WILEY

Agricultural Wages in England and Wales during the Last Fifty Years

Author(s): A. Wilson Fox

Source: *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (Jun., 1903), pp. 273-359

Published by: [Wiley](#) for the [Royal Statistical Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2339234>

Accessed: 24/06/2014 22:26

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Wiley and Royal Statistical Society are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

AGRICULTURAL WAGES *in ENGLAND and WALES during the*
LAST FIFTY YEARS. *By* A. WILSON FOX, C.B.

[Read before the Royal Statistical Society, 21st April, 1903.
MAJOR PATRICK GEORGE CRAIGIE, C.B., President, in the Chair.]

CONTENTS :

PAGE	PAGE
Introduction 273	Irregularity of Work 295
Methods of obtaining Information 273	Earnings of Women and Children 297
Terms of Engagement of Farm	Condition of Cottages, and Rent .. 301
Labourers, Systems of Pay-	Position of the Agricultural
ment, &c. 274	Labourer in 1903 compared
Effect of Poor Law Administra-	with 1850 309
tion upon Wages 275	Migration from the Country Dis-
Rates of Weekly Wages 279	tricts 310
Yearly Earnings 282	
Value of Food 290	APPENDICES 323

Introduction.

WHEN Major Craigie did me the honour to ask me to read this Paper, I felt diffident of undertaking such a task, because of the great difficulty in obtaining satisfactory information about the total annual earnings, particularly in former years. The rates of weekly wages present much less difficulty, but the annual amount received from this source does not represent the labourer's income.

Methods of obtaining Information.

The methods of obtaining information for this paper have been as follows :—

Records of weekly wages, summer and winter, for periods of thirty years and upwards, have been collected from 119 farms in nearly every county in England, and from 6 in Wales, amounting in all to 125 returns. Information has also been obtained from these farms about rates for piecework, remuneration in harvest and payments in kind, in certain cases about total annual earnings, and also about the employment of women and children at field work in former times. I have endeavoured to obtain these particulars as far as possible from tenant farmers, as the wages paid on the home farms of estates are not infrequently rather higher than those paid in the surrounding district, and are usually less susceptible to change on account of low prices and unfavourable seasons.

A number of correspondents from nearly every county, with special knowledge of the economic condition of the agricultural classes, have sent particulars of the kind of food eaten by the labourers at the present time and fifty years ago, the quantities consumed, and prices; also benefit societies, and other matters. These correspondents consist of landowners, Local Government Board inspectors, members of Local Authorities, farmers, clergymen, relieving officers, village tradesmen, and labourers. I have also visited various counties in England and Wales during the last six months for the purpose of making personal inquiries, and have made a special point of interviewing the older farmers and also a number of old labourers. In Appendix V will be found the questions asked of correspondents.

Terms of Engagement of Farm Labourers, Systems of Payment, &c.

In most counties weekly engagements prevail for ordinary agricultural labourers, while men specially in charge of animals are frequently engaged on longer terms. Piecework is, of course, more suited to the work of ordinary labourers than to that of men in charge of animals, and it is more common in arable than pastoral districts. The annual earnings of ordinary labourers, therefore, comprise not only the ordinary weekly wages, but also extra payments for piecework, harvest, and overtime, and in some counties certain payments in kind. In the northern counties and in Wales most of the men are hired by the year or half-year, and piecework, and extra payments at harvest, are not generally customary in such cases, though beer and also some extra food are often given at harvest time. Extra money payments in these districts are usually only given to casual men. The single men living in the farmers' houses are provided with all their food. The married men in these districts are more usually on weekly engagements, and, in addition to their weekly wages, frequently have free cottages, potatoes, or potato ground, fuel, and other allowances. Therefore no useful comparison can be made between the rates of weekly wages in the low and high wage counties. The only comparison which can properly be made is between the actual yearly earnings, including all extra money payments, and the value of payments in kind.

However, as the weekly wages have formed the principal part of the labourer's earnings during the period under review, a comparative statement of the rates paid for a series of years would give, at any rate, a substantial indication of the fluctuations in the labourer's circumstances. The figures which I shall presently give will, I suggest, show that the fluctuations in weekly wages determine, to some extent, the fluctuations in annual earnings, that is to say,

that within comparatively narrow limits the ratio of earnings to wages is fairly constant.

The wages and earnings of ordinary agricultural labourers only have been taken for the purposes of this Paper. The higher paid classes, namely, shepherds, and men specially engaged in the charge of cattle and horses, who have greater responsibilities, and generally longer hours and Sunday work, have been excluded, because the ordinary labourers comprise much the largest class, their rates of wages are generally more uniform in a given district, and they receive fewer payments in kind than the other classes referred to.

Further, the wages and earnings of ordinary labourers were given in greater detail than those of other classes by the Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture in 1867-69, by the Royal Commission on Agricultural Interests (Richmond Commission) in 1879-82, by the Royal Commission on Labour in 1891-94, and in the Board of Trade Report in 1900, and I desire on the present occasion to make some comparison with those figures.

Effect of Poor Law Administration upon Wages.

Before the reform of the Poor Law in 1834, the rates of wages in many counties, though not as a rule in the north, were affected by the prevailing system of Poor Law Administration.¹ Generally speaking, where the rate of expenditure per head on relief was high, wages were lower than in the districts where the rate per head was low.

The "Report from the Select Committee on Labourers' Wages" in 1824, appointed to inquire into the practice of paying the wages of labourers out of the poor rates,² said, "able-bodied labourers are sent round to the farmers, and receive a part, and in some instances the whole of their substance from the parish, while working upon the land of individuals. . . . Persons who have no need of farm labour are obliged to contribute to the payment of work done for others."³

The "Report from the Select Committee on Agriculture" in 1833 said that the labour rate interfered directly "with the

¹ "Extracts from the Information received by the Commissioners for Inquiring into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws" (1833), p. 169. See also Purdy, "Earnings of Agricultural Labourers in England and Wales, 1860," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 1861, pp. 345 and 346.

² Out-door relief of the able-bodied was given in (1) kind by payment of rent (partially or wholly); (2) in money by (a) relief without labour, (b) the allowance system, (c) the roundsmen system. (d) parish employment, (e) the labour rate system.

³ pp. 3 and 4 of Report.

“natural demand for labour, levying, in many cases, the wages of labour from those who are not its employers.”⁴

The Report on the Further Amendment of the Poor Law in 1839, said that “various contrivances for confounding relief with wages had enabled the predominant interest in each locality to force their weaker neighbours to contribute to a common fund from which they did not derive an equal benefit.”⁵

Sometimes the farmers had to level their wages up to higher wages given by the Poor Law Authorities to the unemployed for unproductive labour, while on the other hand, it is on record that some farmers agreed to pay low rates of wages, so that the men could get something from the parish in addition, in the form of money, food, tickets on shops, or allowances for children.

In Worcestershire, in the parish of Kidderminster, a committee appointed by the vestry to inquire into the management of the poor and the expenditure on poor relief, reported in 1832 that “a practice had, in some degree, obtained, of labourers being engaged at one-half, or even one-third of the average rate of wages, upon an understanding with their employers that the difference will be made up to them from the parochial rates.”⁶ The labourers of course did not exert themselves over their work, as they were certain of obtaining from one source or the other sufficient to maintain their families.⁷

The Assistant Commissioner, reporting on east Sussex to the Poor Law Commissioners in 1833, said that “Farmers turned off their men or refused to employ them at fair wages, thereby causing a surplus fraudulently; they then took the men from the parish at reduced wages paid out of the poor rates.”⁸

The Assistant Commissioner in Buckinghamshire reported that “wages, considered as the result of a bargain between the capitalist and the labourer, for the advantage of both parties, can hardly be said to exist. The farmer, like the parish, commonly pays every

⁴ p. 7 of Report.

⁵ “Report of the Poor Law Commissioners on the Continuance of the Poor Law Commission and on some Further Amendments of the Laws relating to the Relief of the Poor” (1840), p. 10. See also p. 66.

⁶ “Reports of the Assistant Commissioners to the Commissioners for Inquiring into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws.” Part II (1834), p. 36.

⁷ See “Report from the Select Committee on Labourers’ Wages,” 1824, pp 3 and 4; and “Report of the Poor Law Commissioners on the Continuance of the Poor Law Commission, and on some Further Amendments of the Laws relating to the Relief of the Poor” (1840), pp. 64 and 65.

⁸ “Reports of the Assistant Commissioners to the Commissioners for Inquiring into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws.” Part I (1834), p. 203.

“man according to the wants of himself and his family, and then “gets what work he can out of him.”⁹

But the farmer had to pay both wages and rates, and the fund from which these came was not inexhaustible.

