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*The DECLINE in NUMBER of AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS in
GREAT BRITAIN.*

By LORD EVERSLEY.

[Read before the Royal Statistical Society, 14th May, 1907.

SIR RICHARD BIDDULPH MARTIN, Bart., President, in the Chair.]

Two years ago, when the fiscal controversy was at its height, and when it was not unfrequently alleged that the great reduction in the number of agricultural labourers in Great Britain during the last forty years was due mainly, if not wholly, to the admission of corn and other agricultural products free of duty, and the consequent fall of prices, I raised a discussion on the subject at the Political Economy Club. I endeavoured to distinguish how far the reduction of labourers was due to changes in the system of farming, such as the laying down of arable land in grass, and the increased cultivation of temporary grasses in lieu of corn on arable land, which could be directly attributable to the low price of corn since 1880, and how far to other causes, such as the economy of labour effected by the use of machinery and improved methods, which were in no way connected with the fiscal policy of Free Imports. The discussion which took place in the Club was of a private character, and was not reported in the Press. Towards the end of last year (1906), Major Craigie, your late President, suggested that I should expand my address into one for this Society. Since I undertook to do so, a report of a most able and interesting character on the same topic—"The Decline in the Agricultural Population"—has been issued by the Board of Agriculture. It is the work of Mr. Rew, the assistant-secretary in charge of the Land and Statistical Division of that Board, who also so ably fills the position of honorary secretary of this Society. In view of this report, it would seem to be a work of superfluity to proceed with my present Paper. The report, however, of Mr. Rew deals only with the twenty years from the census of 1881 to that of 1901, during which time alone it can be alleged that the decline in the number of agricultural labourers has been due to the great fall in prices of agricultural produce and the consequent depression of agriculture. By far the larger amount of the reduction of labourers took place in the previous twenty years, from 1861 to 1881, when prices were at a high level, when agriculture was prospering, and rents were on the rise. As the distinction between these periods is not borne in mind by many, and the whole of the reduction of labourers in the forty years is often attributed to

the same cause, namely, the low prices of produce and the consequent changes in cultivation, it has seemed to me to be worth while to consider the subject in its larger view, that is, over the forty years. There are other differences in treatment of the subject, and in the grouping of the statistics, which may make my address of some value, not in any way as in conflict with, but rather as a supplement to the official report, and such that the two together may form the subject of consideration and discussion by the members of this Society.

That the reduction in the number of agricultural labourers during the forty years from 1861 to 1901 has been of serious import in its bearing on the economic condition of the country admits of no doubt. There has, however, been some exaggeration on the subject, due in part to a table included in the Memorandum issued by the Board of Trade three years ago giving a mass of statistics bearing on the Fiscal question. The table, founded on the census returns, gave the number of persons employed in agriculture in England and Wales at the decennial censuses from 1851 to 1901, as follows:—

1851	1,904,600	1881	1,199,800
'61	1,803,000	'91	1,099,500
'71	1,423,800	1901	988,300

These figures showed a reduction in the fifty years of nearly one million, or of about 50 per cent. It formed the text for a good many speeches on different features of the question of agricultural depression, and the land system of England. It was, I doubt not, the authority for the statement made by the eminent leader of Tariff Reform in an oft-quoted speech at Luton, in which he said that a reduction had taken place in the number of persons employed in agriculture in England and Wales since the repeal of the Corn Laws of nearly one million. "What," he added, "has become of this million of persons? The oldest, for whom there was no change of employers, have gone to the workhouse. Others have broken up their homes, have gone to foreign countries, and have contributed to their prosperity, when they might have remained to contribute to ours. Many of them have migrated to the towns, and what have they done there? Crowded the courts and alleys of our great cities, lowered the standard of health and strength of the people, and flooded the market with a surplus of underpaid labour."

This statement not unfairly represents the views prevalent in many quarters as to the causes, extent and effect of the migration of rural labourers. Some part of it might have been dispelled or mitigated by a consideration of the following fuller table, given later in the Memorandum of the Board of Trade to which I have referred, and showing in detail from the census returns the numbers of persons of different sex and different age included in the earlier table:—

Number of Persons in England and Wales Employed in Agriculture.

Year.	Adults Aged 20 Years and Upwards.			Persons Under 20 Years of Age.			Total of All Ages.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
1851.....	1,140,900	336,230	1,477,130	327,620	99,950	427,560	1,463,510	436,170	1,904,690
'61.....	1,119,000	301,030	1,420,030	323,100	59,920	383,020	1,442,110	360,942	1,803,040
'71.....	972,000	122,440	1,094,440	277,180	52,240	329,420	1,249,180	174,080	1,423,860
'81.....	884,270	50,050	934,320	254,480	11,020	265,500	1,183,750	61,070	1,199,820
'91.....	816,460	39,730	856,290	237,110	6,240	243,350	1,053,570	46,000	1,099,570
1901.....	749,800	43,390	793,190	186,070	9,060	195,130	985,880	52,460	985,340

U 2

It will be seen from this table how very largely the numbers of women and of persons under the age of 20 entered into the enumeration. Of the 1,904,600 persons counted in 1851 as employed in agriculture, 436,100 were women, and 327,600 were males under the age of 20. Deducting these, the number of males above 20 in that year was 1,140,000. Of the total of 935,800 employed in 1901, 52,400 only were women, and 186,000 were males under the age of 20. Deducting these, the number of males above 20 in 1901 was 749,800, to compare with 1,140,000 in 1851, a difference of 390,200, or about 35 per cent. This figure, from which I shall presently show that considerable deductions must be made, is that on which we must mainly concentrate our attention. The number represents so many heads of families. Those below the age of 20 are for the most part the sons of labourers or others employed in agriculture. With respect to the enormous reduction in the number of women alleged to be employed in agriculture, namely, from 436,200 in 1851 to 52,400 in 1901, the greater part of this is altogether misleading. In the census returns of 1851 and 1861 there were subheads of "wives of farmers" and of "daughters and "other female relatives living with farmers," in the class of persons employed in agriculture, and 163,500 wives and 85,000 daughters, &c., were enumerated under these heads in 1861. In the later returns wives and daughters, &c., of farmers were transferred to another class. These numbers, therefore, ought to be excluded from the figures for 1861, for the purpose of comparison. Deducting these, there remain about 112,442 women of all ages employed in agriculture in 1861. This number was reduced to 61,000 in 1881, and 52,400 in 1901. The number of women farmers included in the census returns for the three periods were 22,700, 20,500 and 21,500. Making these deductions, it would seem that there were 164,800 women employed as labourers in 1861, 40,000 in 1881, and 31,000 in 1901. As agriculture was very prosperous during the years 1861 to 1881, this great alleged reduction in the employment of women during this period cannot be attributed to any cause connected with changes in the system of cultivation. After careful consideration of the figures, I feel very sceptical as to them, so far as the first three decades are concerned. I have difficulty in believing that in 1861 164,000 women, above and below the age of 20, were employed in farm work. I think it probable that large numbers were so enumerated who were only employed at certain periods of the year, in such seasonable work as the picking of fruit and hops, in haymaking and harvesting. Women so employed were certainly not included in the class of labourers in 1881 and 1901.

The census for 1901 gives the number of women above the age of 20 employed in agriculture as 43,393, and below that age 9,065. Of the first of these figures, 21,500 were women farmers. Deducting these, there remain only 22,000 above the age of 20. This is probably not more than the number of dairymaids permanently employed on farms. To whatever extent the census figures are to be relied on as showing a great reduction in the employment of women on the land, they must be considered as satisfactory rather than the reverse; they must show that women were withdrawn by their husbands and parents from field work. It may be that this change was one of the first results of the improved condition of agricultural labourers, which undoubtedly occurred between 1861 and 1881.

It is clear from the above that, in comparing the conditions of employment in agriculture at the different censuses, it is safer to omit all reference to women.

With respect also to the reduction in the number of males under the age of 20, it must be recollected that the Education Acts of recent years, requiring the attendance of boys at school, had the effect of withdrawing large numbers of children below the age of 15 from work in the fields. What numbers were so withdrawn we have no means of computing. But here, again, any reduction due to this cause is matter for satisfaction. In comparing the numbers employed at the different periods, it would seem to be safer to omit those under 20, and to confine our attention mainly to those above that age.

Omitting reference to the census figures of 1851—which, except as regards women, show no material difference with those of 1861—we find that the census returns as tabled in the Memorandum of the Board of Trade for the three periods of 1861, 1881, and 1901 show a reduction in the forty years of 369,200 males above the age of 20 employed in agriculture, of which 234,800 occurred in the first half of the period, and 134,400 in the second half from 1881 to 1901.

There are, however, several points on which these figures must be further corrected.

In the census of 1881 a change was made in the classification of persons no longer able to work by reason of old age. In previous returns, farmers and labourers unable to work on the land, and either retired or in workhouses and asylums, were still included in the class of persons employed in agriculture. In 1881 and subsequent years they were enumerated in another class. This accounted for a reduction in 1881 (as shown in a separate return) of 27,000 males, viz., 13,000 farmers and 14,000 labourers. For

the purpose of a fair comparison, these numbers, and probably a somewhat larger number as regards labourers, should be deducted from the figures of the census of 1861.

Correction ought also to be made for the figure given in the census of 1861, under the head of "farmers' sons and relatives." In that census it was assumed that all such persons were engaged in agriculture. The figure for that year was 60,046 (over 20). In the census of 1871 only those were enumerated under this head who declared that they were employed on the farms. The figure for 1881 is 47,120, the reduction, as compared with 1861, being largely due to the above qualification. But in 1901 the figure again rose to 55,600, the number of farmers remaining about the same. It is difficult to account for this. I have not felt justified in making a correction in this respect, but the figures are open to great doubt.

It should again be recollected that the census of 1901 was taken in the middle of the war in South Africa, when all the Army Reserve men, about 80,000 in number, were called out and were employed in South Africa, and when nearly all the Militia regiments were enrolled, and were employed either in Africa or in military posts abroad and at home, and when large numbers of Yeomanry and Volunteers were also employed in the war. It cannot be doubted that the absence of these men accounted for a large reduction in the number of agricultural labourers and of farmers' sons at the census of 1901. It was well known that farmers were in great difficulty at the time as regards labour. The War Office are unable to supply any figures showing the number of men ordinarily employed in agriculture who are in the Army Reserve or Militia. The only light they can throw on the subject is that 15 per cent. of the men enlisted for the army describe themselves as agricultural labourers. On this basis, I think that, on a very low estimate, 20,000 should be added to the number of persons employed in agriculture in England and Wales, who were temporarily withdrawn from their work for the Army Reserve, Militia, and Volunteers.

Lastly, there is a yet larger correction to be made of the table in the Board of Trade Memorandum. It includes only farmers, farmers' sons and relatives working on the farms, bailiffs, shepherds, labourers, and woodmen. It does not include the very large and growing class of gardeners, other than domestics, including market and nursery gardeners, florists, seedsmen, and fruit growers. All these are employed on the land. They represent "intense" cultivation as distinct from ordinary farm cultivation. The labourers so employed are generally paid rather higher wages than

ordinary farm labourers. There seems to me to be no good reason for the exclusion of this class when comparing the number of persons employed in agriculture at different periods. The increase of this class has been very great of late years.

The census returns for the earlier years under review mix up the number of these non-domestic gardeners with those of domestic gardeners in a most imperfect and confusing manner, as the following figures show :—

	1851.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1901.
Seedsman, florists, &c.	2,400	2,800	5,100	7,000	} 174,000	} 123,100
Gardeners, non-domestic	69,600	76,700	95,800	63,600		
„ domestic	4,500	14,600	18,700	74,600		
Total	76,500	94,100	119,600	145,200	174,000	211,000

It is evident from these figures that very grave errors of enumeration were made in the first three decades, and that very large numbers of domestic gardeners must have been included in the list of non-domestic gardeners. It is impossible to believe that the numbers of domestic gardeners at the three periods were so low as 4,500, 14,600, and 18,700, and that they then jumped up to 74,600 in 1881. It is equally impossible to believe that the number of non-domestic gardeners fell from 95,800 in 1871 to 63,600 in 1881. We are justified, I think, in assuming that the figures for 1881 and 1901 are correct, and that there was the same relative increase of numbers of domestic and non-domestic gardeners in the first three decades. On this assumption I have re-formed the table as follows—maintaining the same totals :—

	1851.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1901.
Gardeners, non-domestic, nursery gardeners, seedsman, &c. ... }	22,000	33,100	51,700	70,600	93,000	123,100
Domestic gardeners	54,500	61,000	67,900	74,800	81,000	87,900
Total	76,500	94,100	119,600	145,200	174,000	211,000

On this assumption the non-domestic gardeners increased in number from 33,100 in 1861 to 123,100 in 1901, and the domestic gardeners from 61,000 to 87,900. I have included the

numbers of non-domestic gardeners in my revised list of persons employed in agriculture. The census returns do not distinguish between the numbers under this head who are employers and those who are labourers. Nor can we ascertain what is the area of land thus cultivated.¹

This great increase of non-domestic gardeners has been very unevenly spread over the different counties of England. It has been very great in the counties round London, in Middlesex, Herts, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, and Essex, and also in Norfolk, Suffolk, Leicester, Cambridge, Lancashire, Cheshire, and Worcester. In Dorsetshire, Wiltshire, Salop, Cumberland, Northumberland, and in the whole of Wales, the increase has been small.

