County Committee. If the obligations are not kept and if the owner fails to remedy them within the time specified by the Committee, the Agricultural Secretary will proceed against the borrower in accordance with the stipulation set out in the mortgage bonds.

It will be seen that the three sections of the 1909 Law referred to above qualify very definitely absolute ownership. They assert on very definite terms the State's right to insist on good cultivation. The mortgage bond, in effect, gives the community right to dispossess an "owner" whose use of a holding is not in accordance with public interest.

#### DENMARK: THE INTERMEDIATE TENURE OF 1919.

403. The ideas implicit in the Law of 1909 were made much more implicit in the three Laws of 1919. In Appendix IX is given a translation of Law No. 557, which deals with the conditions on which land taken by the State under the other two laws of the same date may be sold. The first point to notice is that the land is not in fact sold at all. It is leased. But, to quote Sir William Ashley: "When the measures came to be drafted, it was realised that the prejudice of the peasant classes against tenancy, and their preference for ownership were so great that it was necessary carefully to retain the term 'ownership' and to describe the new tenure as ownership subject to conditions. And hence the Law declares:—

"Whoever obtains agricultural property on these conditions acquires in regard to it all the rights belonging to a proprietor within the limits fixed by the law." And



supporters of the policy among the rural population are very careful to speak of the State smallholders as owners."

Of the Laws dealing with the acquisition of land for these "intermediate tenure" holdings it should be noted here only that the first of them takes parochial land or glebe, and is expected to provide about 25,000 acres, that is, land for about 2,000 new settlers. The second should provide 50,000 acres, that is, holdings for about 4,000 new settlers. For the purposes of this chapter the points to emphasise are the conditions which restrict absolute ownership of the holdings concerned. Very briefly they are that:—

(a) The "owner" is bound to occupy and work the holding himself. The holding, therefore, cannot be let, nor can any houses be built on it to be let.

(b) The holding cannot be sub-divided, nor, on the other hand, can it be merged in or joined to other holdings.

(c) The "owner" may transfer a holding to his legitimate heir, but if he wishes to transfer it to anyone else, the State has right of pre-emption at the original price of the land together with the value of the buildings and the value of improvements arising from the work and expenditure of the "owner."

(d) The holding must "always possess the necessary capital and equipment."

(e) The property must not be mortgaged beyond the amount of the loan granted by the State for the erection of buildings. It cannot be seized on account of personal debts of the "owner."

(f) The "owner" of the holding cannot without permission of the Agricultural Department engage in operations likely to injure the productivity of the soil, such as the destruction of the vegetation layer, or the extraction of clay or chalk.

Whatever may be the right term to use in Denmark for the tenure here described, it can certainly not be

described in English as ownership. The farmer is never called upon to pay a purchase price. What he pays is an annual charge, based on the valuation fixed by the Valuation Commission and re-assessed every five years. The mortgage referred to above is not on the land, but on the buildings in respect of which the farmer may obtain a loan from the State of nine-tenths of the cost.

#### A PARALLEL FROM GERMANY.

404. Before leaving the Danish parallel to Cultivating Tenure, a note must be made of certain German experiments in land tenure reform. Agrarian reform in Germany was directed first to the consolidation of peasant holdings, secondly to land settlement, and only thirdly to protective tariffs. When in the steady working out of a national agricultural policy the turn of land settlement came, the first attempts were made in Hither Pomerania, a province where large properties preponderated.<sup>1</sup> The first experiments failed on the whole. There was not a sufficient supply of peasants who could buy their holdings. But in Mecklenburg there was a measure of success. The Duke was able to check the depopulation which had already begun by simply converting the tenants on his own domain from leaseholders to hereditary tenants. The failure in Pomerania and the partial success in Mecklenburg taught German statesmen a lesson, and efforts were made to discover or devise a form of tenure which should give more security than tenancy, but at the same time would not throw upon tenants the necessity of purchasing their holdings. As a result, the form of

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<sup>1</sup> Many parts of Germany, like Denmark, retained their peasantry into the 19th century. In both countries peasant protection was the Royal policy. In such States as Mecklenburg and Pomerania, which were governed by aristocracies rather than by royalty, the peasantry largely disappeared. East of the Elbe large properties were the rule 50 years ago. It was in these provinces that the problem of landless labourers arose. One authority computes that between 1816 and 1850 something like 100,000 small peasant holdings were absorbed.

tenure called *Rentengut* was found existing in Hanover, and was adopted in the Settlement Law of 1886. *Rentengut* is holding subject to a rent charge. Into the details of it it is not possible here to enter. Nor is it necessary to follow out the modifications influenced in part, at any rate, by the German-Polish question in the eastern provinces where it was mainly applied. Its interest to us is that in essence it is an intermediate form of land tenure, very similar to the form of tenure introduced in Denmark in 1919, and to *Cultivating Tenure*.<sup>1</sup>

#### FARM OWNERSHIP NOT THE SOLUTION.

405. The argument against occupying ownership may be briefly summarised :—

1. It would bolt the door of opportunity against those land workers, who, at present, have no land to farm.

2. It would enormously complicate measures for acquiring land for smallholdings, housing, etc.

3. It would leave wholly unsatisfied the deep-lying sentiment that the land belongs to the people.

4. It would burden either the community as a whole, or occupying owners themselves, with a load of debt.

5. It would absorb capital urgently required for farming development.

6. It would perpetuate the present size of holdings in this country.

7. It would not provide proper inducements to good cultivation, and, therefore, would not safeguard the paramount interest of the State.

#### WHAT IS NATIONALISATION ?

406. The foregoing Sections should have made clear our reasons for rejecting Farm Ownership as a solution and Aided Farm Ownership as a policy. It is, to say the

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<sup>1</sup> Sir William Ashley's Memorandum "Germany" in the Report of the A.T.I. is worth careful study.

least of it, interesting that an examination of Ownership, in the light of the principles laid down as those of a national rural policy, should, via the example of Denmark, bring our minds back again to the idea of conditional or qualified ownership, that is, to a form of tenure which gives the cultivator the utmost degree of security compatible with the maintenance of the national interest. We must turn now to a very different alternative, namely, the socialisation of agriculture. To talk of Nationalisation of land is wantonly confusing. The phrase arouses prejudice and induces a kind of intellectual stupor. If nationalisation of land simply means the re-assertion of the historic principle of land tenure, which, in the words of Joshua Williams "has never been controverted or even questioned"; if, in other words, nationalisation means resumption by the Crown of the land because the necessary national control of land use has been allowed to weaken, then we can see no objection to it, either in principle or in practice. We have already pointed out (Section 151), that there is a fundamental difference between property in land and property of other kinds. In the restricted sense of nationalisation, there can be no policy now of nationalising the land for the simple reason that land has never been absolute private property.

#### SOCIALISATION.

407. But if nationalisation means not only resumption of the land by the Crown, but the whole control of the agricultural industry, the public ownership of the equipment of farming and public control of farming operations, that, we have no doubt whatever, would be retrogression.

Two straight tests of Nationalisation may be applied to any scheme :—

(1) What would be the relations of the State to persons occupying and working on the land? If they are stipendiary, then the scheme is for the nationalisation of agriculture. A simple parallel is the position of a Post Office official. A village postmaster is in a stipendiary position.

He cannot pocket the proceeds and pass on the business of postmastership to son or daughter. The fact that he cannot do so is evidence that the transmission of letters and postal packets is a nationalised service.

(2) Would there be an incentive of profit for private enterprise? For example, would a farmer making a profit out of 200 acres receive the same wage as the farmer who makes no profit, or a loss? If the profit goes to the man who takes the risks and devotes his enterprise, then the scheme is not nationalisation.

We suggest that these tests should be applied because, however clearly in any scheme the necessity and the limitations of State action may be stated, there will always be an attempt to stir up prejudice by inane repetition of the charge: "But this is Nationalisation."

#### THE DIFFERENCE.

408. There is a perfectly clear distinction between the nationalisation of minerals and the nationalisation of mining. So, too, is the distinction perfectly clear between the nationalisation of land and the nationalisation of agriculture. The policy put forward by us may be described as nationalisation of land. On that we would ask only that the last two sections should be re-read. It is emphatically not nationalisation of agriculture. It is actually its antithesis. What is meant by nationalisation of agriculture is fairly expressed by a quotation from a recent pamphlet (*Socialism and Agriculture. A Popular Explanation of the I.L.P. Agricultural Proposals*, by F. Seymour Cocks, published by the I.L.P. Information Committee). The author is summing up the agricultural proposals of the I.L.P., which he says will have the following effect among others:—

"Agriculture will be recognised as a national service and the farm worker, instead of being a wage slave, will be the servant of the State. . . . His opportunities of advancement will be greater, and more numerous . . . he may rise to the position of Manager of the Parish Farm, he may rise to higher

positions still. . . . In the future any farm worker will have the opportunity of rising, through his own merits, to the position of Director General of Agriculture."

We are not concerned to express any opinion on the policy which Mr. Seymour Cocks thinks will have this effect. What we wish to make crystal clear is that the policy spoken of by him is one in which the farmer and the farm worker would be in receipt of a salary paid by the State. Under it there would apparently be no more correlation between wages and profits, on the one hand, and production on the other than there is now a direct connection between the salary of a village postman and the number of stamps sold at the village Post Office.

The example of Russia is illuminating, both on the process and on its results.

#### AGRICULTURE IN RUSSIA.

409. Russia in a short space of time has experimented in almost every possible system of communal control of cultivation. Not long before the War much of Russian land was cultivated by the village Mirs, under a system of open field farming which gave Russia the distinction of producing less food per acre than any other country in Europe. Before the War broke out, agricultural reform was being pushed forward by relaxing the powers of the Mir, enforcing amalgamation and re-distribution of existing holdings, and handing over Crown and other State lands for smallholdings. Under this policy millions of small farms were being established, the area of the large estates was diminishing, and production was being slowly increased. The bulk of the land was already in the hands of the peasants before the War. The Soviet Government, when it came into power, confiscated all private estates and put communal land committees and district councils in control of all the land, with the stipulation that all agricultural land was to be periodically redistributed, though there was freedom in the culti-

vation of the land by those who occupied it. A little later communistic principles were pushed further. Land was worked by associations of peasants who used implements and stock in common. Alternatively the whole village community was—and this method was the more usual—organised into an agricultural commune, the members of which were called upon to surrender all their individual property, whether in cash, implements or live stock. All surplus produce was the property of the State. How this scheme broke down is generally known. The area under cultivation, in three years of Soviet rule, was reduced by 36 per cent, and production by 48 per cent. On the fourth anniversary of the Revolution, Lenin openly retracted the whole policy. He confessed that it had “been impossible to organise by the simple will of the proletarian State the State production and distribution of food products in a nation of small peasants.”

“It is (by) making use of the profit of individuals, personal interest and economic considerations, that you must seek to build before all else firm bridges which will lead to Socialism by the way of State Capitalism in a nation of small cultivators.”

The practical effect of the legislation which followed Lenin's speech in 1921 was to restore to the peasants the full use of their holdings. Since the institution of this new system the productivity of Russian land has again risen, and recurrence of the famine of 1921-22 has been rendered unlikely.

If further details of Russian experiments in socialised farming are required, valuable accounts will be found in the League of Nations Report, and Mr. Venn's *Foundation of Agricultural Economics*. Mention also should be made of several exceedingly well informed articles in the *Economist*, published at intervals during the last few years. The value of the experiments lies partly in their failure, but largely in the light they throw on the meaning of nationalisation of agriculture.

## PRICE POLICIES.

410. So far in this chapter we have dealt with policies which are, or may be, put forward as direct alternatives to Cultivating Tenure. We must now consider two policies loudly demanded by certain sections of the agricultural community, the goodness or badness of which are not directly affected by our proposals.

First is the policy of Protection or Subsidies ; the second, Stabilisation. Both need careful examination, and we do not profess to be able to give to them here the space they demand. But our attitude towards them must be made clear, if only because they are by some people thought of not only as sound but as sufficient.

## PROTECTION AND BOUNTIES.

411. The policy of Protection has an irresistible attraction for some minds. Conversation in any country town on any market day tends to assume the *méchanceté* of town dwellers who refuse to pay more for their food in order that food may be more profitably grown at home. Generally, however, this presentation of the case is thought to be rather crude and the policy is disguised with varying degrees of ingenuity. If Protection were ever justifiable in this country it would be for agriculture. But since the Repeal of the Corn Laws no one has seriously proposed to give Protection to agriculture alone. Even Mr. Baldwin's bounty proposals of 1923 were merely a set off against the proposed Protection of certain urban industries. The bounty, in fact, was conceived not as a means of helping agriculture to overcome its existing difficulties, but as a set off against fresh difficulties which would be imposed upon it by raising the price of certain commodities which agriculturists are compelled to buy.

## THE LATENT ANTAGONISM.

412. In this connection the recent experience of the United States is interesting and important. Mr. Holman, in a recent article in *The Annals* of the American Academy



of Political and Social Science, has pointed out that the very serious difficulties in which American farmers were involved in 1920 were due to precipitous price declines in raw commodities and the release of world surpluses on the one market which could absorb them.

The Emergency Tariff Act of 1921 checked the evil for a time and tended to stabilise farm prices at, be it said, a low rate. American farmers are convinced that agriculture should be permanently protected. "This, however, is bound to involve an increasingly severe complex with the urban population." The Fordney Tariff Act of 1922 gives more prominence to farm duties than any previous Act. But farmers have criticised it on the ground that the protection given to agriculture is outweighed by the protection given to other industries.

A concrete example of the position which might readily arise in this country under Protection is offered by the application made this year by the Fertiliser Manufacturers' Association for an import duty on Superphosphates. The Association had to prove that the Superphosphates industry was of substantial importance, and subject to abnormal competition. Representatives of farmers in all parts of Great Britain were at once mobilised to prove that Protection for Superphosphates would injure agriculture, which, admittedly, was an industry of much greater national importance at present depressed by international competition.

#### NOT ONLY IMPRACTICABLE BUT—

Earlier in this report we have expressed our conviction that a nation 80 per cent. urban will not in any circumstances be induced to vote for dearer food. It is unnecessary to waste time arguing that the only kind of Protection which would be of the slightest use to the agriculturist would be such as would secure for him better prices. The Hutchison Committee expressed what is common ground to-day among political realists when it found that Protection for English agriculture is not

practical politics. "At the present time no sane person," say Mr. Orwin and Mr. Peel,<sup>1</sup> while suggesting that circumstances might arise to make Protection possible, "would advocate the Protection of the agricultural industry by the State."

But we do not wish to avoid argument on the expediency of Protection for English agriculture by insisting on its impracticability. Germany's national agrarian policy is often quoted by Protectionists. It is true that the eugenic argument has been found convincing in Germany and that it induced von Bulow to increase the Protective Tariffs on agricultural produce. But a comparison between agriculture in Germany and in other countries does not prove the soundness of the argument.<sup>2</sup> There is good reason to believe that progress has been retarded rather than accelerated by Protection. Lord Bledisloe has said that German agriculture flourished in pre-War days not in consequence of, but in spite of, its Protectionist Policy.<sup>3</sup> Professor Branson says pungently that what impressed him in Denmark was the number of beasts in the fields, and in Germany the number of women. But Denmark is agriculturally a Free Trade country. So is Holland; and so, to a large degree, is Belgium. Denmark built up her agricultural renaissance on Free Trade. On Free

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<sup>1</sup> "Tenure of Agricultural Land," page 8.

<sup>2</sup> Our Investigator in Holland reported that Holland is as much of a Free Trade country as Great Britain, import duties being imposed for revenue, not for protective purposes. He was much impressed by the general belief among farmers that Free Trade had been one of the chief causes of rural success. One said: "Free Trade has made the farmer put thought into farming." Another: "Free Trade, of course, we can buy in the cheapest market." He adds that recent conditions have played into the hands of Protectionists, and there is a movement for raising the 5 per cent. *ad valorem* duty on fully manufactured articles to 8 per cent. There is strong agricultural opposition to the movement. On the Danish attitude to the Free Trade-Protection issue, Appendix XIII should be read.

<sup>3</sup> Address to British Association, 1922.

Trade Holland's agriculture flourishes. In these countries the springs of energy and resource have not been weakened by tariffs or bounties. New ideas have consequently been welcomed, new methods tried out and new goals found to be within reach. Both socially and economically Free Trade has produced and is producing, or perhaps is allowing to be produced, the results which are often said to be impossible without Protection in England.

—AGRICULTURE PROSPERS UNDER FREE TRADE.

413. The facts quoted in the last paragraphs are, we think, far too little known in England. Were they better known the Free Trade argument would be put in rural areas with much more force and conviction. Numerous farmers gave evidence to the Hutchinson Committee, to the effect that agriculture would be self-supporting were it protected by import duties either on imported food or (as a minimum) on flour. Others argued that bounties would be as advantageous as Protection in stimulating production, and that the country as a whole, though it would pay the bounties through taxes, would not find the cost of its food increased. Supporters of bounties generally argue that a bounty policy is just, because it makes up to the rural population for the handicap imposed by the townsman's cheap food. This argument from equity is in some ways attractive. We would go rather further in some respects and say that special circumstances may from time to time justify the granting of a bounty for certain purposes. Sugar beet, for example, may make out a good case on the score that a bounty will enable special skill and knowledge to be gained for this country. The contention that sugar beet growing, however extensive it now may be, has not established itself in any European country without special assistance in its early stages, appears to be well grounded. In any case the home-grown sugar industry must either prove itself or definitely confess failure within a limited term of years. But there is a fundamental difference between a bounty of a definite

amount given for a definite period and firmly scaled down year by year within that period, and a bounty which, being given as an unearned addition to industry's income, readily becomes a premium on inefficiency.

#### A PROTEAN ARGUMENT.

414. The variety of bounty proposals is amazing. The latest proposal is that a grant of £2 per acre should be given for fallow land. This ingenious proposal has been arrived at after the objections to other bounties have been made abundantly clear. Turning over a file of recent newspapers shows how one man advocates "grants for clean acres"; another, subsidies for clay land; another, subsidies to manufacturers of fertilisers; another, a bounty on wheat per acre; another, a bounty on wheat per quarter; another on all cereals; yet another a subsidy based on the proportion of arable land to other land, or on the proportion of men employed to every hundred acres. To deal with these proposals separately would be to waste a great deal of time. In favour of each there is a body of opinion which sees clearly the impossibility of its rivals. One means soil-scratching; another the use of unsuitable land; another the growing of unsuitable and out-of-date varieties of wheat. In sum they cancel out each other.

#### STABILISATION.

415. *The Case for.*—Proposals to stabilise the prices of agricultural products by control of imports have now to be seriously considered, because they have been lately put forward by the Independent Labour Party as part of a proposed remedy for agricultural depression.

The case for stabilisation is well put by Mr. W. R. Smith in his Minority Report to the Food Commission Report. Prices of agricultural produce, he says, owing to the difficulty and delay in adjusting supplies to prices are liable to very violent fluctuations. These fluctuations have "very pernicious results." They encourage speculation and often lead to further fluctuations in prices. "Variations in the price of

wheat, in particular, are altogether disproportionate to the variations in its supply or in the demand for it." Speculation is bad for the consumer who suffers from shortage and does not gain the advantage of temporary gluts.

But price fluctuations are more ruinous to the producer. According to one witness who appeared before the Food Commissioners, it is "ridiculous that a British farmer should be at the mercy of pure chance as to whether he makes a good price for his grain by marketing it one week, or a bad price by marketing it in another on account of the constant fluctuations in world prices."

This feeling of lack of confidence and uncertainty has, in Mr. Smith's opinion, been responsible to no small extent for the decline of wheat production in this country since the War.

#### *Producers' Pools and Trusts.*

Mr. Smith emphasises the general tendency of producers to-day to combine and organise for the sale and disposal of their products. The New Zealand Produce Board and the Australian Meat Council are typical examples. They "must be regarded as the producers' adaptation to the economic circumstances of the time and as likely to extend still further in the future to meet changing economic conditions."

Alongside these Pools large Trusts exercise almost monopolistic control of much of the food products imported into this country. Their object avowedly is to create a sellers' market which is more often than not incompatible with the public interest.

#### *Conclusion.*

The conclusion drawn from these facts is that "the organisation of the food trades is changing, and that the measures which might have been appropriate twenty-five years ago are altogether inadequate to-day." The danger is in underestimating the "dynamic character" of the food trades, and "in assuming a permanence in the present organisation which is not, in fact, justifiable."

We find ourselves, in many particulars, in agreement with this case as made by Mr. Smith. There seems little doubt but that the general tendency of modern business is towards concentration into a few hands, usually with the immediate purpose of effecting economies but often with results which are not always for the benefit of the public. It is undoubted, too, as we have pointed out in the Sections dealing with Marketing, that uncon-

trolled speculation in food prices is a handicap to the agriculturist. But having said this we are not convinced that the best remedy is to adopt the measures proposed by Mr. Smith and his colleagues. What has to be considered is first, whether they will achieve the results expected, and, secondly, if they will do so without bringing other evils in their train. The actual proposals made by Mr. Smith are set out in the four paragraphs following :

#### THE ACTUAL PROPOSALS FOR STABILISATION.

##### *Centralised Purchase of Wheat and Meat.*

416. The import of all wheat and flour into this country should be effected by a Wheat Imports Board acting for the whole community. Such organised purchasing of foreign wheat would, it is maintained, be of great value to the Dominions by encouraging and stabilising their production. Again, such control would enable this country to deal effectively with the meat combines, and to establish direct relations with the producers of other countries, with whom more favourable terms could be made.

The duty of the Board would be, "as and when occasion arises, to make economical bulk contracts with organised producers in other countries, and at all times to do its utmost to eliminate unnecessary intermediate costs, to maintain a steady price and to encourage by steady and reliable policy the increased production of cereals, especially in this country and in the Great Dominions."

The import of meat would similarly be centralised in the hands of a Meat Imports Board "with power to purchase the meat required in this country, to make bulk contracts with organised producers of other countries especially in the Dominions, or, if it is more favourable, to arrange for imports under a licence scheme designed to secure steady and adequate supplies at reasonable prices for this country and to increase available supplies in the producing countries."

##### *Import Boards.—Powers and Constitution.*

"The Meat and Wheat Import Boards should be constituted of experts in the particular trades, together with representatives of the co-operative organisations; they should be given the status of statutory corporations and be responsible for the due discharge of the commercial operations of import and licensing as set out in the Act bringing them into existence,"

*Constant Level of Prices.*

According to Mr. Smith, it would not be "essential to interfere in detail with the sale of British grain."

"The farmer would continue to sell his grain to the mills in the ordinary way. But it would be the policy of the Import Board to keep the price of imported grain constant over considerable periods. The period of stabilisation would depend on the degree to which the Board could make forward contracts, and to which it could make confident forecasts, having regard to the probable average price it would pay for its imported grain. But I believe that the Board could guarantee to the farmer that imported grain would be sold at a fixed figure with a small margin for local variations for considerable periods ahead, and that by these means the price of English grain would be stabilised."

"I do not contemplate that it would be necessary to interfere at present with the marketing of British cattle and sheep."

## DIFFICULTIES TO BE MET.

417. The Minority Report of the Food Commission practically repeats the evidence given to the Commission in favour of Stabilisation. The proposals are the result of thought and enquiry, and they deserve serious and careful examination. But apart from the practical difficulties of running a business concern of such magnitude there are fundamental principles which the proponents of Stabilisation have apparently failed to consider.

## ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES.

418. In the first place there are what the Majority Report of the Food Commission call the "*Economic Difficulties.*"

"If the State were the sole buyer and sole seller of wheat, flour and meat," reports the Majority, "prices in this country would cease to reflect the normal working of supply and demand," good or bad as that system may be. That being so, there are several immediate dangers. The State might be tempted to sell at a loss and thus subsidise the consumers at the cost of the taxpayer. It is true that in present circumstances food is sometimes sold at a loss. At such times the consumer is temporarily

subsidised by the trader, who recoups himself during times of higher prices. It is equally true that the Stabilisation plan would "regularise" and "organise" this policy, but private traders mitigate losses by cutting costs, and it rarely happens that all dealers in wheat, flour or meat suffer losses together. The State, however, as the sole trader, working with employees on the Civil Service basis of guaranteed employment and under a system that would not lend itself to elastic movement and adjustment, would make losses or profits "en bloc." The dealings would be on so vast a scale that even the smallest percentage loss would involve enormous sums of money. Losses and profits would, of course, have to be averaged out, but the difficulties in determining what the stable price was to be would remain. What would be the period of time chosen for balancing accounts? If it were short there would be little advantage over the present system in the matter of stability. If the period were long, selling prices to the English consumer might have to be maintained for several years above or below the level of prices ruling in other countries. It is no reply to say, as does Mr. Smith, that "it would clearly be *the desire* of those responsible for the State monopoly to prevent any disparity between domestic and world prices *as far as possible.*" (The italics are ours). No one would doubt the "desire" of those responsible, but what we wish to be assured on is the possibility of putting these desires into practice. The supporters fail to meet this point. Indeed they admit the objection by speaking of preventing disparity "as far as possible."

#### WORLD PRICES AND WAR-TIME EXPERIENCES.

419. But the point should be examined further. World prices of wheat and flour are dominated by world supplies. A bumper harvest or a series of bumper harvests would mean low prices. A series of poor harvests in the world would lead to high prices, for let it be emphasised that the proposals are made to apply only to Great Britain. How



is any Board or any Commission to control these caprices of nature? It is replied that the Wheat Board would make allowances for such movements; that is, the Board would require to estimate future yields. But this is surely too much to ask. The experience of the Wheat Commission during the War is all against such a proposal. This Commission did remarkably good work during the war years. At the end of the period, however, it predicted an alarming world famine in wheat. It urged the Treasury to finance it to the extent of many millions of pounds. It failed to get this support, and eventually was proved to be entirely wrong. If the policy of Stabilisation of prices were to be adopted, we should be constantly exposed to the particular danger which beset us at the conclusion of the War.

"On the most favourable assumption," says the Food Commission Report, "the State monopoly could not expect to make fewer miscalculations than a private importing firm: but the effect of miscalculations would be far more serious under a State monopoly since they would be on a vastly greater scale. Moreover, losses would fall on the taxpayer and not on the individual responsible for incurring the loss."

#### WAR CONTROL MEANT MONOPOLY PRICES.

420. There is a further lesson to be learnt from the experience of the Wheat Commission during the War, namely, that immediately the British Government monopolised the purchase of wheat, the Governments of exporting countries monopolised the sale to the great advantage of their farmers and at the expense, through higher prices, of the British tax-payers. The Commission, in the words of the *Economist*, June 27th, 1925, had to pay increased prices "simply because it was buying for the Government."

It is worth noting that the cost to the nation of stabilising the price of the loaf during the War was £162,000,000, notwithstanding that the price of British wheat to the farmers was also "stabilised."

DIMINISHED NATIONAL INCOME AND MORE  
UNEMPLOYMENT.

421. Again, the prohibition of private import necessarily involves prohibiting private export. This would have a most damaging effect upon the foreign trade of this country.

" Even if the State monopoly undertook the intricate business of re-selling to foreign countries, the abolition of a free market in London and Liverpool would not fail to diminish the national income from the profits of finance, shipping and insurance, and to increase unemployment." (Food Commission Report.)

## ADMINISTRATIVE DIFFICULTIES.

422. Not less serious than these " Economic Difficulties " is the confusion necessarily introduced into national policy and administration. True, it is *proposed* that the Board of Supplies should not be subject to the hampering bureaucratic trammels of a Government Department in its daily routine. But where public money is at stake, routine, rules and red tape must regulate every transaction. We cannot conceive of any State organisation endowed with sufficient freedom to allow of the full use, by its heads, of that individual initiative which counts for so much in successful business.

## DANGERS OF POLITICAL PRESSURE.

423. It has to be remembered that during the War political and social pressure was brought to bear on the Ministry of Food. In peace-time such pressure (which during the War was resisted) might well become irresistible. There would be a very real and ever present danger, reports the Food Commission, that " interested parties would try to use political influence for obtaining ends that would not be justified on grounds of public policy or of economic advantage." Indeed, the possibilities, to say nothing of the probabilities of misusing the power of the State to control the price of food would be unbounded.