I will quote an interesting illustration of the apparent inelasticity of this fund, at any rate in one district, from the report of the Poor Law Commissioners published in 1833.¹⁰

At Eastbourne, in Sussex, in 1830, under the pressure of riots and incendiarism, it was agreed that the surplus labourers should be paid according to a certain scale varying with the number of children, a system which was a common one in the southern counties after the Act of 1782, in connection with the fixing of the rate of wages. A single man 18 years of age received 6s. a week, a man and his wife with three children 12s. a week and a gallon of flour, or else a total money payment of 13s. 4d. If there were ten children the sum paid was 18s. 8d. a week. Under such a system, to quote the Report of 1824 to inquire into the practice of paying the wages of labourers out of the poor rates, “men who “receive but a small pittance know that they have only to marry, “and that pittance will be augmented in proportion to the number “of their children.”¹¹

The amount spent in labour and rates by the principal occupier of this parish in 1830 and 1831 was, in round figures, as follows :—¹²

	1830.	1831.
	£	£
Labour	900	700
Rates	300	500
Total	1,200	1,200

Very soon after the reform of the Poor Law in 1834, a radical change was effected in the system of relief. The Report of the Commissioners on the Further Amendment of the Poor Law, 1839, states “that systematic relief of able-bodied men in aid of wages only “exists in a few Unions which do not yet possess an efficient work- “house. All the other pernicious varieties of the old mode of relief,

⁹ “Extracts from the information received by the Commissioners for Inquiring “into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws” (1833), p. 77.

¹⁰ “Reports of the Assistant Commissioners to the Commissioners for Inquiring “into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws.” Part II (1834), pp. 187 and 188.

¹¹ “Report from the Select Committee on Labourers’ Wages,” 1824, p. 4.

¹² See Note 10, above.

"which are described by the Commission of Inquiry as being then "in full vigour—the allowance system, the roundsmen system, the "labour-rate system—have ceased."¹³

But during the "forties," at any rate, the provision of work by the farmers in many districts for surplus labour for which they had no need, in order to keep the men off the rates, tended to keep the wages low.

The "Report on the Burdens on Land," 1846, states that "in order to reduce the Poor's Rate, the farmers in many parishes "employ more hands than the economical working of the land "requires."¹⁴

Farmers on large holdings in Beds, Essex, Norfolk, Surrey, Wilts, Devon, Kent, Hunts, Cambs, Rutland, Herts, Bucks, Oxford, Hants, Suffolk, gave striking evidence before the Committee as to their practice of employing considerably more men than they required, finding it more economical to have them doing some work on the land than doing nothing, and being supported with their families out of the poor rate. Consequently preference was frequently given to the men with large families, who might not be the best workers, both by the farmers, and also by the local authorities, for employment at road work. Some of these witnesses stated that they did not use machinery, in order to be able to employ these men. Threshing with the flail was often resorted to for the sake of giving employment. As a Huntingdonshire farmer said to the Committee, they had "either to employ or maintain."¹⁵

Again, Caird¹⁶ refers to a similar state of things in 1850-51, the farmers in certain districts dividing up the surplus labour by arrangement.

This superabundance of labour was very unsatisfactory, both for the labourer, who got a low rate of wages, if employed, and for the farmer, who often had to employ inferior men, and also more than he required at certain seasons.¹⁷

¹³ "Report of the Poor Law Commissioners on the continuance of the Poor Law Commission, and on some Further Amendments of the Law relating to the "Relief of the Poor" (1840), p. 10.

¹⁴ "Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Burdens "affecting Real Property," 1846, p. v.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 7, 23, 24, 42, 49, 64, 70, 71, 73, 78, 87, 93, 105, 106, 112, 116, 118, 124, 136, 137, 146, 153, 154, 166, 169, 171, 177, 189, 380, 521, 539, and 551.

¹⁶ "English Agriculture in 1850-51," pp. 18, 84, 148, and 515—51

¹⁷ Speaking of a district in Wiltshire, where the wages were very low, Caird says: "Both farmers and labourers suffer in this locality from the present over-supply of labour. The farmer is compelled to employ more men than his "present mode of operations require, and, to save himself, he pays them a lower "rate of wages than is sufficient to give that amount of physical power which is "necessary for the performance of a fair day's work." *Ibid.*, p. 85.

Rates of Weekly Wages.

I will now proceed to deal with the records of weekly wages for the last half-century.

I have obtained records showing for thirty years or more the rates of weekly cash wages paid in each year to ordinary labourers employed on 125 farms in England and Wales. In Appendix I a few of these records will be found printed in detail. Of the 125 records, 67 cover the whole of the period from 1850 to 1902, and I have used these 67 returns as the basis of the charts shown with Appendix II on pp. 333—5.

Although I have only included in the charts the records of weekly wages since 1850, I have obtained information as to the rates of wages on some farms at an earlier period. One return from Hertfordshire commences in 1789, one from Essex in 1800, one from Herefordshire in 1819, one from Wiltshire in 1824, one from Warwickshire in 1825, one from Northumberland in 1831, one from Shropshire in 1835, and one from Suffolk in 1836.

The first chart shows the percentage fluctuations in the rates of wages paid on the 67 farms in each of the years 1850-1902, as compared with the year 1871, which I have selected as a standard year, being one in which the average rate of wages was about midway between the minimum and maximum years.

The second chart shows a corresponding curve for the eastern counties, and as wages there for many years were more or less regulated according to the price of corn, a curve has been added showing the percentage fluctuations in the average price of British wheat in each of the years for which the changes in wages are shown.

The third chart shows the course of wages, on the same method as in the first and second diagrams, in the northern, midland, and southern and south-western groups of counties respectively.¹⁸

Where the summer rates differed from those paid in winter, an average has been taken of the summer and winter rates, it being reckoned that the ratio of summer to winter weeks is as 3 to 2. The period varies in different districts according to circumstances. In times of falling wages the winter rates may begin soon after harvest; in good times the fall does not take place (if at all)

¹⁸ The counties included in the different groups are as follows:—*Northern Counties.*—Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland, Lancaster, York. *Midland Counties.*—Derby, Chester, Nottingham, Leicester, Rutland, Salop, Worcester, Warwick, Northants, Bucks, Herts, Beds. *Eastern Counties.*—Huntingdon, Lincoln, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex. *Southern and South Western Counties.*—Surrey, Sussex, Hants, Wilts, Dorset, Somerset, Gloucester, Hereford, Monmouth, Devon, Cornwall. No chart is given for Wales only, as the returns are not sufficiently numerous to yield a representative curve.

until nearly Christmas, and the change in the spring depends on similar considerations.

While the figures for these 67 farms may not accurately represent the average rate of wages for the whole body of ordinary farm labourers in England and Wales in any one year, they, at any rate, form a connected picture of the fluctuations in rates of wages, year by year, during the last half-century.

It will be seen from the chart for England and Wales that the lowest point touched was in the early fifties, a time of great agricultural depression. A few years before 1850 both prices and wages were higher. In 1846 the Corn Laws were repealed, and prices rose in 1847, the year of the Irish famine. Some indication of the comparative lowness of wages in 1850 is afforded by the following figures, based on the records for 10 farms in which the figures are available as far back as the year 1843.

Average Rate of Weekly Wages in—							
1843.	1844.	1845.	1846.	1847.	1848.	1849.	1850.
<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>
9 1½	9 1¾	9 4	9 5	10 0½	9 3	8 10½	8 7½

Wages rose sharply in 1853 and 1854, the years of the Crimean War, and from this period until 1871 the upward movement continued, with slight interruptions coincident with falls in the price of corn. In 1872 and 1873, just after the Franco-German War, rates of wages again rose considerably, and the agitation amongst the labourers, led by Joseph Arch, helped to maintain the high level until the period of agricultural depression which followed the disastrous season of 1879. The upward movement was resumed in 1889 and, with the exception of slight decreases in 1893 and 1894 (a period of general agricultural and commercial depression), it continued up to 1902.

If we turn to the charts for the different groups of counties we find that the general characteristics of the curve for England and Wales are repeated, but it will be noticed that in the southern and south-western group the fluctuations in wages were comparatively slight, while in the eastern counties, where the farmers' profits mainly depend on the prices of grain, the variations in the rates of wages have been greater than in the other groups, where cattle and sheep are more generally bred and fattened, and mixed farming is carried on.

In many districts, chiefly in the eastern counties, up to and including the "sixties" at any rate, wages used to be frequently

adjusted according to the price of wheat; sometimes in accordance with a regular scale, sometimes in a more rough and ready fashion. A Buckinghamshire farmer giving evidence before the Committee on the Burdens on Land in 1846, spoke of a bushel of wheat as representing the price of a week's wages in some former time. In parts of the eastern counties the price of a bushel of wheat added to half-a-crown used to be the weekly wage. Then when wheat was selling at 30s. a coombe (4 bushels) wages were 10s.¹⁹ Subsequently the relation between the wages and the price of wheat became less precise, but still up to a comparatively recent period wages were roughly adjusted according as the price of corn rose or fell.