Making these various corrections in the census returns for the years 1861, 1881, and 1901, I have constructed the following table,—omitting women, and giving males above and below 20 separately, except in the cases of farmers, bailiffs, and woodmen, where the numbers under 20 are very small, and not worth distinguishing.

¹ The "Report of the Tariff Commission on Agriculture" describes the recent development of market gardening in the Evesham district of Worcestershire: "The acreage," it says, "under fruit and vegetable cultivation has "much increased since 1879 on lands formerly under corn. The methods "of California and Canada have been copied; cultivation is greatly improved, "and made more scientific and uniform than formerly. Very heavy clay land, "not worth 5s. per acre for wheat-growing, is adapted for fruit and vegetables, "especially asparagus, of which hundreds of acres have been put down. In "1870 small holders held 2,000 acres within 8 miles of Evesham; now 2,400 "cultivate 15,000, averaging 1 to 10 acres each, and these holdings increase "every year. . . . Land practically derelict twenty years ago was taken by "labouring men at 1*l.* per acre. Many now hold 6 acres. They own their "houses, and some of them have sufficient means to support them for life. "A Ledbury (Worcestershire) witness puts the culture and market gardening "cost of labour at 1*l.* 15*s.* per acre, as against 25*s.* for ordinary farm labour"—that is, nearly ten times the amount. It is further stated in the evidence that 1,150 acres are now under glass in England for fruit cultivation, employing 7,000 labourers.

ENGLAND AND WALES.

Male Persons Employed in Agriculture.

	1861.		1881.		1901.	
	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.
Farmers	226,960	—	203,430	—	202,760	—
<i>Corrected figure</i>	213,960	—	—	—	—	—
(Women farmers)	(22,750)	—	(20,520)	—	(21,550)	—
Sons and relatives of farmers working on the farms	60,040	32,280	47,120	28,080	55,680	33,480
Bailiffs and foremen	15,700	—	19,370	—	22,610	—
Shepherds	20,660	4,200	20,090	2,750	22,230	3,100
Labourers, out-door and in-door	788,760	283,940	585,960	221,650	435,750	148,030
<i>Corrected figure</i>	774,760	—	—	—	455,750	—
Woodmen	7,910	990	7,600	640	11,210	820
Gardeners (non-domes- tic), florists, seeds- men, &c.	28,200	5,600	58,900	11,700	105,400	17,720
Totals	1,147,840	327,010	942,370	264,820	855,640	203,150
<i>Corrected figures</i>	1,120,840	327,010	942,370	264,820	875,720	203,150

Reduction of all male persons above 20 employed
in agriculture from 1861 to 1881 (corrected
figure) } 178,470

Reduction of male persons above 20 from 1881 to
1901 (corrected figure)..... } 66,650

245,120 22 per cent.

Reduction of farm labourers above 20, exclusive
of those employed in nursery or other gardens,
from 1861 to 1881 (corrected figure) } 188,800

Reduction of farm labourers above 20, only, from
1881 to 1901 (corrected figure) } 130,200

319,000 41 per cent.

It will be seen that there has been a reduction of farmers of about 12,000. This occurred between 1861 and 1881, and was doubtless due to the amalgamation of farms during a period when farming on a large scale was very profitable.

The corresponding figures for Scotland are as follows :—

Male Persons Employed in Agriculture.

	1861.		1881.		1901.	
	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.
Farmers	54,670	—	48,120	—	45,550	—
<i>Corrected figure</i>	51,400	—	—	—	—	—
(Women farmers).....	(6,410)	—	(7,060)	—	(7,820)	—
Sons and relatives of farmers working on the farms	11,300	6,400	10,720	5,470	11,160	6,360
Bailiffs	3,150	—	3,520	—	4,650	—
Shepherds	6,540	730	9,260	1,020	8,670	960
Labourers	89,330	38,890	61,730	30,050	51,050	27,740
<i>Corrected figure</i>	87,530	—	—	—	53,550	—
Foresters.....	2,600	220	2,860	246	3,750	370
Totals	167,990	46,240	136,210	36,780	124,830	35,430
<i>Corrected figures</i>	162,920	46,240	136,210	36,780	122,330	35,430
Reduction of all male persons above 20 employed in agriculture from 1861 to 1881 (corrected figures)					26,710	
Reduction of all male persons above 20 employed in agriculture from 1881 to 1901.....					13,910	
Reduction of farm labourers above 20 from 1861 to 1881 (corrected figures)					40,620	25 per cent.
Reduction of farm labourers above 20 from 1881 to 1901 (corrected figures)					25,800	
					8,180	
					33,980	38 per cent.

It appears that the total reduction of males employed in agriculture above 20 has been 40,600, or 25 per cent., compared with 22 per cent. in England, the difference being due to the fact that there has not been the same increase of non-domestic gardeners in Scotland. The reduction of agricultural labourers above 20 has been about 34,000, or 38 per cent., as compared with 41 per cent. in England.

The above tables show that the number of farmers in England and Wales in 1901 was 202,700 men and 21,500 women, a total of 223,500. To this must be added the number of bailiffs presumably holding farms, 22,400, making a total of 243,900 persons.

In Scotland the figures are : 45,800 male farmers, 7,800 women farmers, 4,650 bailiffs, a total of 58,000 persons.² It may be worth while to consider how many of these persons returning themselves as farmers can really be considered as such.

A return of the Board of Agriculture in 1895 gave the following figures as regards the occupation of land:—

² It is probable that many of the 23,400 bailiffs enumerated in England and Wales, and 4,600 in Scotland, do not hold farms. On the other hand, a large number of farms are held by landowners and other persons not enumerated in the census as farmers. The numbers may be considered as balancing one another.

England.

	5 to 20 Acres.	20 to 50 Acres.	50 to 100 Acres.	100 to 300 Acres.	300 to 500 Acres.	500 to 1,000 Acres.	Over 1,000 Acres.	Total.
Number of holdings ...	108,145	62,446	46,574	60,381	11,112	3,942	524	293,130
Acreage	1,210,716	2,077,950	3,403,760	10,434,130	4,188,650	2,570,680	693,510	24,579,420

Wales.

	5 to 20 Acres.	20 to 50 Acres.	50 to 100 Acres.	100 to 300 Acres.	300 to 500 Acres.	500 to 1,000 Acres.	Over 1,000 Acres.	Total.
Number of holdings ...	18,570	12,400	10,217	7,896	386	54	3	49,525
Acreage	211,260	423,750	749,460	1,288,570	142,906	32,810	3,920	2,802,670

Scotland.

	5 to 20 Acres.	20 to 50 Acres.	50 to 100 Acres.	100 to 300 Acres.	300 to 500 Acres.	500 to 1,000 Acres.	Over 1,000 Acres.	Total.
Number of holdings ...	23,104	10,817	9,834	12,968	2,070	620	76	59,489
Acreage	245,666	363,260	732,090	2,203,300	782,370	397,686	104,410	4,828,370

These figures show that in England and Wales there are 216,000 holdings of land of over 20 acres, and in Scotland, 36,350; as compared with 244,000 farmers and bailiffs in England and Wales, and 58,000 in Scotland.

It appears probable, then, that of 126,700 holders of land of from 5 to 20 acres in England and Wales, about 27,000 return themselves as farmers, and that in Scotland of 23,000 holders of between 5 and 20 acres, 21,700 return themselves as farmers. It should be recollected that the small holders of land in Scotland have generally large grazing rights over the neighbouring moors and mountains. Of the holdings of land between 5 and 20 acres, by far the greater proportion in England and Wales is in the occupation of persons not in the position of farmers, who hold it in connection with their residences, or of persons engaged in other local industries.

If we reckon only holdings of 20 acres and over as farms in the ordinary sense of the term, the 185,000 farm holdings in England average 127 acres, those in Wales, 31,000, average 83 acres, and the 36,400 in Scotland average 133 acres.

It will be seen from my corrected tables that if we include all persons above 20 engaged in agriculture in England and Wales, including those employed in intense cultivation of fruit, &c., there was a reduction in the number of 178,400 in the twenty years from 1861 to 1881, and of 66,500 in the second period of twenty years from 1881 to 1901. The total reduction, therefore, in the forty years of males above 20 was at the rate of 24 per cent., and about three-fourths occurred in the first period and one-fourth in the second period. If, however, we confine ourselves only to agricultural labourers above 20 employed on farms, excluding those engaged in intense cultivation, the proportion works out differently—the numbers reduced in the first period from 1861 to 1881 was 188,800, and in the second period was 130,200; and the total reduction in the forty years was 41 per cent.

It need not, however, be pointed out that the reductions which were effected between the years 1861 and 1881 were in no way connected with agricultural depression, or with the great fall of prices resulting from free import of foreign produce.

The twenty years, 1861 to 1881, with the exception of the last two years, were a period of great prosperity to the agricultural interest in Great Britain. Though corn and other agricultural produce were admitted free of duty (save the 1s. registration duty on corn up to 1871), prices of corn, and still more of meat, wool and other produce, were remunerative.

The price of wheat, which had been 58s. 4d. in the three years before the repeal of the Corn Laws, fell to 44s. from 1849 to 1852, but

rose again during the war with Russia to 58s. or 60s. It fell again in 1860 to slightly over 50s., and for the twenty years, 1861 to 1881, the price averaged 51s. a quarter. It was not till very near the end of this period that the price began to fall. It then fell continuously and rapidly for some years till it reached the average of 28s. in 1901, a point at which it has since remained nearly stationary. The following table shows the average price during the whole of the period from 1840 to 1900.

1840-47.	1848-52.	1853-60.	1861-70.	1870-80.	1881-99.	1891-1900.
<i>s.</i> 58	<i>s.</i> 44	<i>s.</i> 58	<i>s.</i> 51	<i>s.</i> 51	<i>s.</i> 35	<i>s.</i> 28
<i>d.</i> 1		<i>d.</i> 4			<i>d.</i> 9	<i>d.</i> 2

The prices of meat, and of other agricultural produce such as wool, butter, cheese, &c., rose considerably during the years 1861 to 1881, and especially during the years 1870 to 1875, and they attained a much higher level than they had ever done before. It was not till after 1881 that the prices of these products fell. The result was that, in spite of free imports, agriculture prospered greatly during the twenty years 1861 to 1881. Farmers made good profits; there was a great demand for farms; rents rose considerably. The increase of the assessments of land for Income Tax during this period is good proof of this. For England and Wales the assessment rose from 44,650,000*l.* to 51,182,000*l.*, and for Scotland from 6,675,000*l.* to 7,648,000*l.*

During this period of agricultural prosperity, the great reduction of the number of agricultural labourers in farms took place, in England amounting to 188,800 above the age of 20, 62,000 below that age, and in Scotland to 26,000 above 20, and 8,000 below 20. This was to a very small extent connected with any change in the system of cultivation, such as the laying down of arable land in grass. The agricultural returns of the relative areas of arable and pasture do not go back to the year 1861. There is no reason to believe that any change in this respect took place before 1861 and 1871. Between 1871 and 1881 the returns show a reduction of arable land of about 1,000,000 acres, and an increase of permanent pasture of about 2,400,000 acres, due in part to the reclamation of land from mere and waste, and in part, perhaps, to more accurate returns by farmers.

The reduction of arable land took place, not in the most arable parts of England, but mainly in the more pastoral districts. Whatever the cause of this, there was nothing in it to account for the

great reduction in the number of labourers in the laying down of arable land in grass. This conversion of arable to grass was effected almost equally in the five years between 1871 and 1876, when prices were at their best, as between 1879 and 1881, as the following figures show :—

Great Britain.