## INTERNATIONAL COMPLICATIONS.

424. Formidable, too, are the possibilities of international complications. During the War more than once Government trading disturbed international amity. Is there any reason to believe that in time of peace, State bargaining with the Dominions and foreign countries would not lead to similar difficulties? In the words of the Food Commission's Majority Report "diplomatic relations might easily be strained by disputes of a purely commercial kind arising out of the interpretation of a contract or the fixing of a price." To-day it is only in the last resort that the Foreign Office or the Government will interfere in the business of private companies. Disputes remain private disputes. To-morrow, under a system of State trading in wheat and meat, it would be the duty of the Government to interfere in every contract.

## THE REAL CRITICISM.

425. And lastly, there is the objection, which seems to us the most important of all, namely, that it is most unlikely that this scheme would benefit those who work on the land.

If the level of prices fixed by the Board were low, what incentive would there be for improved farming? Farmers would be left to continue the bad old system of cutting labour costs and turning arable into pasture. If it were high, wherein does the scheme differ from Protection with its resultant evils, including increased cost of production in industry?

The scheme of Stabilisation is a big one and bold. But we cannot see that it would meet the difficulties of to-day in any way whatever.

## SECURITY OF TENURE.

426. Lastly in this chapter must be briefly touched on the policy of leaving things much as they are now, but of enlarging in some way the security now enjoyed by tenant farmers and, at the same time, increasing the supply of

smallholdings. This Report has already made clear our conviction that it is not enough to extend policies of the past, but the reasons for this conviction must be assembled.

#### EXTENSION OF SMALLHOLDINGS.

427. Some light has already been thrown on the difficulties under which the County Councils' Smallholdings policy is now being administered. In the Spring of 1926 the whole finance of the official Smallholdings scheme is destined to come under review. The State will ascertain the actual economic value to the County Councils of their smallholdings estates; will itself meet the liabilities incurred by them, and leave the future working of the estates in the County Councils' hands. The approximate total loss which the Exchequer will have to meet is  $9\frac{1}{2}$  million pounds, that is, an average of £38 per acre of smallholdings, and of over £550 per tenant<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the number of smallholdings throughout the country has declined in spite of 30,000 created under the Acts of 1908 and 1919. We have also given reasons for thinking that a very much larger number of families should be settled on the land than the 30,000 who have been so settled as the result of deliberate national policy since 1908. If, then, the County Councils are to create more and larger holdings under a policy similar to that practised up to the present, it must be anticipated that the process will be extremely expensive, even when the fullest allowance is made for the inflated cost of equipping the holdings after the War. There must, in our view, be a great and rapid provision of holdings of all sizes and of family farms. We believe it can be done, and better done, at practically no cost to the State. We do not for a moment endorse the popular verdict against County Councils as landlords. The cry, for example, that the rent for smallholdings should be no higher than the rent of land farmed on the extensive

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<sup>1</sup> Second Report from the Select Committee on Estimates, Ministry of Agriculture, 1925.

method by large farmers is clearly absurd; the cost of equipment must be higher per acre on a small holding than on a large. But we do not regard as in any way ideal the discharge of a landlord's duties by the County Council. In practice, the Council tends to become one landlord among many. Its tenants have not the particular incentive given by actual or virtual ownership. The Council, on the other hand, has not the backing of popular opinion for insisting on good cultivation. The movement as a whole lacks popular enthusiasm.

County Council smallholdings mark a stage. They are far from representing a final achievement.

#### SECURITY OF TENURE.

428. The recommendations made for increasing tenants' security of tenure by the Land Enquiry Committee of 1913 are in principle embodied in the present Agricultural Holdings Acts. The machinery, however, is not at all that recommended by the L.E.C. The effect has to be acknowledged as disappointing. Lord Bledisloe, in the remarkable address partially quoted in our last Chapter, declared that in theory they *have really put the bad tenant on equal terms with the good to the great detriment of the industry*. It seems to us frankly impossible to give good farmers that fuller security which they still require without stultifying the community's claim to secure the proper cultivation of the land. Sir Daniel Hall, in *Agriculture After the War*, in his usual authoritative way, says,

"The mere granting of security of tenure to the sitting tenants taken by itself is not likely to further the improvement of agriculture. The freedom it would give the farmer to develop his holding and embark capital on new ventures without the risk of having his rent raised or his improvements confiscated, would be valuable to men of enterprise, especially to those who wish to take up fruit growing and market gardening; but these men are in a minority, and the majority, who are making what they regard as a sufficient income out of their cheap methods, will be confirmed in their restricted policies" (p. 64).

## THE VICE OF DUAL OWNERSHIP.

429. The real trouble inherent in the renting system, he continues, is how a farmer can realise the value of a special business built up by him or of the general improvement of a holding made by him. Any provisions for security of tenure and free sale of improvements must be accompanied by safeguards to ensure that full use is made of the land. He goes on to point out that a very real objection to granting security of tenure is that rents are below their true economic value in England. There is an excess of the real over the rental value of the land which has not been realised, either because :

1. Of indifferent farming, or
2. Of the failure of the landlord to enforce a more adequate cultivation.

The creation of a dual ownership, he declares, " would only put new obstacles in the way of the resumption of this interest (i.e. rise in value of land) by the State, which has the only real title to it." (p. 65).

Giving security is an admirable and necessary thing so far as it goes. But *it does not go anything like the whole distance which has to be traversed.*

For the establishment of any form of dual ownership in English land there is no case to answer. Where dual ownership has been created it has been by accident, not by design. It has been the obvious task of statesmanship to undo it. Its latency in landlord-tenancy has been one of the causes of that system's breakdown. The experience of the Irish Land Acts proves to the hilt that the establishment of tenant-right as a separate and distinct thing alongside of owner's right is in practice dual ownership. The mistakes made in Ireland, and undone at such cost, must not be repeated in England.

## INEFFECTIVE TREATMENT.

430. Even if it were wise to attempt to give further security of tenure, while leaving untouched the system

which causes the insecurity complained of, there is the difficulty met with in practice in getting rid of bad farmers under the provisions of the Agricultural Holdings Acts. The Act of 1923 secured to the tenant compensation for improvements made by him on his holding, for continuous adoption of a special standard or system of farming, and, up to a maximum amount equal to two years' rent of the holding, for disturbance. The onus of proof that the tenant is guilty of bad farming lies on the landlord. We have obtained figures showing how many applications have been made by landlords to English and Scottish County Agricultural Committees under Sections 10 and 33 of the Agricultural Act 1920, and Sections 12 and 57 of the Agricultural Holdings Act 1923. These figures show that up to the date of the Return, namely December, 1924, 531 applications from landlords or from agents alleging bad farming had been received, and that the County Committee had granted the landlord relief from paying compensation in 292 cases. We have already pointed out that farmers themselves admit the prevalence of bad farming; that labourers definitely associate their low wages with bad farming, that a generally accepted estimate of the extent of bad farming puts it as ten per cent. of the whole, and that the lowest estimate is five per cent. Five per cent. of English and Welsh holdings means 20,000 and ten per cent. 40,000 holdings. We doubt very gravely whether a provision which, in three or four years, has enabled landlords to deal with a minute fraction of the bad cases, can be regarded as anything but playing with the problem.

#### EVESHAM CUSTOM.

431. The Evesham Custom must here be mentioned if only because its extension has been recommended by the Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation.

*Note.*—The Evesham Custom is that which has grown up in the fruit-growing district round Evesham by which the departing tenant finds his own successor, someone, that is, who is prepared to purchase the value of his tenant right. The landlord

customarily accepts the nominee and the outgoer is thus able to dispose to a willing purchaser of the value given to the land by his expenditure and work.

Essentially the custom applies to market garden areas. The Land Enquiry Report of 1913 found that there was much to be said in its favour but that it was open to two grave objections :

(1) It is based on the assumption that the landlord does not increase the rent. In fact, the Custom had been described as "fixity of rent and free sale." There is, however, no assurance that the rent should remain fixed. The Custom may work successfully where adopted voluntarily. Were it made statutory the incoming tenant, after paying full value to the outgoing tenant for the tenant right, would have no guarantee that his rent would not be raised by the landlord.

(2) Eagerness to get the holding may result in the occupier burdening himself with an excessive price. The system of free sale, already found unsatisfactory in Ireland, may well prove disastrous to incoming tenants in the Evesham District.

The Hutchinson Committee obtained a great deal of evidence on the point and found that farmers' opinion was equally divided. By those in favour it was generally admitted that Rent Courts would be necessary if the custom became general and certainly if it was made compulsory. The use of the word "compulsory" brings us to the crux of the question. Apart from compulsion it remains simply an amiable idea. Were it made compulsory very many consequences would have to be faced which do not arise so long as the custom remains optional. Essentially, however, it would mean establishing dual ownership and cannot, therefore, be seriously considered. It is an excrescence produced on a decaying system by local pressure and friction. It would leave the landlord in the industry as a rent charging sinecurist. It would



do nothing to safeguard the nation's right to insist on good cultivation, and nothing to remedy the landlessness of the labourer.

#### INSECURITY THROUGH SALES.

432. Even more serious is the problem arising from the insecurity caused by the sale of estates, a form of insecurity which no Agricultural Holdings Act can touch. Since the War, something like five million acres of British agricultural land have come into the market. To the hardship entailed in hundreds of cases to farmers who have been compelled to buy their homes and land at prices which they themselves have given to the farms, and to the evil done by the withdrawing of farmer's working capital from the land as a consequence of these forced purchases, we have referred more than once. Here we wish to emphasise the paralysing sense of insecurity which possesses tenants who know that their present landlords are hanging on by the skin of their teeth, in the practical certainty that sooner or later they or their heirs will be compelled to sell.

#### SECURITY FOR GOOD HUSBANDRY.

433. *Our conclusion is that what is required is not a higher degree of security for all farmers but a different kind of security for good farmers. The only real advance on the Security question can be made by changing tenure-at-will and tenure-at-chance into tenure-for-good-husbandry.*

We ask nothing better than that the tests which we have applied in this chapter to our proposals put forward by others should be applied to the policy of Cultivating Tenure.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ENERGY AND HOPE.

434. In bringing this long Report to a conclusion, we must deprecate any suggestion that we are putting forward a panacea. Our proposal is that the nation should provide a firm foundation for the industry of agriculture and should use every effort to assist the erection of a sound structure on that foundation. Recovery will not come all at once. The first step must be the rebirth of hope and the infusion throughout the industry of that spirit of energy which comes from consciousness that effort is worth while.

### FARMERS' VIEWS.

435. To test our conclusions, we have asked a number of farmers to state the extent to which they thought the yield of their fields could be increased, given such conditions as to tenure and credit as those proposed in this Report. One or two replies may be quoted :—

A Welsh farmer wrote :—

“ Given absolute security of tenure, without interference with my working capital, and having access to credit for improvements of permanent value, I would gradually re-drain the whole farm. I would also apply lime. I would farm in a way that would more than conserve the existing fertility of the soil. By the application of fertilisers I would more than compensate for any crops removed, and gradually build up the reserve of fertility in the soil. This would result in a gradually increasing production of meat, milk, corn and animal fodder. In ten years' time I would be disappointed if my production had not increased by about 30 per cent. or 40 per cent., although the increase after that would be at a slower rate.”

A farmer in Kent wrote :—

“ I think under Cultivating Tenure a good farmer could and would increase his output by 20 per cent. I know that since I bought my farm my corn-cake and manure bills have increased enormously (hardly owing to rise in prices), but in regard to tonnage one-third more. I have built six cottages I could get neither my landlord to build nor give me any conditions to do so. I have built a pumping station, laid water pipes over my hop gardens costing £500 before the war, and planted 15 acres of fruit. None of these things could I get conditions that would enable me to do.”

#### REAL SECURITY.

436. A word should perhaps be added as to the sort of security here contemplated. The Agricultural Holdings Act, 1920, does not, in fact, provide for security of tenure strictly so called at all, nor is it easy to see how any Agricultural Holdings Act could make such provision. The 1920 Act does secure compensation for disturbance up to the maximum of two years' rent. It gives a farmer no security that he will not be disturbed. It makes no provision whatever for the farmer who leaves his farm or gives up farming for any reason not included in what is for the purpose of the Act “ disturbance.” Real security such as Cultivating Tenure would give would relieve the farmer of anxiety either on the advisability of undertaking obviously necessary improvements or on forfeiture of their value on terminating his holding. Under Cultivating Tenure the Agricultural Holdings Acts, in their present form, will be superseded by machinery built upon this essential principle that a farmer, or his estate in the event of his decease, shall be entitled at the termination of his tenure to the full unexhausted value of improvements made or taken over by him.

437. A particularly valuable reply by a well-known

farmer in the Midlands should be given in rather fuller form :—

“ The policy of Cultivating Tenure with its corollaries will bring a new spirit into the decaying country life of England. It will open the doors of freedom to the farmer and the labourer. From it a new wave of life will sweep throughout the whole industry, carrying fresh hope to what was once, and will be again, the most fertile country in the world. It will give security of tenure to the farmer, and freedom from the uncertainties of an unknown future, the danger of being rented on his own improvements, and the fear that the lands fertilised by his efforts may be sold over his head. These things will no longer be a constant menace to him. He will get rid of the lurking suspicion that his neighbour may be preparing to outbid him for his farm. He will feel himself a free man, safe in securing full advantage of his efforts.

“ This new security will encourage the farmer to take advantage of all that science and research can teach him. He will no longer hesitate, if credit is provided, to undertake those repairs to drains and buildings which are generations overdue. He will not wonder whether it is worth while to give his children the best possible education that his means can afford. Co-operation, which he has looked on with doubt because of his suspicious attitude towards his neighbours, will not need to be forced from without on this freed man. It will become a natural growth. He will realise that collective effort will enormously enhance his opportunities of increasing his prosperity, and will magnify his powers tenfold. Such a form of co-operation will make him sell and buy in the best possible markets without undue effort on his own part. The energy which is at present expended in the market place, selling and buying in competition with his brother farmers, will be released for the business of attaining maximum production from his land. It will not necessarily mean that he will become a stay-at-home farmer, but it will mean that his excursions from home, instead

of being spent in bargaining for the last shilling in a somewhat unequal contest with the trader, can be utilised in discussion with his neighbours, and in making himself better informed in all matters relating to his industry. Apart from all the other advantages of the scheme, this change in the mental outlook of the farmer will, before another generation passes, tend to change the whole face of the countryside.

“The benefit to the labourer will be no less great. The policy will enable the State to atone for a wrong which was not only a crime but a blunder. Much may be said for the Enclosure Acts, but more can be said against them. The endeavour to improve the system of cultivation of the lands which belonged collectively to the people was laudable and necessary, but in the name of progress the people’s birthright was stolen from them. They became a landless class, and from that legalised robbery has arisen the major part of the troubles to-day. The desire for greater possessions influenced legislation on behalf of great possessors. They did not then realise, nor do their descendants to-day, that the wrongs then committed are ultimately responsible for the decline of our agriculture. The real backbone of rural England was then destroyed. The peasant population who were accustomed to till the soil on their own behalf, to attend to the cows, the pigs, the poultry and the geese were crushed out of existence. A great army of freemen became an army of servants, without any prospect of regaining their lost possessions.

“No serious result was felt from this change so long as the large farmers and employers of labour were receiving monopoly values for their produce. A low standard of efficiency in labour, as in anything else, does not become apparent until it has to meet outside competition. When the wheat of America and the dairy produce of Denmark entered into competition with the production of low-standard labour in England, the result was inevitable—

an increasing decline, not only in our agricultural output, but in the number of people employed on the land. The most important element in the whole scheme is the redressing of the wrong originally done to the labourer. It will create a new landed class, who will feel that it is once more worth their while to put forth efforts to become cultivators on their own behalf and possessors of stock. The more ambitious of the young men will see before them the possibility of attaining success in life without flocking into the already overflowing cities. They will know that they will never become millionaires. It is not all men's ambition to count wealth by the million. There are men who would be attracted by a career which would give them health, freedom, and a reasonable opportunity of attaining happiness.

“ Every boy who begins his career on the land under the new scheme will have before him the possibility of becoming his own master under conditions more favourable than have ever before been granted to any cultivator. His success will depend entirely on his own efforts. Proficiency and efficiency in the theory and practice of agriculture or of a kind of agriculture will be the *only* test.

“ The rising generation of women also will have their opportunity to assist in developing a saner and better balanced form of society than has existed in England in recent generations. The woman worker on the land in the past was a drudge. On her devolved some of the most unpleasant tasks, such as the spreading of manures, or the cleaning and raising of root crops. In the next era woman's place will be in the poultry yard, rearing chickens, a task for which her temperament is admirably suited, or in the orchard. These careers were not open to women in the past, because there were no such things as poultry farming or fruit culture as they are now understood. They were merely sidelines, and not considered worthy of serious attention.

“ The increase in our knowledge of science and of agricultural economics makes the possibility of a successful career on a small holding greater than ever before, and it is more likely to increase than to diminish in the future. Even in the case of dairy farming modern knowledge has made it possible for the small holder with ten good cows to secure a greater profit than a farmer with thirty second-class animals. The only remaining essential is organised marketing of the produce.

“ From the national point of view the advantages of the scheme can only be limited by the natural conservatism of mankind. Each one of us will feel that he has at last a real sense of ownership in his native land. He will be as keenly interested in all that pertains to the increased efficiency of its cultivators and the increased wealth to be desired from it as in the last generation he took pride in the battleships which defended his native shores. Nationalism in its real sense will then become a greater stabilising force than has ever been known. The term ‘ our land ’ will become more than a mere figure of speech.

“ It will be for the nation to see that the cultivators of the soil are fit for their task, and that they are given not only the training but the equipment necessary for the production of the maximum amount of foodstuffs. The derelict buildings in which in too many cases milk is produced for the nation’s children must be remodelled. Our overgrown watercourses and water-logged soils must be a first charge on the Exchequer. It will not be a dead charge. They will rank among our most valuable assets for the production of wealth in its most essential form. The afforestation of millions of acres of land will give employment to men whose spirits are broken through their being forced to exist in unwilling idleness on the bounty of the State. The despair with which our economists and philosophers are at the present moment looking forward to the future of this country will vanish in the re-birth of a new life and a new purpose. Difficulties

are made to be overcome, and those which beset England to-day may, if we face the future with courage, yet prove to be our greatest blessing."

AN EXPERT'S ESTIMATE.

438. We asked Sir Henry Rew also to give us his considered judgment on the amount by which home production of food could be increased under Cultivating Tenure. After giving figures of imports and home produce similar to those contained in Chapter III. of this Report, he continued :—

" We imported last year nearly  $8\frac{1}{2}$  million tons of cereals (excluding maize) at the cost of over £100,000,000. Of meat we imported nearly  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million tons (including poultry and rabbits) at a cost of about £106,000,000. For imported butter, cheese, condensed milk and margarine we paid nearly £75,000,000, and for eggs nearly £19,000,000. It is estimated that the annual egg production of British fowls is 1,375 millions, but we imported 2,438 millions ' in shell,' in addition to about 26,000 tons of ' eggs, not in shell.'

" Of apples we grow 176,000 tons, and import 362,000 tons at a cost of nearly £8,500,000, and our annual bill for imported fruit, excluding bananas, oranges and other popular but exotic kinds, and including only such typically British fruit as Apples, Pears, Cherries, Plums, Strawberries, Currants and Gooseberries, exceeds £12,000,000.

" Values of course are an unsatisfactory, because a variable, measure of trade, but at the prices of 1924 (and on the whole they are higher now) the nation's bill for imported food of those kinds which can be readily produced in this country was not less than £350,000,000.

" Apart from any questions of extending the area of land devoted to agriculture, or increasing the proportion under arable cultivation, the obvious means of increasing production is to increase the output per acre. *A considerable proportion of agricultural land is not now producing the maximum quantity of which it is capable under the present*



*economic conditions.* When this is stated publicly it is common to regard it as an aspersion on the general efficiency of farmers, and to evade the issue by referring to the impossibility of obtaining equally good results from all soils alike—which is a platitude.

“ All general statements as to the extent to which production might be increased must be distrusted as they can only be vague generalisations from particular instances or particular districts. It would be easy to find in every county examples on the one hand of farms producing the economic maximum, and on the other hand of farms which do not reach 50 per cent. of that standard. To estimate the ‘weighted average’ of these extremes is statistically impossible. *Nothing but a complete survey of all agricultural land could supply the data for a trustworthy estimate of the deficiency.*”

“ It is possible to make an approximate estimate of the practicable increase in the output of certain products. In the case of Milk, for example, the returns from Milk-recording societies show that the average yield of the herds of members of such societies is 535 gallons per annum, whereas the average for the whole country is not more than 440 gallons. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the output of milk could be increased by 20 per cent. without the addition of a single cow. The present total production of milk in England and Wales is estimated at about 1,200 million gallons. If this were increased by 240 million gallons we could more than double our present production of butter, or, alternatively, treble our production of cheese, without affecting the milk supply.

“ In the case of wheat we produce on the present acreage ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  million acres in England and Wales) an average crop of 31 bushels per acre. The heaviest crop recorded in this country was 96 bushels, but this of course was very exceptional and grown on one small field. But there is the authority of Rothamsted for the statement that a good farmer gets in an average season from 40 to 50 bushels.

*It is therefore possible, especially with the aid of the improved varieties of wheat introduced by Professor Biffen, to increase the output of wheat by 50 per cent. without adding a single acre. This addition would provide bread for 4 million persons.*

“In the same way if the average yield of barley and oats were brought up to the level attained by good farmers *the output of each crop would be increased by 50 per cent.*

“We now grow  $4\frac{3}{4}$  million tons of ‘white straw’ crops, i.e., wheat, barley and oats, and import  $8\frac{1}{2}$  million tons. If our present output were increased by 50 per cent. *we should produce 7 million tons and reduce our bill for imported corn by over £20,000,000.*

“If we grew more barley and oats we could rear and fatten more cattle, sheep and pigs. This would not only increase our home meat supply but would substantially reduce the sum which we pay annually for maize and imported oil cake, amounting to over £20,000,000. An increase of 20 per cent. in our home supply of meat would reduce our bill for imported meat by about £15,000,000.

*“It follows that by merely levelling up our production of milk, corn and meat to the standard set by good farmers we could save at least £50,000,000 now spent on produce from overseas. This takes no account of increased production of fruit, vegetables, poultry, eggs and other subsidiary products which are especially associated with small holdings and intensive cultivation.*

“These calculations are deliberately made on cautious lines and with the object of avoiding exaggeration. It may be repeated that the increased production which they assume is based only on the hypothesis that the occupiers of all agricultural land farm as well as those farmers who are admittedly farming well. In other words they assume that full economic use is made of the present area of agricultural land, with the present proportions of arable and grass.”

## THE LANDLORD.

439. Finally we must set out how the policy put forward in this Report will affect all of those sections of the community who are directly concerned with the land and the nation as a whole. Let the position of the landlord first be taken.

The landlord to-day finds himself in an increasingly impossible and, as he himself says, increasingly dangerous and unremunerative position. No practicable expedient, other than Cultivating Tenure, has been suggested by which his condition can be prevented from progressing from bad to worse. Cultivating Tenure will secure for him an income equal to the net income which he now derives from the land. If he is himself a farmer or fitted to farm, he can continue without any disturbance and with better prospects than heretofore. If he is not a farmer, but desires for reasons of family, sentiment, or otherwise to remain, he can retain possession of his residence and its immediate surroundings and amenities under conditions calculated to improve and cement the relations hitherto existing between himself and his agricultural neighbours. If his land has any prospective site value the machinery of Cultivating Tenure will secure for him its present value, if and when realised.

## THE FARMER.

440. The farmer under Cultivating Tenure will have the legitimate rights of ownership without its risks and the advantages of yearly tenancy without its insecurity. Subject only to good cultivation he will have full security for himself during his life, and for his children after him. He will no longer be at the mercy of the caprice or the necessities of others, but, firmly established in his holding, with the nation as the guarantor of his title, he will be free as any business man in any other industry to put his best energies into his business and to reap for himself the full reward of his enterprise. He will pay fair net

rent, which, once fixed, will be unalterable for him and his children. There will be no possibility of his being penalised upon his own improvements, nor will he need to fear the loss of his holding by sale. For the first time in the history of British agriculture the capital equipment of the farm and its maintenance will be the sole business of the only man who can properly attend to them, the farmer himself, who will thus become in this as in other respects on the same footing as any other independent producer.

The existing system of land tenure, an affair of rent charges, marriage settlements, and, above all, mortgages raised for other than agricultural purposes, has robbed British land of its life-blood. Under Cultivating Tenure the farmer will have ready access to both long and short term credit on terms comparable to those obtained by other business men.

#### THE AGRICULTURAL WORKER.

441. For the labourer Cultivating Tenure means the recognition, for the first time in any British agricultural policy, of his real status and function in the industry and in the nation. Previous alterations in our land laws have proceeded with a callous disregard of his rights and requirements. He has been deprived of his ancient heritage and privileges, and for that deprivation agriculture, and the nation as a whole, has suffered a righteous and inevitable judgment. To-day the British land-worker is the only landless peasant in Europe, and no proposal for agricultural reform other than Cultivating Tenure makes a change in his status, condition, and opportunity the most essential of its proposals.

The precarious and dependent position of the land-worker under the existing system makes it inevitable that in discussing the reform of that system there should be an appearance of concern with the interests of farmers rather than with his interests. This is only an appearance however, due to a condition which we are out to remove.

We view the practical problems of agriculture from the standpoint which in its essence makes no division between farmers and labourers, but views both as cultivators of the soil, and sees in the humblest of such cultivators a prospective farmer.

Let us endeavour to visualise the consequences to the land-worker of the acceptance of these proposals by the country. As soon as the reform is seen to be coming every occupier of cultivable land will begin to consider the question of qualifying for a title of good cultivation. Even the best farmers, especially after a series of wet autumns, may find fields which can only be got into the condition in which he will desire to see them by the employment of additional labour. The average farmer will certainly have fields or corners of fields which he will wish to bring up to the general standard of his farm. In short, the approach of these proposals even before they come to be introduced as an Act of Parliament will stimulate a demand for labour, and when this happens there is invariably a tendency to rising wages. Wages committees will remain, but it may reasonably be anticipated that the need for them, at least so far as the able bodied land worker is concerned, will have soon passed. The wage-earner who can, if he wishes, obtain a holding will choose to remain dependent on wages only if those wages can give him a living. Cultivating Tenure will recognise the right of the land-worker to a living wage as the first charge on the industry. Rescued from dependence, the land-worker will have equality of opportunity with any other cultivator to obtain land and to rise from and through wage-earning to an independent status.

Cultivating Tenure will make more land available for settlement in one year than was found during the first ten years' administration of the 1908 Small Holdings Act. The County Agricultural Authority will, in disposing of any land which comes to hand, have special regard to the requirements of farm workers in the district. The

statutory right of any man with five years' farm service to half-an-acre of his own will enable many a worker to add to his real wages, and to feed his family with home-grown produce. The provision of spare-time or part-time holdings will lead towards full-time holdings and family farms. Each rung of the ladder thus to be erected will be made in succession accessible to competent and thrifty men. The vigour of opportunity and independence will show itself in every phase of village life.

#### THE NATION.

442. If this Report has done nothing else it has, we hope, made it unnecessary now to show that, if the hopes we have expressed in this chapter are fulfilled, the nation will gain greatly thereby. There is no reason to despair of solving either of the two problems which we faced at the beginning of our task. In placing and retaining more families on the land lies the effective remedy for much of our urban unemployment; in increasing the amount of food grown at home our position in the world market can be secured. There can be in our times no greater cause for which to fight. Twenty reasons for doing nothing can always be adduced when any problem is faced. We have tried to give the reasons for doing something, and to indicate the manner in which the energy of the nation can be applied with increasing prospects of achievement.