The highest and lowest rates of weekly wages shown in individual returns in the four groups are as follows :—

Group.	Year.	Highest Rates of Weekly Wages.	County.
ENGLAND.			
Northern counties	1875	24 -	Northumberland
Midland "	1890-1902	20 -	Derby
Eastern "	1873-78	18 -	Lincoln
Southern and south- western counties .... }	1900	18 -	Devon
Group.	Year.	Lowest Rates of Weekly Wages.	County.
ENGLAND.			
Northern counties.....	Early 50's	10 -	{ Cumberland, Lan- caster, York
Midland "	1853	7 -	
Eastern "	1852	7 -	
Southern and south- western counties .... }	Early 50's	6 -	
			Somerset, Gloucester.

¹⁹ " Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Burdens affecting Real Property," 1846, pp. 7, 8, 37, 50, 77, 84, 108, 109, 115, 138, 139, 170, 171, 185, 527, 529, 530, 545—547, and Appendix, p. 6; Mr. H. Raynbird (see " Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England," 1847) said it was the practice of some farmers in East Suffolk to pay labourers according to the following scale :—

When wheat was 5s. per bushel and under 6s., wages paid were 8s. a week.
 " 6s. " 7s., " 9s. "
 " 7s. " 8s., " 10s. "

See also Lowe, " The Present State of England in regard to Agriculture, Trade, and Finance," 1823, Appendix to Chapter x, pp. 99 and 100; Clare Sewell Read, M.P., in an address to the Tunstead and Happing Agricultural Association, " Norfolk News," 9th November, 1867; Clifford, " The Labour Bill in Farming," Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, 1875, p. 73; H. J. Little's contribution to the " Memoir on English Agriculture, prepared for the International Congress at Paris, 1878," Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, 1878, p. 771; Rew, " Report to the Royal Commission on Agriculture," C-7915 of 1895, pp. 43 and 44.

It is interesting to observe that when wages on the 67 farms were at their lowest (9s. 2½d. per week in 1851), the average price of wheat was 38s. 6d. per quarter, while in 1902, when wages reached their highest point (14s. 7d. per week), the price of wheat was only 28s. 1d. per quarter.

In the following table a comparison is made between the average rates of wages paid on the 67 farms, with the figures given by certain other authorities for England in certain years during the period under review. Notwithstanding the different methods adopted in arriving at these figures, they show a rough correspondence.

Year.	Authority.	Average Weekly Rate of Wages.	Average Weekly Rate of Wages on 67 Farms.	Year.
		s. d.	s. d.	
1850-51	Caird, "Agriculture in England in 1850-51"	9 7	9 3½	1850
'60	Purdy, <i>Journal of Royal Statistical Society</i> , 1861	11 7	10 11	'60
'67-69	Little, "Commission on Labour"	12 2	12 0½	'68
'70-71	Druce, "Journal of Royal Agricultural Society of England," 1885	12 2	11 10½	'70
'80-81	"Royal Commission on Labour"	14 2	13 2½	'80
'91-94	"Board of Trade Report"	13 5	13 5	'92
'98	"Board of Trade Report"	14 5	13 8½	'98

Yearly Earnings.

I will now pass to the question of how weekly wages are supplemented by other payments. Speaking generally, the amount by which the total weekly earnings exceeds the weekly rate of cash wages is greatest in those counties in which the rate of cash wages is low, and least in those in which the cash wages are high.

The following figures, giving the average weekly wages, and also the excess of average weekly earnings over average weekly rates of wages, in certain counties in 1898, illustrate this:—

High Wage Counties.	Average Weekly Rates of Wages in 1898.	Average Weekly Earnings during 1898.	Excess of Average Weekly Earnings over Average Weekly Rates of Wages.	Low Wage Counties.	Average Weekly Rates of Wages in 1898.	Average Weekly Earnings during 1898.	Excess of Average Weekly Earnings over Average Weekly Rates of Wages.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Derbyshire	18 2	19 11	1 9	Suffolk ...	11 5	14 5	3 -
Lancashire	18 1	19 4	1 4	Dorset ...	11 8	14 9	3 1
Cumberland and Westmorland }	17 -	18 9	1 9	Wiltshire	11 9	15 -	3 3

One result is that in the high-wage counties the labourer's income, whether paid in cash or kind, is more evenly distributed over the year, while in the low-wage counties, which are the arable ones, the labourer's weekly wages are increased at irregular intervals according as the season enables him to work at piecework or harvest.

This has, I think, been a great advantage to the men in the high-wage counties. It has enabled them to live on a uniform scale of diet throughout the year, and they have been better nourished in consequence. It has also kept them from getting into debt in the winter, and from the temptation of drinking when a lump sum is paid, as is the case of the harvest money in the eastern counties. But old customs are very difficult to alter, and it is quite likely that a suggestion in the eastern counties to raise the rate of weekly wages by 3s. to 4s. in lieu of the present system of harvest and piecework payments, would meet with more opposition from the men than from the employers. The men would very likely think they were going to be the losers. Moreover, they have got accustomed to paying their rent for the year and buying some clothes, or paying some debts out of the harvest money.

Speaking generally, ordinary agricultural labourers in England get comparatively few allowances in kind excepting potato ground and beer at harvest. But in the northern and some of the western counties cottages and fuel are also frequently given free, and in some counties in the latter group cider is often given as a daily allowance.²⁰

Although almost every class of farm work is the subject of piecework to some extent, most of the operations which are "put out" to piecework are undertaken between spring and autumn, and they are chiefly those connected with hoeing and the gathering of the corn and root crops. Much piecework is also given on the hop farms and fruit and flower gardens. More piecework is undertaken on large farms than small ones, as on the former the work can be better organised and supervised, and the prices more easily fixed. Moreover, where the farmer has a large range of roots to hoe, or potatoes to gather, he finds it to his interest not only to have it accomplished in the shortest possible time, but also to ascertain the cost of the operation.

²⁰ Men in charge of animals, in addition to higher wages than ordinary labourers, usually get more payments in kind. The married men generally have cottages and garden free, and frequently have potato ground. Among other allowances sometimes given are straw for pigs, coal, milk, vegetables, and certain allowances of food, beer, and cider. They also often receive some extra cash payments, such as lamb money, journey money, and Michaelmas money.

The harvest payments are highest in the great corn growing counties in the East of England, namely, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire, a month's harvest there being worth in 1902 between 7*l.* and 8*l.* per man, and up to 10*l.* per man in some of the fen districts of Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire. Thus a man whose ordinary weekly wages are 12*s.*, earning 7*l.* 10*s.* for a month's harvest, receives at least 5*l.* extra for the month's work.

In the Eastern counties the harvest is commonly undertaken by piecework. The amount earned depends a good deal on whether the crop is a light or a heavy one, and whether it is so laid by storms or wind that some of it has to be cut by hand instead of with the self-binder. In Norfolk and Suffolk it is the usual practice for the men to contract for the whole harvest, the ordinary staff undertaking to do the harvest for a certain sum per head, taking the risk of bad weather. In the midlands and the southern and south-western counties the harvest payments for a month are generally worth between 3*l.* 10*s.* and 5*l.*

In most districts a good deal of beer is given free at harvest, and in some districts extra food.

The component parts of the annual cash earnings on a few farms in different parts of England are shown in the following table:—

Year.	Number of Ordinary Labourers Employed throughout the Year on the Farms included in the Table.	Average Cash Earnings per Man during Year.					Total.
		Ordinary Wages (Exclusive of Piecework and Corn Harvest).	Piecework Earnings (Exclusive of Corn Harvest).	Corn Harvest.	Other Cash Payments.		
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
1897....	61	27 14 1	4 7 9	5 18 2	— 11 —	38 11 —	
'98...	59	28 19 9	4 — 1	6 13 11	— 14 6	40 8 3	
'99....	55	29 9 4	4 18 9	6 9 2	— 13 3	41 10 6	

The following table shows in the case of these same men the amount of the component parts of the yearly earnings expressed in percentages:—

Year.	Percentage Proportion of Total Cash Earnings Derived from				Total.
	Ordinary Wages.	Piecework.	Corn Harvest.	Other Cash Payments.	
1897	72	11	15	2	100
'98	72	10	16	2	100
'99	71	12	15	2	100

I now come to the figures I have obtained from certain farms in England and Wales, showing the total annual earnings of ordinary labourers at decennial intervals between 1851 and 1901. The gentlemen who were good enough to supply me with these figures were asked to take the earnings of three or four representative men from their books, and not necessarily the men who earned the most.