		Arable Land.	Permanent Pasture.
		Acres.	Acres.
1871.....		18,403,400	12,435,400
'76.....		18,035,600	13,515,900
'81.....		17,568,000	14,643,600
1901.....		15,590,100	16,827,200

The explanation of the great exodus of labourers from rural districts during the twenty years 1861 to 1881 was undoubtedly to be found in the great prosperity, and the general rise of wages of the manufacturing and mining districts; in the fact that labourers were tempted by the higher wages in the towns, and on work on the railways, and in the rural police, to give up farm work. It was also in part due to a growing disinclination to farm work among labourers in rural districts, to the absence of opportunities to them of rising in their vocation, and to a desire for the greater independence and freedom of life in towns.

As a result of this exodus, wages rose considerably in rural districts. The following table from the Board of Trade Memorandum shows the course of weekly wages of agricultural labourers in England and Wales during the last fifty years :—

1850.	1851-60.	1861-70.	1871-80.	1881-90.	1891-1900.	1901-03.
<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>
9 4	10 4	11 5	13 4	13	13 4	14 7

It will be seen that money wages rose nearly 30 per cent. between 1860 and 1880, from the miserably low rate which prevailed before 1850, a rate at which, having regard to the high price of wheat and other requisites, it is difficult to understand how agricultural labourers contrived to exist and bring up their families. Farmers were compelled during this period to meet this rise of wages by economising labour, and adopting machinery and other improved methods.

This reduction in the number of labourers took place over the whole of England and Scotland in not very unequal proportions.

In Scotland the reduction was 30 per cent., in Wales 32 per cent. and in England 25 per cent.

It was not till nearly the close of these twenty years that a turn occurred in the tide of agricultural prosperity. In the year 1879 the harvest was one of the worst ever experienced in this country. The produce of corn was extremely small. The pastures were seriously damaged by incessant rain through the summer and autumn. Cattle and sheep suffered in consequence. The price of corn, for the first time almost in this country, did not rise in some proportion to the deficient produce. In the years beginning with 1881, the prices of wheat, barley, and oats fell continuously, and in 1884 the price of meat, wool, butter, and other agricultural produce also began to fall. In the fourteen years from 1881 to 1894 the price of wheat fell 50 per cent.; barley, 32 per cent.; oats, 30 per cent.; meat from 15 to 20 per cent.; wool, 32 per cent.; and dairy produce from 10 to 15 per cent. I will not enter upon the causes of the great fall of prices. Whatever they were the effect on agriculture in this country was most serious. Farmers experienced great losses. The fall of prices affected the different parts of the country very unequally. The reduction of the price of wheat was relatively greater than that of other corn or other agricultural produce. That of dairy produce was the least. The wheat-growing districts of the East of England suffered most. Oats were substituted for wheat in many parts. A great extent of land previously under the plough was laid down as pasture, or was allowed to fall back into very indifferent grass. Many arable farms became derelict. In many parts of the arable districts the system of rotation of crops was altered, and green crops were substituted for corn crops.

Rents gradually fell, to the extent of 50 per cent. in the purely arable districts, 25 per cent. in those of mixed husbandry, and 10 to 15 per cent. in the purely pastoral districts. Farmers had the benefit of lower rates in consequence of the reduction of their assessments, and the Agricultural Rating Act of 1896 relieved them of one-half the rates previously paid. They also benefited by lower prices for all their requirements, for feeding stuffs for their cattle, for artificial manures, for their machinery and implements, and for most of their family requirements. If the money wages of labour had fallen in the same ratio as the price of agricultural produce, and as rents and rates, farmers would have been sooner able to adjust themselves to the new range of prices. The money wages, however, of labourers were not only maintained, but rose to a somewhat higher point, as the table already given shows. Labourers, therefore, as compared with their condition between the years 1861-81, and

still more as compared with anterior times, had the benefit, not only of higher wages, but of lower prices for their food, for their bread and meat, for their tea and sugar, for their clothing and every other requirement. This great reduction in the cost of living was equivalent to a further rise in the money value of their wages of from 30 to 40 per cent. Taking into account wages and the price of food, they were certainly twice as well off in the decade 1891-1901 as in the times before 1861. In spite of this improvement in their condition, the exodus of labourers continued, though not in the same proportions. Farmers were again compelled to economise labour as far as possible by the increased use of machinery, by laying down arable land in grass, or by changing the rotation of crops. It is not uncommonly believed that the reduction of the area of land under the plough accounts for the whole of the reduced number of labourers in the twenty years from 1881 to 1901. This was certainly not the case. It can be shown very clearly that the larger part of the reduction of labourers employed in agriculture was not due to this cause, but to those other causes which resulted in the still greater reduction in the previous twenty years.

The late Mr. William Little, a great authority on agricultural subjects, who reported in 1894 to the Royal Commission on Labour on the condition of agricultural labourers, stated in his report: "It is undoubtedly the opinion of many persons that want of employment was the cause of the labourers' emigration to the towns, but I venture to maintain that the reduction of the working staff of farms was the consequence of, and not the cause of, the emigration."

He reported that out of thirty-eight typical districts inquired into there were twenty-seven in which the supply of labour was about equal to the demand. In seven districts the supply was in excess of the demand, and in only three districts was the demand in excess of the supply. He added: "There was universal agreement that if the system of farming had remained what it was there would have been a difficulty in finding the necessary hands." In a further passage he said: "It is no exaggeration to say that in the last quarter of a century a great economic revolution, accomplished with little aid from legislation, has transferred to the labourers from one-third to one-fourth of the profit which the landowners and farmers previously received from the cultivation of the land."

The meaning of this was that the money wages of the labourers having increased and the price of their food being very greatly reduced, the wages paid on a farm bore a far higher proportion to the farmer's profits and to rent than they had ever done before.

There is further proof of the above in the fact that the reduction in the purely pastoral parts of England, Wales, and Scotland has been as great, if not greater than, in the arable districts; and that in those few parts of England and Scotland, where there has been no change whatever in the system of cultivation, there has been as great a reduction in the number of labourers as in the districts which have suffered most from depression, and where a large extent of land under the plough has been laid down in grass.

In 1881 the area of arable land in Great Britain, as shown by the figures already quoted, was 17,568,000 acres, and that of permanent pasture 14,643,000 acres. In 1901 the proportion was nearly reversed; the arable land was reduced to 15,590,000 acres, or by nearly 2,000,000 acres, and the permanent pasture was increased to 16,827,000, or by 2,184,000 acres. In other words, somewhat less than one-eighth of the land under the plough was laid down in grass. By this change in the proportion of arable to pasture a considerable reduction was effected in the employment of labour. Much of the land so laid down became very indifferent pasture. But the change thus affected accounts for only a part of the reduction of labourers.

With the object of throwing light on the subject, and especially on the comparative number of persons employed on farms, as distinct from intense cultivation, in the two periods of twenty years ending in 1881 and 1901, in different parts of the country, distinguishing the arable districts from the pastoral districts, I have separated the English counties into six groups. Of these, the first consists of three purely pastoral counties, Derbyshire, Westmoreland, and Monmouth, where the proportion of arable land in 1901 was less than 20 per cent. of the total cultivated area, and the last of six counties in the East of England, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Lincoln, Cambridge, Herts, and York (East Riding), where the arable land was over 60 per cent. of the total cultivated area. The other four groups are intermediate between these two. I have also shown separately the Welsh and the Scotch counties. I have compared these eight groups for the years 1861, 1881, and 1901 as regards the numbers of male persons above or below 20 employed in the cultivation of farms as distinct from nursery, market, and other gardens. In the following table (C) I have shown the percentage reduction of all males employed and of labourers employed, and also the number of persons above 20 and of labourers above 20 employed, and in Table D I have compared the number of persons employed per 100 acres in these different groups.

TABLE C.—*Percentage Reduction of Males above 20 Employed on Farms from 1861 to 1901, distinguishing all Persons so Employed from Labourers, and excluding those engaged as Gardeners in Intense Cultivation.*

Group	1861 to 1881.		1881 to 1901.		1861 to 1901.	
	All Males Employed.	Labourers only.	All Males Employed.	Labourers only.	All Males Employed.	Labourers only.
	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.	Per cent.
Group 1	22	20	6	20	28	47
„ 2	26	32	20	30	40	53
„ 3	20	25	16	28	34	46
„ 4	19	22	16	30	33	45
„ 5	16	19	27	33	38	46
„ 6	11	14	13	22	22	33
Wales	20	33	9	23	27	47
Scotland	20	30	9	16	27	43

TABLE D.—*Number of Males above 20 and under 20 Employed on Farms per 100 Acres in 1861, 1881 and 1901 (including Farmers, Farmers' Sons, Bailiffs, Shepherds, and Labourers).*

Group	1861.		1881.		1901.	
	Above 20.	Under 20.	Above 20.	Under 20.	Above 20.	Under 20.
Group 1	3·3	0·7	2·4	0·5	2·1	0·5
„ 2	5·3	1·3	3·7	0·8	3·0	0·5
„ 3	3·9	1·0	3·0	0·8	2·5	0·7
„ 4	4·1	1·1	3·3	0·8	2·8	0·6
„ 5	4·3	1·5	3·6	0·9	2·7	0·6
„ 6	4·1	1·3	3·6	1·0	3·2	0·8
Wales	3·5	0·8	2·5	0·5	2·3	0·4
Scotland ...	3·6	1·0	2·8	0·8	2·5	0·7

It should be pointed out that in these tables, and in those in the Appendix for the various groups of counties, I have not made the corrections I have adverted to in my aggregate of numbers for England, Wales and Scotland, due to the changes of classification in the census returns of 1881 and 1901, and to the absence of reservists, &c., in South Africa during the census of 1901. If made, they would result in a difference in the reductions of numbers, whether of all persons employed or labourers only, between 1861 and 1901,

of about 3 per cent., and this difference would be divided between the two periods of 1861 to 1881 and 1881 to 1901.

I have also not thought it worth while to distinguish between the numbers of males employed above and under 20, except in the cases of labourers and of the sons and relatives of farmers. The numbers of farmers, bailiffs, and shepherds under 20 years of age are so small that it is not necessary to distinguish them. In the case of several counties the census returns for 1881 and 1901 do not distinguish persons above or under 20 for the sub-heads of labourers or farmers' sons, and I have, therefore, taken them at the same proportion as the census returns show for the whole country.

The two tables giving the percentages of reductions and the number of males employed per 100 acres for the different groups show clearly how evenly spread the reductions have been over the whole of England, Wales, and Scotland irrespective of any difference in the systems of cultivation. The reduction has been greatest in Group 2, where the arable land is only between 20 and 30 per cent. of the total cultivated area. The reduction of all males above 20 employed has been 40 per cent., and of labourers 53 per cent. The reduction has been least in the six most arable counties in the East of England—namely, 22 per cent. for all persons employed, and 33 per cent. for labourers only.

In Wales, which is mainly pastoral, the reduction of all males employed has been 27 per cent., and of labourers 47 per cent. This almost exactly tallies with the reduction in the three most pastoral counties of England. It is to be noted that the great difference in these districts between the reduction of all persons employed and of labourers only is due to the very small proportion of labourers to farmers and their sons. In Wales the labourers above 20 were, in 1901, little more than half the number of farmers and farmers' sons or relatives—to wit: Farmers, 29,800; women farmers, 5,200; farmers' sons (above 20), 9,560; labourers, 23,550. In the three most pastoral counties of England the numbers are: Farmers, 9,700; farmers' sons, 2,750; labourers, 9,200. For the whole of Scotland the farmers number 45,500, women farmers, 7,800, their sons above 20, 11,100, and the labourers above 20, 53,500 only. It is only in the more arable parts of England that the labourers now bear a large proportion to the numbers of farmers and farmers' sons. In the six most arable counties of England the proportions are: Farmers, 35,100; women farmers, 2,000; farmers' sons above 20, 7,800; labourers above 20, 121,900. The proportion of labourers to farmers is, therefore, a little over 3 to 1. In Wales and in the pastoral parts of England and Scotland

where the farms are small, a large part of the manual work is done by the farmers themselves.

The table giving the number of persons above and under 20 employed per 100 acres is also of interest. It shows that the difference in employment of all persons, including farmers or farmers' sons as well as labourers, between the most pastoral and the most arable parts of England is only slightly more than 1 male above 20, and 0.2 below 20 per 100 acres. In Wales the reduction in the forty years has been from 3.5 males above 20, and 0.8 under 20 per 100 acres to 2.3 above 20 and 0.4 under 20. There is little in the change of cultivation to account for this. It must be due to economy of labour and the use of machinery and improved methods.