## APPENDICES.

## APPENDIX VIII.

## COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AUTHORITIES UNDER CULTIVATING OWNERSHIP.

*Typical Counties Taken.*

Cambridgeshire.  
 Isle of Ely.  
 Cumberland.  
 Devonshire.  
 Kent.  
 Norfolk.  
 Oxfordshire.  
 Yorkshire (West Riding).

*Note on the Basis of Election.*

The County Agricultural Authority shall consist of—

(a) Members elected by Rural Districts and nominated for Urban Districts with as many as 500 agriculturists resident in the district—one-half.

(b) Members nominated by the County Council—one-third.

(c) Members nominated by the Ministry of Agriculture—one-sixth.

Each Rural District in a county shall elect members in numbers proportionate to the number of agriculturists resident in its area. The scale shall be as follows :—

For 500–1,000 agriculturists . .	1 member,
For 1,000–2,000 agriculturists . .	2 members,
For 2,000–3,000 agriculturists . .	3 members,

and so on with one member extra for each additional 1,000 in the total number of agriculturists.

## CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

The County contains one Municipal Borough, no Urban Districts, and six Rural Districts. The County Council is at present composed of fifteen Aldermen and forty-seven County Councillors, total sixty-two members of the County Council.

The Agricultural Authority would be composed as follows :—

Name of Local Authority.	Agriculturists. Census, 1921.	Members.
<i>Municipal Borough (1).</i> Cambridge.. .. .	889	1 nominated.
<i>Urban District Council (0).</i> None.	—	—
<i>Rural District Councils (6).</i> Caxton and Arrington ..	1,759	2 elected.
Chesterton .. .. .	4,385	5 ..
Linton .. .. .	1,729	2 ..
Melbourn .. .. .	1,604	2 ..
Newmarket .. .. .	3,851	4 ..
Swavesey .. .. .	588	1 ..
<b>Total</b> ..		<b>17</b>

The C.A.A., therefore, would consist of sixteen elected members directly representing the R.D.C.'s, one nominated representing the 889 agriculturists living in the area of the County Borough of Cambridge, eleven members nominated by the County Council and six nominated by the Ministry of Agriculture. Total 34.



## ISLE OF ELY.

The County contains one Municipal Borough (Wisbech, with 1,387 agriculturists), four Urban District Councils (with between 529 and 1,146 agriculturists each) and five Rural District Councils.

The County Council is at present composed of 14 Aldermen and 41 County Councillors. Total 55 members of the County Council.

Name of Local Authority.	Agriculturists. Census, 1921.	Members.
<i>Municipal Borough (1).</i>		
Wisbech .. .. .	1,387	2 nominated.
<i>Urban District Councils (4).</i>		
Chatteris .. .. .	1,114	2 nominated.
Ely .. .. .	983	1 ..
March .. .. .	1,146	2 ..
Whittlesey.. .. .	529	1 ..
Total ..	—	8
<i>Rural District Councils (5).</i>		
Ely .. .. .	3,288	4 elected.
N. Witchford .. .. .	1,489	2 ..
Thorney .. .. .	644	1 ..
Whittlesey.. .. .	903	1 ..
Wisbech .. .. .	4,340	5 ..
Total ..	—	13

The Agricultural Authority would be composed of 13 elected members representing Rural Districts, eight nominated members representing the Urban Districts and Wisbech, 14 members nominated by the County Council, and seven nominated by the Ministry of Agriculture. Total 42.

N.B.—The Isle of Ely, owing to the intensive cultivation prevalent, has an unusually high percentage of agriculturists in what are technically Urban Districts.

## CUMBERLAND.

The County Council at present consists of 19 Aldermen and 59 County Councillors. Total 78 members of the County Council.

Name of Local Authority.	Agriculturists. Census, 1921.	Members.
<i>Municipal Boroughs (2).</i>		
Whitehaven .. ..	85	0
Workington .. ..	104	0
<i>Urban District Councils (12).</i>		
Arlecdon, Frizington ..	101	0
Aspatria .. .. .	70	0
Cleator Moor .. .. .	77	0
Cockermouth .. .. .	86	0
Egremont .. .. .	88	0
Harrington .. .. .	70	0
Holme Cultram .. .. .	703	1 nominated.
Keswick .. .. .	123	0
Maryport .. .. .	67	0
Millom .. .. .	64	0
Penrith .. .. .	333	0
Wigton .. .. .	100	0
<b>Total</b> .. .. .	—	1
<i>Rural District Councils (9).</i>		
Alston and Garrigill ..	242	0
Bootle .. .. .	988	1 elected.
Brampton .. .. .	1,355	2 "
Carlisle .. .. .	1,761	2 "
Cockermouth .. .. .	2,010	3 "
Longtown .. .. .	1,309	2 "
Penrith .. .. .	2,929	3 "
Whitehaven .. .. .	1,123	2 "
Wigton .. .. .	2,422	3 "
<i>County Borough (1).</i>		
Carlisle .. .. .	411	0
<b>Total</b> .. .. .	—	18

The Agricultural Authority would be composed of 18 elected members representing the Rural Districts, one member nominated by the only Urban District with over 500 agriculturists, 13 nominated by the County Council and six by the Ministry of Agriculture. Total 38.

## DEVONSHIRE.

The County Council now consists of 25 Aldermen and 76 County Councillors. Total 101 members of the County Council.

Name of Local Authority.	Agriculturists. Census, 1921.	Members.
<i>County Boroughs (2).</i>		
Exeter .. .. .	832	1 nominated.
Plymouth .. .. .	576	1 ..
<i>Municipal Boroughs (10).</i>		
Barnstaple.. .. .	222	0
Bideford .. .. .	221	0
Dartmouth .. .. .	115	0
Great Torrington .. .. .	136	0
Honiton .. .. .	138	0
Okehampton .. .. .	74	0
S. Molton .. .. .	191	0
Tiverton .. .. .	637	1 nominated.
Torquay .. .. .	851	1 ..
Totnes .. .. .	104	0
<i>Urban District Councils (23)</i>		
Ashburton .. .. .	199	0
Axminster .. .. .	55	0
Bampton .. .. .	181	0
Brixham .. .. .	219	0
Buckfastleigh .. .. .	93	0
Budleigh Salterton .. .. .	107	0
Crediton .. .. .	120	0
Dawlish .. .. .	163	0
Exmouth .. .. .	391	0
Holsworthy .. .. .	22	0
Ilfracombe.. .. .	234	0
Ivybridge .. .. .	74	0
Kingsbridge .. .. .	99	0
Lynton .. .. .	121	0
Newton Abbot .. .. .	241	0
Northam .. .. .	170	0
Ottery St. Mary .. .. .	445	0
Paignton .. .. .	393	0
Salcombe .. .. .	88	0
Seaton .. .. .	83	0
Sidmouth .. .. .	205	0
Tavistock .. .. .	146	0
Teignmouth .. .. .	247	0

DEVONSHIRE (*continued*).

Name of Local Authority.	Agriculturists. Census, 1921.	Members.
<i>Rural District Councils (18).</i>		
Axminster .. ..	1,596	2 elected.
Barnstaple.. ..	3,128	4 "
Bideford .. ..	1,272	2 "
Broadwood Widger ..	631	1 "
Crediton .. ..	2,421	3 "
Culmstock .. ..	608	1 "
Holsworthy (part in Corn- wall not included here)	1,732	2 "
Honiton .. ..	2,109	3 "
Kingsbridge .. ..	2,169	3 "
Newton Abbot .. ..	2,683	3 "
Okehampton .. ..	2,739	3 "
Plympton St. Mary ..	1,997	2 "
St. Thome .. ..	3,946	4 "
S. Molton .. ..	2,421	3 "
Tavistock .. ..	2,296	3 "
Tiverton .. ..	2,570	3 "
Torrington.. ..	1,984	2 "
Totnes .. ..	2,079	3 "
Total .. ..	—	47

The Agricultural Authority would consist of 47 elected members representing the Rural Districts, four members nominated by the Boroughs with more than 500 agriculturists each, 34 members nominated by the County Council and 17 by the Ministry of Agriculture. Total 102.

## KENT.

The County Council now consists of 23 Aldermen and 72 County Councillors. Total 95 members of the County Council.

Names of Local Authority.	Agriculturists. Census, 1921.	Members.
County Borough of Canterbury .. .. .	736	1 nominated.
<i>Municipal Boroughs (19).</i>		
Bromley .. .. .	971	1 nominated.
Chatham .. .. .	401	0
Deal .. .. .	240	0
Dover .. .. .	335	0
Faversham .. .. .	315	0
Folkestone.. .. .	314	0
Gillingham .. .. .	309	0
Gravesend .. .. .	210	0
Hythe .. .. .	170	0
Lydd .. .. .	265	0
Maidstone .. .. .	697	1 ..
Margate .. .. .	408	0
New Romney .. .. .	139	0
Queenborough .. .. .	19	0
Ramsgate .. .. .	478	0
Rochester .. .. .	395	0
Sandwich .. .. .	136	0
Tenterden .. .. .	405	0
Tunbridge Wells .. .. .	794	1 ..
Total .. .. .	—	2
<i>Urban District Councils (23).</i>		
Ashford .. .. .	181	0
Beckenham .. .. .	458	0
Bexley .. .. .	699	1 nominated.
Broadstairs and St. Peters	386	0
Cheriton .. .. .	116	0
Chislehurst .. .. .	425	0
Crayford .. .. .	222	0
Dartford .. .. .	271	0
Erith .. .. .	257	0
Herne Bay .. .. .	139	0
Milton Regis .. .. .	215	0
Northfleet .. .. .	312	0
Penge .. .. .	154	0
Sandgate .. .. .	22	0

## KENT (continued).

Name of Local Authority.	Agriculturists. Census, 1921.	Members.
<i>Urban District Councils (cont.)</i>		
Sevenoaks .. ..	402	0
Sheerness .. ..	31	0
Sidcup .. ..	310	0
Sittingbourne .. ..	261	0
Southborough .. ..	265	0
Tonbridge .. ..	311	0
Walmer .. ..	104	0
Whitstable .. ..	116	0
Wrotham .. ..	566	1 nominated
Total .. ..	—	2
<i>Rural District Councils (23).</i>		
Blean .. ..	1,072	2 elected.
Bridge .. ..	1,893	2 "
Bromley .. ..	2,500	3 "
Cranbrook .. ..	2,204	3 "
Dartford .. ..	3,271	4 "
Dover .. ..	956	1 "
East Ashford .. ..	1,888	2 "
Eastry .. ..	2,607	3 "
Elham .. ..	1,377	2 "
Faversham .. ..	2,771	3 "
Hollingbourne .. ..	2,646	3 "
Hoo .. ..	688	1 "
Isle of Thanet .. ..	1,052	2 "
Maidstone .. ..	3,299	4 "
Melling .. ..	2,711	3 "
Milton .. ..	2,034	3 "
Romney Marsh .. ..	687	1 "
Sevenoaks .. ..	3,106	4 "
Sheppey .. ..	404	0
Strood .. ..	1,677	2 "
Tenterden .. ..	1,330	2 "
Tonbridge .. ..	2,943	3 "
West Ashford .. ..	1,525	2 "
Total .. ..	—	55

The County Agricultural Authority would consist of 55 members representing the Rural Districts, six members nominated by Boroughs and Urban Districts with over 500 agriculturists each, 41 members nominated by the County Council and 20 by the Ministry of Agriculture. Total 122.

## NORFOLK.

The County Council now consists of 19 Aldermen and 54 County Councillors. Total 73 members of the County Council.

Name of Local Authority.	Agriculturists. Census, 1921.	Members.
<i>County Boroughs (2).</i>		
Great Yarmouth .. .. .	377	0
Norwich .. .. .	1,283	2 nominated.
<i>Municipal Boroughs (2).</i>		
King's Lynn .. .. .	329	0
Thetford .. .. .	116	0
<i>Urban District Councils (10).</i>		
Cromer .. .. .	93	0
Diss .. .. .	190	0
Downham Market .. .. .	110	0
East Dereham .. .. .	340	0
New Hunstanton .. .. .	103	0
North Walsham .. .. .	246	0
Sheringham .. .. .	119	0
Swaffham .. .. .	267	0
Walsingham .. .. .	993	1 nominated.
Wells .. .. .	146	0
Total .. .. .	—	1
<i>Rural District Councils (20).</i>		
Aylsham .. .. .	3,208	4 elected.
Blofield .. .. .	1,882	2 "
Depwade .. .. .	3,667	4 "
Docking .. .. .	3,041	4 "
Downham .. .. .	3,754	4 "
E. and W. Flegg .. .. .	1,537	2 "
Erpingham .. .. .	2,600	3 "
Forehoe .. .. .	1,787	2 "
Freebridge Lynn .. .. .	2,188	3 "
Henstead .. .. .	1,932	2 "
King's Lynn .. .. .	78	0
Loddon and Clavering .. .. .	2,557	3 "
Marshland .. .. .	4,949	5 "
Mitford and Launditch .. .. .	4,199	5 "
St. Faith's .. .. .	1,901	2 "

NORFOLK (*continued*).

Name of Local Authority.	Agriculturists. Census, 1921.	Members.
<i>Rural District Councils (contd.)</i>		
Smallburgh .. ..	2,777	3 elected.
Swaffham .. .. .	1,726	2 ..
Thetford .. .. .	1,958	2 ..
Walsingham .. ..	2,804	3 ..
Wayland .. .. .	2,416	3 ..
Total .. .. .	—	58

The Agricultural Authority would contain 58 elected members representing Rural Districts, three nominated by Urban Districts with over 500 agriculturists each, 41 members nominated by the County Council and 20 nominated by the Ministry of Agriculture. Total 122.



## OXFORDSHIRE.

The County Council now consists of 15 Aldermen and 45 County Councillors. Total 60 members of the County Council.

Name of Local Authority.	Agriculturists. Census, 1921.	Members.
<i>County Borough.</i>		
Oxford .. .. .	490	0
<i>Municipal Boroughs (4).</i>		
Banbury .. .. .	234	0
Chipping Norton .. .. .	124	0
Henley .. .. .	221	0
Woodstock .. .. .	66	0
<i>Urban District Councils (4).</i>		
Bicester .. .. .	190	0
Thame .. .. .	217	0
Witney .. .. .	75	0
Wheatley .. .. .	88	0
<i>Rural District Councils (11).</i>		
Banbury .. .. .	1,769	2 elected.
Bicester .. .. .	1,797	2 "
Chipping Norton .. .. .	1,919	2 "
Crowmarsh .. .. .	904	1 "
Culham .. .. .	458	0
Goring .. .. .	392	0
Headington .. .. .	1,172	2 "
Henley .. .. .	1,541	2 "
Thame .. .. .	1,058	2 "
Witney .. .. .	2,788	3 "
Woodstock .. .. .	1,625	2 "
Total .. .. .	—	18

The County Agricultural Authority would consist of 18 members elected to represent the Rural Districts, 12 members nominated by the County Council and six nominated by the Ministry of Agriculture. Total 36.

## YORKSHIRE—WEST RIDING.

The County Council at present consists of 29 Aldermen and 89 County Councillors. Total 118.

Name of Local Authority.	Agriculturists. Census, 1921.	Members.
<i>County Boroughs (10).</i>		
Barnsley .. .. .	128	0
Bradford .. .. .	1,335	2 nominated.
Dewsbury .. .. .	275	0
Halifax .. .. .	741	1 ..
Huddersfield .. .. .	770	1 ..
Leeds .. .. .	2,094	3 ..
Rotherham .. .. .	223	0
Sheffield .. .. .	1,492	2 ..
Wakefield .. .. .	220	0
York .. .. .	548	1 ..
Total .. .. .	—	10
<i>Municipal Boroughs (11).</i>		
Batley .. .. .	168	0
Brighouse .. .. .	207	0
Doncaster .. .. .	285	0
Harrogate .. .. .	566	0
Keighley .. .. .	252	0
Morley .. .. .	216	0
Ossett .. .. .	155	0
Pontefract .. .. .	222	0
Pudsey .. .. .	164	0
Ripon .. .. .	191	0
Todmorden .. .. .	266	0
<i>Urban District Councils (114).</i>		
Adwick-le-Street .. .. .	82	0
Altofts .. .. .	51	0
Ardsley .. .. .	43	0
Ardsley, East and West .. .. .	156	0
Bailden .. .. .	129	0
Barkisland .. .. .	107	0
Barnoldswick .. .. .	99	0
Bentley-in-the-Arksey .. .. .	143	0
Bingley .. .. .	501	1 nominated.

YORKSHIRE—WEST RIDING (*continued*).

Name of Local Authority.	Agriculturists. Census, 1921.	Members.
<i>Urban District Councils (cont.)</i>		
Birkenshaw .. .. .	37	0
Birstal .. .. .	54	0
Bolton-on-Dearne .. .. .	60	0
Burley-in-Wharfedale .. .. .	142	0
Calverley .. .. .	95	0
Castleford .. .. .	32	0
Clayton .. .. .	98	0
Clayton West .. .. .	39	0
Conisbrayl .. .. .	58	0
Cudworth .. .. .	49	0
Darfield .. .. .	48	0
Darton .. .. .	235	0
Denby and Cumberwall	158	0
Denholme .. .. .	103	0
Dodworth .. .. .	49	0
Drighlington .. .. .	70	0
Earby .. .. .	117	0
Elland .. .. .	103	0
Emley .. .. .	95	0
Farnley Tyes .. .. .	61	0
Farsley .. .. .	70	0
Featherstone .. .. .	118	0
Flockton .. .. .	33	0
Garforth .. .. .	89	0
Gildersome .. .. .	53	0
Golcar .. .. .	79	0
Goole .. .. .	218	0
Greasborough .. .. .	66	0
Greetland .. .. .	35	0
Guisley .. .. .	79	0
Gunthwaite and Ingbirch- worth .. .. .	53	0
Handsworth .. .. .	183	0
Haworth .. .. .	68	0
Hebden Bridge .. .. .	30	0
Heckmondwike .. .. .	35	0
Hemsworth .. .. .	100	0
Hipperholme .. .. .	71	0
Holmes .. .. .	21	0

YORKSHIRE—WEST RIDING (*continued*),

Name of Local Authority.	Agriculturists. Census, 1921.	Members.
<i>Urban District Councils (cont.)</i>		
Holmfirth .. ..	273	0
Honley .. ..	84	0
Horbury .. ..	47	0
Horsforth .. ..	165	0
Hayland Nether .. ..	68	0
Hayland and Swarne .. ..	50	0
Hunsworth .. ..	60	0
Ilkley .. ..	211	0
Kirkbarton .. ..	79	0
Kirkheaton .. ..	72	0
Knaresborough .. ..	162	0
Knottingley .. ..	81	0
Lepton .. ..	68	0
Linthwaite .. ..	54	0
Luddendenfoot .. ..	35	0
Meriden .. ..	53	0
Meltham .. ..	92	0
Methley .. ..	99	0
Mexborough .. ..	35	0
Midgley .. ..	44	0
Mirfield .. ..	165	0
Mark Bretton .. ..	52	0
Mytholmroyd .. ..	159	0
New Mill .. ..	164	0
Normanton .. ..	37	0
Oakworth .. ..	232	0
Otley .. ..	146	0
Oxenhope .. ..	121	0
Penistone .. ..	46	0
Queensbury .. ..	84	0
Rawdon .. ..	123	0
Rawmarsh .. ..	58	0
Rushworth .. ..	51	0
Rotherwell .. ..	294	0
Royston .. ..	33	0
Saddleworth .. ..	267	0
Scammenden .. ..	40	0
Selby .. ..	240	0
Shelf .. ..	85	0

YORKSHIRE—WEST RIDING (*continued*).

Name of Local Authority.	Agriculturists. Census, 1921.	Members.
<i>Urban District Councils (cont.)</i>		
Shelley .. .. .	66	0
Shepley .. .. .	60	0
Shipley .. .. .	138	0
Silsden .. .. .	182	0
Skelmanthorpe .. .. .	42	0
Skipton .. .. .	150	0
Slaithwaite .. .. .	102	0
South Crosland .. .. .	78	0
Southowram .. .. .	80	0
Sowerby .. .. .	131	0
Sowerby Bridge .. .. .	41	0
Soyland .. .. .	116	0
Spensorborough .. .. .	255	0
Springhead .. .. .	70	0
Stainland with Old Lindley	116	0
Stanley .. .. .	235	0
Stocksbridge .. .. .	104	0
Swinton .. .. .	55	0
Thurlstone .. .. .	124	0
Thurnscoe .. .. .	27	0
Thurstonland .. .. .	61	0
Tickhill .. .. .	203	0
Wath-on-Deerne .. .. .	76	0
Whitley, Upper .. .. .	58	0
Whitwood .. .. .	26	0
Wombwell .. .. .	82	0
Worsborough .. .. .	25	0
Yeadon .. .. .	78	0
<i>Rural District Councils.</i>		
Barnsley .. .. .	212	0
Bishopthorpe .. .. .	272	0
Bowland .. .. .	1,234	2 elected.
Doncaster .. .. .	1,922	2 "
Goole .. .. .	1,428	2 "
Great Ouseburn .. .. .	1,410	2 "
Halifax .. .. .	249	0
Hemsworth .. .. .	851	1 "
Hunslet .. .. .	175	0 *

YORKSHIRE—WEST RIDING (*continued*).

Name of Local Authority.	Agriculturists. Census, 1921.	Members.
<i>Rural District Councils (cont.)</i>		
Keighley .. .. .	246	0
Kiveton Park .. .. .	506	1 elected
Knarborough .. .. .	1,137	2 "
Patley Bridge .. .. .	1,127	2 "
Penistone .. .. .	344	0
Pontefract .. .. .	1,070	2 "
Ripon .. .. .	1,107	2 "
Rotherham .. .. .	899	1 "
Sedbergh .. .. .	585	1 "
Selby .. .. .	1,812	2 "
Settle .. .. .	1,662	2 "
Skipton .. .. .	1,918	2 "
Tadcaster .. .. .	2,016	3 "
Thorne .. .. .	957	1 "
Todmorden .. .. .	316	0
Wakefield .. .. .	486	0
Wetherby .. .. .	1,958	2 "
Wharfedale .. .. .	1,051	2 "
Wortley .. .. .	1,020	2 "
		—
Total .. .. .	—	36

The County Agricultural Authority would consist of 36 elected members representing the Rural Districts, 12 representing the Urban Districts, 32 nominated by the County Council and 16 nominated by the Ministry of Agriculture. Total 96.

## APPENDIX IX.

## RECENT DANISH SMALL HOLDINGS LEGISLATION.

In Paragraph 272 of the Report will be found some account of the Danish Small Holdings Legislation. It is impossible to give here anything like a full history of the movement, but references made in different parts of the Report can be briefly elucidated. No better start can be made than from the year 1787, when occurred the great "Liberation" which in reality was the culmination of two parallel movements, the first being the separation of peasant holdings from the common fields, their consolidation and their freeing from a compulsory rotation, the second being the conversion of labour dues into quit rents, accompanied by conferring the right of inheritance.

To commemorate the "Liberation" was erected in Copenhagen the great Obelisk known as "Friheds Stotte," the "Column of Liberty." The inscription on the column runs something as follows:—

"The King saw that Civic Freedom fixed in Righteous laws gives Love of Country, Courage for its Defence, Desire for Knowledge, Longing for Industry, Hope of Prosperity"—  
 "The King bade that serfdom should cease; that to the Land Laws should be given order and might, that the Free Peasant may become Brave and enlightened, industrious and good, an honourable citizen dwelling in Happiness."

"It is recorded," reports Mr. Nugent Harris, "that when the blocks of stone for the erection of the monument arrived at the Copenhagen docks from the island of Bornholm, the peasants harnessed themselves to the waggon on which the blocks were loaded and drew them to their destination."

Agrarian Acts aiming at continuing the historic royal policy in Denmark of preserving the peasantry were passed on various dates since 1788. In the thirty-five years 1850-1885 a total of 80,000 new cottages and small holdings were erected. Then followed a slackening and, to quote Mr. Harris again, "about 1890 the movement came to a standstill. As a result the large farmers had great difficulty in securing day labourers."

*The Legislation of 1899.*—Meanwhile other movements were growing in force, notably the People's High School movement and the Co-operative movement. Grundtvig, who inspired the whole High School movement, was a religious teacher who preached original virtue rather than original sin, the essential goodness of man, of soil and of cultivation. The Schleswig-Holstein disaster revealed the vital importance of his social gospel to the Danish nation. From the High Schools came many of the leading men in the Co-operative Movement. The gospel of "scope for human

dignity and happiness and for an ardent and intelligent citizenship"\* created both leadership and disposition to be led. While these two movements were growing in power the system of arable farming for stock was being developed.

On the other hand there was also in progress a migration from country to town, due to the concentration of factories in the towns and the wasting away of rural industries.

The State Small Holdings Act of 1899 had a complex aim. It attempted to foster the many interests which centred about small holders and their concerns. It helped the moneyless to obtain land but it also provided a reservoir of labour for the larger farmers. The financial terms were generous. The holdings created were minute. The object was definitely and deliberately to provide part-time holdings, not family farms.

Mr. Nugent Harris says: "The present day Danish small holder, as a result of recent legislation, is concentrating all his energies on his own holding, and the larger farmers are employing the young sons of their brother farmers under a rather unique labour system which provides a virile educated labour. More than one farmer informed me that whereas they were opposed to the new small holdings legislation at first because of their fear of labour shortage, now they were convinced of its wisdom from every point of view."

*The Small Holdings Acts of 1904-1909.*—The Acts of 1904-1909 were revisions of the 1899 Act, designed to make good defects which experience proved to exist in the original Act. The defects were mainly that the State which lent the money had ineffectual control over its expenditure. It was made a condition of receiving credit that the borrower should have actually at command a certain sum for working capital. Under these three Acts, 9,960 new properties had been created by the end of 1922. Loans in respect of them totalled 77½ million Kroner. The Act of 1909, which is a revision and consolidation of the previous Acts, will be found translated into English in Appendix B of Sir Rider Haggard's "Rural Denmark." Its implied restrictions of absolute ownership are referred to in Appendix IX., page 483, of our Report.

*The Legislation of 1919.*—Three laws are dated October 4th, 1919. Two of them deal with the acquisition of land, the third with its disposal. The first provides that all parochial land or glebe, suitable for the purpose, is to be "sold" by the State to suitable applicants. (The precise meaning of "sold" in this connection is examined in Paragraph 403). The incumbent was left the right of reserving for his own use 7 hectares (say 17½ acres). The State assumes the responsibility for paying the incumbent an annual

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\* Sir Wm. Ashley.—Agricultural Tribunal of Investigation Report, page 270.



income equivalent to the assessed rental of the land resumed by the State.

The second law was at once bolder and more contentious. In brief it provided that any entailed estate should be put at the absolute disposal of the present holder, provided that he paid to the State one-fifth of its value, and, moreover, put at the disposal of the State one-third of the land in return for a proper indemnity for the establishment of small holdings.

The indemnity in the case of glebe lands and of estate lands was to be such as "a purchaser of experience would have given for the land if it belonged to a farm of medium size. No addition to the indemnity shall be made on account of severance, disturbance, etc." Certain provisions were made for the protection of the next two life tenants.

Sentiment and affection proved in some cases stronger than the desire to profit. In the following year possessors of settled estates who had not taken advantage of the power given them to break entail were subjected to additional taxation. This not unnaturally brought matters to a head, and after an organised appeal against the Act of 1919 as being unconstitutional the estate owners as a body decided to acquiesce. It is calculated that 25,000 acres will be obtained from glebe lands and 50,000 acres from the large estates. About half the estates previously entailed have been enfranchised and the process is steadily proceeding.

The glebe land falls in as leases run out or when new incumbents are installed.

*Law No. 557.*—The following synopsis of the third law, that which deals with the disposal of land acquired under the first two laws of 1919, has been put at our disposal by Mr. H. P. Hansen, of the Anglo-Danish Commercial Company.

1. Land owned by the public (Government, Churches, etc.) which on account of position and nature is suitable as Agricultural land only, must be sold on the conditions as set forth in the Act.