The Society will understand the difficulty of making an inquiry into the earnings of forty or fifty years ago. Very few books kept for so long a period are now available, and where they are, in many of them no records of piecework payments to individual men are to be found, the course most usually adopted being for the employer to pay the total sum earned by a number of men on a piecework job to a particular man, who settles up with the rest of the "company." It is not known from these books what share the respective men took, and it is not possible to make even an estimate, because the "company" may have included some casual men whose names do not appear on the farm books at all.

In Appendix III a table will be found showing for ordinary agricultural labourers their rates of weekly wages and their total annual cash earnings, including weekly wages, payments for piecework and overtime, and for extra money earned at harvest, and a statement of the payments in kind, on farms in 21 counties in England and Wales at decennial intervals from 1851 to 1901.

The following are the earnings on 6 of these farms in the counties of Durham, York, Warwick, Lincoln, Essex and Sussex. In the case of the Essex farm I have added the earnings of the men in charge of animals for comparison.

County.	Total Cash Earnings of certain Individual Ordinary Agricultural Labourers, including Amounts Earned at Weekly Wages, Hay and Corn Harvest, Piecework, and Overtime during the Year.					
	1851.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1901.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Durham	33 16 -	39 - -*	40 - -	47 2 -	54 12 -	57 15 6
	31 4 -	34 - -*	39 3 9	46 16 -	52 - -	47 16 -
	28 12 -	36 8 -*	40 3 5	49 8 -	49 8 -	52 - -
	28 12 -	36 8 -*	39 - -	46 16 -	44 4 -	49 8 -
Yorkshire: North	29 19 11	36 1 7	39 9 1	42 19 -	39 7 -	42 - -
Riding	30 2 1	39 1 2	30 10 2	42 19 -	39 7 -	38 12 -
	26 13 5	35 2 6	41 6 11	42 19 -	39 7 -	44 8 -
Warwick	27 8 -	30 - -	30 - -	35 - -	33 18 -	34 12 -
	27 8 -	30 7 -	30 - -	35 4 -	34 - -	34 12 -
	30 - -	32 12 -	32 12 -	37 16 -	36 10 -	37 5 -
Lincoln	45 12 5†	42 18 6	40 11 3	38 17 5	43 4 2½	45 3 11
	45 2 9†	37 13 11	41 6 11	41 3 -½	44 1 -	43 17 8
	45 6 10†	45 8 11	50 19 9½	39 9 1½	42 13 -	43 - 6
Essex—						
Common la-						
bourer	26 - -	30 - -	32 - -	36 - -	41 - -	41 - -
Capable task						
workman	27 - -	32 - -	35 - -	39 - -	43 - -	44 - -
Horseman	30 - -	35 - -	40 - -	40 - -	45 - -	45 - -
Stockman	29 - -	33 - -	35 - -	39 - -	44 - -	44 - -
	33 10 5	37 8 5	37 10 10	33 10 11	33 19 11	36 11 8½
Sussex	31 3 1	34 4 5	33 14 10	33 14 7	35 14 9	38 19 0½
	31 9 2	35 2 5	36 13 3	37 15 1½	38 14 1	36 12 -
	27 4 8	30 5 10	34 1 9	41 4 -	34 8 -	37 19 1

* Figures relate to the year 1859.

† " " 1855.

Allowances in Kind in addition to Cash Earnings.

DURHAM.—Cottage and garden rent free, coals, 40 stones potatoes, and beer during haytime and harvest.

YORKSHIRE.—Cottage and garden rent free; coals led; sticks for fuel found; potato ground found, manured and ploughed; 2 pints of beer each day during haytime and harvest, and if leading late, another pint and cheese and bread; straw for pigs.

WARWICK.—Formerly a gallon of beer or cider each day for 4 weeks in haytime and for 4 weeks in harvest. Now 1*l.* is paid in lieu of beer or cider for haytime, 1*cd.* or 8*d.* per day during harvest, and 6*d.* per day when threshing.

LINCOLN.—None.

ESSEX.—Home-brewed beer. At present time abstainers get 1*s.* per week, and for harvest 2*cs.*, in lieu of beer. Horsemen and stockmen have a cottage and large garden at a low rental.

SUSSEX.—Up to 1855 all old wood was carted free. Subsequently over-hours were paid for and cartage was charged.

The following table gives the percentage increase in total annual earnings, and also in the rates of wages in each decennial period from 1851-1901 on the 14 farms for which information is given for the whole of the periods. An estimated allowance for payments in kind based upon the actual particulars supplied by the employers has been added.

	Increase Per Cent. in	
	Rates of Weekly Wages.	Total Earnings.
1861 as compared with 1851	22·2	17·3
'71 " '61	9·8	8·5
'81 " '71	11·8	11·8
'91 " '81	0·3	1·3
1901 " '91	6·9	5·1
1901 " '51	60·8	51·3

It will be seen that the percentage increases during these periods in the total annual earnings and in the rates of weekly wages respectively show a fairly close correspondence. Although I am not in a position to separate the total amount earned in each year by weekly wages and that earned by harvest and piecework, I am informed that on these farms the men were generally in constant employment during the entire period. But I have shown in this Paper that, in many districts, men were often irregularly employed in former years.

On a large farm in Cambridgeshire, where regular employment was usually given, and for which particulars of earnings will be found in the Appendix, the employer states that "the men were not paid for any time when they were absent excepting certain holidays—Christmas Day, Good Friday, and two fair days." The number of days lost by the men whose earnings have been furnished, exclusive of the holidays mentioned above, were as follows:—

	1871.	1881.	1891.	1901.
1st labourer.....	17 days	12 days	20 days	6 days
2nd "	17 "	6 "	2 "	4 "
3rd "	21 "	20 "	5 "	18 "
4th "	{ No record of any absence }	15 "	19 "	8 "

Dividing the total annual earnings, including the value of allowances in kind into fifty-two weekly amounts, and comparing them with the rates of weekly wages, we get the following results:—

	Weekly Rates of Wages.		Weekly Earnings.		Excess of Earnings Over Wages.		
					Amount.	Per Cent.	
	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	
1851	9	9 $\frac{1}{4}$	12	2 $\frac{3}{4}$	2	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	25·3
'61	11	11 $\frac{1}{4}$	14	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	2	5	20·3
'71	13	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	15	6 $\frac{3}{4}$	2	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	18·8
'81	14	7 $\frac{3}{4}$	17	4 $\frac{3}{4}$	2	9	18·8
'91	14	8 $\frac{1}{4}$	17	7 $\frac{1}{4}$	2	11	20·0
1901	15	8 $\frac{1}{4}$	18	6	2	9 $\frac{3}{4}$	17·9

Turning now to figures given by other authorities as to total annual earnings, I do not find that there are any reliable ones before 1867 based on particulars relating to the country as a whole. Mr. Purdy in his Paper before this Society in 1861 found this to be the case, and Mr. Bowley, who has examined the available statistics on the subject with much care, appears to agree with this view.²¹

The general excess of earnings over wages in England, based on the information given by the Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture (1867-69), the Royal Commission on Labour (1892-94), the Board of Trade Report on the Wages and Earnings of Agricultural Labourers, 1900, is as follows :—

Authority.	Year.	Excess of Earnings Per Cent. of Wages.
Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture.....	1867-69	20
Royal Commission on Labour	'91-94	19
Board of Trade Report, 1900	1898	18

This question is of importance, for if it could be proved that there is a fairly constant relation between wages and earnings in each period, a rough and ready calculation of earnings can be made, when the weekly wages are known, without a laborious inquiry.²²

²¹ Purdy, "Earnings of Agricultural Labourers in England and Wales, 1860," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 1861, pp. 342, 343, 353, and 354; Bowley, "The Statistics of Wages in the United Kingdom during the last "Hundred Years," Part IV *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 1895, pp. 555-557.

²² Summing up the whole of the evidence before him in 1899, Mr. Bowley said: "There seems no reason to suppose that the ratio of earnings to wages has "changed to any great extent on the average since Arthur Young's time, and it "appears that the former are about 17 per cent. higher than the latter." *Ibid.*, p. 556.

I find that on the farms in question the payments in kind (if any) made to the class of men whose wages and earnings are being considered, have varied very little, if at all, during the period under review. It may, however, be observed that the old labourers state in some counties that since 1874 fewer gifts have been given by the farmers, such as an occasional meal, milk, broth, beer, cider, and fuel.²³ Generally the tendency is to substitute money payments for payments in kind, to all classes of farm labourers, and this is more particularly observable in the districts near towns. I may add that even the shepherds in Northumberland and over the Border, who have up to the present time been paid largely or wholly in kind, are now showing a decided preference for cash wages.