There are three counties in England where there was practically no change in the system of cultivation in the forty years between 1861 and 1901. They are Cheshire, Lancashire and Cornwall.

In Cheshire the area of arable land in 1901 was slightly above that in 1871, but the reduction since 1861 of all persons employed has been 21 per cent., and of labourers nearly 40 per cent., very slightly below the average of other counties. The assessment of land has been reduced between 1881 and 1901 by less than 10 per cent., and in the later year was about the same as in 1861. It cannot be said, then, that there has been serious depression in that county.

The same may be said of Lancashire. The area of arable land increased between 1881 and 1901 by about 10 per cent., from 227,000 acres to 243,000, and was only 5,000 acres below that of 1871. The area of permanent pasture also slightly increased, doubtless from reclamation of moor and waste land. There has, therefore, been no change in the system of cultivation, but the number of persons employed has been reduced by 40 per cent., and the number of labourers (above 20) by 53 per cent.—a larger reduction than in any other county in England. There has been a considerable reduction in the number of farmers, from 16,000 to 12,170. The farms even now are of small average—those above 20 acres average 71 acres, or considerably less than one-half the size of farms in the arable districts in the East of England.

In Cornwall also the arable land has remained nearly stationary, viz., 375,000 acres 1871, 363,000 acres 1881, and 361,000 acres 1901. The permanent pasture has, according to the return, increased from 132,000 acres in 1871 to 245,000 in 1901. How much of this is due to reclamation and how much to more accurate returns does not appear. Farms are small and average only 90 acres. The number of labourers has been reduced by one-half since 1861—namely 12,400 in 1861, 10,200 in 1881, and 6,300 in 1901. The

greatest reduction has here taken place in the twenty years from 1881 to 1901, viz., 40 per cent. The number of labourers is 25 per cent. less than that of farmers. The assessment of land has been reduced by about one-ninth since 1881, but is greater by one-seventh than it was in 1861.

In Scotland, also, there are some counties where little or no change has been made since 1861 in the proportion of arable land to pasture.

The county of Aberdeen is the most arable district in Great Britain. Five per cent. only of its area is in permanent pasture. There has been an increase of arable land, as the following figures show:—1861, arable, 548,000 acres; pasture, 31,000; 1881, arable land, 572,000 acres; pasture, 27,000 acres; 1901, arable, 597,000 acres; pasture, 33,000. The area of corn cultivation has remained unchanged, 212,000 acres. The reduction of labourers above 20 has been at the rate of 33 per cent., of which the larger amount was between 1881 and 1901:—1861, 11,700; 1881, 10,100; 1901, 7,940. The number of farmers has been reduced from 8,700 in 1861 to 7,000 in 1901. The farms are small in area, those above 20 acres averaging 92 acres. It will be seen that the reduction of persons employed—22 per cent.—is considerably less than the average of Scotland as a whole. This is doubtless due to the fact that the farms are worked by the farmers and their families, who number more than the labourers.

An interesting comparison may be made between this county of small arable farms, and the three counties of large arable farms in the south-east of Scotland—Berwick, Roxburgh, and Edinburgh. In these three counties the arable land remains much as it was twenty and forty years ago, viz.:—380,000 acres, 1861; 385,000 acres, 1881; 374,000 acres, 1901. The permanent pasture has increased from 111,000 acres to 132,000 acres.

The number of labourers above 20 has been reduced by 40 per cent., from 7,400 in 1861 to 6,000 in 1881, and 4,400 in 1901. The cultivation in these counties is of a very high order. The average of farms above 20 acres is 256 acres, the proportion of persons above 20 per 100 acres is lower than in any other part of Great Britain. It is only 1·7, and the proportion of those under 20 is only 0·5 per 100 acres. Taking the two classes together, they are about one-half the percentage of arable counties in the East of England in Group 6.

The comparison between these three counties and Aberdeenshire affords a striking illustration of the difference between the systems of large and small holdings of arable land, as the following table shows:—

	Number of Agricultural Holdings				Area of Holdings above 300 Acres.	Total Area of Cultivated Land.
	1 to 20 Acres.	20 to 100 Acres.	100 to 300 Acres.	Above 300 Acres		
Aberdeen	5,230	4,280	1,910	124	50,690	630,300
Berwick, Edinburgh, and Roxburgh	1,210	580	780	571	324,650	505,000

	Number of Farmers, including Women and Bailiffs.	Sons, &c., of Farmers Working on Farms.	Labourers and Shepherds over 20.	Total Persons Employed over 20.	Reduction of Males Employed from 1861 to 1901.	Assessment of Land for Income Tax, per Acre.
					Per cent.	s.
Aberdeen	8,750	1,680	8,400	18,820	20	20
Berwick, Edinburgh, and Roxburgh	2,315	380	5,760	8,450	27	28

It appears from these figures that Aberdeen, with a cultivated area only 25 per cent. more than the three South-Eastern Counties, has nearly four times the number of farmers and bailiffs, and 50 per cent. more labourers and shepherds (over 20). The total number of persons employed on its land is more than twice as large. The reduction in the last forty years has been less by one-fifth. On the other hand, judging from the assessment of land, the owners of land in Aberdeenshire receive 8s. per acre less rent, or 30 per cent., and must have far greater outgoings or deductions from rent for the maintenance of farm buildings for their tenants. I am told that this higher rent of the three South-Eastern Counties is mainly due to the better average quality and position of their land. This makes it the more remarkable that so much larger a community of farmers and labourers should be able to make a good living out of the land of the more northern country. It may well be a question which is the soundest and best system, looked at from the interest of the country as a whole, which is concerned not so much in the amount of the surplus rent as in the maintenance of a vigorous and independent population. It is to be noted that a consolidation of holdings has been proceeding in Aberdeenshire, the number of farmers having been reduced by 1,700 from 1861 to 1901.

Comparing again the three South-Eastern Counties with the two pastoral counties of Ayrshire and Lanarkshire, we find in the latter that there has been a small reduction of arable land from 327,000 acres in 1861 to 311,000 in 1881, and 308,000 acres in 1901, and an increase of permanent pasture from 218,000 acres in 1861 to 268,000 in 1901. There has been in the forty years a reduction

of 40 per cent. in the numbers of all persons above 20 employed, and of 60 per cent. in the number of labourers above 20, a greater reduction than in any other part of Great Britain. Of this, three-fourths took place between 1881 and 1901. The number of farmers has been reduced by one-fifth, from 5,200 to 4,150. The number of persons employed per 100 acres is slightly above that in the three arable counties, viz., 2·0 of persons above 20, and 0·45 of persons under 20. The proportion of persons employed per 100 acres is less than in any of the pastoral parts of England.

In view of those cases where there has been no change in the system of cultivation, and where in spite of this there has been a large reduction in the number of persons employed on the farms, and in view also of the percentage reduction of labour in the pastoral districts as compared with the arable districts, it is quite clear that a very large proportion of the reduction of labour between 1881 and 1901 was due to other causes than the laying down of arable land in grass. The same causes which were in operation in the period from 1861 to 1881 must have continued. Labourers were again tempted by better wages in other employments to give up work on the land; farmers were again compelled to economise labour by the greater use of machinery and improved methods.

How many, then, of the 130,000 fewer farm labourers in England and Wales, and 10,000 in Scotland, above the age of 20, who were employed in 1901 as compared with 1881, were reduced owing to the laying down of arable land in grass? The question is not an easy one to answer. The reduction of arable land in the twenty years amounted to about 2,000,000 acres. On a review of all the figures and the facts I have been able to gather, I don't think that the reduction of labour due to the laying down of the arable land has been more than 2 males per 100 acres, of whom three-fourths were above 20 and one-fourth under that age. Undoubtedly in some cases the reduction has been greater, as, for instance, where arable farms became derelict for a time, or where land of a very bad quality, such as the chalk downs, was allowed to go back into poor pasture; but these are exceptional cases. The derelict farms have now been let and are again cultivated—not to the same extent as arable land, but under a mixed system of agriculture, in which dairying takes a large part. The question is, what is the difference in the employment of labour on an average arable farm with some 30 or 40 per cent. of pasture and a farm where the proportions are reversed?

On this point I have consulted, among others, a farmer who was one of those Scotchmen who were tempted to farm in Essex by the very low rent, and who have introduced there the more

economical system which they followed in Scotland. This gentleman farms 500 acres of stiff clay land, of which 150 acres are under the plough. The remainder is in grass. He tells me that he employs 10 labourers only. With himself and two sons that makes 13 men, of whom two are under 20. He keeps 80 cows, and this necessitates a larger number of men than he would otherwise employ. He says that many of his neighbours who are Scotchmen, and who have twice the proportion of arable land, employ even fewer men per 100 acres than he does. "The extension of dairying," he said, "means the employment of more men here in Essex; it is dairying that has saved Essex. There is no derelict land now as there was twelve years ago. Two years ago I could not get a farm when I wanted a change, and I had to raise money on a mortgage to buy the farm I now have."

It would be very desirable to pursue this enquiry further, and to determine what is the number of men employed per 100 acres on an average arable and an average pastoral farm from which skilful farmers succeed in making a profit. On this will depend the answer to the question whether the reduction of farm labourers effected between 1801 and 1901 will be carried yet further in the future, on the assumption that no further change will be made in the system of cultivation by the laying down of more arable land in grass.

The above cases and the great differences in different parts of the country, and especially the small number of labourers employed in the arable counties of Scotland, and the success of the immigrating farmers from Scotland to Essex and some others of the Southern Counties, would tend to show that we have not yet reached the limit of economies of labour in many parts of England. As the result of enquiries made by the Board of Agriculture, Mr. Rew is of opinion that during the past six years there has been a further reduction in the number of labourers employed on farms in England, though not in the same ratio as between 1881 and 1901. It may be that extended use of petroleum engines will in the future dispense to a large extent with horse labour on the land, and in such case may yet further economise labour. At all events, one may safely predict that there will be no increased employment for labour in England and Wales on farms cultivated on the ordinary systems now in use on comparatively large farms.

The hope for increased employment for labour will be in the direction of intense cultivation of comparatively small holdings for fruit, vegetables, &c. I showed in the early part of this paper that the increase in this direction in England and Wales has been very great of late years, from 33,000 persons in

1861 to 74,000 in 1881, and 123,000 in 1901.³ There is reason to believe that this increase has been carried further in the last six years. It is unfortunate that the census is not taken at five years' interval in lieu of ten years, so that we might know what is the progress made in this important direction. I do not propose to discuss the question whether Parliament should stimulate progress in this direction by facilities for creating small holdings. I will only express my own belief that there is room for a great extension of intense cultivation, and for a consequent increase of employment of labour on the land.

The question arises whether this great economy of labour has been effected at the expense of a reduction of products other than that resulting from the laying down of arable land in grass, or from the alteration of the rotation of crops in the direction of a less area of corn in proportion to green crops. As regards the pasture land of Great Britain, which constitutes considerably more than half its area, there seems to be no ground for the suggestion. On the contrary, it is certain that, owing to the low prices of feeding stuffs and of artificial manure, these districts carry a greater stock of cows and cattle than they did. There is distinct proof of this in the statistics of the pastoral counties already referred to, in which there has been no change in the system of agriculture, as the following figures show :—

1881.

	Cows.	Other Cattle.	Sheep.	Horses.
Lancashire	122,100	99,900	318,100	38,300
Cheshire	91,100	60,700	97,800	23,000
Ayrshire and Lanarkshire	75,300	77,400	579,600	16,500
Wales	261,300	393,600	2,718,200	134,800

1901.

	Cows.	Other Cattle.	Sheep.	Horses.
Lancashire	139,000	101,400	335,400	44,900
Cheshire	106,400	73,000	102,400	27,100
Ayrshire and Lanarkshire	90,000	86,900	624,100	16,700
Wales	280,900	462,100	3,427,700	154,600

The figures show in nearly all cases a considerable increase. The same increase of cows and cattle is shown by the statistics of more arable counties where there has been little or no change in the proportion of arable land to pasture :—

³ A deduction should be made from these figures for "seedsmen," if under this head are enumerated the vendors of seeds living in towns, and also for florists under the same conditions.

1881.

	Cows.	Other Cattle.	Sheep.	Horses.
Cornwall	55,100	108,500	426,500	31,500
Aberdeen	41,300	110,800	137,600	26,800
Berwick, Roxburgh, and Edinburgh	18,700	33,600	945,000	13,900

1901.