2. The Land is to be parcelled-out in plots, preferably of such size that on each plot can be erected a farm, sufficient to maintain one family by this family's own labour.

Parcelling-out in smaller or larger plots can be permitted by the Ministry of Agriculture, where circumstances, in a considerable degree, make it advisable. Excluding building and garden plots no plot must be smaller than 1 Hectare ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres). Small lots can be added to existing Housemen's farms, if the size of these is not thereby increased to more than 7 Hectares ( $17\frac{1}{2}$  acres) medium good land.

In special cases the Ministry of Agriculture can give dispensation from this rule.

3. When parcelling-out has taken place the council for Valuation (Act of 15th May, 1913, Tax on Property) shall assess each lot at a value corresponding to the price a cautious buyer would pay for it if it belonged to a farm of medium size.

4. To get land for agricultural purposes in accordance with the Act an applicant must :—

1. Have the right to vote to the Folketing (Commons).
2. As a rule not be more than 50 years of age.
3. Produce certificate from the parish council that he is a sober, honourable person, who is suitable for a small farm : and
4. Be in possession of means. necessary for establishing a small farm and not in possession of more land than joined with the plot would be suitable as a small farm.

If several applicants apply for the same plot, the Ministry of Agriculture decides—in practice, by drawing lots.

At the sale no purchase money is paid, but on the property is laid a periodically fixed half-yearly payment according to rule in S. 5. Admission to building loan in accordance with this Act is only given those farmers who cannot by their own means get a property of the class mentioned in the Act.

5. The half-yearly payment which has to be paid every 11th June and 11th December term shall be  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the amount at which the value of the land has been fixed by the valuation according to S. 3.

By each following general valuation for tax on property a new valuation is put on the land. So long as the land is used agriculturally, the value as at the first valuation shall be fixed at an amount which a cautious buyer would pay, if it belonged to a farm of medium size.

If the land is used for other purposes this has to be taken into account. At the re-valuation, increase in value from the owner's work or use of capital shall not be considered.

After such re-valuation the future half-yearly payment is fixed as interest on the new valuation. After the first three years an additional one per cent. of the original loan is paid as sinking fund. The interest is fixed by the Exchequer on the average interest for the last five years on the bonds, issued in open Series by the Jydland Land Credit Associations . . .

6. From the State a loan for erecting buildings on plots mentioned in S. 1, first part, of nine-tenths the cost of suitable buildings can be given. In accordance with the ruling prices as determined by the Statistical Department a maximum amount is fixed by the Ministry of Agriculture for each year. The

fundamental price is the price for the year 1914, for which year the maximum amount shall be considered 6,000 Kroner, whereto for the following years an increase is added, sufficient to cover the increase, which the price index number shows. On the loan interest is to be paid equal to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the amount which the loaner would have had if the buildings had been built in 1914. Within ten years after the Act, the Ministry of Agriculture, after consulting the Parliamentary Committee for Finance, decides if this rate of interest shall continue, or which other shall be fixed and for what period, and if interest has to be paid on a larger amount than the maximum on which the interest was fixed at the time the loan was given. The loan is free from instalments the first three years, and thereafter until the loan is fully paid, a yearly yield on the original amount of the loan of 1 per cent. beyond the interest shall be paid. Until the loan is fully repaid, this amount shall be continually paid, interest to be reckoned on the balance of the loan at any time and the rest to be considered instalment. If the property changes owner, the State can demand payment of the whole or part of the difference between the amount of interest which has been paid and the amount which there would have been to pay if the interest should have been paid on the whole loan. Such payment cannot be demanded if the new owner is a child of the previous owner.

7. When it is intended to transfer the property to another, not a descendant of the owner, the State has the right of pre-emption of the property, land and buildings, at a price which corresponds with the original purchase price or buildings price with additions of money spent on extensions or improvements, and the value of such improvement which the property has received through the owner's work and use of capital.

8. The property must be used for agricultural or horticultural purposes only, and must be kept fully stocked with live and dead stock. The buildings must be maintained and kept in repair.

The supervision of buildings is discontinued when there is no State Loan on the buildings.

The Ministry of Agriculture can permit such alterations and decides the conditions thereof.

9. The owner must not make alterations whereby the cultivation value permanently is decreased, such as destruction of surface by excavation of clay, lime, etc.

The owner must keep buildings as well as live stock and implements insured against fire at the full value for the buildings in one of the Insurance Associations approved by the Government.

The buildings shall also be kept insured against damage by

storms. If the plot is supplied with buildings and is a self-contained farm the owner is under obligation to live there and manage the property. He must not relet any part of the land or erect houses to be let on it.

10. The property cannot be mortgaged for a larger amount than an amount equal to the loan advanced for erection of the buildings. Distraint cannot be made on the property for any of the owner's personal obligations.

11. The property must not be parcelled-out or joined with other land without special permission from the Ministry of Agriculture.

12. The Act shall be revised within fifteen years.

13. If the Act is not extended or replaced by a new Act, the last valuation remains the future foundation for interest payment.

14. The Ministry of Agriculture has the power to take steps necessary to work the Act.

## APPENDIX X.

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AGRICULTURAL TRIBUNAL AND "THE LINLITHGOW COMMITTEE."

*(The Departmental Committee on Distribution and Prices of Agricultural Produce.)*

The following summary is not presented as in any way complete. For instance the Tribunal's Recommendations in regard to Protection and Subsidies have been omitted as being out of practical politics. The object aimed at has been to present, as briefly and accurately as possible the major recommendations of both bodies. On many of them action could be taken to the profit of the industry on the establishment of Cultivating Tenure.

## I. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AGRICULTURAL TRIBUNAL OF INVESTIGATION.\*

(1) *Credit.*

(a) Farmers organising for joint handling of their products should be able to obtain credit for erection of buildings and purchase of plant against security of their uncalled capital.

(b) Proposals of Committee on Credit Facilities in Agriculture with regard to short-term and intermediate credit should be given effect to so as not to exclude from State advances or guarantees through Joint Stock Banks approved associations of farmers for purchase and sale.

(c) Success of Part II. of Agricultural Credits Act, 1923, depends upon whether it is carried out in close association with agricultural co-operative societies. Machinery for utilisation of public funds now available for co-operative enterprises and the guarantees furnished by Trade Facilities Committee require consideration. There should be established County or Joint County Farm Loan Boards, representative of banking, Government and farming community. They should enjoy defined autonomy up to prescribed financial limits. They should be the authorities responsible for assistance to Farm Loan Associations and co-operative societies within their districts, especially to associations of small holders. If the Boards should prove successful, the question of co-ordinating their operations in a Central Farm Loan Board should be considered.

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\* All these recommendations were endorsed by Sir William Ashley and Professor Adams. The third member of the tribunal, Professor MacGregor, made reservations in reference to some, and did not endorse others.

(2) *Research and Education.*

Further grants should be made for approved schemes of research, especially in diseases of animals in testing new systems of farm management, particularly as regards arable stock-farming, and comparative costs of production and marketing. Steps should be taken to spread among farming community results of investigation and research, and to impress upon farmers importance of keeping full and accurate cost accounts. Increased grants should be made for agricultural education, especially for farm institutes and local winter classes. There should be an Agricultural Organiser in every county with an efficient staff for education, demonstration and investigation. Demonstrations should be provided on selected farms throughout the country, and ultimately in every parish containing over twenty holdings. There should be closer relationship between county instructors and colleges and research stations. Attention should be directed to methods of agricultural instruction in rural elementary schools of Canada and United States. There should be more propaganda among farmers with respect to grading and marketing of their produce, and among consumers in favour of extended use of home-grown produce.

(3) *Wages and Housing.*

"The drift of the more intelligent labourers away from agriculture can only be checked by improving their material well-being both as regards wages and housing, and by satisfying their desire for a reasonable degree of personal independence."

(a) Establishment of about six District Wages Boards to cover whole of England and Wales, each having full executive powers within its own area. Boards not to fix actual rates of pay, but to enact minimum wages.

(b) Consideration to be given to provision of special grants for housing agricultural labourers, similar to policy pursued in Ireland for many years under Labourers (Ireland) Acts.

(4) *Small Holdings.*

"The Small holdings movement is of the greatest value in maintaining the agricultural population, and the time has come for a renewed and vigorous effort to extend the establishment of small holders on the land."

(a) Government should formulate scheme for early operation for settling suitable applicants on the land. Scheme would not be self-supporting for some years, but additional expenditure would not be great if equivalent of housing subsidy is credited to the houses erected on the small holdings.

(b) Consideration should be given to the voluntary or compulsory hiring of land in addition to that of purchase by Local Authorities.

(c) Sinking fund charges relating to purchase of land and execution of permanent improvements should not in future be included in rent of small holdings.

Position of existing small holders under Act of 1908 should be equitably reviewed in this respect.

(d) Land Division of Ministry of Agriculture to be enlarged into a Land Settlement Department (within the Ministry), which, while leaving the main work of actual settlement in hands of County Councils, should act as the supreme small holdings authority responsible for seeing that in all suitable districts adequate provision is made for satisfying the demands of good applicants.

(e) The concurrent powers conferred on Ministry of Agriculture by Section 3 of the Land Settlement (Facilities) Act, 1919, to acquire land for small holdings and allotments where the County Council is not providing such land to the extent considered desirable by Ministry, should be revived, for use in necessary cases.

[*Note.*—The above recommendations on small holdings are given, though it would be obvious that the institution of Cultivating Tenure would put them out of court. It is impossible to think that they could be effective, or that they do in fact amount to a "renewed and vigorous effort to extend the establishment of small holders on the land."]

#### (5) *Co-operation.*

(a) Government should continue to provide funds for propaganda in aid of agricultural co-operative movement. Minister of Agriculture should continue efforts to bring together all associations connected with agricultural community, with view to ascertaining appropriate channels through which State can assist in organisation of co-operative societies.

(b) Important that this country should develop principle of co-operative insurance of live stock and crops. Recommended that Government should make grants for organisation of co-operative live stock insurance societies, on condition that satisfactory returns of the incidence of disease are made by members. Government should also assist in making provision for re-insurance by establishment of a central State organisation which would help to bear the incidence of severe epidemic losses in particular districts.

(c) The erection by associations of farmers or by companies who purchase their milk, of milk-collecting depots at local centres, equipped with plant for proper treatment of milk before railing,

and for conversion of surplus milk into dried or preserved milk, butter or cheese. State should actively encourage formation of such associations or companies—advancing loans to assist in erection of necessary plant.

(6) *Transport.*

(a) Immediate and material reduction—not less than 25 per cent., Government, if necessary, taking the financial responsibility—of railway rates on farm produce and farm supplies.

(b) Government should examine recent developments of road transport for agricultural produce at home and abroad.

(7) *Use of Electricity.*

Possibility of extended use of power and wireless in agriculture should be examined.

(8) *Sport.*

More effective steps should be taken for destruction of rabbits and vermin.

(9) *Local Rates.*

Increased contribution from Exchequer; agricultural hereditaments (other than the farmhouse and cottages) as well as lands should pay on half rates.

(10) *Local Administrative Machinery and Organisation.*

(a) Local machinery is important for advancing the organisation of the industry, and the setting up again of the machinery of County Agricultural Committees in Scotland is recommended.

(b) Consideration should be given to conferment on County Councils of power to strike a rate for agricultural purposes generally, as in Ireland. Crop reporters of Ministry should be in close touch with county agricultural officers. Rural Industries sub-committees of County Agricultural Committees should be re-established. The Council of Agriculture should be regarded as the Council of the County Agricultural Committees, and the Agricultural Advisory Committee should be made more representative of the County Agricultural Committee element, and brought into closer touch with Ministry.

(11) *State Aid.*

A cautious use of power of State to obtain for operations of British agriculture a somewhat greater measure of security.



(12) *Miscellaneous.*

(a) Preparation of schemes of relief for rural unemployment, in particular field drainage, afforestation operations, and assistance in developing—preferably through county or inter-county organisations—lime-burning and limestone crushing.

(b) Regulations requiring cutting of weeds and maintenance of ditches and hedges should be more strictly enforced.

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON DISTRIBUTION AND PRICES OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE.

### A.—MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS.

#### (1) *Credit.*

Where difficulties exist in obtaining capital, Government's proposal to stimulate formation of Co-operative Credit Societies in rural areas would be of assistance if made applicable in such cases. Funds available under Trade Facilities Act might be utilised with advantage, and Advisory Committee under that Act should give favourable consideration to applications from suitable associations of farmers for assistance in developing the dairying industry.

#### (2) *Research and Education.*

(a) Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with Local Authorities should take steps to revive and extend scheme of co-operative dairy schools.

(b) Departments of Agriculture in conjunction with Local Authorities should consider simplest means of furnishing technical and expert advice to producers in preparation, packing, grading and marketing of home dairy produce. Assistance in direction of education and advice should also be given to co-operative dairy societies.

#### (3) *Co-operation.*

National Farmers' Union should give serious consideration to question of Co-operation with view to encouraging formation of Co-operative dairy societies under suitable conditions, and in districts where they are most needed and likely to achieve a fair measure of success.

#### (4) *Transport.*

(a) Lower railway charges on milk would be of the greatest national advantage in encouraging an increase in consumption and, therefore, in railway revenue. Companies should review present scale of rates in this sense.

(b) To encourage traffic in small parcels of dairy produce from farm to consumer or individual retailer, companies should consider advisability of adopting cash-on-delivery system and of reducing existing special rates on small parcels of agricultural produce.

(c) Parcel post rates on small quantities of dairy produce should be reduced, and cash-on-delivery system adopted.

(5) *Future Position.*

By efficient organisation, this country can and should be made far more, if not entirely, self-supporting in its supplies of cheese, butter, condensed milk, cream, and milk powder. There are many directions in which the industry can promote its own expansion and progress. The public demand for home produce of first quality is undoubted, and, as regards dairy produce, all concerned in the industry should feel its reproach that, with our natural advantages and accumulated experience, we are so dependent upon overseas supplies of these essential foods.

B.—FRUIT AND VEGETABLES.

(1) *Marketing.*

(a) Attention is called to the considerable volume of produce re-consigned to provincial markets from Covent Garden which could be consigned direct to those markets by the growers. The advantages of purchase direct from growers are plain, and the system should be expanded.

(b) Growers and their organisations should consider advisability of erecting refrigerating plant in areas where supplies of good-class fruit are regularly in excess of immediate demand.

(c) General question of reducing variety of packages in common use by home grower should receive earnest attention of all branches of the industry.

(d) Ministry of Agriculture's instruction on grading and packing of apples should be continued and extended to cover other varieties of produce. In the face of keen, well-directed and increasing competition from producers in other lands, progress of the industry in this country depends on wider use of the initiative, intelligence and foresight which this instruction is designed to encourage.

(e) The growth of allotment movement should be encouraged in every way as a competitive factor in regard to retail prices.

(2) *Transport.*

(a) Unless the fruit and vegetable industry, in many districts, is to perish, railway freight on such goods must be reduced.

(b) Railway Companies should adopt cash-on-delivery system for small and suitable consignments.

(3) *Co-operation and Credit.*

It is clear that there must and should be an increasing tendency for growers, by combination and organisation, to control both volume and direction of the supplies they market. The extension of co-operative marketing necessitates both ready access to capital and intensive propaganda, and no time should be lost by Government Departments concerned and by the industry itself to secure employment of British credit for such development.

(4) *Statistics.*

Growers' Associations should consider establishment of an efficient system of marketing intelligence, e.g., broadcasting of market prices by wireless telephony.

(5) *Need for future Co-ordination.*

Effective organisation of the trade as a whole is an essential preliminary to satisfactory regulation of the industry. Every effort should be made by the various associations to co-ordinate their activities in matters in which they are mutually concerned. The best hope for the future lies with the industry itself. Producers must realise that marketing is the other half of production.

## C.—MEAT.

(1) *Marketing Live Stock.*

Sale by live weight would be a step forward as compared with general practice of sale by head, but there is no clearly defined body of opinion in favour of making the practice compulsory. Farming industry must first make up its mind before any legislative action can be taken.

(2) *Distribution of Meat.*

It is to the interest of railway companies to reduce goods rates on fresh-killed meat, which pays higher charges than those levied on imported chilled and frozen supplies.

(3) *Home Curing of Bacon.*

Home curing of bacon on the farm and in villages should be encouraged. Instruction in bacon-curing should be arranged at centres of agricultural education.

(4) *Credit.*

Adequate credit facilities should be made available by Government for agricultural marketing undertakings, under control of producers, Trade Facilities Acts should be renewed or, alternatively, other machinery of credit established.

(5) *Co-operation.*

(a) Ownership and control of auction marts by producers is to be recommended.

(b) The building-up of a large-scale pig-producing industry is essential.

(c) Co-operative bacon factories, which have been so successful in other countries, should be promoted by breeders' and feeders' organisations.

(d) In view of close relationship between co-operative dairying and co-operative bacon production, Ministry should support an experiment for co-operative production of bacon in conjunction with a co-operative cheese school.

(e) Producers' organisations should consider advisability of encouraging co-operative societies for slaughter and consignment in producing areas where a sufficiently large volume of business can be relied on, and where satisfactory outlets for by-products can be secured ; and also co-operative slaughter houses in consuming centres.

(6) *Marketing.*

In view of improved organisation for marketing and distribution of imported meat supplies, it is essential that every effort should be made to improve British system of marketing and distributing meat, and to reduce the costs involved.

D.—POULTRY AND EGGS.

" The outstanding feature of the poultry industry . . . at the present time is the immense opportunity for expansion and development which awaits the home-producer. Imports of both poultry and eggs are appreciably below their pre-war dimensions, and it should be his concern to see to it that they do not recover."

(1) *Distributive Charges.*

Adoption of cash-on-delivery system should be considered by Post Office and railway companies.

(2) *Preparation for Market.*

It is essential that more progressive methods of marketing poultry should be adopted by general run of poultry-keepers if the industry is to develop.

(3) *Credit.*

Adequate credit should be made available by State for enterprises under the control of producers engaged in marketing of poultry produce, on condition that minimum supplies are guaranteed by members of organisations concerned.

(4) *Co-operation.*

(a) British egg industry cannot be fully developed on commercial lines except through large co-operative organisations working in conjunction with each other throughout the country.

(b) The preservation of eggs in times of glut is an enterprise which co-operative societies might undertake with advantage.

## E.—CEREALS, FLOUR AND BREAD.

"The improvement effected in recent years in the milling quality of English wheat, as instanced by the extent to which 'yeoman' wheat is now being grown, is reflected in the tendency towards revival in country milling. The process can only be accelerated by the continued improvement of the varieties of wheat grown, and the full, ready and enlightened use by the farmers of the improved and authenticated varieties placed at their disposal."

## F.—OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN FINAL REPORT.

(1) *Prices and Profits.*

"Our investigations have led us to the conclusion that the spread between producers' and consumers' prices is unjustifiably wide. Taken as a whole, distributive costs are a far heavier burden than society will permanently consent to bear. Certain intermediaries between the farm and the home are, of course, indispensable for the great bulk of produce grown in these islands. . . . But economies can be made, and processes of collection and distribution can be shortened. . . . We have no doubt that if the present system were carefully examined by those who are primarily interested in it, whether as producers or as distributors, modifications could be introduced which would render it more efficient and less costly. In some trades there are now too many profit-making agencies engaged in the process of distribution."

(2) *Standardisation of Produce.*

The Committee urges the standardisation of produce. Standardisation is the essential preliminary to successful competitive trading under modern conditions. In developing standardisation the producer should be able to count on the co-operation of intermediary organisations.

(3) *Marketing.*

"It is abundantly clear from our evidence that most farmers and fruit and vegetable growers have little knowledge of the working of the distributive system . . . It is doubtful whether many (farmers) have the capital and facilities necessary for the fuller development of the marketing side of their enterprise." If the British producer is to occupy his proper place in the home market, the marketing sense must be cultivated more generally. "Representative organisations of producers should also make it their business to study closely the systems of marketing and distribution in order that they may by organisation and by collective bargaining . . . secure for their constituents the most favourable terms in competition with well-organised supplies from other parts of the world."

(4) *Co-operation.*

The Committee recommends the co-ordination, in their present stage of development, of existing agricultural co-operative societies with the existing distributive machinery, concentrating on a country-wide organisation of production, the co-operative standardisation of supplies, and a general straightening out and systematising of marketing processes, on up-to-date and co-operative lines.

## APPENDIX XI.

## AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND WOMEN.

BY MRS. WINTRINGHAM.

The influence of their womenfolk on menfolk is very considerable in any calling—but in none is it so direct or so far reaching as in the industry of agriculture. To the wife of the factory operative or the clerk, her husband's occupation may seem a thing apart, with the politics of which she has little or nothing to do. But the agriculturist's wife is in a very different case. She is an active participant in her husband's business, takes a practical and lively interest in its progress, and is qualified to take and actually does take a part in determining farm policy.

In our own time we have had striking illustration of the influence exerted by women on rural development. The dissatisfaction of country women with their own conditions of life, coupled with the desire for a better future for their children, has been one of the main factors in the rural exodus. The nation needs a contented rural population and good home-produced food, but this will never be achieved till a policy is evolved which women can support because it satisfies the aspirations they cherish for themselves and their children.

It is a remarkable fact that all the past proposals for the regeneration of the countryside, though they have varied according to the party complexions of their authors and the political exigencies of the moment, have consistently overlooked the existence of women on the land, and have helped to spread the belief that agricultural industry is exclusively the concern of men.

It is to be hoped that this mistake will be avoided in future and that it will be realised that any land programme will be keenly scrutinised by the women, both from the point of view of their own interests (whether as paid workers or as members of a family partnership), and also from the standpoint of their children's interests.

It will be convenient to survey briefly women's connection with agriculture.

*Women's Indirect Interests.*

The slightest acquaintance with country life is sufficient reminder of the intimate connection of the women of the farms, the small-holdings, and the cottages with the work of their menfolk. The country home is not simply a home as understood by

townspeople. It is the centre of the farm business. Wives and daughters are not merely housekeepers, they are co-partners, though often unpaid ones, in the industry of agriculture. From the cottager's wife, who feeds the pig or the poultry, to the farmer's womenfolk, who deal with the dairy and poultry work, rearing of young stock, and may direct farm policy in the absence of the men, women's part in farm economy is of paramount importance. In addition to such general assistance, they make their own special contribution. The conversion of part of the produce of the farm into the means of exchange often falls to their share and the success in this direction is an asset to the industry. Curing too, in the rural home, offers special problems and special responsibilities. The country-woman has to ensure the best utilisation of home-produced food—and often has to do so under conditions which would dismay her city sisters.

#### *Women's Direct Interests.*

It has surprised many people to learn that the latest Census returns show that some 83,000 women were engaged in agriculture in 1921, and that the industry therefore ranks, after textiles and metals, as one of the most important in the country, from the point of view of women's employment. In view of existing opposition to the employment of women in agriculture, and the discouraging conditions offered to them, their faithful adherence to the occupation is the more noteworthy. Even the war has not succeeded in teaching the world that natural, and not artificial, limitations should determine the activities of women. The case of Scotland shows how large a share women can take in agriculture.

The Census figures are interestingly supplemented by the statistics published by the Ministry of Agriculture for 1924, which show that on a given day in that year there were 62,276 women and girls in *regular* employment on the land and nearly 47,000 *casually* occupied. It is to be noted that these figures do not include occupiers, their wives or domestic servants.

The subjoined table, extracted from the Census returns for 1921, shows the variety of work which women undertake in agriculture:—

#### *Females aged 12 years and over.*

Agricultural Occupations.	..	..	..	Total	83,052
Of whom single women number	..	..	..	..	47,487
Married women number	..	..	..	..	20,280
And widowed or divorced women number	..	..	..	..	15,285



The above total includes :—

Land and Estate Agents and Managers .. .. .	35
(not Auctioneers and Estate Agents).	
Farmers .. .. .	19,440
Daughters or other Relatives assisting in the work of the farm .. .. .	15,384
Gardeners, Nurserymen, Seedsmen, Florists ..	6,156
Agricultural and Forestry Pupils (not at Colleges)	341
Farm Bailiffs and Foremen .. .. .	217
Foresters and Woodmen .. .. .	14
Agricultural Machine, Tractor-Proprietors, Managers, Foremen .. .. .	39
Drainage Superintendents, Foremen, etc. ..	3
Shepherds .. .. .	42
Agricultural Machine, Tractor-Drivers, Attendants	61
Agricultural Labourers, Farm Servants .. ..	32,265
Distinguished as in charge of cattle .. ..	10,603
Distinguished as in charge of horses .. ..	313
Not otherwise distinguished .. .. .	21,349
Gardeners' labourers .. .. .	4,344
Land Drainers, drainage labourers .. .. .	2
Labourers in woods and forests .. .. .	15
Estate labourers .. .. .	1
Pea and fruit pickers .. .. .	3,370
Other agricultural occupations .. .. .	1,323

#### *Proportion of Women Workers to Men.*

806,000 persons are returned for 1924 as workers on the land. Of these 109,206 are women (i.e., 62,276 regular workers and 46,930 casual workers). In other words women form 1-7th to 1-8th of the total labour on the land. Of regular workers they form about 1-9th (62,276 women and 582,263 men). Of casual workers they form more than 1-3rd (46,930 women and 114,994 men).

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INCLUSION IN ANY PROGRAMME OF AGRARIAN REFORM.

As indicated above, the interests of women in agriculture are both (a) *direct* and (b) *indirect*.

A. Under *direct interest* must be included (i) women working on their own account and (ii) women working for wages.

With regard to (i) women farming or gardening on their own account will share with the men the advantages or disadvantages of any general policy adopted by the Government, i.e., the criteria in both cases will be purely economic.

(ii) women working for wages need legislative or administrative assistance in three directions, viz. :—

- (a) improvement of wage standards
- (b) amelioration of conditions
- (c) increased opportunities of employment.

In each case legislative and administrative reform is practicable and such a policy would make a great appeal to the woman worker.

As to (a) *improvement of wage standards* could be effected, e.g., by such amendment of the Agricultural Wages Act, 1924 (Clause 2) as would insure that in fixing wages regard should be had to the maintenance of a proper standard of efficiency for the worker and for the support of any dependents. (As the Act stands, both points are to be observed by Committees in fixing men's wages, but no standards need be regarded in the case of women.)

As to (b) *amelioration of conditions*, in the case of casual and seasonal occupations, (in which women are largely employed), attention should be given by the Ministries of Health and Agriculture to the possibility of raising the general standard of conditions. In the case of "imported," i.e., non-local labour, there is need for legislative action in respect of housing standards. There should be certain minimum requirements as to numbers accommodated in a given space, provision of drinking water, sanitary arrangements, etc. A uniform scale is wanted instead of the irregularities which prevail and will prevail as long as the making of the necessary byelaws is optional to local authorities and their enforcement doubtful. Such labour is of importance to the industry and will be increasingly difficult to secure unless some attempt is made to "move with the times."

In the case of local labour, too, whether regular or casual, some regard should be had to everyday working conditions. No one would suggest that a farm should be run as a factory. Still, it has to be remembered that the immense improvement in factory conditions during and since the war has had no corresponding reflection in country life. The failure to make any advance in this direction is a factor in driving people to the towns. Conditions as well as wages determine attractiveness of employment. Much could be done by some simple provision of farm headquarters (e.g., a hut or section of a building allocated for meals, refuge in case of bad weather or illness, or a place for "tidying up" before leaving work). Such arrangements would be of benefit to men as well as to women.

As to (c) *increased opportunities for employment*, it should be borne in mind that there is much trade union opposition to en-

counter. There are many branches of work, e.g., market gardening and glasshouse work, in which women did well during the war, although they have since been dispossessed by the men. For the single women in the villages casual work on the land is often the one money-making alternative to domestic service, and laments are heard at the passing of certain occupations (e.g., weeding corn) which formerly provided them with additional opportunities. Married women, too, are glad to earn a little money which is not under their husband's control. The remedy no doubt lies in the revival and reorganisation not only of rural industries but certain elementary processes of food manufacture formerly carried on in rural areas. The establishment of centres for cheesemaking, bacon curing, preservation of fruit and vegetables in country districts would provide the opportunities for employment the countrywomen need, and would, at the same time, ensure that the food designed for consumption in the towns was handled under proper conditions.