As regards the rates for piecework, they have, as would be expected, gradually increased along with the increase of weekly wages, and they are now about 50 per cent. higher than they were in 1850. On the other hand, the amount of piecework per man now given by the farmers is generally said to have decreased. This is partly due to the introduction of machinery, which has displaced hand labour at such operations as mowing at hay and corn harvest, and threshing. In some districts also the area of arable land has been reduced, and there are fewer crops of the character to which piecework is applicable. The smaller profits derived from agriculture since the "seventies" have also prevented the farmer from hoeing and weeding or keeping his ditches and hedges as tidy as formerly, and, lastly, the labourer himself, now that his wages are higher, is not so anxious to obtain piecework as formerly, and when he gets it he will seldom work overtime, as he frequently used to do.

²³ John Woollas, a Herefordshire labourer, aged 75, said to me in October, 1902: "Fifty-six years ago there were more allowances. A man could get a bag of wheat at market price from the farmer, and if he wanted a pig he could buy it from the farmer and pay for it in instalments. Broth and milk were given to the children 'graciously' in the old days, and if a man was kept late he was given supper. The men had as much cider as they liked then." An old farmer in the same county, who had farmed for fifty years, and was once a waggoner, said: "In the old days men bought wheat from the farmers, ground the grain, and used the offal for the pigs. They all had ovens then, and now they are not used. After Arch came they had more money and less perquisites. When bread was so dear the labourers often got dinners from the farmers, say twice a week. Farmers gave food rather than raise wages."

James Bullock, 82 years of age, said: "In the old days farmers used to give a can of broth or some victuals, and you could fetch a drop of milk when you wanted it, and a bit of fuel sometimes. You were bound to get a bit of summat extra over if you had seven or eight to feed. Farmers also gave more potato ground then."

It is alleged by some authorities that some farmers paid the wages partly in inferior wheat at a price they could not realise in the market. Caird refers to this being the case in Dorsetshire (*English Agriculture in 1850-51*, p. 72). See also the late Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, "*On the Farming of Somersetshire*" (*Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, 1850, pp. 750 and 751).

In Appendix I will be found some examples of rates for piecework in 1850 and 1902.

As regards earnings at corn harvest in 1901 compared with 1851, the information sent by employers also shows that about a 50 per cent. increase has taken place. But since the introduction of self-binding machines the number of men required for harvest operations has decreased. This has consequently also affected the Irish migratory labourers.

The amount paid for corn harvest on two farms for a series of years is shown in the following table:—

County.	Amount Paid for Corn Harvest on certain Farms in						Allowances in Kind in Addition to Cash Payment.
	1851.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1901.	
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
Suffolk	5 7 6*	7 13 -	8 1 -	—	8 12 6	8 13 6	
Essex...	5 - -	6 - -	6 10 -	7 10 -	7 10 -	7 15 -	Home-brewed beer

* 1853.

Piecework at hay harvest has disappeared since the introduction of machinery for cutting, but overtime money, beer, and sometimes extra money are given.

I have shown from the figures I myself obtained, and also from those collected by other authorities, that the earnings of the labourers have been almost continuously increasing since 1850. Taking the financial position of the labourer as a whole, and comparing it during the period 1850-70 with 1870-1900, there are three important elements which should be considered in connection with his position in the former period, namely, the higher prices paid for the necessities of life, the greater irregularity of the men's employment in many districts, and the earnings of the women and children.

Value of Food.

I do not propose in this paper to go into any details on the question of prices, though it is essential to allude to it when considering the position of the labourers fifty years ago and now. It is a generally accepted fact that the prices of most of the necessities of life — food, clothes, furniture and lights — have cheapened to a considerable extent.

Taking a few of the principal articles of food of the labourer in 1850 and in 1901, the reduction in prices is approximately as follows:—Flour, 25 to 30 per cent.; sugar, 60 to 70 per cent.; tea, 65 to 70 per cent.; cheese, 25 per cent.; potatoes, 8 per cent. On

the other hand, pork has increased in price by about 20 per cent. and bacon nearly 15 per cent.

In the last fifty years the food of the labourer has generally increased in quantity in the low-wage districts, and in all districts in quality and variety. In some counties more meals are taken now, the whole family sitting down to tea as well as supper. In the north the hired men get substantial refreshments at ten o'clock and four o'clock, in addition to three other meals a day.

In the "forties," "fifties," and "sixties," it is evident that the amount of food eaten by the labourers' families was barely sufficient in some localities. In the winter, the season when food was most required, the labourers and their families in the low-wage districts often had to live on poor diet.²⁴ Regular employment was often scarce, there was little or no piecework, while extra money was required for fuel and clothing.

I do not think that there is much evidence from the low-wage districts that the food available was insufficient for men in normal health, but there is certainly medical evidence to show that if there was a disposition to disease, then the quality was found to be defective. Further, as the husband had necessarily to have the largest share of the food, and also the most strengthening diet, such as pork and bacon, the women and children frequently suffered from insufficient nourishment.²⁵

In the "thirties," "forties," and "fifties," the principal diet of the agricultural labourers was wheaten bread or other food made from flour. Barley bread was, however, frequently eaten in the western counties; and, in the north, barley bread, oat cake, and porridge. In some counties nearly half a man's weekly wages appears to have been spent on bread for his family. Other articles of diet were bacon, pork (the latter frequently salted), cheese, dripping, lard, milk, potatoes, onions and other vegetables. The high price of tea prohibited much being drunk. Fresh meat (beef or mutton) was seldom eaten, except in some of the northern and north midland counties (chiefly on Sundays), but the men who were boarded in the farm houses had it more frequently.

²⁴ See "Reports of Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture," 1843, pp. 17 and 18; also Dr. Edward Smith's "Report on the Food of the Poorer Labouring Classes in England," Appendix No. 6 to the Sixth Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council, 1863, p. 264.

²⁵ See "Reports of Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children," 1843, p. 18; also Dr. E. Smith, in his "Report on the Food of the Poorer Labouring Classes in England," Appendix No. 6 to the Sixth Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council, 1863, p. 262, and the Report of Dr. Simon, Medical Officer of the Privy Council, p. 12.

In the low-wage counties the monotony of the bread diet was relieved by eating it soaked in broth or spread with dripping or lard. Toast water was often taken in lieu of tea. Skim milk or butter-milk was also drunk. Bacon or pork was, as a rule, eaten on Sundays only; and, at times when this could not be obtained for the Sunday dinner, potatoes were eaten with melted butter or grease.

In some of the western counties potatoes, swedes, and cheese made from skim milk formed a considerable portion of the diet. A good deal of cider was given free to the labourers in these counties by the farmers.

Since the "sixties" a great change has taken place in the labourer's diet. At the present time wheaten bread is universally eaten, but a good many people deplore the substitution of fine for coarse flour, which, they assert, was more nourishing. Fresh meat—beef or mutton—is now generally within the reach of all, though I do not think that in the low-wage counties it is eaten more than once a week, as a rule. In the north, however, fresh meat is eaten daily in many cases. Other articles of food now partaken of, some of which were practically unknown in the "fifties" and "sixties," but which are now brought round in carts to the labourer's door, are tinned meats, fish, jam, pickles, tea, butter, sugar, fruit, eggs, coffee, cocoa, currants, and cake.

Correspondents in various parts of the country state that one effect of the lower prices and larger earnings has been that many of the labourers have given up keeping pigs, and also cows, in the few districts where this was customary, and also cultivating allotments.

In Appendix IV I have given instances of the food most usually eaten at meals by a labourer and his family forty or fifty years ago and at the present time, in the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Huntingdon, Cambridge, and Essex, and also in Wales, and of the food eaten by hired men in the farm houses in Cumberland.

The following table shows the average quantity of the principal kinds of food consumed in a week by an agricultural labourer, his wife, and four children in 1902 in certain groups of counties :—

[Based on 114 returns furnished by landowners, farmers, Local Government Board Inspectors, members of Local Authorities, the clergy, relieving officers, tradesmen, and agricultural labourers.]