	Cows.	Other Cattle.	Sheep.	Horses.
Cornwall	70,400	134,600	394,300	31,000
Aberdeen	44,310	136,600	226,600	30,700
Berwick, Roxburgh, and Edinburgh	19,000	35,700	1,050,700	14,100

Whether arable land as a rule is worse cultivated and produces less owing to the less employment of labour is more difficult to determine. The agricultural statistics show that, on the average of the last few years, compared with previous years, there has been an increased production of wheat of rather over three bushels per acre.⁴ But this is stated to be due to inferior land having been laid down in grass, and the consequent improvement in the average of what remains under wheat cultivation. On the other hand, there is a general impression that labour has been somewhat stinted on arable farms, and that the cultivation has not been as neat as it used to be. To what extent this has reduced the production it is impossible to determine. The difference, in any case, cannot be large.

With respect to the 130,000 labourers above 20 who have been withdrawn in England and Wales from farm cultivation in the twenty years from 1881 to 1901, I have shown that 46,000 of them found employment at better wages in intense cultivation of gardens (non-domestic). A further 10,000 represents the increase of domestic gardens taken doubtless from the same class of agricultural labourers. The remaining 74,000 doubtless found employment at higher wages than they were getting as agricultural labourers, in the numerous avocations and industries where physical strength is necessary—on the railways, in the rural police, as carmen, and labourers in towns. Many of them also emigrated. It is not the fact that the older men were compelled to go to the workhouse, or that those who found employment in towns lowered the standard of health and strength there, or

⁴ The average yield of wheat in England was, till a few years ago, reckoned to be about 28 bushels per acre. For the last ten years, since 1895, the average yield has been 31·26 bushels per acre. There has been a somewhat less corresponding increase in the yield of other cereals per acre.

that they flooded the market with a surplus of underpaid labour. If this were the case we should find that the worst men left the rural districts and that the best remained there. We should find that the wages of labour were lowered in rural districts. With lower wages some of the difficulties of farmers in the last twenty years would have been overcome, and they would have been sooner able to make the two ends meet. Exactly the reverse has occurred. Money wages rose; wages as measured in what can be got for the money in bread, meat, tea, sugar, clothing, and all articles of necessity were very greatly increased. The labourers were induced to leave the rural districts—tempted by yet higher wages in the towns in other employments. The best, and not the worst, men went. This was the main cause that wages in rural districts, when measured by the price of food, rose during the last twenty years. It compelled the farmers to resort to new means of economising labour by the use of machinery and improved methods. As a result it would seem that adjustment has been made by most farmers to the new conditions. There is no part of Great Britain at the present time where there is any difficulty in letting farms at the present rents. In many districts there is keen competition for farms, and it is very difficult for any outsider to find one. However much we may deplore the reduction in rural districts of the number of labourers who constitute the reserve of physical wealth and strength of the country, we must recognise the economic causes which have been at work and the material advantages obtained by the labourers who left the land and by those who remained. There is no reason to believe that any rise in price of agricultural produce will reverse what has taken place, or will induce farmers to forego the economies they have already effected. There must be a very large rise in the price of corn to induce farmers to break up again on a large scale the land which has been laid down as pasture. A rise in price may add to the profits of farmers and raise rents, but only on condition that wages will not be increased. If wages are not increased in proportion to the rise in price of bread and meat and other requisites, the condition of the labourer will be worsened in the same proportion, and the inducement to leave the rural districts will be increased rather than reduced.

In conclusion, I must repeat that it is in the direction of intense cultivation in connection with small holdings, under the stimulus of ownership, or of security of tenure different from that of yearly tenancy, which is the rule with larger farms under the system of British agriculture, that we must look forward to a greater employment of labour on the land, and to the increase of a vigorous and independent rural population.

APPENDIX.

TABLE I.—*Three Counties where the Arable Land is Under 20 per Cent. of the Total Cultivated Area:—DERBYSHIRE, WESTMORLAND, MONMOUTH.**Male Persons Employed on Farms.*

	1861.		1881.		1901.	
	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.
Farmers	10,120	—	9,790	—	9,710	—
(Women farmers)	(1,310)	—	(1,230)	—	(1,230)	—
Sons and relatives of farmers employed on farms	2,860	1,520	1,920	1,200	2,750	1,430
Bailiffs	390	—	470	—	540	—
Shepherds	340	—	350	—	330	—
Farm labourers	17,370	5,520	11,550	3,860	9,200	3,030
Total males	31,080	7,040	24,080	5,060	22,530	4,460

Reduction of males above 20 from 1861 to 1901 8,550 28 per cent.

„ labourers „ „ — 47 „

	1871.	1881.	1901.
Arable land acres	311,800	225,300	175,700
Permanent pasture..... „	642,000	770,100	808,800
Total cultivated area.....	953,800	995,400	984,500
Assessment of land for in- come tax..... }	1861. £1,491,800	£1,708,600	£1,465,300
Number of men above 20 per 100 acres..... }	3.3	2.4	2.1
Number of men below 20 per 100 acres..... }	0.7	0.5	0.7

Number of farms in 1895 above 20 acres, 10,220; average, 90 acres.

TABLE II.—*Five Counties where the Arable Land is between 20 and 30 per Cent. of the Total Area of Cultivated Land:—LANCASHIRE, LEICESTER, MIDDLESEX, SOMERSET, STAFFORDSHIRE.*

Male Persons Employed on Farms.

	1861.		1881.		1891.	
	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.
Farmers	33,330	—	31,280	—	28,040	—
(Women farmers)	(3,830)	—	(3,350)	—	(2,995)	—
Sons, &c., of farmers	9,079	5,160	6,330	3,270	8,870	4,460
Bailiffs	1,160	—	1,780	—	1,770	—
Farm labourers	98,320	28,780	65,660	21,890	46,350	15,420
Shepherds	1,830	—	1,330	—	1,320	—
Total males	143,710	33,940	106,380	25,160	86,350	19,880

Reduction of males above 20 from 1861 to 1901 57,366 40 per cent.

„ labourers „ „ 52,000 53 „

	1871.	1881.	1901.
Arable land acres	995,100	881,300	749,600
Permanent pasture „	1,729,400	1,955,400	2,097,000
Total cultivated area.....	2,724,500	2,836,700	2,846,600
Assessment of land for in- come tax..... }	1861. £6,018,800	£6,677,500	£5,194,000
Number of men above 20 per 100 acres }	5.3	3.7	3.0
Number of men below 20 per 100 acres }	1.2	0.8	0.5

Number of farms in 1895 above 20 acres, 27,496; average, 95 acres.

TABLE III.—*Twelve Counties where the Arable Land is between 30 and 40 per Cent. of the Total Cultivated Area:—BUCKS, CHESHIRE, DORSET, DURHAM, GLOUCESTER, HEREFORD, NORTHANTS, NORTHUMBERLAND, RUTLAND, SALOP, WARWICK, WORCESTER.*

Male Persons Employed on Farms.

	1861.		1881.		1901.	
	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.
Farmers	42,430	—	38,460	—	40,530	—
(Women farmers)	(3,950)	—	(3,960)	—	(3,996)	—
Sons, &c., of farmers ...	10,820	6,100	9,720	4,860	11,660	5,820
Bailiffs	3,380	—	3,660	—	3,800	—
Shepherds	6,180	—	4,830	—	5,570	—
Farm labourers	160,700	56,720	121,050	40,350	86,760	28,910
Total males	223,510	62,820	177,720	45,210	148,320	34,730

Reduction of males above 20 from 1861 to 1901 75,198 34 per cent.

„ labourers „ „ 73,990 46 „

	1871.	1881.	1901.
Arable land acres	2,889,000	2,569,100	2,131,800
Permanent pasture „	2,811,400	3,313,200	3,812,500
Total cultivated area.....	5,690,400	5,882,300	5,954,300
Assessment of land for in- come tax..... }	1861. £10,003,700	£11,460,900	£8,274,200
Number of men above 20 per 100 acres..... }	3·9	3·0	2·5
Number of men below 20 per 100 acres..... }	1·0	0·8	0·7

Number of farms in 1895 above 20 acres, 42,844; average, 132 acres.

TABLE IV.—*Eight Counties where the Arable Land is between 40 and 50 per Cent. of the Total Cultivated Area:—CUMBERLAND, DEVON, KENT, SURREY, SUSSEX, WILTS, YORK (N.R.), YORK (W.R.).*

Male Persons Employed on Farms.

	1861.		1881.		1901.	
	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.
Farmers	53,300	—	47,280	—	47,710	—
(Women farmers)	(4,590)	—	(3,060)	—	(3,170)	—
Sons, &c., of farmers ...	14,670	7,480	11,740	5,860	17,790	8,890
Bailiffs	4,340	—	4,770	—	4,540	—
Shepherds.....	5,530	—	4,590	—	5,610	—
Farm labourers	177,450	62,090	138,200	46,060	97,590	32,530
Total males	255,250	69,570	206,580	51,920	173,240	41,420

Reduction of males above 20 from 1861 to 1901 82,162 33 per cent.

„ labourers „ „ 79,800 45 „

	1871.	1881.	1901.
Arable land acres	3,313,200	3,068,600	2,535,400
Permanent pasture..... „	2,640,300	3,227,600	3,738,900
Total cultivated area.....	5,953,500	6,296,200	6,274,300
Assessment of land for in- come tax..... }	1861. £6,441,400	£7,615,300	£5,243,000
Number of men above 20 per 100 acres..... }	4.1	3.3	2.8
Number of men below 20 per 100 acres..... }	1.1	0.8	0.6

Number of farms in 1895 above 20 acres, 49,632 ; average, 122 acres.

TABLE V.—*Seven Counties where the Arable Land is between 50 and 60 per Cent. of the Total Cultivated Area:—BEDFORD, BERKS, CORNWALL, HANTS, HUNTINGDON, NOTTS, OXFORD.*

Male Persons Employed on Farms.

	1861.		1881.		1901.	
	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.
Farmers	21,260	—	19,260	—	19,140	—
(Women farmers)	(1,926)	—	(1,300)	—	(2,370)	—
Sons, &c., of farmers.....	4,890	2,980	4,420	2,210	5,050	2,520
Bailiffs	1,760	—	2,140	—	2,380	—
Shepherds	3,880	—	3,120	—	3,080	—
Farm labourers	98,540	42,880	80,360	27,780	52,670	17,560
Total males	130,330	45,860	109,300	29,990	80,320	20,080

Reduction of males above 20 from 1861 to 1901 50,010 38 per cent.

„ labourers „ „ 45,870 46 „

	1871.	1881.	1901.
Arable land acres	1,967,400	2,002,300	1,706,300
Permanent pasture „	811,500	955,100	1,296,600
Total cultivated area.....	2,778,900	2,957,400	3,002,900
Assessment of land for in- } come tax.....	1861. £4,687,600	£5,239,600	£3,680,100
Number of men above 20 } per 100 acres	4·3	3·6	2·7
Number of men below 20 } per 100 acres	1·5	0·9	0·6

Number of farms in 1895 above 20 acres, 21,043 ; average, 135 acres.

TABLE VI.—*Seven Counties where the Arable Land is over 60 per Cent. of the Total Cultivated Area*:—CAMBRIDGE (76·3), ESSEX (62·2), HERTS (63·5), LINCOLN (67·1), NORFOLK (73), SUFFOLK (75·8), YORK, E.R. (68·5).

Male Persons Employed on Farms.

	1861.		1881.		1901.	
	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20
Farmers	34,870	—	32,470	—	35,160	—
(Women farmers)	(2,708)	—	(2,250)	—	(2,000)	—
Sons, &c., of farmers	7,080	4,090	5,890	2,940	7,800	3,900
Bailiffs	5,700	—	8,830	—	11,700	—
Shepherds.....	5,920	—	5,180	—	5,980	—
Farm labourers	181,400	71,320	156,310	52,100	121,890	40,630
Total males	234,970	75,410	208,680	55,040	182,530	44,530

Reduction of males above 20 from 1861 to 1901 52,440 22 per cent.

„ labourers „ „ ... 59,900 33 „

	1871.	1881.	1901.
Arable land acres	4,294,100	4,258,400	3,938,200
Permanent pasture „	1,255,100	1,444,900	1,688,400
Total cultivated area.....	5,548,300	5,703,300	5,626,600
Assessment of land for in- come tax.....	1861. £8,947,600	£10,138,300	£5,989,000
Number of men above 20 per 100 acres	4·1	3·6	3·2
Number of men below 20 per 100 acres	1·3	1·0	0·8

Number of holdings in 1901 above 20 acres, 33,920; average, 163 acres.