B. Under *indirect interest* must be included the work of the women (referred to above) who are working in one form or another of family partnership.

The best way of assisting these women will be found in extended and improved facilities for agricultural education. This country lags behind other nations, notably America and Belgium, in this respect. There was the increased recognition of the fact that, while women need purely agricultural instruction (particularly in branches such as dairying, poultry keeping and horticulture, with which they are specially concerned), they need special assistance with the function that is peculiarly theirs, that of rural homemaking. This brings us to the question of actual and potential facilities for agricultural education for women in this country.

#### *Agricultural Education for Women.*

On the University level the existing provision may be said to be adequate, since courses are usually open to women as to men. But the Farm Institutes (designed to provide short courses for those unable to proceed to a College) normally receive women students for the Summer Term only. Country classes are open to women as to men, but tend to be of more benefit to the latter, since recent increases of agricultural organisers and lecturers do not appear to have been accompanied by a proportionate increase of instructresses in the branches which particularly affect women. The present unemployment among men seems to be leading them to take up work in departments which have been traditionally and actually the province of women. Without implying that people must necessarily be taught by those of their

own sex, it is worth while pointing out that just as the male lecturer will probably be more successful in approaching the man, the woman lecturer will be more acceptable to the woman on the farm. Much more might be done in this way to extend the interest of women in agricultural education.

Further, instruction offered to women, both at Farm Institutes and in Country Courses, could be improved by the introduction of some domestic science teaching. Farm and cottage house-keeping offer peculiar problems of their own, and assistance might well be provided on the lines adopted in Belgium, which possesses an excellent central institution for the teaching of rural domestic economy, and also provides itinerant courses in subjects of special concern to the countrywoman, i.e., dairying, poultry, etc., combined with the domestic arts.

Recent institution of Young Farmers' Clubs in this country should be noted. Open as they are to boys and girls, they afford an opportunity for interesting young people in the scientific and practical aspects of agriculture, and should receive every support.

The root difficulty of women's agricultural education in this country is the inadequate representation of women on the administrative machinery. This is particularly regrettable now that the extension of women's political power and the growth of that remarkable movement—the Women's Institutes—are fitting the countrywoman to play a more useful part on public bodies and are arousing a desire for further education. County Agricultural Committees, Sub-Committees for Agricultural Education, District Wages Committees, and any other such bodies as may hereafter be constituted under any future land policy should all have their due quota of women members. In no other way can the importance of women to the industry, and their special needs and difficulties, be properly presented in the right quarters. As political education advances, it is to be hoped that the women will obtain due proportion of places on such bodies in the ordinary course of election, but in the meantime it may be necessary to secure for them minimum representation by legislation.

#### *Rural Education of the Young.*

The women's concern in education is not limited to themselves. The education of her children is a very burning question with the countrywoman. There appears to be room for improvement in our present system in several directions.

In the first place, while avoiding any tendency to make such education vocational, much would be gained if the general teaching in rural schools could be more closely related to the actual life

and the future occupation of the pupils. The attention of the scholars could be profitably directed to everyday processes on the farm and in the farmhouse.

Secondly, with the development of Central Schools, the small village school is becoming less attractive to teachers. Nevertheless, these are positions of peculiar influence, and it is desirable that those holding such posts should have appropriate qualifications, and should receive special inducements to undertake this responsible duty.

Thirdly, the possibility of improving the facilities for rural children between the ages 14-16 might be advantageously explored. If the standard of rural education could be raised by some amendment of the type indicated above, it would have an appreciable effect on rural depopulation, which is largely caused by the women's determination to get their children to urban schools in the belief that they will get a better education and a better chance in life.

#### *Rural Housing.*

This is a matter of primary importance to women. The home is their workshop, and must be equipped in a suitable and convenient manner. Provision appropriate to the towns is of little service in the country. It is essential that the country home should have a garden of adequate size and at least enough land to support poultry and a pig, so that as much as possible of the household's food may be produced at home. (Much of this work could be done with profit and pleasure by wives and daughters, and any small surplus they were able to sell would make a useful addition to the family income.) Water supply, sanitation and lighting are very special problems in the country. Indeed, house-planning altogether, particularly from the labour-saving standpoint, calls for special treatment in rural areas. Efforts are now being made to retain men on the land by improving *their* conditions, and in the same way an effort must be made to render life more possible for the country housewife by improving *hers*. Unless this is done, she cannot properly fulfil her important function in the rural community. A contented home-maker is a great force in keeping husbands and sons on the land.

## APPENDIX XII.

## POINTS FROM ABROAD.

This Appendix contains short extracts from a large mass of material collected by our Investigators in various countries. The material has been carefully considered by the Committee, and extensively used in the compilation of this Report. Here are given a few particularly interesting illustrations.

## ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT INCREASES WAGES.

## ENGLAND.

*Population in Lincolnshire.*

Pinchbeck	..	..	1901	..	..	2,830
			1911	..	..	2,836
			1921	..	..	2,887
Crowland	..	..	1901	..	..	2,747
			1911	..	..	2,683
			1921	..	..	2,707
Holbeach	..	..	1901	..	..	4,755
			1911	..	..	5,259
			1921	..	..	5,381

These are all Small Holdings areas in Lincolnshire. Wages fixed by Wages Board, July, 1925—36s. a week.

*Population in Suffolk.*

Glemsford	..	..	1901	..	..	2,500
			1911	..	..	2,100
			1921	..	..	1,980
Shrimpling	..	..	1901	..	..	280
			1911	..	..	240
			1921	..	..	210
Boxford	..	..	1901	..	..	390
			1911	..	..	358
			1921	..	..	302

These are all normal farming districts of Suffolk. Wages fixed by Wages Board, July, 1925—29s. a week.

## CREDIT.

## BELGIUM.

It is really impossible to estimate the total effect on the efficiency and morals of the Belgian peasant of the establishment and expansion of the credit system. Nor is it possible to see a limit to the benefits it can confer in the development of rural civilisation. It has already been used for bringing electric light to a number of villages and equipping dairies, and one can readily envisage a multitude of other channels into which it can run. Credit has often been described as the driving force of industry; it is certainly the life blood of agriculture.

Suffice it here to point out that the pre-eminence of Belgium in agricultural productiveness is a testimony to the efficacy of abundant credit facilities.

## EDUCATION AND RESEARCH.

## BELGIUM.

The part of the teaching undertaken in Belgium which has the most immediate effects on agricultural efficiency is that organised through and by the State experts (*agronomes de l'Etat*), of whom there are now twenty-nine with six assistants. These officials are distributed over the country, each having a district under his care. Here he carries out his commission to do all he can to promote farming interests. One method he adopts is the organisation of large numbers of popular talks to men on general farming, the feeding and management of animals, market gardening and so forth, and on poultry keeping, fruit preserving and similar subjects to women. But valuable though this instruction is, even more beneficial is the private help which the agronome gives to the individual farmer. It is univcrasly known that any cultivator wanting advice can obtain it, and free counsel is frequently sought by letters. But the agronome does not generally wait for the farmer to come to him. He visits the farms and the markets, and there he makes himself accessible to consultation on all kinds of questions. We saw one of these officials attending an early morning market, going from stall to stall, and heard him discussing with the market gardeners such subjects as the pruning of fruit trees, the diseases of potatoes and advising on seeds and manures.

## HOLLAND.

*Elementary School Teachers Trained as Agricultural Instructors.*—The winter courses have had a great influence. They are given by elementary school teachers.

It is difficult, no doubt, for those unfamiliar with these courses to understand how farmers in the matter of the management of their business will listen to elementary school teachers. "To some teachers," it is explained, "the farmers do not listen. It is somewhat a matter of character and tact, as you might expect. But to very many teachers they do listen."

This result is reached partly, no doubt, through the special pains taken with the training of the village dominies who wish to qualify for conducting agricultural or horticultural courses in their districts or within reach by the bicycle—to which Holland, because the country is so flat, is such an extraordinary devotee. The training lasts three years. During each of these three years the schoolmasters must give up three hours of their Saturday afternoons for 40 weeks—623 schoolmasters did so in 1922—to listen to the lectures of "Rijkslandbouwconsulenten" and "Rijkstuinbouwconsulenten"—of whose functions in a moment—as well as several evenings a week to study. They are then free to sit for an examination. "It is not easy for many," said someone interested in rural education. "They may have been accustomed to study out of books."

*The School Teachers' Influence.*—At a winter course lecture attended by the present writer, the school teacher was giving a practical demonstration of the working of the barometer by making a rough one. After the interval he gave a lecture on the manner in which grain is fertilised.

One hears convincing testimony to the value of the village schoolmasters' work :—

"By educated influence quite ordinary people have been got to use improved methods."

"The instruction is enough to enable a man to read and profit by an agricultural book."

"He is an ordinary farmer, but he has been on the courses and begins to use artificials with knowledge."

"All these people here have been on the courses. They are quite changed. They go with the times."

*Farmers' Sons and Education.*—There can be little doubt that a larger proportion of farmers' sons seeks technical agricultural education than in England. "Some people do not seem to remember," one informant said, "that other countries are always moving, and that when so many countries produce the same things, the country that will be in front will be the one which is best informed and thinks about doing its best."



## GAME.

## NORTH-EAST GERMANY.

No evidence of game preserves has been found, probably on account of the comparative, and in many cases the actual, poverty of the landowners together with their intense interest in agriculture. A landowner who cultivates his own soil is not likely to preserve game with any consequent devastation of crops.

The shooting of estates is often let out for the season, but there are strict laws regarding damage to crops which are stringently enforced. The peasants do not appear to suffer in this respect, and all round landowners and peasants have remarked how incredible it seems that England—the great democratic country—should tolerate such luxuries as deer forests and game preserves!

## HOLLAND.

*The New Game Act.*—The following summary may be given :

A distinction is made between game and disadvantageous game. Disadvantageous game are defined by royal decree, the Government taking the advice of the Dutch Royal Agricultural Society on the matter.

Some variation in regulations may be made for different parts of the kingdom, but disadvantageous game are generally defined as wild swine, rabbits, foxes, pheasants and polecats. It is unlawful to kill by traps, or poison game which is not disadvantageous, but disadvantageous game may be destroyed in any way if it is not tortured. Hunting of disadvantageous game is permitted to every occupier of land or anyone with a written authorization from him. For the use of a gun a licence is necessary. A general shooting licence is 30 florins, a licence excepting swine 15 florins, a licence further limited, 5 florins. Close time is fixed year by year, but the provincial authorities may grant exceptions. Shooting on Sundays or religious festival days is forbidden. All former hunting rights are abolished; no new hunting rights may be established. Owners of old rights are to be compensated.

Woodlands and coverts in good soil for the preservation of game are, of course, unknown.

There are some parts of Utrecht, Gelderland and Overijssel, "still a little feudal," where large proprietors desire to have some game, and such men would dislike to have a hare destroyed; but high agricultural authorities received with astonishment a statement of the number of Hunts in England, the heavy losses through foxes, the burden cast upon poultry-keepers by the cost of enclosing

poultry at night and depriving hens, and especially ducks, of their natural food by locking them up till 6 or 7 in the morning, and the discredit following upon vulpicide. Dutch poultry may forage in the early and late hours and so gain a considerable part of its living.

"Here," said an official of the Agricultural Division, "agriculture is the principal thing; hares and rabbits have to go away. *We don't protect game; we protect agriculture.* We also protect insectivorous birds. *In England you are too well off.*"

*Game which is not Shot.*—Although there are large estates the number is small. There are no large enclosures of any consequence which are not cultivated. There is, consequently, *little or no game preservation.* There are practically no rabbits except in one island, and very few foxes.

#### DENMARK.

"In no part of Denmark does the farmer suffer from rabbits," said one informant. "I had a few partridges and hares, which I was glad to keep, not to shoot—we do not shoot on this estate—but because they were rare. However, the neighbouring farmers shot them."

#### LANDLORDS.

##### SOUTH GERMANY.

The large landowner nearly always lives on his estate, most of which he cultivates himself. His farm is usually almost a model farm, and he is very much looked up to by the peasants, who imitate him as much as possible.

#### DENMARK.

*Landlords as Farmers.*—Almost all the large proprietors are themselves farmers and have a good influence, agriculturally, on the general community. As there are only 419 holdings over 600 acres, large farming, although often excellent and public spirited, is not the chief factor in Danish farming. The principal factor is small farming.

#### BELGIUM.

There is, however, among most landlords in Belgium a real understanding of agricultural operations, and they appreciate the fact that no good farming is possible without security of tenure.

## PRIVATE PARKS.

## NORTH-EAST GERMANY.

In spite of the fact that Germany, east of the Elbe, is a country of great estates, nowhere in the three provinces which have been visited have we found private parks exceeding 1 per cent. of the total estate. Everywhere the land is cultivated most extensively by the owners. In Prussian Saxony the average amount of park in each estate is one-quarter to one-third per cent., and in Pomerania, Brandenburg and Mecklenberg the figure is approximately the same. Where the park amounts to 1 per cent. of the estate, it is usually on hilly ground which would be most difficult to cultivate, and is nearly always well wooded. In the case of one estate near Berlin of some 2,000 acres the private park amounted to 2 acres. It is very striking to one coming from England to find the estate mansion right on the high road running through the village. One looks for a long avenue of trees with extensive parks on both sides, but instead one sees nothing but industry and its machines all around. The German landowner of the highest social rank is also a keen, able and efficient farmer.

## HOLLAND.

*The Dutch Notion of a Private Park.*—There is nothing in Holland comparable to what may be seen in Great Britain. Tracts of good land used as uncultivated private parks.

Parks, in our sense, do not exist. Such private enclosures as there are are largely on sand, where there is often picturesque woodland and the land is of comparatively small value. Except in the Veluwe, the enclosures might be more properly described as large gardens. Dutch properties are ordinarily enclosed by canals not walls. Parks are not to be found on good land. Wealthy men who live in well-cultivated districts are content with 2 or 3 acres at most, and their property is rich pasture on which they like to see the black and white Dutch cows, which form an agreeable picture on the rich green grass.

## TRANSPORT.

## BELGIUM.

All the main railways of Belgium are State owned and managed, and on several occasions during times of agricultural and industrial depression the rigour of crises has been softened by what is really a subsidy in the form of lowered rates of transport. During the drought period of 1894, for example, for several months

the rates for carrying forage and feeding stuffs were reduced 25 per cent., while, in addition, cargoes of manures and fertilisers were transported free of charge on canals and rivers.

## DENMARK.

*The Railways*, which are the property of the State, support agriculture very little by means of low freights and special facilities.

*An interesting exception* is made with limestone. It goes at a third of ordinary rates to areas in need of it. (Lime is a necessity in Jutland.) But this concession may be regarded as a sprat to catch a mackerel, for when the sour areas are limed they have more produce for the railway.

## NORTH-EAST GERMANY.

The question of transport facilities is considered a very important one in Germany and indeed must always be in so large a country. Before the War in several districts lines were laid which did not render any direct profit, or which actually incurred a loss, but which were considered necessary steps towards the accomplishment of the settlement policy referred to above.

*Railway Rates for Rural Produce.*—The railways feel the competition of the canals—1,500 miles navigable—transport by which is always cheaper and, in many ways, better.

*In general, agricultural produce is carried at less than ordinary rates.*

## WAGES AND CONDITIONS OF FARM WORKERS.

## LUXEMBURG.

*Labour* :—As the holdings are nearly all small, the land is largely tilled by its owners and their families. There are only few agricultural labourers in the country, and they nearly all have their own holdings, any unattached going over to France, where wages are high, or emigrating to Canada, U.S.A. and elsewhere.

## NORTH-EAST GERMANY.

Here we find a system of wages in money and wages in kind. The kind wage, which forms the greater part of the total, is known as the "Deputat," and usually includes a long list of what we often call perquisites. A typical case is taken from the district of Schawe in Pomerania, where the deputat is made up of the following items :—

1. *House.*—Large enough for the man and his family, and in good repair. These houses are nearly all "tied" in the three

provinces, and if the worker leaves the employment of the estate he must also vacate the house. This system has caused occasional trouble owing to the shortage of houses, but it still continues to be the almost universal custom east of the Elbe. In all districts and estates labourers' dwellings are found to be very well built, clean, airy and roomy.

2. One third of an acre of garden attached to house or at a short distance therefrom. It is on this ground that the workers, as well as growing vegetables and potatoes, keep their live stock, such as pigs, poultry, geese, etc.

3. One tenth of an acre for cultivation of flax.

4. The right to keep a cow and receive food and pasturage for it, also the right to rear one calf, which, however, must be sold as soon as the labourer has to ask his master for food for it. (This course is commonly avoided by grazing the animal on the roadside and hedges.) With regard to food for the cow, the farmer must give a certain amount of hay, turnips and straw or enough extra ground on which he may grow an equivalent amount. The option is left to the worker, who must make his choice not later than 1st May of each year. Where no cow is kept the employer must give 3 litres of milk per day, in some districts 4 litres.

5. The right to keep two sheep, with food and pasture, and the right to rear their lambs till the end of the pasture season. The farmer may make an equivalent payment in money where this right is not granted, but the labourer has no option.

6. The right to keep two geese for breeding purposes : but a rule is added here to the effect that every seventh or eighth goose of average weight must be handed over to the employer on 1st October of each year.

7. Twenty hundredweight of grain for bread-making, including certain weights of corn, wheat, barley, rye and oats, any of which, however, may be added to or deducted from by altering the weights of the others. Such alteration in the weights is only carried out where the employer does not grow sufficient of any one crop to be able to supply his workers with the required quantity. Such points are usually settled by agreement with the individual worker, or where the number of labourers on any one estate exceeds twenty, with the workers' council. Larger questions, as for example the whole deputat arrangements for a district, are decided on by the district councils, which, being representative of employers and employees, seem to resemble somewhat the Whitley Councils of England.

8. Seventy cwts. of potatoes or sufficient ground on which to cultivate that amount with an allowance for the quantity of labour required. This allowance applies to all such alternatives.

9. *Fuel*.—The quantity is usually fixed locally and includes certain amounts of hard wood, soft wood, briquettes, and peat.

The above deputat is quite typical of the whole of North-Eastern Germany, with, of course, variations for the different conditions in each district.

### RECLAMATION.

#### BELGIUM.

How sustained the effort has been to make more productive the areas which yielded next to nothing may be gauged from the following table giving the acreage of uncultivated land at different times.

In 1846	there were 810,537 acres.
1866	there were 656,192 acres.
1880	there were 579,910 acres.
1895	there were 423,300 acres.
1910	there were 269,942 acres.
1923	there were 252,200 acres.

#### NORTH-EAST GERMANY.

*Quality of Soil*.—It is very difficult to say "whether soils of inferior quality are brought into cultivation as compared with this country" (England), but in the provinces of Brandenburg and Pomerania, and particularly in the former, there are great areas of land with very poor sandy soil which are cultivated with considerable success. This soil is undoubtedly of inferior quality to that of England. Moreover, we have found several instances of moor and marshland being gradually turned into cultivated land. On the whole, therefore, it appears that a more extensive cultivation is carried on than in England.

All over Germany we find distinct evidence of the steps taken to make science serve agriculture. A comparatively poor soil is fed principally with scientific manures, treated with special crops such as *Saradella* (which furnishes ammonia for the ground), and worked by machines which are scientifically built for the special purpose required and for the particular kind of ground.

#### HOLLAND.

*Reclamation of Poor Soils*.—Undoubtedly more inferior soil is brought into cultivation in Holland than in Great Britain.

In Great Britain land of medium quality is usually left to produce grass, or a small quantity of food for cattle and sheep. In Holland such land is hardly to be found, because everything is done to get the most out of poor land by means of labour and manure.

Nearly a quarter million acres of sand and peat were reclaimed in 1900-18 (38,000 hectares were made arable, 34,000 grass and 21,000 plantation).

*Reclamation: Private Enterprise v. the State.*—With regard to land reclamation, there may be districts where it is difficult, owing to the disagreement of the population, to get the water carried away. *In a considerable part of Holland all the rainfall must be got rid of.* Therefore there is a State Commission with powers.

The State has never reclaimed much land, except a certain amount of sand for forestry. The great recoveries of land from the water and inferior soils have been made by private enterprise.

*Land the Greatest Interest.*—The land is and must ever be the greatest interest of the Dutch. Not only because there is no iron in Holland of any importance (coal production now nearly 4 million tons), but because so much of the land has been *made*.

*Land Making.*—"God made the sea," says the Dutch proverb; "*we made the land.*"

Much of Holland is such an artificial product that, *if the sea and river dikes broke, half the country would be under water.* It is on this made land that the Dutch do their best farming and market gardening.

It costs the country an immense sum merely to keep its head above water. Millions have to be spent before Holland can begin its farming and horticulture. The pumps must pump till Doomsday. Device of the province of Zeeland: A lion swimming, and the motto: "*I struggle and keep my head above water.*"

The 70 miles square Haarlem Lake, of which Motley asserts that, "exposed as it lay to all the winds of heaven," it was "lashed into storms as dangerous as those of the Atlantic," is now one of the most prosperous rural districts.

Elsewhere in Holland one may visit miles of nurseries and market gardens the sites of which plenty of people remember as water."

*Land Making Goes On.*—Every year not only the cultivated area but the land area of Holland increases.

The drainage of the Zuider Zee, begun a few years ago, will add an Oxfordshire to Holland.

Valuable land was not taken on which to build the great central station in Amsterdam. A site was got by the waterside by dumping in a half-million wagon loads of sand and driving into them 75 ft. long tree-trunks from Norway.

*Fighting the Wind.*—Not only the water but the wind has been conquered.

The great Westland market-gardening district, adjoining the Hook of Holland, which sends so much of its grapes,

strawberries, tomatoes and other produce to Covent Garden, was windswept and cold. (The winter cold freezes ivy.) The wind has been conquered by windbreaks of brick, straw, sacking, wood and cropped elm and willow; the cold by more than 1,000 acres of glass frames and glasshouses.

*And the Sand.*—There has also been a fight with the sand. Nowhere outside China have greater miracles of soil transformation been wrought than in Holland. Hills of sand have been carried away. Heath and sand have been cultivated.

The wonder of bulb-growing, for which the Dutch are so famous, is not the kaleidoscopic miles of garish bloom, about which tourists and guide-books have so much to say, but the patient and far-seeing fashion in which the sand dunes have been excavated in order that bulb gardens might be made on the peat below.

*The bulbs are grown on naturally infertile soil.*

The shifting sand of the sand dunes along the coast, which would have blown over the farms and ruined them, as sand dunes ruin good land in parts of our own country, have been planted with couch grass, and then, when gripped by the roots of the couch grass, have been studded with trees, so making what was waste the most eligible land in Holland for country houses.

About a third of the central, eastern and southern parts of Holland are also sand.

"Even more intensively worked than the profitable soil is the more sandy soil. The results are astonishing. Hardly is one crop harvested when the land is ready for the next sowing. Even in the early winter the sandy soil is expected to render service and to bear late turnips."—"*Agrarverfassung und Landwirtschaft in den Niederlanden.*" By Dr. Frost. (Published on behalf of the German counterpart of our Royal Agricultural Society.)

## RECLAMATION.

### HOLLAND.

The extreme interest of the following extract justifies its inclusion complete:—

#### 1.—THE FAMOUS HIGH FEN COLONIES OF HIGHER HOLLAND.

You may see in Groningen stacks of peats as big as churches. Some of the strawboard and potato-flour factories use peat only for their furnaces. There is a Dutch conundrum, "Which is the happy country in which the children burn their mother?"



A thousand acres of what are called high fen are cut up into peat in a year. A canal has been dug out from Groningen into the peat country, and year by year this canal and its offshoots have lengthened until there must be more than fifty miles of the main canal and a hundred of the subsidiary canals. It is a sight one can never forget, the stolid, mathematically straight main canal cut through the black peat barrier, and its offshoots leaving it at right angles.

At first, as in driving by the canal side, one gets clear of the town of Groningen, there is nothing, as far as the eye can reach, but cultivated land, such as one sees in the low fen areas of North and South Holland. There are small farms, and neat villa-like, single-storey cottages, with roofs of shining tiles. (The main industry is the production of potatoes, which are so conveniently and cheaply carried off by the canals to the potato-flour, yeast and spirit factories, or to the railways for exportation.) In Groningen province there must be 70,000 acres in which the high fen has been cut away and prosperous homesteads now stand. In the Netherlands, as a whole, there were even before the War a quarter of a million acres in which this transformation has been wrought.

So much for the areas in which the peat is no more. But, as one jogs along by the State canal, districts are reached in which peat may be discerned in the distance. The single-storey cottages, farm-houses, look newer and newer. Very soon the black wall of still unhewn peat begins to close in, and the buildings by the canal side are brand new. Another mile or so, and bricklayers and carpenters are still at work, and there are no buildings at all. Finally, we reach water head, where the canal is being carried into the wilderness. There can be few more desolate sights in Western Europe than this wide expanse of shelterless high moor before the indomitable Hollanders fling themselves upon it and make cultivable land in its place.

The first thing to be done by means of the advancing canal is to draw off the water. The fen loses about a third of its volume by draining. After the trenches that have been cut have brought away the water to the canal, the top layer of high moor, which is moss litter, is cut away. *Below that is peat, often to a man's height or more.* It in turn is cut away. When that is done, the sand beneath is exposed. On the sand the old top layer of moss litter is replaced. Above this moss layer about four inches of sand taken from the canal are laid. Then the surface is ploughed just deep enough to mix a little of the litter among the sand.

The result is an easily worked peaty soil with plenty of water (in the sand) within reach for the crops to be.

From time to time, of course, the plough is set a little deeper, and thus more and more peat is gradually united to the sand and

to the humus produced by cultivation. Some farmers' horses wear wooden shoes, which serve like snowshoes to make easy movement possible over a springy surface. At length, however, the land gets sufficiently solidified for these footguards to be dispensed with.

The work of turning the morass into agricultural land is done by "water companies," properly so-called, as the new waterways are the basis of the whole operation. The other product besides water is the peats, the removal of which before the War used to cost about £130 an acre. Levelling and sanding came to about six guineas an acre. Then there were the simple, economically built farmhouse buildings to be put up. The peats brought £200 to £260 per acre. The first two crops are potatoes. The fen colonies are said to spend more on artificials per acre than any other agricultural area in the world. But these artificials are bought co-operatively.

One writes at some length about this higher Holland, because it is the Holland that so few visitors see. Their time is spent almost wholly in the Holland below the level of the sea.

## 2.—THE STRUGGLE WITH THE WATER LEVEL.

Below the level of the sea! Any reader who has happened to be in a Dutch district in which a dike has broken in a storm has a vivid impression of what the phrase means.

One year, 9,000 acres were spoilt by the sea. In another part of Zeeland the work of a storm had imposed a loss of £50,000.

The sea had crumbled away sections of the dike, built with the experience and skill of so many centuries of dike building, and had strewn it contemptuously, as churned up mud, over miles of cultivated land. Battalions of diggers and carriers of earth, like ants, which on disaster threatening their homes immediately set about the work of reparation, were to be seen indomitably repairing the wreck of parishes. The spectacle of what so lately had been well-cared for fields, now slaked with sludge into a sodden waste, is not easily forgotten.

Nor does the foreign observer find it difficult to understand how the desolation wrought by the inundations of the sea has ever stung the Dutch with a sense of insult which can only be wiped out by the subjugation of the waves once more. In one place large vessels had been lifted by the storm right over the remains of the dikes and dropped in what once were fields.

When the stranger to Holland comes ashore from the steamer at Flushing or the Hook, or up the Maas at the Boompjes at Rotterdam, it is unlikely that it will occur to him that he is on a dike. When in the interior of the country, say as far away as

the vicinity of the German frontier in Gelderland, he is riding along the public road, with the river in its summer bed half a mile or so off, it is also easy for him to forget, till someone gives the road its name of dijk, that he is journeying along the top of a barrier which in winter is the bank of a river.