	Northern Counties.	Midland Counties.	Eastern Counties.	Southern and South-western Counties.	England.
Beef or mutton	74 ozs.	60 ozs.	28 ozs.	53 ozs.	53 $\frac{3}{4}$ ozs.
Pork	3 "	21 "	33 "	14 "	17 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Bacon	55 "	48 "	32 "	38 "	43 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
Cheese	12 "	21 "	18 "	26 "	19 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
Bread	5 lbs.	27 lbs.	17 lbs.	29 lbs.	19 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.
Flour	23 "	7 "	20 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	9 "	14 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
Oatmeal and rice	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	1 "	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
Potatoes	26 "	22 "	24 "	31 "	25 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Tea	8 ozs.	7 ozs.	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ozs.	9 ozs.	7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ozs.
Coffee or cocoa	1 "	5 "	1 "	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Butter	22 "	15 "	14 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	15 "	16 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
Lard, margarine or dripping	29 "	10 "	15 "	12 "	17 "
Sugar	4 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs.	4 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs.	4 lbs.	3 $\frac{3}{4}$ lbs.	4 $\frac{1}{4}$ lbs.
Syrup, treacle or jam ...	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	1 "	2 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ "
Milk { new	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ pints	4 pints	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ pints	4 pints	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ pints
{ or	—	or	or	or	or
{ skimmed	—	9 "	7 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	8 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
Average total value	14s. 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	13s. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	12s. 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	13s. 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.	13s. 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

Particulars of the quantities of fish and eggs were asked for, but in many cases expenditure under these headings is very occasional and, in some cases, was not in addition but in place of one of the items included above.

From the varying quantities of bread and flour it will be seen that while baker's bread is largely consumed in the midland and southern and south-western counties, very little bread other than home-baked bread is consumed in the northern counties. In the eastern counties the consumption of baker's and home-made bread is nearly equal.

The proportion which the value of the articles of food shown in the preceding table bears to the average earnings of ordinary labourers is shown below :—

England.	Average Total Earnings of Ordinary Agricultural Labourers in 1898.	Average Value of Principal Articles of Food consumed by Families of Agricultural Labourers.	Percentage Proportion of Value of Food consumed to Earnings.
	s. d.	s. d.	Per cent.
Northern counties.....	19 1	14 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	78
Midland „	16 11	13 6 $\frac{1}{2}$	80
Eastern „	15 9	12 4 $\frac{1}{2}$	79
Southern and South-western counties....}	16 9	13 4 $\frac{3}{4}$	80
England	16 10	13 6 $\frac{1}{2}$	80

In the case of horsemen, cattlemen and shepherds, whose earnings are generally about 1s. to 2s. higher than those of ordinary labourers, the margin between the value of the food consumed and earnings would, of course, be greater.

The percentage proportion of the principal articles of food seems high, but it should be borne in mind that no account is taken above of the profit a labourer may derive from a garden, an allotment or potato ground, pig or poultry. He may also have a son over 14 years of age, living at home and in regular work, or his younger children may perhaps earn small sums occasionally. His wife, too, may earn a little. Further, children who are out in service or employed away from home, sometimes send money to their parents, especially when there is sickness. It should be added that at the present time the wages are higher than in 1898.

Although the details of the domestic economy of households in various parts of the country differ so widely, it will be seen from the following table that of the total value of foodstuffs consumed weekly, the proportion represented by the chief necessities (meat and bread) is almost equal in the different groups of counties :—

	Northern Counties.	Midland Counties.	Eastern Counties.	Southern and South- western Counties.
	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>
Meat (including beef, mut- ton, pork, and bacon)..... }	5 2½	4 9½	3 2	3 5½
Bread and breadstuffs	3 1	3 3½	4 0	4 0½
Total	8 3½	8 1½	7 2	7 5½
Total value of principal articles consumed	14 10½	13 6½	12 4½	13 4½
Percentage of total value of principal articles con- sumed	56	60	58	56

The following statement gives, side by side, the results [of Dr. E. Smith's inquiry and my own, and shows the average quantity of the principal kinds of food consumed by an agricultural labourer's family in 1863 and 1903 respectively :—

[Based on returns relating to 370 families in England, without distinction as to number included in family.]		[Based on 114 returns relating to families in England, consisting of man, wife, and 4 children.]	
	1863.		1903.
Bacon, meat and bone	72½ ozs.	Beef or mutton	53½ ozs.
Cheese	24 "	Pork	17½ "
Bread, flour, oatmeal, rice, and other kinds of grain (all reckoned as bread)	55½ lbs.	Bacon	43½ "
Potatoes	27 "	Cheese	19½ "
Tea	2½ ozs.	Bread	19½ lbs.
Butter, dripping or lard, suet	25 "	Flour	14½ "
Sugar, treacle	2 lbs.	Oatmeal and rice	1½ "
New milk, skimmed milk, butter milk	7·3 pints	Potatoes	25½ "
		Tea	7½ ozs.
		Coffee or cocoa	2½ "
		Butter	16½ "
		Lard, margarine or dripping	17 "
		Sugar	4½ lbs.
		Syrup, treacle or jam	1½ "
		Milk, new	4½ pints
		or	or
		„ skim	8½ "

Irregularity of Work.

As regards the question of irregularity of work I may say that, after studying the authorities on the subject, I think that many of the published figures of annual earnings probably relate to the men in fairly regular work attached to the staff of the larger farms, and therefore do not disclose the losses incurred by men employed by smaller farmers with but little capital, or by men dependent on casual employment, working for different farmers. There were a considerable number of these casual men in many villages until well into the "eighties."

It is, I think, obvious that the figures must have this tendency, because to approach any accuracy they must of course be taken from books, and detailed labour books are, as a rule, only kept on the large farms occupied by men with a fair amount of capital. Such farmers can afford to employ their men the most regularly. They have more buildings and sheds than smaller farmers, and therefore greater opportunities of providing work under cover in wet weather.

Since 1896 the difficulty of estimating the average earnings in a district has become much less, as labour has, generally speaking,

been scarce, and consequently nearly all the available labour has been regularly employed. Thus the earnings taken from the books of the larger farms are now probably fairly typical of the general body of labourers in the same districts. The "Board of Trade " Report " in 1898 comprised the wages of the whole of the ordinary labourers attached to the staff of the farms from which particulars were obtained, and these include time lost for sickness, holidays, and other causes.

When I was an Assistant Commissioner on the Labour Commission in 1892-93, I certainly felt the difficulty of gaining a correct idea of the average earnings in a district. For instance, in Norfolk and Suffolk the ordinary labourer's wages in 1891-92 were 12s. a week, and the earnings, which I took from the books of farmers, came to about 15s. on an average throughout the year.

But the labourers at the meetings I held in the open parishes generally said that those working on a farm where it was not customary to give regular employment, or men who worked for different farmers, lost 1s. a week, on an average, in the year from bad weather, sickness, or because they could not always get a job, and some said 2s. Some of them also said that they got little or no piecework on the smaller farms. Putting the loss of employment of such men at 1s. a week, and their piecework earnings at 1l. a year, their average weekly earnings, including harvest, would even then have been about 13s. 4d. a week, or 1s. 4d. a week higher than the current rate of weekly wages prevalent in the district. If any men had lost 2s. a week, the earnings in that case would have only been about 12s. 4d. My point on these facts is, that if I could have taken an earnings census in those districts, the earnings I published in 1902 of 15s. a week would have probably been found to be above the average.

Mr. Rew's report on Norfolk in 1895 to the Royal Commission on Agriculture²⁶ supports my contention. Weekly wages at that time had generally fallen to 10s., though in some parishes they were 11s., and in others 9s. Mr. Rew states that the "evidence goes to prove that with a current weekly wage of 10s. the "average weekly earnings of a *regular* labourer, taking the year "through, would be from 13s. to 14s." But speaking of the supply of labour he says, "in winter many men are thrown out of employment."

That very considerable irregularity of employment existed in a number of the southern counties in the "thirties," "forties," and "fifties" is apparent from the "Report from the Select Committee

²⁶ C-7915 of 1895, pp. 40, 41, and 43.

"on Agriculture" in 1833, the "Reports of the Poor Law Commissioners" in 1833 and 1834, the "Reports from the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the state of Agriculture" in 1836, the "Report on the Burdens on Land" (1846), the "Reports of the Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture" in 1843, and from Sir James Caird's letters to the "Times" in 1850 and 1851.²⁷ It is also referred to in the "Reports of the Assistant Commissioners on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture" in 1867-69, by Mr. Clifford in 1875, and in the Reports of some of the Assistant Commissioners to the Royal Commission on Labour in 1892-93, and to the Royal Commission on Agriculture in 1893-95, and in the Final Report of that Commission, published in 1897.²⁸

Earnings of Women and Children.

It can be no matter of surprise that when weekly wages of ordinary labourers were so low between the "thirties" and the "seventies," and work for a good many men frequently irregular, the assistance of the wives and children either upon the land or in local industries were essential to make both ends meet.