TABLE VII.—WALES.

Male Persons Employed on Farms.

	1861.		1881.		1901.	
	Above 20.	Under 20.	Above 20.	Under 20.	Above 20.	Under 20.
Farmers	32,700	—	30,100	—	29,800	—
(Women farmers)	(4,860)	—	(5,200)	—	(5,286)	—
Sons, &c., of farmers....	10,510	5,290	9,370	4,630	9,560	4,730
Bailiffs	1,000	—	800	—	1,200	—
Shepherds	1,030	—	830	—	1,240	—
Farm labourers	45,070	16,320	30,600	10,300	23,550	7,850
Total males	90,210	21,610	71,700	14,630	65,350	12,580

Reduction of males above 20 from 1861 to 1901 24,860 27 per cent.

„ labourers „ „ 21,450 47 „

	1871.	1881.	1901.
Arable land..... acres	1,111,040	969,500	881,700
Permanent pasture..... „	1,494,400	1,815,400	1,941,300
Total cultivated area.....	2,604,800	2,784,900	2,823,000
Assessment for income tax	1861. £2,650,700	£3,248,400	£3,000,700
Number of men above 20 } per 100 acres	3·5	2·5	2·3
Number of men below 20 } per 100 acres	0·8	0·5	0·4

Number of holdings in 1901 above 20 acres, 30,950; average, 8½ acres.

TABLE VIII.—*Showing the Number of Males Employed in Agriculture in Three English Counties where there has been little or no change in the System of Cultivation.*

CORNWALL.

Male Persons Employed on Farms.

	1861.		1881.		1901.	
	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.
Farmers	7,780	—	7,720	—	7,550	—
(Women farmers)	(450)	—	(420)	—	(430)	—
Sons, &c., of farmers...	1,780	1,230	1,840	1,250	1,900	1,290
Bailiffs	160	—	190	—	380	—
Labourers	12,470	6,320	10,260	5,130	6,360	3,320
Shepherds	230	—	70	—	90	—
Total males	22,420	7,550	19,080	6,380	16,280	4,610

Reduction of males above 20 from 1861 to 1901 6,140 28 per cent.

„ labourers „ „ — 50 „

	1871.	1881.	1901.
Arable land acres	375,300	363,500	361,400
Permanent pasture „	132,000	195,200	245,000
Total cultivated area.....	510,300	558,700	606,400
Assessment for income tax	1861. £746,400	£951,100	£850,300
Number of males above 20 } per 100 acres }	4·6	3·5	2·7
Number of males below 20 } per 100 acres }	1·5	1·1	0·8

Number of holdings in 1895 above 20 acres, 6,270; average, 88 acres.

CHESHIRE.

Male Persons Employed on Farms.

	1861.		1881.		1901.	
	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.
Farmers	6,500	—	6,280	—	5,950	—
Women farmers	930	—	960	—	990	—
Sons, &c., of farmers....	2,150	1,110	1,850	970	2,130	1,060
Bailiffs	170	—	270	—	370	—
Labourers	17,800	5,430	12,400	4,140	10,600	3,530
Shepherds	80	—	170	—	160	—
Total males	26,700	6,540	20,970	5,110	19,210	4,590

Reduction of males above 20 from 1861 to 1901 5,730 21 per cent.

„ labourers „ „ — 40 „

	1871.	1881.	1901.
Arable land acres	193,400	174,500	196,700
Permanent pasture „	314,800	362,200	339,300
Total cultivated area.....	508,200	536,700	536,000
Assessment for income tax	1861. £1,069,300	£1,195,300	£1,105,800
Number of men above 20 } per 100 acres	5·0	4·0	3·6
Number of men below 20 } per 100 acres	1·2	1·0	0·9

Number of holdings in 1895 above 20 acres, 5,520; average, 88 acres.

LANCASTER.

Male Persons Employed on Farms.

	1861.		1881.		1901.	
	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.
Farmers	16,090	—	14,820	—	12,170	—
(Women farmers)	(2,080)	—	(1,680)	—	(1,400)	—
Sons, &c., of farmers. .	4,930	2,610	2,680	1,340	4,390	2,190
Bailiffs	240	—	590	—	590	—
Labourers	32,310	7,460	19,710	6,570	15,130	5,040
Shepherds	200	—	110	—	110	—
Total males	53,770	10,070	37,910	7,910	32,380	7,230

Reduction of males above 20 from 1861 to 1901..... 21,390 40 per cent.

„ labourers „ „ 17,186 53 „

	1871.	1881.	1901.
Arable landacres	250,600	227,500	245,800
Permanent pasture „	485,300	560,100	576,300
Total cultivated area	735,900	787,600	822,100
Assessment for income tax	1861. £1,661,000	£1,855,200	£1,570,000
Number of males above 20 } per 100 acres	6·8	4·8	4·0
Number of males below 20 } per 100 acres	1·3	1·0	0·9

Number of farms in 1895 above 20 acres, 10,262; average, 71 acres.

TABLE IX.—*Showing Numbers of Males Employed on Farms in Five Counties in Scotland where there has been little or no change in the System of Cultivation.*

AYRSHIRE AND LANARKSHIRE.

Male Persons Employed in Agriculture.

	1861.		1881.		1901.	
	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.
Farmers	5,220	—	4,340	—	4,150	—
(Women farmers).....	(450)	—	(420)	—	(400)	—
Sons, &c., of farmers....	1,420	790	1,410	770	1,340	670
Bailiffs.....	160	—	240	—	270	—
Labourers	10,840	3,610	5,820	1,950	4,360	1,840
Shepherds	420	—	520	—	680	—
Total males	18,060	4,400	12,430	2,720	10,800	2,510

Reduction of males above 20 from 1861 to 1881..... 5,630

“ “ “ ‘81 „ 1901..... 1,630

“ “ “ ‘61 „ ‘01..... 7,260 40 per cent.

“ labourers “ ‘61 „ ‘01 6,480 60 “

	1871.	1881.	1901.
Arable land acres	327,400	311,000	308,000
Permanent pasture „	219,300	253,000	268,000
Total cultivated area.....	546,700	564,000	576,000
1861.			
Number of men above 20 } per 100 acres	3.3	2.2	2.0
Number of men below 20 } per 100 acres	0.8	0.5	0.45.

Number of farms in 1895 above 20 acres, 4,635; average, 120 acres.

ROXBURGH, BERWICK, and EDINBURGH.

Male Persons Employed in Agriculture.

	1861.		1881.		1901.	
	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.
Farmers	1,790	—	1,500	—	1,580	—
(Women farmers).....	(90)	—	(80)	—	(85)	—
Sons, &c., of farmers....	400	200	360	150	380	170
Bailiffs	550	—	500	—	650	—
Shepherds	1,210	—	1,360	—	1,350	—
Labourers	7,480	3,720	6,070	2,580	4,410	2,300
Total males	11,380	3,920	9,790	2,680	8,370	2,470

Reduction of males above 20 from 1861 to 1881..... 1,590

" " '81 ,, 1901..... 1,420

" " '61 ,, '01..... 3,010 27 per cent.

" labourers " '61 ,, '01..... 3,020 40 "

	1871.	1881.	1901.
Arable land acres	380,000	385,300	374,000
Permanent pasture..... "	111,200	124,100	132,000
Total cultivated area.....	491,200	509,400	506,000
Assessment for income tax	1861. £833,000	£988,000	£695,000
Number of men above 20 } per 100 acres	2·3	1·9	1·7
Number of men below 20 } per 100 acres	0·8	0·5	0·5

Number of farms in 1895 above 20 acres, 1,920; average, 256 acres.

ABERDEENSHIRE.

Male Persons Employed on Farms.

	1861.		1881.		1901.	
	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.	Over 20.	Under 20.
Farmers	8,730	—	7,680	—	7,022	—
(Women farmers)	(980)	—	(900)	—	(1,038)	—
Sons, &c., of farmers....	1,410	790	1,510	800	1,680	1,030
Bailiffs	430	—	350	—	690	—
Shepherds	320	—	380	—	460	—
Labourers	11,710	3,900	10,180	3,390	7,940	3,360
Total males	22,200	4,690	20,100	4,190	17,790	4,390

Reduction of males above 20 from 1861 to 1901 4,410 20 per cent.

„ labourers „ „ 3,770 33 „

	1871.	1881.	1901.
Arable landacres	548,300	572,500	597,300
„ under corn „	(212,400)	(212,400)	(214,300)
Permanent pasture..... „	31,200	27,400	33,000
Total cultivated area.....	579,500	599,900	630,300
Assessment of land for in- come tax.....	£542,100	£682,000	£619,400
Number of men below 20 per 100 acres	3·9	3·3	2·8
Number of men above 20 per 100 acres	0·8	0·7	0·7

Number of farms in 1895 above 20 acres, 7,336; average, 80 acres.

DISCUSSION *on* LORD EVERSLEY'S PAPER.

THE CHAIRMAN, in opening the proceedings, much regretted to announce that Lord Eversley was unable to be present, having met with a slight accident, and was forbidden by his medical attendant to leave the house. He was sure the meeting would wish to convey to Lord Eversley their regret, and hope that he would be soon restored to perfect health.

The Paper was then read by Sir ATHELSTANE BAINES.

The Rt. Hon. JESSE COLLINGS, M.P., much regretted that he should not be able to remain to hear the discussion on this very interesting Paper, which went into great detail and required much examination and consideration. It was said very truly that from 1861 to 1881 agriculture was prosperous and rents were rising, but it must be remembered that during that period the agricultural labourer's wages were very low. It always had been so; high prices and prosperous agriculture had in the past been accompanied by very low wages. He did not attach much importance to what Lord Eversley said as to the enormous rise of wages up to 1901. If he remembered rightly, the average wages rose from 10s. 4d. to 13s. 4d. But, so long as wages were inside the starvation circle, as 13s. 4d. was, they need go no further to account for the labourer wishing to get away from such a state of things. Then it was said that the reduction in the cost of food was equal to a further 40 per cent. rise, so that altogether the labourers were twice as well off. He disputed that the reduction in the cost of living was anything like that named. Take the old state of things in what were called "the hungry forties": the labourer, as far as the necessities of life were concerned, was then far and away better off than he was afterwards. Butter, cheese, milk, bacon, pork, rent, coal, and fuel, all those things were much lower than in the brilliant times which were described; and it was of no use attempting to disguise that fact. They ought not to keep on talking about the agricultural labourer having such a large share of agricultural prosperity and therefore being so much better off. So long as he had only 13s. 4d. or even 15s. or 16s. a week on which to keep himself, wife and family, there was no need for further discussion as to his condition. It was little better than starvation; and it was not right to cover it up by saying how much the wage had increased. If you started at zero, you could easily show an immense increase. Again, in the old times what were called "perquisites" were far greater than in later days, and employment was more regular and continuous. In the old-fashioned days the farmers kept their hands on all the year round; whereas now, when they were day labourers, they were often sent home on wet days. Nothing of that sort was known in the early decades of the last century. By

consulting the writings of almost any agricultural author, it would be found that farmers had nearly twice the force on their farms in the old days. The question was not how many men were engaged on the land, but how many ought to be. There was now a great deal less land under cultivation, and consequently less labour and a diminished production. Further, besides the low wages, what did they find? That there was no time at which the labourer had any prospect whatever on the land, none to speak of; one here and there got on, but there was not, as there was in every other occupation, a possibility of his rising in his profession. He called it a "profession" because the old agricultural labourer was one of the ablest men to be found as a technical skilled labourer. If he had not science, he had observation, and came to a conclusion from his experience and observation on matters in connection with the weather, the soil, the habits of animals, and so on, almost as correct as the scientific man came to to-day. They had yet to learn what they had lost in the splendid *personnel* of the old agricultural labourer. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon with England unless they got that class of man back again; but how was it to be done? That was the question of the day, a question on which their safety depended in the future, and with regard to which all statements about increasing wealth might be disregarded. He was glad to see how this question was coming forward. There were two sentences in the Paper which he thought of more practical value than all the rest of it put together: one was at p. 290, which said that "the hope for increased employment would be in the direction of intense cultivation of comparatively small holdings for fruit, vegetables, &c." The other, which was still more conclusive, was the sentence on p. 293, which stated that for an increase of a vigorous and independent rural population we must look to the stimulus of ownership or a security of tenure different from that of yearly tenancy. "Security of tenure" was a very vague term which no one had yet been able to define, and though they, parrot-like, constantly repeated it, nobody knew how to secure it except by ownership. He would ask his friend Major Craigie's special attention to these two paragraphs, and ask him to put from his mind all those financial considerations, which were of small importance in the face of what they wanted to secure. It was a question of life and death for this nation. What was wanted was, to restore the old class of yeoman-ownerships and peasant proprietors owning the land they tilled. That did not mean that all the country was to be cut up in that way; there should be every kind of tenure and holding; but ownership must be the basis of the system, not a mere incident in it. Our system of land tenure had thoroughly broken down, not only in England, but had been discarded by every other country in Europe. Great Britain remained the only country that had not yet found out (though it was rapidly finding out) that a system based on three separate castes, landlord, tenant, and labourer, was a rotten one. What they wanted to do was to restore those great classes which originally made England what it was. They could be restored: there was a land-hunger, not only among the rural

population, but there were thousands of good and suitable men in the towns who would be only too glad to get back to the country on fair and proper conditions.