The water level is, obviously, at the bottom of the distribution of Holland into grass and arable. Roughly speaking, you cannot cultivate land which is not a matter of, say, two feet out of the water, and there are large areas in Holland where it is impossible to get the water as low as that. Consequently, there is pasture there.

The part of Holland which the tourist sees when he goes from Flushing to Rotterdam, The Hague, Haarlem, Amsterdam and Utrecht, and makes a trip across the Zuider Zee—which will one day be the same kind of country—is the part where cattle are kept in the largest numbers, and butter and cheese are chiefly made.

The best plough land is the sea clay, that is the alluvial marsh soil of Zeeland and Groningen; but the plough works in all formations in Holland where the water level is low enough—with several horses before it on the river clay, and with a minimum of power in sandy districts. As much as 46 per cent. of Holland is sand, with some gravel. Of the rest, 35 per cent. is sea and river clay, and nearly 19 per cent. is fen.

### 3. EDUCATION IN CO-OPERATION.

As to the thrilling story of polder making—a polder is a reclaimed morass of lake—in a single district of South Holland there are no fewer than 350 separate polders ranging in area from 12 acres to the 40,000 acres of the Haarlem Lake polder. Every one of these polders is under sea level. Many are 16 feet below sea level.

It would be a long story to tell either of the troubles of the waterschappen (water authorities) in keeping the water out of them when once made, or the story of the struggles between different waterschappen over the disposal and reception of water. The complications of water management in the Netherlands are unending. They have had the excellent effect of educating generations of members of waterschappen in self-government.

“They who suffer by the water,” says the Dutch proverb, “must fight the water.” The national struggle with the water gave country people the training which made them readily accept the principles of agricultural co-operation. Superior to all the great and little waterschappen, heenraadschappen, hoogheemraadschappen, polderbesturen, and dijkbesturen, whose official notices are in every inn and local paper, and whose powers in emergencies—think of what ice can do with the level of the water on an indiked river!—is the national Waterstaat. Its yearly

budget, even at pre-war money rates, was three millions. (This in addition to no end of provincial and communal expenditures.) Its directory occupies three dozen pages in the Dutch Whitaker. It has been called "een staat in den staat."

Dreuthe province is now straightening watercourses by un-employed labour. The land dealt with is stated to have an added value of two pounds an acre.

At present little private reclamation from water, heath or sand is being done, because the value of land is low and the cost of wages high.

The work which is going on is continued, because if it was stopped the money sunk would be lost. When the indiking of a new polder is undertaken, it is a work of six or seven years. It is equally a long job with heath or sand reclamation. Ditches and canals have to be dug, and the surface has to be dealt with before ploughing begins.

*The Zuider Zee.*—The State work for the reclamation of the Zuider Zee goes on—for economic reasons not so fast as it did—because it is a great national enterprise on which the Dutch have set their minds. It was once dry land. "We take the Zuider Zee, as the Germans proposed to take Belgium. We are sure of a loss, but we can establish there many thousands of farmers and labourers, and some of the soil, like the soil of the Haarlem Lake, will probably not need manure for many years." A third of the dam has been made.

On the Dollart some taking of land from the sea is going on, but it is done by private enterprise.

*Reclamation from the Heath.*—Most of the reclamation of recent years has been from the heath. During the War, under the stimulus of high profits, much sand was reclaimed, but some ill-advisedly. It is, in part, the kind of sand which does not readily let moisture through. It is, therefore, unlikely to be profitable.

Ordinarily farmers who reclaim know by their own experience whether the land can be most profitably used as arable, pasture or woodland.

*Grass Land Making as a Hobby.*—Many persons take a pride in making new soil. The late Baron van Dedem explained to the present writer how he had made in his time a hundred acres of grass land out of absolute wild.

Ten per cent. of the grass land in his province of Overijssel is not more than 40 years old.

On the Baron's estate it was impressive to cross land in which strips of good grass lay alongside the original wild heather and brushwood. The method of subduing the heath is first to cut down the brushwood and then to fence in. The next thing is to

turn cattle upon it. They eat the heather so thoroughly that it is killed. The ground benefits not only by the droppings from the cattle, but by the manure, mixed with sand, from the cow-houses, where a good layer of sods is carefully placed below the peat litter.

The interesting thing is that it is not necessary to sow grass seed. The manure from the cow-houses is full of hayseed. It is an arresting thing that in from two to four years it should be possible in so simple a fashion to produce a grass good enough for four cows to live on 10 acres of it throughout the summer.

“To make new grass land has been a kind of sport with well-to-do men.”

*The Work on the Dunes.*—This is done by the State, because it is important that the shifting sand should not blow away and let the sea through.

It is equally important that the sand should not blow over the land.

The dunes are from a mile to a quarter of a mile wide. The same kind of dunes can be seen on the coast of Cornwall, Cumberland and Norfolk, and on the Moray Firth. The Dutch are not minded to have the dunes do for Holland what the Sahara has done for much of North Africa.

*Countryside Making.*—Until one has visited the dunes, it is not easy to realise what wind is capable of doing with fine sand. One approaches from farm land, where the cows' tails are blowing about in a comical fashion, and finds oneself in sand where a little hill may shift its position or a great hole be excavated in a few hours. With couch grass, leguminous crops and little firs, these shifting sands are being brought under control, and one day the children or children's children of the patriots who have bent their energies to the work of afforestation in the unlikeliest conditions will inherit a tumbled timber-clad country of no little beauty, which may become a favourite site for country residences.

## APPENDIX XIII.

## DENMARK AND GREAT BRITAIN.

I. THE POINTING HAND.—The outline of Denmark on the map shows a pointing hand.

The lesson of Denmark is the lesson of the rise of an agricultural country from a condition which might be reckoned lamentable to such agricultural and social pre-eminence that every year many hundreds of students of rural progress come from all parts of the world to investigate her methods.

II. THE WORLD'S INTEREST IN A MILLION COUNTRY PEOPLE.—The total number of the country folk, whose methods have been the subject of such world-wide study, is only about a million.

Of the total Danish population of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  millions, a third is engaged in agriculture, and a third in industries dependent on agriculture.

If a map of Denmark (area, 15,000 square miles, or half the size of Scotland) be laid on a map of England, Denmark reaches from inside the Welsh border half-way into Lancashire and Yorkshire, enters some of our Eastern Counties (but is far from reaching the sea), and, on the South, follows roughly the course of the Thames south-east from Oxfordshire to Sheerness.

III. FARMERS WHO ARE LIBERALS!—It is not only that these million country people have reached *a degree of technical efficiency and mental and physical wellbeing that are at once a humiliation and an encouragement to Britons acquainted with the lamentable situation in some of our own rural districts.*

*The Danish farmers, mostly owning the land they work, are not, as some would expect them to be, Conservative, but Liberal, Radical or Socialist, and their social welfare legislation is surpassed nowhere.* The explanation is to be sought in the fact—

(i) that, as F. Zeuthen writes, “medium-sized and small farms play so great a part in Denmark, and that Danish social

legislation, on many points, covers the greater part of the lower middle class, *i.e.*, a great part of the independent farmers, and not only the working class," and

(ii) that "during the last generation a rather comprehensive industry has developed in Denmark, in addition to the many persons engaged in commerce, transport and shipping."

But when full account is taken of the proportion of urban residents and of the industrial population, the fact remains that *as much as 70 per cent. of the population is either directly or indirectly dependent upon agriculture.*

In other words, the number of persons whose business it is to provide the farmer, his agents and merchants, with buildings, railway trains, goods of all sorts and shopping facilities, hotels, sermons and newspapers, all draw their wages, salaries and dividends out of corn, pigs and hens.

IV. THE SOCIAL LEGISLATION OF PROGRESSIVE FARMERS.—Evidence of what an enlightened farming class will work for is seen in such social results as that—

- (i) The death rate (11 per 1,000) is lower in no other country.
- (ii) Suicides have decreased.
- (iii) Drink consumption has lessened.
- (iv) Tuberculosis and other forms of sickness are much less common.
- (v) Urban working hours have gone down to 8 in callings with day and night shifts, and a general 8-hour day, already in existence in many trades by mutual agreement, is proposed.<sup>1</sup>
- (vi) The standard of education is high.
- (vii) There is enlightened provision for unemployment, sickness and old age.

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<sup>1</sup> The agricultural labourer's hours average 9.33.

With regard to the hours of the urban worker, from 1882 to 1914, wages in Copenhagen have been doubled, whereas the retail food prices were rather lower in 1914; from 1914 to June, 1924, there has been another slight rise in the real wage per day, and simultaneously with these rises the working hours in industry have gone down from 10 or 11 hours in 1872 to about 9½ hours in 1914 and 8 hours from 1920 onwards.

(viii) About 6 per cent. of the assessed income of the people is spent on social and hygienic measures.<sup>1</sup>

(ix) Urban Denmark is acknowledged to be as prosperous as farmers' utmost endeavours can make it.

(x) There has been a succession of Progressive Ministries.

V. THE GOOD DENMARK CAN DO US.—It is impossible to transfer bodily from another country agricultural methods which are rooted in physical and historical facts, but *we can get from Denmark encouragement and stimulus and a great deal of knowledge regarding the spirit and manner of rural amelioration.*

VI. WHAT DENMARK ROSE FROM.—At a time when we are feeling the effects of the War, it is worth remembering that the Napoleonic era left Denmark bankrupt. Then came the prolonged resistance to Prussia, culminating in one-third of the country being torn away.

The Danes had left to them *a country short of money, men and hopefulness, with fewer agricultural advantages than our own, and without coal, iron or stone.*<sup>2</sup>

VII. DENMARK'S AGRICULTURAL BACKWARDNESS NOT SO LONG AGO.—“*The Danes,*” wrote Mary Woolstonecraft, “*seem averse to innovation.*”

With regard to *butter*, “*execrably bad*” is what a British Consul called it a generation ago.

As late as the middle of the 19th century, *cattle keeping*, says a Danish writer, was “*very much neglected.*”

During the first half of the 19th century, he goes on to say, *pig breeding* was “*not a very important branch of Danish agriculture.*”

<sup>1</sup> Total expenditure for social purposes for 1923-4 and the immediately preceding years, 200 million kr. (old age pensions 65, sickness 36, unemployment 27, and relief 33). Adding 50 million kr. spent on hospitals and other social hygienic purposes, the total is 250 million kr. (State 31 per cent., commoners 45 per cent., insured workers and societies 16 per cent., employers 8 per cent.).

<sup>2</sup> A certain amount of stone is got in digging out chalk, but stone for building and for paving the roads must be imported.---



There was a time not so long since, when the Danish peasants "had *no idea of keeping poultry.*"

VIII. BUT TO-DAY DENMARK CAN BOAST THAT NO COUNTRY HAS MADE MORE RURAL INNOVATIONS.—She is ahead of every other land, not only in co-operation, but, as we shall see, in the number of cows and pigs she keeps.

The general level of her livestock is not bettered anywhere.

Her butter, bacon and eggs, which are now 85 per cent. of her exports, are of the best quality.

Her farming, by reason of the science brought to bear on it, and by reason of the development of Co-operation, is remarkable.

Finally, and most important, *her peasantry are, as Björnson said, "the most enlightened in the world."*

IX. WHY THE SUCCESS OF THE DANES APPEALS PARTICULARLY TO US.—For half a dozen reasons the appeal made by Denmark's success comes with peculiar force to us :—

(i) *The Danes have been successful, although, like ourselves, they have no duties on agricultural produce.*

(ii) *We have practical evidence of the high level of their agriculture, for we eat most of their butter, bacon and eggs.*

(iii) *Neither their climate nor their soil is better than ours.*

Denmark lies within the latitude of Inverness and Darlington.

The soil of this flat and windswept country—the highest eminence, called, a little pathetically, "Heaven's Hill," is only 482 feet high—is, as an ex-Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Madsen Mygdal, writes, "not of a particularly fertile nature."

(iv) *The Danes are made of much the same racial stuff as ourselves.*

(v) *Three-fifths of the Danes are, like ourselves, islanders, and, as has been pointed out, five-ninths of them are town dwellers.*

(vi) *Before 1880, agricultural Denmark, like agricultural Great Britain, was mainly corn-producing and corn-selling, but had the sense to alter her methods.*

*Instead of engaging in a competition with roughly worked prairie, that might beforehand be called hopeless, Danish agriculture took, as is now so well known, quite a different line from our farming,*

“The supplies of cheap corn, and, later on, of oil-cake, being used, as Mr. Madsen Mygdal has written, as raw materials for production, especially of butter and bacon, which by degrees came to be the speciality.

“This production involved a complete change in economy and working, and opened up—

“(a) potentialities for a use of the land more in harmony with the natural conditions of the country than corn growing, and

“(b) for the minute subdivision of the land into independent small-holdings, *that has proved such a social boon.*”

As Sir John Russell, F.R.S., the head of Rothamsted, says:—

“English agriculture suffered a terrible setback and did not recover until 1896.

“*Danish agriculture was not only to weather the storm, but to make headway all the time.*”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The same is true of the period of agricultural depression which followed the War.

“*Notwithstanding the severity of the present situation,*” wrote that excellent authority, Mr. Harald Faber, “*Danish farmers, as recently stated by one of their foremost leaders, have every confidence in their ability to weather the storm*

*by continued application of rational methods for production, by co-operation, assisted by the research work of various kinds carried out by the State of Agricultural Societies, and by tightening of belts.*”

How different from the spirit of some writing in England by men who regarded themselves as farmers' leaders, and had no little influence on farmers' thinking!

## THE DANISH AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION.

X. THE ENGLISH FARMER'S REMEDY: TO SAVE LABOUR.—The Briton sought to balance his accounts by saving labour.

Because you need fewer hands to mind cattle than to grow crops, he proceeded to put large areas of his ploughed land under grass.<sup>1</sup> On his remaining arable land—and because he had a larger farm than the Dane, he had still a good deal of arable left after putting down a considerable area to grass—he went on steadily growing corn in competition with fertility-stored prairie, which needed no manuring and got very little cultivation.

*And he was quite sure that what he ought to have was Protection.*

XI. THE DANE DECIDED TO DO JUST THE OPPOSITE. He kept every bit of his ploughed land under the plough.

Further, in order to get more of it, he began to plough up grass and to get rid of his sheep.

Only from a sixth to a seventh of the agricultural area is now under permanent grass.<sup>2</sup>

He was minded to market not a raw material like corn, but finished articles. *He would make his farm a factory.*

He would produce milk for butter, and pigs for bacon.

If he grew corn, and prices were unfavourable, it should be fed at first cost to his stock.

He would also grow for his cattle and pigs large quantities of roots and green fodder.

<sup>1</sup> See, in order to avoid misconception, footnote on page 7. "British v. Danish Practice."

<sup>2</sup> BRITISH v. DANISH PRACTICE.—About two-thirds of British cultivated land is under permanent grass.

"The Danish farmer gives his cows little or no hay, which he considers too expensive a food. One acre yields only a ton and a half of hay, whereas under a root crop it will yield 20 tons of cattle food." [Roots are, of course, largely water.]—Lord Bledisloe and Mr. Christopher Turnor.

This provender he would supplement by buying foreign corn, foreign bran, and foreign cake, as much as ever he could scrape together money for.

And, because he wanted these foreign products at the lowest possible price, *he took care that there should be no duties on them at his ports.*

XII. THE PROBLEM FOR THE DANISH FARMER IS NOT WHETHER IT PAYS TO GROW CORN.—*Such an inquiry seems to him to be the mark of an out-of-date farming outlook.*

But the extent of our permanent grass should not be misunderstood by the reader who is technically unacquainted with our agriculture.

Our pastures are regarded by foreign visitors with envy. For what does our climate enable our farmers to do? While the Danes have to bring their cattle indoors in the winter, English farmers are able to graze at a quarter of the cost. As the agricultural editor of the *Times* lately wrote:—

ATTITUDE OF OUR FARMERS.—Is it necessary to remind the reader who is without an expert knowledge of our agriculture, that an epoch in our farming cannot be disposed of in a sentence; that a rapid survey within the narrow limits of this Report cannot be an account at once of Danish and British farming?

Corn was and is grown all over England, but the West Country and Cumberland, for example, were not corn growing districts as such a county as Essex was and is corn growing, and it was areas like Essex that were hit hardest by foreign production. Great changes have now been brought about in Essex agriculture, as everybody knows, but Essex soil and experience made change a slower matter in Essex than it was elsewhere.

Credit is due to British agriculture for a development of cattle breeding, and a varied response to the demands of an increasingly industrialised population, for which instructed Danish critics are the first to express their respect. The value of the export of British pedigree cattle has often been stressed. The development of milk production in a large part of Great Britain leaves no opening for butter or cheese factories.

Farming is conducted in Great Britain on an amazing variety of soils, and in relation to a great diversity of markets. It could not be regimented, as a whole, as Danish farming, chiefly for one market, and largely on similar soils, has been.

The subject is complicated and highly technical. There are a dozen questions—the part played in the troubles of second-class farmers by the lack of good general education and intelligent

political leadership, by their imperfect control over the land they worked, by a host of middlemen, only a few of whom rendered service adequate to the toll they took, etc., etc. It is a matter, not for a paragraph, but for a volume.

In climates where the herds have to be housed for six months in the year, or longer, as in Denmark and the greater part of Scotland, tillage farming becomes a necessity in order that adequate supplies of keep may be produced for the long term of stall-feeding.

He is intent, not on selling off his crops, but on feeding them as fast as he can to his stock, and in buying in as much more food for them as ever he can.

Denmark, from being a grain exporter, has become a grain importer.

All the grain she can lay her hands on, home and foreign, she buys and turns into butter and bacon and eggs.

These finished products she exports at prices which bring a return she could never have obtained for the raw material.

XIII. THE DANISH FARMER'S REMEDY: TO INCREASE THE LABOUR BILL!—*The labour bill, which Giles frantically cut down, Hansen increased.* As Hansen was producing more milk, and would be handling more pigs, he needed more help.

He takes cow-keeping seriously, does the Dane.

He milks thrice a day, and he does not grudge the time to groom his cows and to massage their udders. He frequently blankets his cows in the field as a hunting man might valuable mounts.

Because it is good for the cows and the ground and a saving of feed, he tethers his stock, and you constantly see the strange sight of from a dozen or two or three dozen or more cows, horses and perhaps a couple of sheep—kept for the lambs and the wool—tied out in a row.

The animals have to be shifted four or five times a day—more labour; the milk pails and a water cart and a water trough have to be brought out to the cows—still more labour. But it all seems to pay.

XIV. MANNING OF DANISH FARMS.—The following figures of the manning of average farms compares remarkably with the manning of some farms in England. The authority is Mr. Faber:—

60 acres.—Two men, 1 unmarried stockman, owner reckoned as half a man, one labourer for 1 or 2 months, maid shared by farm and house.

100 acres.—Three men, stockman, stockman's wife and maid to help with milking, 1 labourer 2 to 6 months. Or 2 men, 1 pupil and 1 stockman. Or 2 men, 2 pupils, and 4 labourers. Or 3 men and 1 stockman. Owner reckoned as quarter man.

200 acres.—Four men, stockman, stockman's wife and boy for milking, 3 maids half-time. Or 1 foreman, 4 men or 5 or 6 pupils, 1 stockman helped by wife and a woman, 2 or 3 maids part time, 1 or 2 labourers all the year.

EFFECT OF THE WAR.—In examining all statistics, the effect of the War, in reducing production, stock, etc., owing to the cutting off of supplies of food for stock and of artificial manures, must be taken account of.

XV. IMPORTING MORE LABOUR.—As for the more intensive crop growing and the green foddering that this farm factory system rendered necessary if it was to answer, that involved a yet further expenditure of labour. Hansen met it by importing foreign labourers to clean his roots and to do any other necessary work.

The peasant proprietors as a class may not have been keen on foreign labour. But the larger men and the "gentlemen farmers" were glad to have it, especially in the sugar beet growing districts, and the agreement to pay the foreigners Danish rates has countered criticism. Before the War 6,000 Poles and Galicians arrived in Denmark to do a season's work. The latest figures for 1922 show a total of 6,400.

Come down even to a later date than 1880, to the year 1897, and we find that within a very few years after that date the wages paid by Hansen increased a quarter.

*Yet the farmer did not draw back. He did not do so because he was in no doubt that it all paid.*

XVI. THE EXTENT TO WHICH DENMARK HAS CHANGED HER METHODS.—This is seen in the way in which:—

(i) *Instead of trying to sell her corn, she fed it to her stock and bought more and more feeding-stuffs.*

Note, that, in spite of her large figures of imported feeding stuffs, four-fifths of the food of Danish stock is produced in Denmark.

The acreage under cereals has been fairly constant, but during recent years the acreage under wheat has increased considerably, chiefly at the expense of the area under rye.

Grass and fallow have been largely replaced by roots. Lucerne is more and more cultivated.

INCREASE OF DANISH AND DECREASE OF BRITISH CEREAL PRODUCTIONS (TONS).

	Wheat.		Barley.		Oats.	
	Danish.	British.	Danish.	British.	Danish.	British.
1890	102,768	2,028,000	558,432	1,772,000	661,570	2,137,000
1900	112,601	1,455,000	528,517	1,493,000	703,878	2,039,000
1913	195,708	1,541,000	612,527	1,408,000	821,248	1,986,000
1922	251,715	1,742,000	662,612	1,096,000	847,727	1,932,000

Danish rye production has fallen from 441,583 tons (1890) to 362,823 tons (1922), but mixed grain has risen from 174,881 tons (1890) to 378,677 tons (1922).

(ii) In order to provide further food for the increased number of stock, *Denmark gradually became the country which has, proportionately, the largest area of roots.*

HOW THE ROOT AREA WAS INCREASED SIX TIMES.

Year.	Area of roots, hectares.	Per cent. of the cultivated area under roots.
1880	64,000	2.6
1890	105,000	4.2
1900	212,000	8.2
1910	356,000	13.8
1914	386,000	14.8
1920	431,000	14.0
1921	431,000	14.0

(iii) In order to supplement the roots with nitrogenous food, *Denmark increased her importation and manufacture of oil-cake to this extraordinary degree.*

INCREASED CONSUMPTION OF IMPORTED AND MANUFACTURED OILCAKE.

1880	..	..	..	..	22,000 tons.
1890	..	..	..	..	66,000 "
1900	..	..	..	..	214,000 "
1910	..	..	..	..	442,000 "
1913	..	..	..	..	646,000 "
1920	..	..	..	..	432,000 "
1921	..	..	..	..	491,000 "

XVII. CROP YIELD DOUBLED.—This increased cultivation of roots and heavy feeding of corn, meal and cake to stock, not only benefited the cattle and pigs and raised milk yields, but, by means of the resulting rich manure, doubled the yield of crops.

Not only the *yield* of roots, but the *quality* of roots has risen :— Research having shown that a particular variety of mangel contained more dry matter, that is food, than other varieties, *this special variety has increased in use from 21 per cent. to 90 per cent.* of the mangels grown. A ton of roots represents, therefore, a larger number of food units than formerly.

XVIII. DENMARK BECAME (PROPORTIONATELY TO THE NUMBER OF HER INHABITANTS) THE WORLD'S LARGEST COWKEEPER.

		Cows per 100 inhabitants.			Cows per 100 inhabitants.
Denmark, 1880	..	46	Holland, 1913	..	18
„ 1890	..	45	„ 1919	..	18
„ 1900	..	44	Belgium, 1913	..	13
„ 1910	..	47	„ 1920	..	10
„ 1914	..	46	England, 1914	..	10
„ 1921	..	40	„ 1919	..	8
Norway, 1915	..	31	France, 1914	..	18
„ 1918	..	27	„ 1921	..	17
Sweden, 1913	..	33	Germany, 1912	..	16
„ 1919	..	27	„ 1920	..	14

POTATOES *v.* ROOTS.—The following table shows how potatoes have given way to roots :—



## PERCENTAGES OF POTATOES AND ROOTS.

		Potatoes.	Roots for Feeding.	Other Roots.
1871	.. .. .	88.4	11.6	—
1888	.. .. .	49.7	43.5	6.8
1901	.. .. .	25.5	67.3	7.2
1912	.. .. .	17.1	73.6	9.3
1919	(with Slesvig) ..	22.3	66.7	11.0
1923	" .. .	17.9	74.2	7.9

XIX. DENMARK ALSO BECAME (PROPORTIONATELY TO HER INHABITANTS) THE WORLD'S LARGEST PIG-KEEPER.

The first table gives the number of pigs per 100 inhabitants:—

Denmark	..	1880	..	27	Holland	..	1913	..	22
"	..	1890	..	37	"	..	1919	..	7
"	..	1900	..	53	Belgium	..	1913	..	20
"	..	1910	..	53	"	..	1920	..	13
"	..	1914	..	88	England	..	1914	..	8
"	..	1921	..	44	"	..	1919	..	5
Norway	..	1915	..	9	France	..	1914	..	11
"	..	1918	..	8	"	..	1921	..	3
Sweden		1913	..	17	Germany	..	1912	..	33
"	..	1913	..	12	Russia	..	1913	..	10

This table shows the general increase in number of livestock (in thousands):—

	1861.	1871.	1881.	1893.	1903.	1914.	1923.	
Horses	..	325	317	348	411	487	567	561
Cattle	..	1,119	1,239	1,470	1,696	1,841	2,463	2,523
Pigs	..	301	442	527	829	1,457	2,497	2,854
Sheep	..	1,752	1,842	1,549	1,247	877	515	373
Poultry	..	—	—	—	—	—	15,100	19,100

XX. DENMARK WAS THEREFORE ABLE TO INCREASE  
HER EXPORTS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE  
REMARKABLY :

Year.	Butter (kilos).	Bacon & Ham (kilos).	Eggs. (scores).
1866-70	4,900,000	5,000,000	500,000
1871-75	10,600,000	7,000,000	604,000
1876-80	13,500,000	4,700,000	1,300,000
1881-85	15,300,000	7,900,000	2,700,000
1886-90	30,700,000	24,000,000	5,100,000
1891-95	51,600,000	41,300,000	6,500,000
1896-00	57,400,000	64,900,000	12,000,000
1901-05	75,600,000	76,400,000	18,200,000
1906-10	86,300,000	95,400,000	18,300,000
1911-15	82,600,000	130,700,000	20,100,000
1916	95,800,000	104,700,000	24,100,000
1917	61,500,000	81,900,000	22,200,000
1918	14,700,000	2,700,000	16,400,000
1919	36,600,000	900,000	17,000,000
1920	74,800,000	42,400,000	27,300,000
1921	92,100,000	85,300,000	32,400,000

As agricultural produce is 85 per cent. of the value of Danish exports, the importance of these figures is apparent.

It is not only the fact that the export of agricultural produce has greatly increased that is so impressive. What is quite as impressive is the fact of its *regularity*. "Week after week all the year round," as Mr. Himmelstrup, M.P., writes, "almost the same quantities of butter, bacon, eggs, cattle and beef leave Denmark." The secret is the good supply of roots (xvii). Liberally enriched, even poor land yields a good supply.

XXI. THE DANES HAVE SUCCEEDED BECAUSE OF THEIR BUSINESS-LIKE FARMING, A GREAT FACTOR IN WHICH IS CO-OPERATION. (See XXXIII and onwards.) BUT THIS SUCCESS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN BUILT UP WITHOUT

- (i) A WISE SYSTEM OF LAND TENURE, AND
- (ii) A BELIEF IN EDUCATION.

### THE LAND FOR THE MEN WHO CAN WORK IT.

XXII. SMALL MEN'S FARMING.—*If England and Wales had as many holdings (proportionately to cultivated area) as Denmark we should have thrice as many holdings as we have now.*

Of holdings and land of more than 600 acres, which are so common in Great Britain, there are not in Denmark more than 419.

Most of the land (88 per cent.) is cultivated by peasants, that is, farmers and cottagers.