Mr. Austin, reporting on the counties of Wilts, Dorset, Devon, and Somerset, in 1843, on the employment of women and children in agriculture, speaking of the out-door employment of married women, said, "Their earnings are a benefit to their families which cannot be dispensed with without creating a great deal of suffering."²⁹

Referring to the condition of the labourers in South Wilts, where weekly wages were 7s. a week, and in one large parish 6s., Caird says, in 1850: "Where a man's family can earn something at out-door work, this pittance is eked out a little, but in cases where there is a numerous young family, great pinching must be endured."³⁰

Dr. Edward Smith, in his Report to the Medical Officer of the Privy Council in 1863, says, "The labour of women in the fields (whatever may be its disadvantages and however desirable it may be that it should not be necessary,) is under present circumstances

²⁷ Subsequently reprinted in book form. See "English Agriculture in 1850-51."

²⁸ C-8540 of 1897, pp. 37-40.

²⁹ "Reports of Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture," 1843, p. 28.

³⁰ "English Agriculture in 1850-51," p. 84. Caird states that in 1850 the common rate of wages for day labourers in the Cotswold Hills did not exceed 6s. and 7s. a week, women getting 6d. a day (*ibid.*, p. 32).

"of great advantage to the family, since it adds that amount of "income to the family which relieves from the pressure of want."³¹

Old labourers have frequently told me of the struggles they had when young married men with several young children unable to do any work. Mr. J. J. Henley, C.B., who was an Assistant Commissioner on the 1867 Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture, informed me that that was the hardest period in a labourer's life, and that his advice to young labourers used to be, "marry and get your troubles "over as early as you can."

In most parts of England and Wales women and children were often employed between the "thirties" and "seventies" at field work to a greater or less extent, but where there were opportunities for them to earn money at other industries, either in factories or at home, such as at spinning, hand-loom weaving, ribbon weaving, button making, lace making, knitting, glove making, straw plaiting, and making up garments, women and girls generally did less on the land. It would appear, as might be expected, that, generally, more field work was done by married women and by children in the low wage than the high wage districts. In the early part of the "seventies," owing to the higher wages, the demand for domestic servants in towns, and the Education Acts, the practice of employing women and children on the land largely declined. Machinery at harvest also began to displace their labour, and in the early "eighties" it had almost entirely ceased in many districts.

In 1892-93 the reports of the Assistant Commissioners to the Labour Commission show that women were not often employed on the land except in a few districts. The Senior Assistant Agricultural Commissioner, Mr. W. C. Little, wrote: "One very marked feature "distinguishing the present inquiry from any of the previous "investigations of a similar character is the lessened employment "of women in farm work." He also said: "The universal withdrawal of women from field work is evidence of an improvement "in the circumstances of the labourers."³²

Mr. Spencer reported that "Women are occasionally employed "at farm work in Dorset, Wilts, Essex, Worcestershire, and Surrey, "and but rarely in Somerset,"³³ a very different state of affairs to what I have shown existed in the "forties" and "fifties."

³¹ Appendix No. 6 to the "Sixth Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council, 1863," p. 262.

³² "General Report on the Agricultural Labourer (Royal Commission on "Labour)," C-6894—xxv of 1894, pp. 54 and 163.

³³ "Reports from Assistant Agricultural Commissioners (Royal Commission on "Labour)," C-6894—v of 1893, p. 10.

I myself found very few women employed in the districts I reported on to that Commission, except in Northumberland, where the Scottish system prevails, and in Norfolk, where a good many were engaged at singling, pulling and cleaning roots, weeding corn, and raking after the waggons in hay and corn harvest. Some girls and widows were still working at Swaffham in a gang. The labourers in all my districts, with the exception of those in Northumberland, were averse to the employment of women.

At the present time women, except in Northumberland and Durham, are very seldom employed at field work in any counties, except for fruit and flower picking, pea picking and hop picking, and occasionally a little weeding, singling roots, and picking potatoes, and helping at hay harvest. I am not, of course, referring to the wives and families of the small farmers in England and Wales, who often help them on the land in certain seasons.

It will be readily understood that before the introduction of machinery at hay and corn harvest, the assistance of women and children was a great advantage to farmers, by enabling them to gather their crops as quickly as possible and to save them from the effects of bad weather. It was also of value to them to have a large supply of cheap labour for certain operations for which men's wages have now to be paid.

The employment of women and children is stated by several authorities to have been a factor in keeping the wages of the men low. The late Sir Thomas Dyke Acland stated that when a man had a family old enough to work, he was content to take a lower wage himself if they were employed.³⁴

Generally the work of women and children was irregular, and they usually got but little employment in the winter months, the period when the men were also earning the least and were often in irregular work themselves.

In the early "forties" boys not infrequently began to do light work in the fields in the low wage counties as early as 6 years or soon after, bird scaring or watching cattle. Girls usually began to work later, about 11 or 12 years of age. As the elder boys and girls could not easily obtain situations elsewhere, the whole family were available for agricultural work. The boys at the age of about 12 or 13 used often to be hired in the farm houses, but when boys of between 13 and 18 lived at home, the family earnings were, of course, increased. The cost of the clothes and food, however, of boys of this age was not inconsiderable. In the north the boys

³⁴ "On the Farming of Somersetshire," *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, 1850, p. 754.

generally appear to have begun out-door work at a somewhat later age than in the south.

Regular out-door employment must have been a very hard life for a married woman. She had to be up very early in the morning to see after the children and get the breakfast ready before she started, she had often to walk a considerable distance to and from her work, her clothes and boots were often unsuitable for field work, and frequently she had no change. On her return she had her household duties to perform, often in wet clothes, the supper to prepare, and the children to put to bed. In such circumstances as these the children were neglected and the home comforts of the men were sacrificed. The daughters who worked on the land also grew up without a knowledge of domestic duties, and when they married it is stated that they frequently were almost entirely ignorant of cooking or the economical management of a household which was so essential on a small income. I saw something of this in 1892 in Norfolk, when I was reporting for the Labour Commission.³⁵

The information procurable as to the payment of women and children almost entirely refers to the rates of daily pay, and not to the total amount earned in the year. The reason is that the names of the women and children were seldom entered in the farmer's labour books, as they did not work regularly, and indeed they often worked for different farmers. Further, the farmer often paid the man what he owed to the other members of his family.

I have examined the evidence obtained by the Poor Law Commissioners in 1832-34, the interesting paper read in the year 1838 to this Society by Dr. Kay, an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner, the evidence obtained by the Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the inquiry into the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture in 1843, and of the Assistant Commissioners on the

³⁵ Mr. Austin, reporting to the Poor Law Commissioners on the counties of Wilts, Dorset, Devon, and Somerset in 1843, said: "There is not the same order in the cottage, nor the same attention paid to his comforts as when his wife remains at home all day. On returning from her labour she has to look after her children, and her husband may have to wait for his supper. He may come home tired and wet; he finds his wife has arrived just before him; she must give her attention to the children; there is no fire, no supper, no comfort, and he goes to the beershop. . . . Her own clothes, and those of her husband and family, are rarely in such cases properly attended to" (Reports of Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture, p. 27). Mr. Austin also said that "When the mother of young children is absent from home the whole or the greater part of the day, the mischief to them is very great. They are neglected in every way, morally and physically" (*Ibid.*, p. 26). See also Dr. E. Smith's "Report on the Food of the Poorer Labouring Classes in England." (Appendix No. 6 to the Sixth Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council for 1863, p. 262.)

inquiry into the same subject in 1867-69, and I have also examined all the papers in the "Journals of the Royal Agricultural Society of England," and have read other authorities. In addition, my own correspondents who have sent me particulars as to wages for a long series of years from their books, have given me information as to the annual sum generally earned by a labourer's wife and three or four children in the "fifties" and "sixties."

Having regard to all the available information which I possess, I should say that a farm labourer's wife and family of children, not more than four in number and not exceeding 12 or 13 years old, would have generally earned in the period named between 5*l.* and 12*l.* a year, varying of course according to the number of the children, their ages, the health of the wife, and the opportunities of work, that is, an addition of from 2*s.* to 5*s.* a week to the man's earnings.

With regard to the earnings at local industries of married women and of the older daughters who lived at home, there is a good deal of information in the reports of the Assistant Commissioners on the 1867-69 Commission. 3*s.* to 3*s.* 6*d.* a week appears to be about the usual amount earned, and the hours appear to have been long. Sometimes 4*s.* and 5*s.* a week was earned for a twelve hours' day or more. But assume a girl earned 4*s.* every week, she would only have earned about 10*l.* in a year, which could scarcely have fed and clothed her. A girl could now earn say 12*l.* to 15*l.* in domestic service, and be well fed in addition.³⁶

Condition of Cottages, and Rent.

The condition of the cottages, and the overcrowding in many of the open villages, where they are often owned by speculators and small tradesmen, was frequently most deplorable in the earlier part of the period under consideration. Though much has been done since the sixties in the direction of improvement, much still remains to be done.

The evidence of reliable witnesses such as medical men and the clergy in certain districts given to the Commission of Inquiry into the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture in 1843, and also the Reports of the Assistant Commissioners themselves, are sometimes simply appalling.