Mr. RICHARDS said that as one who took part in the Royal Commission of 1892, he might say that the Commissioners were absolutely united in the conclusions they came to as to the vastly improved condition of the labouring classes, and they were all extremely careful to give the figures and facts on which they formed those conclusions. He was, therefore, somewhat surprised to find a gentleman of the eminence of the last speaker setting up his own imagination against facts which were beyond dispute. They were all agreed that it was very desirable, if possible, to retain the population on the land, and the question was as to the best method of keeping them there. They could not be kept there by artificial means. He entirely agreed with Lord Eversley, that much might be done by increasing the facilities for small holdings; but that was a matter which could not be forced, and, whatever Parliament might do, it could only be successful so far as it coincided with natural economic methods. He believed that agriculture would have to develop very much as other industries. He would take, for instance, one with which he was best acquainted, that of cotton spinning. Many years ago a mill with 100,000 spindles would have been thought an enormous undertaking, but to-day a man would be thought very foolish who built a mill containing less than 700,000 or 800,000. Side by side with facilities for small holdings would have to be placed the conditions of natural economic development. When on the Royal Commission, it fell to his lot to examine a district which was about the best in England, and the only one in which the farmsteading had been laid out with a view to economising the employment of labour—he referred to Lord Tollemache's estate—and he found that the same amount of land might be worked as well with less labour. Some people deplored the use of these economic methods as tending to a still greater depopulating of the rural districts, and that might appear to be the first effect. But the first thing to do was to establish a prosperous agriculture. When you had done that, you would soon get an abundant supply of labour. Mr. Collings had spoken of the vagueness of the term "security of tenure," but he thought it was understood, in a broad sense, to mean that the man who farmed the land should have the whole benefit of the brains and material he put into it. Before there could be anything like intense farming in England, there must be greater security of tenure than there exists to-day. It was said that as between landlord and tenant, if a tenant took a farm for twenty-one years on certain terms and conditions, he had no complaint to make when he surrendered the farm at the end. But on the other hand, the interest of the nation should always be paramount in the contract. Under existing conditions, an intelligent, scientific farmer during the earlier years of his tenancy brought his land to a high pitch of cultivation, and

during the last three or four years he put nitrate of soda on it to force out the good qualities which made the farm productive. That was the natural process by which the tenant recouped himself, but the nation suffered. Absolute security of tenure was required, so that at the end of the tenant's term the land should be left in as good a state of cultivation as when he took it. He saw no reason why small holdings and large holdings should not go on side by side in the neighbourhood of large towns, such as Liverpool, Manchester, and London. The ground would be made rich, because of the proximity of a favourable market; intense cultivation would take place, and huge crops be raised. On the other hand, there were certain districts where the natural development would be in a different direction, fences would be broken down and steam ploughs introduced, and successful agriculture brought about by economising labour.

Dr. LONGSTAFF said it was only natural that politicians should be led astray by the charms of rhetoric. It had been a great disappointment to him not to have had the opportunity of meeting his friend and former colleague, Lord Eversley; but he thought he, too, had been carried away to some extent by the eloquence of a politician when he wrote that "it might well be a question which was the soundest and best system, looked at from the interests of the country as a whole, which was concerned not so much in the securing of a maximum rent as in the maintenance of a vigorous and independent population." He could very well imagine an able advocate of Tariff Reform making great fun of that sentence, and paraphrasing it by saying that it was a question whether a minimum price really was the greatest hope of the nation. It was the duty of their Society to prepare dry facts on which the flowers of rhetoric might be expended, but not to indulge in them themselves. Lord Eversley seemed to think that because all were glad that women were not employed on the land to the same extent as formerly, and that children were in school instead of working in the fields, they were not to be counted among agricultural labourers; but that seemed to him to be wrong. Whatever might be the desirability or otherwise of the change, if there had been a reduction in the number of adult labourers and also of women and child labourers, it showed that the question of total reduction was all the more serious. As a matter of fact, there were so many fewer people deriving their living from the land. Some years ago, in a paper on Rural Depopulation, he (the speaker) called attention to a point which was not alluded to in this Paper, but was not without importance, though it was impossible to state it numerically; that was, the substitution of the town tradesman for the agricultural labourer in a great many occupations. There was a time when, at all events over the corn-growing portions of England, buildings were mainly roofed with thatch, and the thatchers were to a great extent agricultural labourers, since they did not spend the whole of their time in thatching. That trade had almost died out, and buildings were now covered with slates or tiles by tradesmen coming from towns. In the same way the introduction, first, of

wire-fencing and, secondly, of barbed-wire fencing, greatly diminished the work of the hedger and ditcher, and was mainly done by contractors in towns. Again, a great deal that used to be done by the local blacksmith was now done by the manufacturer at Wolverhampton or Birmingham; and in those parts of the country where suitable stone could be obtained, stone-drains used to be made; but pipe-drains were now substituted, the pipes being manufactured outside the place altogether by a different set of men; and the work was often done by contractors, and much less by labourers on the spot than used to be the case. In the same way, the threshing on the farms was almost entirely done by contractors who came from outside, and only very little local labour was employed in connection therewith. Again, there was a tendency, only incipient at present, for a great deal of butter-making to be done as a matter of trade by persons outside the farm altogether. To his mind, the most interesting fact brought out in this Paper was the evenness of the diminution of agricultural labour over the different parts of the country. It was a curious thing that no one had yet mentioned a factor which probably had as much to do with the migration of farm labourers as anything, and that was education; it made people more familiar with the towns, and showed the labourer that there was another life besides that which their fathers and grandfathers lived; finally, the improved means of communication afforded facilities for migration. He thought Lord Eversley was wrong in denying that the influx of country labourers into towns deteriorated the health of the towns and overcrowded the slums. That was one of those flowers of rhetoric, and several steps were missed out. No doubt the agricultural labourer going into the towns did tend, not to deteriorate the health of the towns, but to deteriorate the average health of the nation, by the fact that his children and grandchildren would be brought up in the town and not in the country, and he for one did not believe you could permanently keep a town population as vigorous as a country population. Those vigorous men coming from the country displaced the ineffective and feeble men, and pushed them to the wall. It was not the strong man who came to London and joined the police who went into the slums; but he pushed a man, who pushed another, and in that way the slums got overcrowded. He should like to hear from Major Craigie to what extent the changes in the accuracy of the returns affected that argument, alluding especially to the second part of the Paper, which had relation to the product.. He was a small landowner, and had a small amount of land in hand; sometimes he feared that he filled up his return wrongly, and sometimes forgot to fill it up at all. It seemed to him possible that his tenants might not be much more accurate, and he very often wondered whether Major Craigie was really analysing sound material. It was sometimes said that the more enlightened the person who filled up the return the worse the result, and possibly that might be so. No doubt Lord Eversley intended to say, though he omitted it, that in Lancashire and Cheshire the question was very much governed by the large industries affording ample means of

employment in those districts. Mr. Collings had said that if you began at zero it was easy to show a great percentage of increase, and, in the same way, in diminishing from a fixed number downwards, there was a limit to which you could go. The smaller diminution of agricultural labourers in the second period of twenty years was largely due to the fact that you had a smaller number to diminish, and, for the same reason, he anticipated in the next twenty years a still smaller decrease.

Major CRAIGIE said they must all deeply regret the absence of Lord Eversley, and especially the cause of it. Although nearly twenty years had passed since their senior ex-President had filled the Chair, many of them had experience of his continued interest in statistical inquiry, and they recognised the value of his services and advice. The question placed before them that day was statistical and not political. When he heard his friend Mr. Jesse Collings make the interesting remarks he had just offered, he began to be afraid that the Society might be led off from the true ground they were asked to discuss by more fascinating topics of general agrarian politics. The real question to-night was one of the truth and sufficiency of the figures relied on to demonstrate and to measure the decline of agricultural labour, where and when the decline had taken place, and what particular forms of labour were those which had declined most. This investigation would allow them to see what were the causes pointed to by the recorded movements of the population, and it was to this close attention should be given, and not so much what might be the alleged advantage of one or other of the various political schemes or methods for rejuvenating agriculture, or keeping people on the land in the future. The comparative value and the accuracy of the census returns was the first thing one thought of. By some misfortune each succeeding census, particularly as regarded the occupations of the people, differed more or less in form from that which had preceded it, and a good deal of Lord Eversley's work had consisted, therefore, in trying to disentangle the meaning of the figures from the obscurity which hindered recognition of the real situation. He had dissected the large totals from which political arguments were often drawn, and the result so carefully arrived at reduced the exaggerated totals which, perhaps naturally enough, without close examination of the census figures, many people had accepted at their face value. Even if it was permissible to talk of the "million" who had left the land, Lord Eversley had made it quite clear that the greater reduction of numbers took place in the twenty years before 1881, and but only a smaller proportion since that date, and only the latter period coincided in any way with what was called agricultural depression. He had not dealt, as he probably would if the inquiry had been carried further, with the parallel movements of the agricultural population in other countries, under conditions different from our own; but they were also very striking. Anyone who would take in detail the German or French censuses would see that the movement of agricultural labour was not wholly a British phenomenon. He

agreed with Dr. Longstaff that the loss of women from the fields was a distinct loss of labour, and in this respect there was a striking difference apparent if you compared the position with that of other countries. Some American statisticians, dealing with the effect on labour of new forms of machinery, had pointed out that in one or two classes of farms female labour was actually increasing. Again, if you went to Denmark, where so much attention was given to dairy-farming, there was a tendency to maintain and develop the employment of women on the land. Unless that kind of labour was employed, it would be very difficult to carry out with any economic success any of these schemes of small holdings to which allusion had been made. He did not share the feeling that women were entirely unsuited for some kinds of agricultural labour. With reference to the figures before them, he should like to have seen a further explanation of the effect of the change made in the second item of the occupation schedule in bringing into the category of the agricultural workers in 1901 the female relatives of the farmer who were assisting in agriculture. This appeared for the first time in recent years in the census of 1901, and may suggest a correction in the opposite direction to some of those made in the Paper. He still thought it was a necessary extension, but it affected certain of the figures when they came to compare them with his other records. He thought the tables now presented would prove most useful as a starting point for local examinations in detail, and he would suggest as a future sphere of inquiry that they should apply to the bare figures of numbers of persons employed the calculations they had had on former occasions before the Society with regard to wages. An endeavour to discover what was the relative saving in farmers' outlay or in the cost of production, if any, by the diminution of manual force employed on the farm would be quite worth maturing. They must also take account in any inquiry as to more economic production of the number of working horses. So far as the agricultural returns might be accepted on this point, the apparent diminution in the number of acres under the plough had not been reflected in the number of horses kept for ploughing, and it would seem that whatever gain in labour outlay was effected by the farmers having fewer ploughmen to pay, might be lost if too many working horses are retained. Dr. Longstaff had asked how far they might trust the figures with regard to areas and crops now issued by the Board of Agriculture. On the whole, he thought they had every reason to believe in the approximate accuracy of their general result. There might be an error and an omission here and there, but such errors, where they had, as in this case, a solid basis of half a million returns filled up by different individuals, the *minus* and the *plus* errors cancelled each other. It might be interesting to Dr. Longstaff to know that up to quite a recent date the total percentage of returns not sent in was as low as 3 per cent. He did not say all the returns received were accurate in every detail, but they supplied a statistical basis of a much wider and better character than statisticians often had to deal with, and these

agricultural returns, maintained annually as they had been in so nearly uniform a shape for forty years, were a more valuable and more consistent source of information than, he feared, could be found in the occupation tables of the census.