"TÖNDER HARTKORN" AND "TÖNDERLAND." Until 1901 there were, strange though it may seem, *no statistics showing the actual superficial area of Danish holdings. Land is reckoned, not according to its area or quantity, but according to its fertility or quality.*

The measurement "tönder hartkorn," that is tons, or more properly tuns (of 200 lbs., say a "sack") of hard corn (rye or barley) dates back to the time when *land was valued at the amount of corn it seemed able to pay in taxation.* Holdings might be in any one of 24 different grades of fertility ("bonitet"). On the best soils 8½ acres were supposed to be equal to a ton of taxation. There might be soils, however, on which it would need nearly a dozen times 8½ acres to be worth a ton of taxation.

Therefore, if one is told that a holding's measurement is a ton of hard corn one is uncertain about its precise area. On the average a ton of hard corn may be 16 to 20 acres. "Huse" run from ¼ to 1 "tönder hartkorn" and "gaarde" from 1 "tönder hartkorn" upwards. As buildings are proportionately of greater value per acre on small properties, these small properties have a greater value per "tönder hartkorn" than larger holdings.

*Crops* are reported as occupying so many "tönder land," a ton of land being an acre and a third; but *areas of holdings* are stated in terms of "tönder hartkorn."

XXIII. 95 OUT OF 100 HOLDINGS ARE OWNED BY THE MEN WHO WORK THEM.—Remarkable though the parcelling-out of the land of Denmark is, it is not so remarkable as the fact that *more than 95 out of every 100 holdings are the property of the men who work them.* The latest statistics (given below) are not recent. A high authority believes that, considered as to area, Denmark is 94 to 95 per cent. freehold, but, in number of holdings, 99 per cent.

## NUMBER OF HOLDINGS FROM 1850 TO 1905 (LATEST FIGURES).

	Total.	Number		Per cent.	
		Freehold.	Leasehold & tenancy.	Freehold.	Leasehold.
1850	180,090	103,518	76,572	57.5	42.5
1860	211,315	146,234	65,081	69.2	30.8
1873	239,419	194,263	45,156	81.1	18.9
1885	263,432	225,255	38,177	85.5	14.5
1895	270,918	236,709	34,209	87.4	12.6
1905	289,130	259,874	29,256	89.9	10.1

## 1.—According to area (1901).

	Number.	Total Acreage.
Total number of holdings .. ..	249,903	8,916,388
Less than 1½ acres .. ..	68,380	23,506
From 1½ acres to 12 acres .. ..	65,222	412,039
From 12 acres to 37 acres .. ..	46,615	1,058,300
From 37 acres to 147 acres .. ..	60,872	4,468,914
From 147 acres to 589 acres .. ..	8,072	1,902,127
More than 589 acres .. ..	822	1,051,502

## 2.—According to tenure (1901).

Freehold .. .. .	211,874	7,803,074
Leasehold .. .. .	10,491	242,324
Tenancy .. .. .	20,840	652,658
Glebe and public servants' farm ..	6,778	218,332

3.—According to chief occupation of the  
Owner (1901).

Agriculture .. .. .	171,971	—
Horticulture and forestry .. ..	1,578	—
Fishery .. .. .	2,996	—
Dairy and milling .. .. .	2,707	—
Industry and crafts .. .. .	28,834	—
Commerce and transport .. .. .	7,517	—
Other or no trade .. .. .	34,380	—

XXIV. WHY THE DANISH PEASANTS HAVE NOT LOST THEIR LAND, AS OURS HAVE, BUT HAVE ADDED TO IT.—The reason is that *there is a long history of maintaining and extending the holdings of the peasants.*

*But the thing has not been done all at once, but by law after law after law.*

To go back into history, *which is absolutely necessary to an understanding of the success which has been attained in Denmark*, the first point is that Danish kings withstood the privileged class by relying on the peasantry. Therefore, laws favourable to the peasantry were enacted.

As long ago as the 12th century a peasant might not sell his land without publicly offering it to his relatives.

In the 14th century it was made illegal for the privileged classes to buy peasant land.

400 years ago it became the law that land should be let for the whole life-time of the tenant. It is still the law that a widow may retain possession of her husband's farm. There was also a custom that a son had a claim to hire his parents' holding.

Although the Danish countryside suffered heavily by reason of war and epidemics in the 17th and 18th centuries, and much land became waste, the law and old custom kept the large yeoman class on the land.

In the 18th century the King put up Crown land to auction for the peasants.

When Burke was publishing his "Thoughts on the Present Discontents," a Danish royal decree was prohibiting the alienation of peasants' *common* land.

There were great land reforms at the end of the 18th century, and at the very time that Robert Burns, at his wits' end for money, was thinking of emigrating to America, the Danish State was offering its peasants loans at 2 per cent. in order that they might buy their farms, was arranging for payment in the smallest possible instalments and was making the loans irrevocable. When this State action was proposed objection was taken. "*The State has no money.*" The answer which was made

was, "*We must give the peasant money; the State will get it back again.*" *And it has been so.*

It became law that a peasant might not be evicted without a magistrate's order.

Wrecked as the country was by the Napoleonic wars—our fleet and brigades did their part—there was a basis for stability and progress in the fact that a quarter of the peasants owned their own land.

XXV. LEGISLATION FOR THE PEASANT WITHIN OUR OWN TIMES.—As late as 1849 the ownership of State and University land and land owned by other bodies, which was worked by peasants, was offered to them on easy terms.

\* THE STORY OF THE DISPOSAL OF CROWN OR STATE LANDS.—The Crown Lands, which, in the first half of the 18th century, amounted to about one-sixth of the country, have been disposed of as follows:—

1769 to 1774.—All Crown lands sold by auction except some near Copenhagen. Most of the peasants bought their farms.

1851.—All Crown land leased to "gaardmøend" and "husmøend" was offered to peasant tenants without cash payment (merely a mortgage which could not be foreclosed during lifetime of purchaser or his widow).

1857.—All Crown land disposed of but one small island.

1878.—No State land remained except two farms and small plots, but the State had an income from rents and deeds equal to the income from land before 1850. Some forest land was retained and more has since been bought by the State.

Further, landholders were financially encouraged to sell to peasants.

Land mortgage societies provided peasants with capital.

The incorporation of one farm with another was prohibited. A man may still own as many farms as he likes, but there must be a farmhouse and a family on every one of them.

A man may also cut up his farms, though he must not reduce the holdings below a certain area.

It is now illegal to do away with a farm without permission of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Large estates were further broken up by legislation providing for the sale of land held on varieties of copyhold lease.

**THE CHANGE FROM LEASEHOLD TO FREEHOLD.**—Denmark had some experience of landlordism in the first half of the 18th century when three-quarters of the agricultural land was farms "leased from landlords, who," Mr. Faber writes, "exercised great power over the peasants in many ways, and often very harshly." The freehold peasants were also dependent on the landlords. The sale of Crown lands about 1770, the way in which this example was followed by the Dowager Queen and Count Bernstorff, and the encouragement given to other landholders to sell to the peasants brought about a change beneficial alike to peasants and the former owners. Following upon the State credit fund of 1786 to help peasants, a quarter of the peasants held their land either freehold or on heritable leases.

Measures taken to improve the position of the small peasants, "husmøend," by letting them have four or five acres, resulted in there being by 1801 about as many "husmøend" as "gaardmøend" (115,000 to 132,000), and 70,000 of them had freehold or heritable land. Many of the "husmøend" got their land by "gaardmøend" selling off pieces in order to purchase the freehold of the remainder.

By 1835 there were 41,700 freehold "gaarde" against 24,800 leasehold.

In 1861 only 14,000 peasant farms were leasehold.

By 1882 there were only 5,000 leasehold. Many "huse" are also leasehold. In 1901 about 10,000 "huse" and "gaarde"—most of them "huse"—were still leasehold.

**XXVI. TEN TIMES THE KING'S CIVIL LIST FOR LABOURERS.**—In 1899 funds equal to ten times the King's Civil List were set aside to provide loans for agricultural labourers who wanted holdings.

In 1904 the grant was increased by one-half.

In 1909 the original grant was doubled.

There was further legislation in 1914, 1917, 1919, 1922 and 1924, of which details will be given later.

**XXVII. LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FARM LABOUR AS WELL AS SMALL HOLDINGS.**—*In the glow one gets in rapidly enumerating all these measures, which have had the*

*effect of strengthening so remarkably the position of the Danish peasant, it is most important to bear in mind that the legislation, or much of the legislation, was initiated as much (i) to keep men on the land and (ii) to provide labour for the larger farms as (iii) for the benefit of the men themselves.*

The 1899 State Small Holdings Act sprang in a large degree from a recognition of three facts: (i) that day labourers were increasingly difficult to obtain in the rural districts, (ii) that there was a large movement to the towns, (iii) that there was a considerable emigration. As Mr. Siggard, Secretary of the Danish Royal Agricultural Society, wrote this year:

“The Act was an Act that was to help the moneyless to get farms.

“But it was also an Act that aimed at securing more labour for the larger farms by making the small holding of such a size that the small holder could, in addition to taking care of his own land, also find time to do work for others.

*The act was a compromise between opinions as to the desirability of small or large holdings.”*

XXVIII. “INDEPENDENT SMALL HOLDINGS.”—It is only, with this year’s Small Holdings Law, that we have legislation in Denmark which is patently, in Mr. Siggard’s phrase, “to establish independent small holdings of such a nature that their owners will *not* have to seek work elsewhere.”

It is noteworthy that, with each renewal of legislation for housemen during the last few years, Parliament has not only voted larger annual loans but “has made the holdings larger and larger.”

The legislation of past years, if conceived in the interests of employers as well as of small holders, did have the effect of keeping the peasantry on the land in increasingly self-respecting conditions. *In the 35 years between 1850 and 1885 as many as 80,000 families got land*, an immense number for a small country.

And now that experience has proved the advantage of giving small holders enough land for them to live on



without needing to work for others, there is no reason to believe that the supply of labour is diminished. Their sons and daughters supply a great deal of labour, for the sons of men on the land in Denmark believe (*see XLIX*) that, *if they are to have a holding of their own one day, they must have not only a little money of their own, but experience of other men's agriculture than their fathers'.*

*"The movement of the Danish population from the country towards the towns, which had been going on during the years from 1911 to 1919,"* ran a statement of our own Ministry of Agriculture, issued in July, 1923, *"was reversed in 1920."*

XXIX. OWNERSHIP *v.* STATE TENANCY IN RECENT SMALL HOLDINGS LEGISLATION.—The precise character of the noteworthy measures carried out, chiefly in 1899, 1919 and 1924—*following upon the placing of 80,000 small men on the land between 1850 and 1885*—is often imperfectly grasped. *The achievement of a quarter of a century (1899–1924) may be summarised as follows:—*

(i) The Act of 1899 offered would-be small holders *Ownership.*

The land required was largely obtained by the surrender of glebe.

No fewer than 12,000 holdings have been created in this category.

(ii) The *State Tenancy* legislation was carried through in 1919.

There are about 2,000 small holders in this category.

(iii) The 1924 legislation is a renewal of the law of 1899.

XXX. THE BARGAIN WITH THE COUNTS.—The land for the State Tenancy 1919 legislation was obtained by carrying out, in an ingenious and effective way, an arrangement which had been provided for in the Constitution (1840).

The owners of entailed estates, originally received from the Sovereign, were told that their property, falling to the Crown on the extinction of their families, could

be converted right away into freehold on their (a) giving the State a percentage of the capital value, varying between 25 per cent. and 20 per cent., and (b) selling to the State a third of the land.

The bargain having been carried out, the State paid the Counts, out of their own money, for the third part of their lands that they had sold to the State, and out of the balance the State gave and continues to give loans to would-be small holders.

It is estimated that the funds falling to the Exchequer from the entailed estates is about £4½ millions, and that the area of land available for small holdings is 53,000 acres.

XXXI. OWNERSHIP AND STATE TENANCY SIDE BY SIDE.—As we have seen, the 1924 legislation is a renewal of the law of 1899.

Therefore, *as the 1899 ownership system and the 1919 State Tenancy system are both in operation—a would-be small holder can choose under which system he prefers to obtain his land—and it was agreed that the two systems shall continue to be in operation until 1934, Denmark will have, by that date, a unique experience in the results of small land holding on different principles, and will be in a position to take a wise decision with regard to legislation after 1934.*

The acreage acquired by the State from the Counts and the parsons for small holdings was no less than 77,500 acres, of which 37,500 acres came from glebe. (The surrender of land by the parsons was made on conditions somewhat similar to those offered to the owners of entailed estates.)

NOTE: "THE COUNT IS ON HIS FARM."—It must not be understood that because Counts' land was released in this way the Counts were not utilising some at least of their land satisfactorily. Where one in England hears, "Lord B. is in the country," one hears in Denmark, "The Count is on his farm." The landowner is usually thought of, primarily, not as the occupant of a country house, but as a large farmer of means.

XXXII. THE GAIN AND THE COST.—*The impressive fact is that some thousands of Danes are in the enjoyment of a comfortable house and a sufficient piece of land, with convenient buildings, towards the total cost of which it was only necessary for them to find one-tenth of the value.*

Between 1900 and 1923 some 10,825 owned holdings were created at an expenditure on the part of the State of 88 million kroner.

Under the 1919 law, 1,837 holdings have been established under State tenancy, covering in all 32,500 acres, with a value, not including improvements, of about 13 million kroner.

Total expenditure, say £3 $\frac{3}{4}$  millions, or half the price of a battleship.

The tendency is to fix the limits of the value of land and buildings higher and higher.

STATE SMALL HOLDINGS CREATED FOR AGRICULTURAL  
LABOURERS (STATSHUSMEND).

	Total Number.	Average Size Acres.	Total Area, Acres.	Purchase Price per Acre.	Total Amount of Loan from State.
1900-1911	5,777	9	48,748	£ s. d. 16 16 0	£ 1,400,000
1900-1916	8,200	—	—	—	2,300,000
1900-1923	10,825	—	—	—	4,500,000
					£8,200,000

XXXIII. VISITS TO SUCCESSFUL "STATE HOUSEMEN."—Here are notes of visits paid in August, 1924, to a chance group of small men, whose circumstances, as will be seen, fully prove the good work the Housemen Laws have done:—

A. The school teacher. Had had 20 acres for 8 years. He was found harrowing with 2 ponies. He was in wooden shoes. He contracts to send 50 pigs a year to the factory—aims at

80—and will have by the Spring 10 cows. He had 50 head of poultry. Was giving his pigs (started on barley meal) maize meal soaked in skimmed milk returned from the creamery, and a little lucerne. Had 25 per cent. of his land in roots. His manure was in a concrete tank.<sup>1</sup> He had a telephone (200 kr. a year) in his comfortable house (6 rooms and cellar), and insisted on his visitors having fried eggs and the national smörbröd (sandwiches in variety), and, for those who indulged in them, beer and cigars. Being the school teacher he had to employ labour. If he could work himself and dispense with labour he reckoned he would make 4,200 kr. a year.<sup>2</sup> He had had the State loan, but had paid it back.

B, formerly a bricklayer, and possibly doing a little builder's work now and then, began in 1910 with 10 acres and now has 14. Wife a farmer's daughter. Had 800 kr. of savings and 6,000 from the State. 6 cows and 2 calves, 9 pigs and 2 ponies. Husband and wife had been to the "höjskole." (See L) 100 books in the house and a violin. Profit in a year, 3,000 kr.

C had 10 acres. Started with his own capital. Profit 3,000 kr. Factory contract 25 pigs. 4 cows and 2 ponies and 80 head of poultry. Had had an agricultural course from the schoolmaster.

D had 9 acres. Began in 1909 with 900 kr. of his own and 5,500 kr. from the State. 64, and wife paralysed, so his son helped. D has been at the "höjskole," and, like his son, had been at an agricultural school. Pig factory contract 26. 1 pony, another hired, and 4 cows, with poultry books from a library. Gramophone. Profit 3,000 kr.

E had 8 acres. Had in 1909 700 kr. of his own and 7,000 kr. from the State. Profit 2,000 kr. He was 48 and his wife 50. Factory pig contract 25. 4 cows and 100 poultry. Library books. Husband and wife had worked for a farmer.

F, ex-bricklayer who may still work at his trade. Had, in 1909 7,000 kr. savings and 7,000 kr. from the State. 8 acres. 4 cows, 1 horse, 80 poultry. Factory pig contract 20. About 2,000 kr. profit. Violin.

G, ex-carpenter. Had in 1919 700 kr. and 7,000 kr. from the State. Pig contract 20. 4 cows, 1 horse, and hens. 2,000 kr. from land. Number of books.

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<sup>1</sup> Watertight manure tanks, an excellent indication of agricultural progress, were to be found even before the War on 90,000 farms, and covered manure heaps on 20,000 farms.

<sup>2</sup> This profit, and the profits of the other small holders mentioned later, is the amount at which income would be returned for taxation. It is plus the value of milk, eggs and crops consumed by the family.

XXXIV. IN CONTRAST WITH MANY OF OUR OWN VILLAGES.—All these men had houses of at least 4 rooms and a cellar, the houses being light and airy, comfortably furnished and spick and span. The standard of comfort was high. Husband and wife in each home had single beds.

*The contrast between these self-respecting, secure homes and the overcrowded, stuffy, low-ceilinged dwellings of our own labourers was as remarkable as the appearance of their occupants.* All the couples were physically fit and contented looking, and *looked younger than their ages.* And the children were bright and sturdy.

The quantity of embroidery that the housemen's wives make does not point to their being overworked out of doors.

The small holders averaged a membership of five co-operative societies apiece. Most men had a neat, light wagon. The holdings had been provided by the cutting up of large farms. The buildings were simple, but well built, convenient and modern. The cows looked well kept and the pigs were so clean that they looked as if they had been washed. This cleanliness was due to their clean indoor pens, to the animals being brushed and also to their being provided with a separate sleeping place which they did not foul.

XXXV. ELECTRIC LIGHT AND THE TELEPHONE.—In another district a man with 17 acres was spoken with. He had 6 cows, 36 pigs (contract for 60), 2 horses, *electric motor power, electric light, and the telephone.* This man had been a labourer. He got his holding with 4,000 kr. of his own and 20,000 kr. from the State.

It was early evening when this man was interviewed, and he and most of the men who passed along the road had changed their clothes.

The well-being of the rural population is exhibited most convincingly in the physique and mentality of the well-nourished, well-developed children, and the in-

telligent, independent, vigorous and unharassed appearance of their parents. *It was in humiliating contrast with what one may constantly see in our own villages.*

The value of such citizens and such children to the community is obvious. The sad thought is that *there are, in all our villages, men and women who, if given the same chances, would have done equally well for themselves and the State.*

XXXVI. THE ALLEGED LOW STANDARD OF LIFE.—It is sometimes suggested that financial results obtained on small holdings in Denmark are due, in part, to a lower standard of life than our country folk would stand. *Whatever may be the standard of life on small holdings in other countries, there is every reason to believe, that in the things that matter most, any difference between the homes and way of living of the rural workers of Denmark and England is all to the advantage of the Danish workers.*

As one goes from one small farmer's home to another in Denmark, the feeling one has is that *at last the man on the land has come into his own, that he and his wife are reaping the just reward of their toil and skill, that at last the most is being made out of the soil, that at last the countryman is having not only a good living but a good life.*

XXXVII. WHOLE-TIME OR HALF-DAY FARMERS.—It is worth while to recapitulate and to stress the history of this legislation for the Housemen.

A generation ago, then, we have agricultural workers consisting of (i) men in houses with a garden, and (ii) unmarried men.

Conditions bad; migration to the towns; shortage of rural labour. Problem, how to keep the younger workers on the land?

In the first legislative movement the aim was not to provide too much land; the small holders were to be so placed that they must go out to work part of their time. The 1899 law was, therefore, a compromise between those

whose aim was labour and those whose ~~aim~~ was small farmers.

But by 1902 the Housemen's Union had got to work. (For its informative programme, see Section XL.) The Union wanted whole time small holdings.

XXXVIII. FROM 8 ACRES TO 18.—In the 1899-1904 period the Legislature had provided the Housemen with 8 acres. Later, the area was  $9\frac{1}{2}$ , and then in 1910-1911 11 acres. Finally, in 1919, there was agreement on a maximum  $17\frac{1}{2}$  acres, "the best size for intensive work and for absolute independence for the worker."

XXXIX. BETTER HOUSES AND BUILDINGS FOR SMALL HOLDERS.—A similar development has taken place with regard to the buildings for the small holdings.

At first the notion was that rather primitive buildings, which would not cost much, would do for small holders. Now the new Housemen are supplied with adequate, convenient buildings and comfortable, attractive-looking houses, both well-planned and well-built.

Capable and public-spirited architects, interested in the movement on behalf of the Housemen and desirous of seeing houses and buildings put up which would be at once pleasing and practical, have prepared drawings and plans for the guidance of local builders. The latest drawings and plans, based on the experience which has been gained, are the work of Professor Over Bentsen, of the Architectural School at the Royal Academy of Art.

XL. THE HOUSEMEN'S CHARTER.—The Housemen's programme begins with good agriculture and economics and proceeds to some interesting decisions on social matters (particularly resolutions 17 and 18).

*Agricultural.*

- (i) The Associations to lay out fields for demonstrations and trials.
- (ii) An increase of Farm Competitions.
- (iii) An Annual Show.
- (iv) Field Meetings with Lectures.
- (v) Tests for Seeds and Seed Corn.

- (vi) Results of State and Agricultural Associations' tests to be published as attractively as possible.
- (vii) Yield to be the test in cattle and pig breeding.
- (viii) Breeding centres and shows for the improvement of poultry.
- (ix) Continuance of the work of the Parcelling-Out Associations in facilitating access to the land.
- (x) Association courses for agricultural instruction.
- (xi) The Association to engage instructors on agricultural economy and to provide lectures.
- (xii) The co-operative movement to be strengthened.

*Social.*

- (xiii) Equal votes for all men and women of age.
- (xiv) The people's right to the land to be maintained. As the value of the land is created by the community's life and work this value should be in the public possession by means of land taxation. During the transition period, the taxes on income and capital on a rising scale to remain.
- (xv) Housemen's farms must be freehold.
- (xvi) The public interest in entailed estates to be protected.
- (xvii) Excise and import duties for revenue purposes should be reduced and finally abolished.
- (xviii) Protective duties should be reduced and gradually discontinued.
- (xix) Access to such school education according to ability.
- (xx) Dietetics and temperance to be taught in schools as regular subjects.

**XLI. WORK OF A HOUSEMEN'S UNION.**—The report of the Jutland Housemen's Union, consisting of 644 local Housemen's Societies, with about 40,000 members, in 98 district societies, shows that half a million kroner were spent.

15,000 kr. contribution to the cost of a million coniferous and foliage trees, and 8,000 fruit trees.

280,000 kr. for crop improvement by means of experiments, demonstrations and tests, prizes, shows, field meetings, analyses and experts' advice. The last item, accounting for as much as 86,000 kr., was added to, to the amount of 140,000 kr., by the State.

Some 220,000 kr. was spent by district and local societies. 1,321 lectures had been given.

A paper called "The Houseman's Home" is published.

9,800 kr., to which the State added 4,900 kr., went on judging stock, and on recording their productive powers.



The Union helped in the breeding of all kinds of stock for small holdings, and in the importation of ponies from Norway and Iceland.

A further function was "the protection of children and weak and old people against injustice and ill treatment; 291 watchmen look after 138 children and 111 weak and old people."

Thirty-nine tours for studying the best class of housemen's farms (12,000 men and women participating in the excursions) had been arranged, and there had been a model farm competition, 1,634 prizes being given to well-managed holdings.

The State gave in all 103,000 kr. to be used for prizes for Housemen's farms and in aid of Housemen's excursions.

**XLII. PARCELLING-OUT ASSOCIATIONS.**—Alongside the State's work in establishing small holdings, there is the work of a score of parcelling-out associations, concerned chiefly with providing larger farms than those for which there has been legislation.

The profit is limited to 4 per cent. Between 1907 and 1923 the oldest association (which was started in 1906 with a guarantee of 50,000 kr. and has now a surplus of 300,000 kr.), divided up 122 farms into 1,450.

**XLIII. RESULTS OF MAKING SMALL FARMS OUT OF BIG ONES.**—These are the results of the dividing up of 67 farms by the Zealand Parcelling-out Associations:

	Before Parcelling- out.	After Parcelling-out.	
		Houses Built.	Houses. Added to.
Number of Farms .. .. .	67	480	191
Average Acres .. .. .	160	18	—
Tax Valuation .. .. .	3,048,000 kr.	4,460,000 kr.	—
Insurance .. .. .	1,243,000 kr.	3,037,000 kr.	—
Chattels, Implements, etc.	1,593,000 kr.	3,016,000 kr.	—
Horses .. .. .	438	746	—
Cows .. .. .	1,946	3,244	—
Pigs .. .. .	1,421	4,179	—
Poultry .. .. .	2,622	8,497	—
Families .. .. .	56	480	—
Persons .. .. .	436	2,152	—

**XLIV. PRIZE SMALL HOLDINGS' FIGURES.**—The following particulars of two farms are given in the records of a farm competition conducted by the Jutland Housemen's Association :—

Eighteen acres holding. Taxation value 10,000 kr. Chattels and implements, 5,000 kr. Ingoing cash, 4,445 kr. Outgoing cash, 3,600 kr., of which interest was 435 kr. Balance surplus nett, 1,845 kr. Living for family.

Twenty-five acres of poor soil. Valuation, 10,000 kr. Chattels and implements, 4,600 kr. Ingoing cash, 3,600 kr. Outgoing, 2,650, of which interest and taxation, 640 kr. Balance surplus nett, 950 kr. Living for family.

Altogether " a yearly surplus of 1,000 kr. is expected, so that the farm can be paid for in 10 or 12 years ; as a rule the Houseman prefers to use all income for improvements and to buy a larger property."

**XLV. THE MORAL IMPROVEMENT.**—There can be no question that, as the result of the opportunities of getting on and of self-improvement which these Danish small farmers have had, *the standard of life in the villages has improved, not only economically, as we have seen, but mentally and morally.*

Drinking has greatly diminished.

So has illegitimacy.

" The people," said the schoolmaster, some account of whose farming has been given, " have now better things to think about ; they have got interested in agriculture, politics and social economy."

The influence of the " höjskole " has been far-reaching. " In every village," said an ex-Minister of Agriculture,

"10 or 12 farmers and farmers' wives have been at the high schools."

No small factor in the life of the village is the "forsamlingshüs" (assembly house) where there are meetings for innumerable lectures and for social enjoyment.

"The peasant is quite a different man from what he was in my young days," said a man well qualified to speak. "When I was a lad, country third-class carriages were filthy with spitting. Now they are clean. When I was a lad, a peasant could not open his mouth without swearing. Nowadays, if I were to swear among farmers, my conduct would be disapproved of. There are many villages where in church on Sunday it is hardly possible to get a seat. But this does not mean that the parson has it all his own way. The school committees of which the parson used to be chairman are now frequently presided over by farmers. There is in the country not less, but more, morality and religious feeling than there was."

**XLVI. THE ADVANTAGE OF SMALL HOLDINGS TO THE MAN ON THE LAND AND TO THE COMMUNITY.**—This has been effectively put by Mr. Madsen-Mygdal :

"The larger estates have undoubtedly the advantage in the cultivation of corn *for sale*, particularly when modern improvements in implements are considered.

"But, on the market for refined products, as butter, bacon and eggs, *small holdings are not merely able to compete successfully but reap even a considerably larger net profit per area unit, thanks to their constant personal attention, increased live stock, and intensive cultivation.*

"In view of the altered conditions of production *the extensive parcelling-out of the land has proved—*

- (a) *an economical advantage to the farmers, and*
- (b) *a social benefit to the whole community."*

## THE VICTORY OF EDUCATION.

**XLVII. BUT SMALL HOLDINGS WITHOUT CO-OPERATION AND WITHOUT EDUCATION ARE HOPELESS.**—The parcelling-out of the land into a large number of medium-sized and small properties might, however, as the same authority points out,

“spell a danger, if these many thousands of independent workers keep separated and act isolatedly. Without an intimate collaboration in co-operative enterprises, production of importance cannot be maintained by small holdings.