Mr. JESSE ARGYLE, after remarking on the general interest of the Paper, said it would be interesting to know how many people had been misled by the great change in the method of compiling the census which took place in 1871. He remembered the very point referred to by Lord Eversley of the removal of the wives and daughters of farmers from the agricultural class so puzzled such a careful paper as "The Economist" that it propounded various theories to account for what was in reality an imaginary decrease of nearly 250,000 in the number of women employed in agriculture in a single decade. He agreed that it was much the best to entirely exclude women engaged in agriculture in making comparisons with previous years; there being another reason for this not mentioned by the author. While the censuses of 1851 and 1861 included all the wives and daughters of farmers, and while those of 1871, 1881 and 1891 carefully excluded them so far as they could, in 1901 they were again to some extent introduced. Whilst in previous returns there was the line, "Farmers' sons, grandsons and other male relatives," in 1901 this was altered to read "Sons, daughters, &c.," and, in that way, about 18,000 women were re-introduced. He could not say whether these were previously returned as farm-servants; possibly they were, but there was nothing to show it. Another point which might easily mislead was that in the earlier censuses landowners were returned as being engaged in agriculture; whilst in the more recent ones they were all relegated to the "independent" or "unoccupied" class. In 1861 there were more than 30,000 of these landowners returned under the head of "agriculture." With regard to the greater employment of machinery in farming, the census figures were interesting. In 1871 there were only 1,500 persons returned as agricultural machine proprietors and attendants, whilst in the last census there were 6,600. There was one point which he had not heard mentioned anywhere, but which seemed to be of some importance. To a considerable extent, the transfer from agriculture to a town occupation was not direct, but indirect. A number of small industries, other than agriculture, had been started in the villages, and the agricultural labourers had put their sons to those trades, instead of putting them on to the land. No doubt education had a good deal to do with that; but what had, he believed, largely happened was, not that the young men had gone direct to the industrial centres, but had learnt their trades in the villages, and then, as opportunity occurred, went to the towns. As a young man, he lived two or three years in a tiny agricultural town in the West of England, and he saw this process going on. Whilst he was there, there was a great dispute in the printing trade, and two or three young men, sons of agricultural labourers, who were working in the rural printing office, seized the opportunity and went straight to London,

where they were soon, he was told earning 4*l.* or 5*l.* a week on a morning newspaper, instead of the 1*l.* they got in the country. And he knew that they had been the means of bringing up others from the same parts of the country. You could not really wonder at it, for in that place there was absolutely no amusement of any kind whatever for the young fellows in winter, apart from the public-house—no concerts, no reading-room, and no discussion-class; there was nothing for them to do in the long evenings but to loaf about the unlit street, or, if they could afford it, go into the tap-room of the local beer-house. With such a state of things, it was no wonder that a young man seized the first opportunity of going to a great town. He agreed with the view that agricultural depression had little to do with the change that was going on; it was mainly due to other causes. In the neighbourhood he had referred to, there was, save possibly amongst a very few aged people, no actual distress; though wages were low, they were sufficient to provide for actual needs, and there was nobody out of work; but there was an absence of future prospects. Another thing was, the practical absence of social liberty and privacy; you could not do anything whatever but what it was known to everybody else for miles round.

Mr. WILLIS BUND said Lord Eversley had done very valuable service in showing the fallacies which lay in some of the census tables, but he was not quite sure he had not, in his zeal for small holdings, rather fallen into a fallacy himself. In the next census, probably there would be a number of additional persons returned as connected with land, and the public would be told in glowing terms that small holdings were a wonderful success. He might give a little experience of his own with reference to small holdings. In a district not far from Bromsgrove, there was a number of persons who used to follow the occupation of nailers, they had now taken small holdings, and they spent so many days working in their nail shops, and so many days on the land, and they would now all be returned as having come on the land as small holders, but they had not come from the towns, they were the same people who were in the village before. Great care would, therefore, have to be taken in making out these statistics to avoid mistakes and prevent people speaking in glowing terms of what small holdings were to bring people back to the land, when in fact they were there already.

Mr. B. SANSOME said he should like to call attention to one point referred to in the Paper, namely, the cost of living. In the book mentioned by Mr. Collings, "*The Hungry Forties*," written by a daughter of Cobden, it was stated that in 1845, the cost of a loaf was 5*d.*, butter 7*d.* lb., cheese 2*d.*, bacon 3*d.*, and beef 4*d.*, a score of potatoes 2*d.*, and new-laid eggs 30 a 1*s.* The total of those figures comes to 2*s.* 11*d.* Under present prices, the loaf was 5½*d.*, butter 1*s.*, cheese 6*d.*, bacon 8*d.*, beef 8*d.*, potatoes 9*d.*, eggs 1*s.* 6*d.*, thus making 5*s.* 6½*d.* There was, therefore, 3*s.* more

payable by the labourers than it cost them sixty years ago. That being so, the wages mentioned by Lord Eversley, 13s. compared with 10s., had not, it was plain, improved the condition of the labourers. It was entirely wrong to say that the price of food, taking the leading articles, had gone down, it was, in fact, 40 or 50 per cent. higher.

Mr. JOHN LLOYD desired to call attention to the many charges on the land which militated very much against the progress of agriculture. He referred especially to the burden of the tithe rent charge, which was very heavy on the best corn-growing land, often amounting to 4s. per acre. Then there was the land-tax, the interference of sanitary inspectors, who would not allow people to keep pigs, a tax on the farmer's trap, and many other things. The main burden, however, was that of tithes; there were thousands of acres of beautiful arable and pasture land which were not cultivated on account of that impost.

Mr. W. R. LAWSON said Major Craigie had advised the speakers to stick to hard-and-fast figures; but he did not indorse that. On the contrary, he did not see what was to be made of mere figures, especially when you got such variations and contradictions in them as they had seen in this discussion. It seemed to him that the effect of this Paper was, to show that they could not have the slightest faith in any of the census returns, as they so seldom agreed with each other. It was often thrown in their faces that anything could be proved by statistics: but Lord Eversley had shown them that anything could be explained away by statistics. If the Paper had any practical meaning, it was that there had been no disappearance of farm labourers worth speaking of. But supposing it had established that, how far did that carry them in solving what they all knew to be the fundamental problem before the nation at the present time? The question was, not simply whether there were now 100,000 fewer agricultural labourers than there were sixty years ago, but what proportion the rural population bore to the town population. During those sixty years, the proportion of urban population had increased to a very unhealthy extent; and, with all respect to Major Craigie, he could not see how the urban population was going to maintain the health of the country as the rural population would do. Nowadays, there were slum suburbs close to London nearly as bad as Whitechapel used to be. There was another fallacy in this Paper which showed what a very short distance you could go if you stuck to hard and dry figures. Apparently, it did not occur to Lord Eversley that for fifty years previous to 1846, when this depopulation was supposed to have commenced, agriculture in England had been growing at a very rapid rate, the rural population had been increasing almost as rapidly as that of towns, and its condition was better in many respects. They ought to take the period when agriculture was growing, and compare it with the recent period when it had been decreasing. That was more important than merely figuring up how

many labourers there were in one census or in another, and then confessing, when you had done with them, that none of the returns were to be relied upon. He had been several times in Canada, and had learnt many things there, some of them bearing on this question. The Canadians had a type of provincial town which, he believed, we should ultimately have to adopt. He knew one or two such towns in Ontario, with a population of 8,000 or 10,000, situated in agricultural districts, but not wholly dependent on agriculture. In their early days they were blessed with citizens with brains, who had business-like ideas of developing them. They offered free sites for factories with freedom from taxes for twenty years, and thus induced people to come in with considerable capital and build factories. Some of these employed 300 or 400 people right in the heart of the country. That was what we should probably have to come to. Such towns did not lose their rural character; the town and the country elements being successfully combined in them.

The CHAIRMAN said he should confine himself to proposing a hearty vote of thanks to Lord Eversley for his very interesting Paper, for the discussion had ranged over such a variety of subjects that it was impossible to deal with them at the moment. He was sure the Fellows would criticise the Paper carefully and accurately, and would give to economists, politicians, and statesmen the benefit of those dry statistical facts at which they arrived.

The following communication has since been received from Lord Eversley :—

I hope I may be permitted in the *Journal* of the Society to add a few words by way of comment on the discussion which took place after the reading of my Paper in my enforced absence. In the first place I must emphasize that my object, as Major Craigie well pointed out, was to determine the real reduction which has taken place in the forty years, from 1861 to 1901, in the number of persons employed in agriculture, to disentangle the facts and figures from the intricate confusion created by the different classifications adopted in successive census returns, and to dispel many exaggerated statements which have been founded on them. Secondly, having determined the figures, my object was to show how far the reduction was due to changes in the system of cultivation, such as the laying of arable land in grass, and how far to other causes, such as the economy of labour effected by the use of machinery and other improved methods. It was not my intention to enter upon the subject discussed by several speakers, whether an increase of rural population could be effected by multiplying small holdings. Having, however, shown that there is no reason to expect a larger employment of labour on the land under the existing system of large farms, but rather the reverse, I incidentally expressed the hope and belief that

it is in the direction of intense cultivation on small holdings, there is room for a greatly increased employment of labour on the land. With respect to the reduction of agricultural labourers in the forty years under review, I showed that by far the greater part of it took place in the first half between 1861 and 1881, when agriculture was prosperous, when prices were high and when money wages were largely increased, and that much the smaller part took place between 1881 and 1901, when prices of produce were continually falling, when grave depression of agriculture existed, and when, in spite of this, wages, measured in what could be obtained for them in food and other requirements of labourers, were again largely increased.

As a conclusion from this I showed how very much improved has been the condition of agricultural labourers in the forty years. On this point I must entirely dissent from the statements made by Mr. Jesse Collings to the effect that "agricultural labourers, as far as the necessities of life were concerned, were far away better off in what have been called the hungry forties than in more recent years"; that "butter, cheese, milk, bacon, pork, rent, coal and fuel were all much lower" in these good old times. No one who has really studied the figures of prices and of wages can possibly come to these conclusions. I am not able to state what the average rate of agricultural labourers' wages was between 1840 and 1850. It is certain, however, that it was no higher than in 1850. The Board of Trade memorandum, which I quoted, gave the average weekly wage for that year as 9s. 4d. It showed how this gradually rose till in 1901-3 it was 14s. 7d., an increase of 5s. 3d., or more than 50 per cent. As regards what could be got for these money wages there is an interesting statement by the late Mr. William Little, in his report to the Royal Commission on Labour of 1894, to the effect that the average price of a sufficiency of flour, butter, cheese, tea and sugar for a week's consumption of an adult male labourer gradually fell during the period under review from 50·4d. to 29·2d., a reduction of more than 40 per cent. To this extent, independent of the rise of money wages, the labourers of late years have been better off. All the other requirements of labourers—clothes, boots, petroleum, fuel, &c., have fallen in about the same ratio. Meat alone has not fallen in price in the same proportion. But nothing is more certain than that agricultural labourers in the days of dear bread were never able to afford the luxury of butchers' meat, while at the present time they are generally able to do so. The further statement of Mr. Collings that "in old-fashioned days farmers kept their hands on all the year round, whereas now the men were day labourers, and were often sent home on wet days" is one which cannot be sustained. It is a matter of common knowledge that in the days of protection and high prices, there was a great redundancy of labour in rural districts. Large numbers of men were discharged by farmers in the winter, and were thrown upon the rates for outdoor relief. Of late years there has been a deficiency of labour rather than the reverse in rural districts. Pauperism has largely

decreased. There are as a rule no men out of work at any period of the year.

I quite agree with Dr. Longstaff, that in considering the reduction in the number of labourers, account should be taken of the many ways in which labour has been dispensed with in rural districts by such changes as the substitution of wire fencing for hedges, and of slates and tiles for thatching. If I did not mention these altered methods, I had them in my mind when I referred to the economy of labour which has been effected of late years. I would also observe, with reference to his remarks, that when I controverted the statement "that the migration of rural labourers had resulted in lowering the standard of health and strength of the people of the towns, and flooded the market with a surplus of underpaid labour," I was not unmindful of the effect of this migration on the lowest classes of workers in towns, by adding to the competition for work, and in many cases by increasing the difficulties of over-crowding. It is for this reason, among others, that I should welcome any measures which, by increasing the inducements and facilities for intense cultivation and small holdings, will give greater employment for labour in rural districts, and stem this tendency to concentrate population in urban districts. I have only to conclude by thanking the many speakers for their kindly personal references to me.

The following were elected Fellows of the Society :—

Marius Taudin Chabot.		Samuel Lord, A.S.A.A.
William Palin Elderton, F.I.A.		