“The parcelling-out also contains a danger if the many thousands of independent workers are not individually endowed with sufficient insight and training to be competent to follow the tide of development and take advantage of technical improvements.”

The Secretary of the Danish Royal Agricultural Society, already quoted, writes in the same sense :

“In order to give a complete picture of the conditions out of which the State Small Holdings Act grew, it will be necessary to mention that in the nineties the co-operative movement had already begun to set its mark on the development of Danish agriculture. Especially, the co-operative creameries and bacon factories were creating better economic conditions for *the small holder*, who slipped into these organisations on an equal footing with the farmer and the large land owner, both as regards rights and duties, and *was thus able to get the same price for his butter and pigs as the large agriculturists.*”

**XLVIII. NOT ONLY A WISE SYSTEM OF TENURE, BUT AN ENLIGHTENED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM HAS BEEN THE BASIS OF THE DANISH AGRICULTURAL ADVANCE.**—*Effective Co-operation*, on which so much of Danish success has been built, *requires*, as an eminent Danish agricultural authority has written, “*a certain intellectual development, especially of the faculty of individual subordination.*”

*This intellectual development and true spirit of co-operation has been obtained by Education.*

The result is that, as a well-known educationist wrote long ago, “*You will, perhaps, nowhere find the people in general better educated than in Denmark.*”

*Education has been compulsory since the year before Waterloo.*

No one who spends a few weeks in rural Denmark can fail to be struck by the intelligence and alertness of the people. What education of a suitable kind has done for the rural districts is seen not only in the bearing and the life and conversation of the people, but in the books and papers in their houses.

Go into the houses of half a dozen small farmers in England and ask them what their crops were worth last year, what was the acreage under different crops, exactly how many head of stock they have, what is the average yield of milk from the cows, what is the proportion of butter-fat, how much they get a gallon, what eggs fetch, how many are sold, how much land they own, how much money they have on loan and what societies they belong to. Compare the result with what happens when a foreign visitor reels off such interrogatories in Denmark. They are taken as a matter of course, and there are intelligent and accurate answers in a few minutes.

Such a state of things is to be accounted for in part, no doubt, by pride and satisfaction in the details of a business which is being conducted in a businesslike way, but above all, by the standard of technical education and the training of the people, and their attitude towards their work.

**XLIX. THE DANISH CONCEPTION OF FARMING AS A BUSINESS NATURALLY INCLUDES AN APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM WHICH IS WELL WORTH STUDY.**—Danish agriculture cannot be understood by the foreigner who does not grasp the fact that *a very large part of the farm work is done, not by a labourer class, but either by the sons of the farmer or by other farmers' sons who are working for him, not only to maintain themselves, but to widen their experience.*

These young men have, obviously, an intelligent interest in what they are doing. They work on a social equality with their masters, usually have their meals with them, and are regarded as part of their family.

EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYED ON DANISH FARMS (1921), all figures being for men and women and dependents:—

*Employers—*

Large proprietors, called "godsejer," the owners of "heeregaarde" or "gentleman farms" .. .. .	6,094
Middle farmers, that is, peasant proprietors and tenant farmers, called "gaardejer" and "forpagter," who are owners or occupiers of peasant farms, "bøndergaarde." (But "bøndergaarde" and "heeregaarde" are both counted as "gaarde" or yards, in contrast with "huse" houses) .. .. .	231,489
Small farmers, "parcellist" or "bolsmand," that is, petty proprietors, say 20-acre men (half-way between middle farmers and small holders, "husmand") .. .. .	166,595
Housemen ("husmænd"), very small proprietors of 10 acres or so .. .. .	212,639
Others .. .. .	3,864
Total employers of both sexes and their dependents .. .. .	620,681

The four sons of a Member of Parliament, who has 75 acres, were found to be working for four different farmers.

There are no fewer than 97,000 of these "erhvervstyende" (experience-getters).

*It is more than a century since the Danish Royal Agricultural Society organised an elaborate apprenticeship system, which has not only done its own work but served as a model for much private training. The apprentices serve three years on three different farms in different parts of the country.*

Since the fifties there has been a similar system of apprenticeship for herdsmen. There are also systems of special apprenticeship in dairying, root-growing, draining and irrigation.

*Employed—*

Foremen, stockmen of all sorts, grooms	33,162	
Farmers' sons and daughters over 14, presumed to be at work on their parents' farms .. .. .	107,082	
"Erhvervsustyende," young men and women at work on other farmers' farms .. .. .	97,537	
Permanent and casual labourers ("lan- darbejder") .. .. .	130,445	
Others .. .. .	44	
	<hr/>	
Total employees of all kinds .. ..		368,270
Add Agricultural experts .. ..		1,554
		<hr/>
Total directly employed in agriculture		990,505
Domestic servants on farms .. ..		48,671
Employers and employed in horti- culture .. .. .		25,722
Employers and employed in forestry..		21,294
		<hr/>
		1,086,192
Employed in creameries .. ..		13,696
Employed in bacon factories, egg-col- lecting depots, etc. .. .. .		—
		<hr/>
		1,099,888

On one large farm no fewer than a dozen "apprentices" were found.

Half the Danish farmers have had experience on other farms than their fathers'.<sup>1</sup>

L. A POWERFUL FACTOR IN THE RURAL ADVANCE HAS BEEN THE FAMOUS "PEOPLE'S HIGH SCHOOLS."—The remarkable facts about these "Höjskole" are that, ordinarily,

(i) *They vaunt themselves that their principal business is to teach things by which their students cannot earn a living. The "Höjskole" are chiefly concerned with the humanities, not technics.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For particulars of remuneration of the "Experience-getters," see page 44.

<sup>2</sup> Some of the "höjskole," but not the most important, teach a little agricultural science.

(ii) *A large part of the capital for these non-technical schools has been provided by the farmers themselves, at whose initiative, indeed, many have been opened.*

(iii) *There are as many as fifty-eight of these schools.*

(iv) *On half of the farms in Denmark there is at least one person who has had a "höjskole" course.*

The country people's high schools are a Danish invention.

They were originally planned by far-sighted and loving-hearted well-wishers of the country people as a means of bringing hope and vigour into the country after the losses in territory, money, men and morale inflicted by the Prussian invasion (1866). There were Danes who despaired of the future of Denmark. *The rural high schools set themselves to conquer hopelessness and agricultural backwardness by concentrating, not on the technical improvement of the country folk, but on the improvement of their mental and moral fibre.*

The schools, which are attended by young countrymen and countrywomen in their twenties—the men for 5 or 6 months from Nov. 1 and the women for 3 or 4 months from May 1—teach something of national history, world history, the lives of the great men of Denmark and other countries, undenominational religion, music and athletics, but, above all, the gospel of a happy, healthy, useful life in combination with others. It is held to be out of keeping with the notions of the high schools for text books to be used.

Many of the men conspicuous in Danish life owe their start to the country people's high schools.

Year by year these schools widen the views and give a lasting impulse towards a worthy life to thousands of young people at an impressionable period.

It is not pretended that the students are able, within their short courses, to learn much of the subjects to which they are introduced. But they do get a notion of the



depths of knowledge in books, and they receive impressions, experience relationships and get a sense of a wider world which have an influence on their future.

All the teaching of the "jolly Christians," as the Grundtvigians are sometimes called, goes to glorify the work and life of the countryman. So the "höjskole" send their students not to the town but back to the farms.

The attendance at the schools—fees are from 50s. to 60s. a month for tuition, board and lodging<sup>1</sup>—was, in 1922-3, 3,080 youths and 3,134 girls.

LI. FURTHER, FARMERS' SONS AND DAUGHTERS GO TO AGRICULTURAL SCHOOLS AS A MATTER OF COURSE.—*It is important to notice that the "hojskole," which many people of the farming class in England would no doubt consider unpractical, and likely to take young people out of their places and put wrong notions in their heads, were the forerunners of the agricultural schools.*

*The curriculum at the 21 Agricultural Schools—there are also creamery schools—is only a 5 or 6 or 9 months' affair, but it is taken by students who have had several years' "thorough all round" training as farm hands, first on the students' parents' farms and then as workers on other farmers' holdings.*

Only after from 5 to 10 years' thorough practical training do the young men go to the agricultural schools. First practice, then theory, is the sound principle.

What these Agricultural Schools aim at doing is to reinforce practical knowledge and experience with wider conceptions and sufficient theory to prepare the young men readily to accept, when they become farmers on their own account, the results of technical investigation and the latest developments of agricultural organisation.

The fact to be borne in mind is that half of the Danish farmers have had an agricultural course of some sort.

<sup>1</sup> ELEMENTARY EDUCATION.—There is a considerable variation in different districts in the hours of school attendance. In some

*HOW AND WHY CO-OPERATION SUCCEEDS.*

LII. THE REMARKABLE DANISH SYSTEM OF CO-OPERATION, LIKE THE HIGH LEVEL OF DANISH AGRICULTURE, HAS BEEN THE CREATION, THEREFORE, OF (1) WISE TENURE, (2) EDUCATION, AND (3) A LONG HISTORY OF PEASANT COMBINATION.—*No one can tell when Agricultural Co-operation began in Denmark. The tradition and practice of Co-operation have continued from the earliest times. They have not been broken through, as in Great Britain, by wholesale taking away of the peasant land and the depopulation of the rural districts.*

When agriculture was carried on in strips and on common land, co-operation was, in Great Britain as in Denmark, a necessity.

"The character of the Danish landscape as we see it now with detached farmsteads and houses," writes Mr. H. Hertel, "has come into being during the last century."

"In former times the farmsteads and houses were built close together in villages. Each village—in Denmark called "Bye"<sup>1</sup>—was in reality a co-operative society. The alderman was to see that meetings were conducted in an orderly way: 'No one shall scold, swear or call his neighbour names; he who does so shall pay for scolding or swearing, two skillings, and for calling names, three marks.' The village was a miniature state within the State. A well-developed spirit of co-operation and home rule existed, handed down from generation to generation.

"The great rural reforms in Denmark towards the close of the 18th century caused co-operation gradually to disappear.

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districts, owing to small accommodation and limited staff, children are not called upon to attend at the same time. In the summer, in many districts children may attend two or four days a week only. It is thought of importance that children should have an early acquaintance with the work of the land and with stock, and get some of their education later at an age when they have come to realise its value.

Danish Elementary Education has the advantage of not being disturbed by religious bickerings. The Roman Catholic population instead of being a third, as in Holland, numbers only a few thousands.

<sup>1</sup> The word which shows the Danish origin of so many of our towns, such as Whitby.

The joint tenure of land ceased, the villages were broken up, the village land was so enclosed that the fields allotted to each peasant should form one continuous piece lying round his farmstead, which was moved from the village and rebuilt on the land which became his individual possession, or, in the case of a tenant, his individual holding."

LIII. THE COMING OF CREDIT ASSOCIATIONS.—But, as Mr. Hertel goes on to point out, "co-operation in agriculture was not quite extinct during the interval between the cessation of the joint working of the land and the coming into existence of the first modern co-operative undertakings."

"In the beginning of the 19th century a number of mutual cattle insurance societies had been formed—nay, it is even quite possible that societies of this kind were already in existence in the 18th century.

"The impulse which gave rise to the first co-operative action under modern forms was the necessity of borrowing money, on long terms, for agricultural purposes.<sup>1</sup>

"The old institutions which have existed in Germany for 150 years served as a model for credit associations.

"The Schulze-Delitzsch and Raiffeisen credit societies were imitated only from 1915."

LIV. HOW ENGLAND TAUGHT DENMARK CO-OPERATION.—The co-operative store movement in England had a helpful influence on developments in Denmark. "*The modern form of co-operation*," writes Mr. Harald Faber, "*may well be said to owe its origin to the twelve Rochdale weavers of 1844.*

"The seed of this movement was transplanted into Denmark in 1866 by some philanthropists. It threw out some straggling shoots in the shape of small supply stores among the labouring classes in a few small towns and soon withered away.

"But the agricultural population, *without any inducement from outside*, took up the idea, formed first a number of co-operative distributive societies and then applied the lesson, with ever-increasing force, to almost all branches of their work."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For continuation of the history of Credit Associations, see XLII. to XLV.

<sup>2</sup> Hertel's "Co-operation in Danish Agriculture," translated by Harald Faber (Longmans).

LIV. CO-OPERATION, NOT A THING OF THE STATE NOR OF PHILANTHROPISTS, BUT OF THE FARMERS THEMSELVES.—When Mr. Faber asks himself *why co-operation throve in Danish agriculture and left English agriculture cold*, he answers that “*the explanation is to be found in differences in rural tenure and social and educational conditions.*”

To repeat, “*the co-operative movement in Denmark was not started by a circle of philanthropists. It has grown up locally, and gradually, among the peasants in the villages, and takes its root in the feeling of solidarity and a sense of the benefits of mutual help among the peasants which may be traced back to remote centuries.*”

LVI. CO-OPERATION WITH A VIEW TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF AGRICULTURE.—Mr. Faber finds it characteristic of Danish agricultural co-operation that it has “*aimed almost exclusively at improving agriculture or agricultural industry.*”

“The peasants formed societies for the purpose of enabling them to adopt means for the improvement of their live stock which they saw practised by large landowners, but which they themselves individually could not afford to employ.

“They also combined in other societies, to improve their business by the manufacture of butter and bacon on an industrial scale, and introduced quite original modes of co-operation, such as the control societies.

“Later on, they took up the question of improving farm seed, both by producing better strains of corn and roots and by buying those improved seeds through special co-operative purchase societies.

The Danes very sensibly believe in one society one job. It is possible to meet a peasant who is a member of nearly a dozen co-operative societies.”

“All these and sundry other co-operative societies, each with its own single object, were formed by the peasants for the purpose of improving their farming, in the widest sense of the word; and the success achieved was such that gradually farmers in a large way, and even wealthy landowners, found it to their advantage to join these peasants' societies. The local societies formed a backbone of the Danish co-operative movement.

"The farmers in the village form their supply store, their co-operative dairy, their control society, bull club, horse-breeding or egg collecting society, all being co-operative, and all being independent of one another, although the members and even the committee members are often the same individuals." District organisation and national organisation follow.

"The Danish conception of co-operation is that the members should manage the affairs of the society, should be jointly and severally liable for the loan raised to start the society, should have one vote each only, independently of their share in the transactions of the society, that goods should be distributed to, or produce delivered by, members at current market prices, and that the net surplus, after a substantial contribution to the sinking funds, should be divided among members according to the amount or value of their transactions.

"Societies have, in several instances, applied the rule of compulsory delivery. The co-operators will bind themselves for a number of years to deliver all their pigs to their co-operative bacon factory, or all their milk to their co-operative dairy, except what is wanted for their own use, or they will bind themselves to buy, either all the artificial manure they want, or a certain quantity, through their co-operative purchasing society."—*Faber*.

LVII. TRADE COMBINES BEATEN BY FARMERS.—Mr. Faber points to a solution of the problem of meeting trade combines against farmers:—

"On at least two occasions, when the trade supplying certain goods threatened to combine to exact conditions which were considered unreasonable, the farmers were quickly roused to form a special society for supplying those goods, thereby withdrawing most of the custom from the threatening trust and establishing a standard of fair prices and conditions."

Obviously, however, such a remedy "requires a population with a wide experience of Co-operation and with trusted and versatile leaders."

LVIII. HOW FARMERS, WHOSE BUTTER WAS UNFIT FOR EXPORT, BECAME PRODUCERS OF THE VERY BEST BUTTER.—There are plenty of old Danish farmers who can remember when Danish butter production was at so low an ebb that *it was widely doubted whether dairying paid*.

The so-called "peasant butter" was of such inferior

quality and was produced in such irregular quantity that it was "*quite unfit for export.*"

As late as 1882, "gentleman butter," *i.e.*, butter from the large estates, "estates butter," fetched 142 kroners; "peasant butter" made only 88 kroners.

With the foundation of the co-operative creameries the small man received the same return for his milk as the big man. One quality of butter was produced all over the country. The top price was being obtained.

Now big and small men alike send their milk to the co-operative creameries.

*To-day the milk of 83 per cent. of the cows in Denmark is taken to the co-operative creameries.* All over the country one sees the cool, white-washed walls and roofs, and the tall chimney stacks of the perfectly equipped co-operative creameries.

LIX. BACON 85 PER CENT. CO-OPERATIVE.—One great advantage of the co-operative creameries is that the farmer gets the hot pasteurised<sup>1</sup> skimmed milk for his pigs—one of the open secrets of the successful Danish pig rearing.

After the co-operative creameries came the co-operative bacon factories—the first was established as late as 1887—and now 85 per cent. of the pigs in Denmark go to the co-operative factories.

LX. WHERE A STALE EGG COSTS 5s. 6d.—The Egg Societies have not only marked their eggs so that a farmer selling a stale one can be promptly traced and fined 5s. 6d. A quarter of the egg production is put down at the cheapest times co-operatively in lime water and gypsum for sale in the winter.

LXI. CREDIT ASSOCIATIONS date from 1850 with the passing of the law on Credit Associations Offices for Owners of Real Estates.

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<sup>1</sup> All butter made for export must be made from pasteurised cream. This arrangement is not for the foreigner's benefit only. It saves the pigs and calves from all risk of tubercular infection.

The chief points about it were—

(i) The permission given to these private co-operative associations to use unstamped paper in issuing and transferring bonds.

(ii) To sell without judicial proceedings of any sort the mortgaged property of a debtor who failed to meet his obligation.

(iii) Authorisation of trustees to invest in the Association's bonds.

(iv) Provision that before an Association is established borrowers must be registered for a minimum joint amount of £55,500.

(v) No member to have a loan exceeding three-fifths of the value of his property.

(vi) Bonds in circulation not to exceed total amount of members' mortgages.

(vii) *Members to be jointly and severally responsible for the bonds to the extent of the full assessed value of their property in ratio to the amount borrowed by them.*

In a word, *the borrowers, by becoming jointly responsible, increased their credit* and were thereby able to raise a joint loan.

LXII. WHY THEIR WORK WAS MADE EASY.—Mr. Hertel, from whose book the foregoing summary is made, draws attention to *the great advantage the Credit Associations possessed in there being in Denmark*

(i) *a Land Register,*

(ii) *a Mortgage Register.*

It was an inexpensive matter to ascertain what security was available.

The further regulations which experience suggested are recorded by Mr. Hertel ("Co-operation in Danish Agriculture," translated by Mr. Faber). *The first Credit Associations were for big proprietors, but the smaller men's turn came soon. The State helped the Housemen's Associations (1880) with a guarantee of interest at 4 per cent.—later at 4½ per cent.—and a grant of £550 towards formation expenses. There were, however, some special restrictions.*

All Credit Association bonds are quoted daily on the Copenhagen Stock Exchange. In fact, "*in these securities is invested by far the greater part of the private and public wealth of the kingdom.*"

In 1909 the value of property pledged as security for loans was estimated at 184 millions, and the encumbrances for loans 78½ millions, or about 47 per cent. of the value.

LXIII. WHERE DANISH AGRICULTURE WOULD HAVE BEEN WITHOUT CREDIT ASSOCIATIONS.—Without the loans of the Credit Associations, as Mr. Hertel goes on to show, Danish agriculture would have been unable

- (i) To enlarge and rebuild farm buildings.
- (ii) To increase very largely the number of live stock.
- (iii) To improve dairy cattle so as to yield twice or three times as much as before.
- (iv) To carry out permanent improvements by draining and marling.
- (v) To accommodate the farming system to the altered conditions in the world's markets.
- (vi) To buy farm implements and machinery, and
- (vii) To build and equip many hundreds of co-operative factories.

As the legal limit of the Credit Associations for loans is three-fifths of the value, "*Hypothec*" or *Second Mortgage Associations* (also favoured in the matter of stamp duty, &c.), came into existence. The total mortgage to the Credit Association and the Hypothec Association must not by law exceed three-fourths of the value. Working loans are issued by the Short Loans Associations. Before the War there were 168 of these to 9 "*Hypothec*" Associations.

DEBT ON DANISH FARMS.—The greater part is through the Credit Associations. For 1913-17 the amount of debt was estimated as follows:—

"Huse"	..	½ to 1 Td. Hrtk.	..	43.3%
"Gaarde"	..	1 .. 2 .. "	..	44.0%
"	..	2 .. 4 .. "	..	43.5%
"	..	4 .. 12 .. "	..	47.5%
"	..	above 12 .. "	..	50.1%
Total for "Gaarde" .. ..				<u>46.2%</u>

The percentage for 152,000 holdings in 1909 was 49½ per cent. (1,417 million kr.). Some 17,000 holdings of a value of 442 million kr. were free of debt.



LXIV. A CENTRAL CO-OPERATIVE BANK was opened in 1914 (with no little opposition from the regular banks), by co-operative societies and savings banks, and in its first two years had a turnover of 51 and 200 millions respectively.

There has been a great development in connection with this institution, of

*Co-operative Village Banks* which,

(i) From members' savings, grant short loans for the working capital needed by many small farmers.

(ii) Give members an account to which can be credited what they receive from their co-operative societies and to which can be debited what they pay to other co-operative societies.

(iii) Issue cheques and do simple banking business, and

(iv) Have a considerable educational effect, for the farmers who form and manage these banks learn to handle money economically.

LXV. THE TOTAL TURNOVER OF THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT, *in as far as it is represented by the co-operative societies* connected with the Central Co-operative Committee—that is, rural co-operative stores for consumers, agricultural purchase societies, creameries, bacon factories, butter export societies and egg export societies—is more than £50 millions, without including Credit Associations and Banks.

To these figures are to be added the figures of the Credit Associations and "Hypothec" Associations which have granted loans to the amounts of £105½ millions and £7½ millions respectively.

### MORALS AND APPLICATIONS.

LXVI. MORTGAGES WITHOUT MISERY.—When these totals are contemplated it is well to remember clearly what they stand for. The value of the work which the Credit Associations did for the farmers, by enabling them to mortgage, lay in the fact, as Mr. H. P. Hansen points out, that tenants became owners "on conditions which could never be altered to their disadvantage." It was

not like borrowing from the bank, or from friends, on a mortgage that might be called in inconveniently.

Between 1860 and 1870, but particularly between 1870 and 1880, as we have seen, *nearly all the farms in Denmark which were under tenancy passed under the control of the men who worked them.* This movement from tenancy to ownership created the present Danish farming community, *changed it, as Mr. Hansen says, "from a slow working, unintelligent and uneducated class into the hard working, educated and energetic class they now are."*

Similarly, Credit Associations for the smaller men, who work a few acres only, enabled them to get help towards becoming owners in the same satisfactory way.

An important point to notice is that the Government help to the farmers' Credit Associations, in privileges, and the Housemen's Credit Associations, in privileges and a guarantee of interest, *cost the State nothing.*

It is no surprise to learn that the work of the "Hypothec" Associations with second mortgages, following on the work of the Credit Associations with first mortgages, was of "great assistance" to "young men with the best of their working lives before them."

LXVII. THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL RESULTS.—From the success of the Credit Associations in helping middle farmers and small holders to ownership it was a natural step to the State Housemen legislation from 1899 onwards, which has helped men to houses and land, who had only about £50 of their own, men who have almost invariably turned out well.

It had been proved, Mr. Hansen continues enthusiastically, that ownership was followed by "improvement of the value of the land, increased production and a sense of freedom and intellectual strength." "The number of settled and happy members of the stable population with democratic opinions" was also increased.

"Accumulation of land in a few hands," he remarks, "is uneconomical; it creates neglect of cultivation,

snobbery and ignorance; it is unhealthy and must be hindered.

"As political opinion is largely an expression of economic life, it is to be expected that the democratic idea of self-government should be prevalent in a progressive population. The housemen are a Radical group forming the Left Wing of the Liberal Party,<sup>1</sup> while the more moderate wing consists principally of the larger farmers. Only the large owners are Conservatives (of a type which would be called Liberal in England.)<sup>2</sup> "All of them are strong Free Traders." As to the Radicals, "the organised debtors of the Credit Associations and the State are in natural opposition to those who represent organised capital. The system works as a healthy competition between two factors for national development and progress."

LXVIII. DANISH EXPERIENCE FOR ENGLAND.—This Dane, after some acquaintance with English traditions, is strongly of opinion, and it is of interest to hear a Danish view on such points, that—

"If the Danish system were properly organised in England and forced along, the result would be:

"(a) considerable increase in production, in many cases even doubling its value.

"(b) A stronger and larger population of independent agricultural producers, forming, as owners of the land, the backbone of stability and progress.

"(c) A considerable absorption from the unemployed.

"(d) For a long period expansion of the building, machinery, tool and furniture trades.

"Apart from the co-operative work done by the Danish co-operative societies for villages, districts and the

<sup>1</sup> A large part of this Left Wing would no doubt call themselves Socialists. There is at present a minority Labour Government in power.

<sup>2</sup> The large owners are not all Conservatives. The Conservative party draws much of its strength from the towns.

nation at large, membership of them is a great experience in democratic organisation."

LXIX. THE OUTSTANDING FACT ABOUT DANISH RURAL EXPERIENCE IS THAT CO-OPERATION, THE SETTING UP OF THOUSANDS OF FARMERS ON LAND OF THEIR OWN, THE REMARKABLE INCREASE IN RURAL INTELLIGENCE AND WELL-BEING, AND THE IMMENSE RISE IN PRODUCTION HAVE ALL BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN HALF A CENTURY.

### CONCLUSION.

When it is sought to take advantage of Danish experience in Great Britain, note may be made of some Danish criticism and appreciation of our agriculture.<sup>1</sup>

*The chief impression which is taken away from Denmark is of the existence of a much more enlightened interest in rural problems than we are accustomed to. This greater interest is due in part, no doubt, to Denmark being preponderatingly agricultural.*

*An important thing Denmark has to teach us is that the careful study of rural questions and the application of progressive ideas over a period of years must show results*

---

<sup>1</sup> BRITISH AND FOREIGN CONDITIONS.—“The reader who knows the English countryside, because he lives in it all the year round, and he and his have succeeded in getting, all things considered, a fair and agreeable living out of it, is not to be tried by patronising proposals to transfer to our rural districts an agricultural practice rooted in the geographical and economic conditions of another country: I press on him no japes at an agriculture as old, as varied, as capitalised, as competent and as world-famous as Great Britain's.

“I am not without hope, however, that there are things [in this Report] not only about the training of the man on the land and the organisation of agriculture, but about the outlook of the countryman and the raising of the standard of rural life, about the sociology and politics of the countryside and the essentials of rural efficiency, which are worthy of the consideration of those who live in rural Britain and think about its welfare.”—“*A Free Farmer in a Free State.*” By J. W. Robertson Scott. 1912.

*of enormous benefit to the rural population and the nation at large in any country.*

We have a large number of first-class farmers in Great Britain, as all the world knows, but the average of intelligence, information and practice is below what it might be. *Denmark shows how the average may be raised.*

But the mass of our agricultural population is not in the farmhouses but in the cottages. And no one would suggest that our cottager class is as happily situated as the cottager class in Denmark.

*Our country people poured into the towns because, in the country, these people have not the opportunities of self-respecting existence that are open to every energetic and skilful young countryman in Denmark.*

*We have in Great Britain nothing approaching the facilities for getting a suitable and sufficient piece of land and a decent house which exist in Denmark.*

*A young English cottager of spirit has few inducements to remain in the average English village. A young Danish cottager of spirit has every inducement to remain in the average Danish village.*

Our peasantry is not "its country's pride." To us the word peasant yields an impression of something a little bovine and forlorn. To Danes the word peasant yields an impression of a man of intelligence and alertness with a comfortable house, good clothing, something to look forward to at the end of his life, and a keen interest in public affairs. (The considerable proportion of peasants or men of peasant family in Danish Ministries is well known.)

The Danes can say with pride that, *if, in Denmark, there are few rich men, there are few poor men, and that the land is the possession of those who want to stay on it and work it as well as it can be worked.*

THE ARGUMENT FROM DENMARK IS  
UNANSWERABLE.

## APPENDIX XIV.

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The following list aims only at recommending a few publications which will be found useful by readers who desire to study in fuller detail some of the subjects dealt with in the Report.

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