³⁶ I found a good deal of outwork done by the wives and daughters of agricultural labourers in the neighbourhood of Bury St. Edmunds in 1892, which they got from clothing factories in the neighbourhood or from London.

The women with large families in Suffolk told me what a great advantage the extra money earned at factory work was to them. But it will be understood that the noise of a machine in the only living-room was very trying to the man, who not infrequently went to the public house to escape it.

Reporting on Wilts, Dorset, Devon, and Somerset, Mr. Austin said: "The want of sufficient accommodation seems universal. Cottages generally have only two bedrooms (with very rare exceptions); a great many have only one. The consequence is, that it is very often extremely difficult, if not impossible, to divide a family so that grown-up persons of different sexes, brothers and sisters, fathers and daughters, do not sleep in the same room."³⁷

Cases are mentioned of lodgers being taken into the cottages in addition to a family of some size. It is not therefore surprising that we find the clergy talking about immorality, and the doctors about disease.

Dr. (afterwards Sir J.) Simon, the Medical Officer of the Privy Council, in his report for 1864, referring to Dr. Hunter's Inquiry on the State of the Dwellings of Rural Labourers, says:—"To the insufficient quantity and miserable quality of the house-accommodation generally had by our agricultural labourers, almost every page of Dr. Hunter's report bears testimony. And gradually for many years past the state of the labourer in these respects has been deteriorating,—house-room being now greatly more difficult for him to find, and, when found, greatly less suitable to his needs, than perhaps for centuries has been the case. Especially within the last twenty or thirty years the evil has been in very rapid increase, and the household circumstances of the labourer are now in the highest degree deplorable."³⁸

The "First Report of the Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture" in 1868, stated as follows:—³⁹

"The evidence received by our Assistant Commissioners in every county hitherto visited by them proves that many land-owners, both large and small, have, especially within the last thirty years, expended in the aggregate immense sums of money in improving and enlarging old and providing new cottages on their estates.

"Nevertheless, it is lamentably evident that, although much has

³⁷ "Reports of Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture" (1843), p. 19. See also evidence of the Hon. and Rev. (afterwards Rev. Lord) S. Godolphin Osborne, p. 73. Also evidence of Mr. Phelps, an agent of the Marquis of Lansdowne, p. 62, and Mr. Spooner, a surgeon, pp. 82 and 83. See Report on Kent, Surrey and Sussex, by Mr. Vaughan, one of the Assistant Commissioners, pp. 148 and 149. See also "Report from the Poor Law Commissioners, on an Inquiry into the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain" (1842).

³⁸ "Seventh Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council, for 1864," p. 9.

³⁹ p. liv.

“been done towards remedying the omissions and the errors of past generations in that respect, a large proportion of the agricultural labourers throughout the country are still under the disadvantage of being housed in dwellings in which they cannot fail to be subjected to great and serious discomfort, and in which the decencies of life are often impossible.”

The Hon. Edward Stanhope, one of the Assistant Commissioners of the Commission of 1867-69, afterwards Secretary of State for War, speaking of Dorset, said that while the great majority of land-owners had effected great changes on their estates, there were many cottages unfit for habitation.⁴⁰ The Rev. Mr. Fraser, afterwards the Bishop of Manchester, who reported on the counties of Norfolk, Essex, Sussex, and Gloucester, said that “the majority of the cottages that exist in rural parishes are deficient in almost every requisite that should constitute a home for a Christian family in a civilised community.”⁴¹

In Mr. Frederick Clifford’s book entitled “The Agricultural Lock-out of 1874,” which was originally published in the form of letters to the “Times” in that year, he thus describes the cottages in a Suffolk village:—“Habitations like these are enough to crush nearly all sense of decency, or notion of tidiness and comfort among the women, while they must inevitably drive the husband to the public-house.”⁴² In my report to the Labour Commission in 1892, I quoted this and endorsed it as applicable to the state of things then existing nearly twenty years later in some of the open villages where I made a minute inspection.

In my final report to the Labour Commission on the condition of the cottages in the northern and eastern counties, I pointed out that although it was encouraging to be able to say that cottage accommodation was improving owing to the action of the land-owners, who build without making profit their primary object, “there are many houses left more fitted for animals to inhabit than men or women, and in which no human being could be either comfortable or contented.”⁴³

The late Mr. W. C. Little, who was the senior Assistant Agricultural Commissioner, and who was charged with the task of writing a report summing up all the Assistant Commissioners’

⁴⁰ Appendix, Part I, to “Second Report of the Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture” (1869), p. 6.

⁴¹ Appendix, Part I, to “First Report of the Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture” (1868), p. 35.

⁴² p. 36.

⁴³ C-6894—III of 1893, p. 17.

reports to the Labour Commission, wrote as follows in 1894: "Very generally an improvement has taken place, and is still in progress, but this is chiefly on the estates of large proprietors, and it is to be feared that a large proportion of the cottages inhabited by labourers are below a proper standard of what is required for decency and comfort, while a considerable number are vile and deplorably wretched dwellings."⁴⁴

On the Agricultural Commission in 1894-95 I had further opportunity of examining the cottage question. As I found the cottages more uniformly bad in Cambridgeshire than in any other county I visited, I will refer to the evidence given at Wisbech by a very representative body of farmers invited by the late Mr. W. C. Little to meet me. They said "the cottages are very bad in North Cambridgeshire, with the exception of those on large estates, and a lot are not fit to live in. If the sanitary authorities did their duty a lot would be condemned." A well-known farmer and land agent near Cambridge said that "the wretched homes of the labourers have had much to do with their migration from the villages." I myself said that "I venture to reiterate that until the inspection of cottages is undertaken by the county councils or a Government Office, through capable and disinterested officials, influenced by no local prejudices or interests, so long will the housing of the labourers remain a great blot on our rural life."⁴⁵

The facts relating to this question require great care in collecting and handling. A great deal of evidence from a large number of districts is necessary to enable a general opinion to be formed of the condition of the cottages in rural districts. It is an easy matter to write a sensational report by visiting a number of open villages containing cottages of the older type made of lath and plaster, or clay lump, often owned by comparatively poor people, frequently without the means to keep them in decent repair, and to whom it is important to obtain the largest possible return. It is also an easy matter to write a rosy account of the cottage accommodation in the close villages, or on farms belonging to large and wealthy

⁴⁴ C-6894—V of 1894, p. 92.

⁴⁵ C-7871 of 1895, p. 15. Comparing the condition of the cottages in Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland, Lancashire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Lincolnshire, and Cambridgeshire in 1892-95, according to my experience as Assistant Commissioner on two Royal Commissions, the cottages in Lincolnshire were the best, and in Cambridgeshire the worst. In Norfolk and Suffolk the best and the worst class of cottages were to be found. Taking the average, the cottages in Northumberland, Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire were better than in Norfolk and Suffolk. (See also Rew's Report on Norfolk to the Royal Commission on Agriculture. C-7915 of 1895, p. 46 and 47; and Mr. H. Rider Haggard's "Rural England" (1902), vol. II, pp. 59—64.

landowners, who have spared no expense to erect dwellings equipped with every modern convenience.

The contrast between the classes of cottages often in the same parish is extraordinary. In the old type of cottage there is often overcrowding in the sleeping rooms, low ceilings, small windows, rickety stairs; while down stairs the living room is often a small kitchen possessing no back door, where the cooking and washing have to be done. The discomfort in case of illness in such places can be imagined. Add to this, dampness on the ground floor, general want of repair, little or no garden, no proper outhouse or sanitary arrangements, and water to be fetched from some distance, and occasionally nothing but pond water to be obtained, and you get some of the influences which make the agricultural labourer not disinclined to move elsewhere when he gets the chance. In the new type of cottage there are often three bedrooms, a kitchen, and scullery or pantry; also a parlour, good outhouses, including a wash-house with a copper, or a bakehouse, and a garden and pig sty. This class of cottage is not merely a dwelling but a home. Health, decency, cleanliness and comfort can be obtained; the wife need not be a slut, nor the husband a drunkard, nor the children little "hoolligans."

The decline in the number of farm labourers during the last decade has resulted in the decrease of overcrowding in the cottages, as the following figures for certain agricultural counties show:—

Table showing for certain Agricultural Counties the Population, and the Percentage of the Total Population of those Counties, Living in Tenements, more than Two per Room, according to the Census of 1891 and 1901 respectively.

County.	1901.		1891.		Decrease in Percentage in 1901 as Compared with 1891.
	Population Living More than Two per Room.	Percentage of Total Population.	Population Living More than Two per Room.	Percentage of Total Population.	
Westmorland	1,804	2.80	3,229	4.88	2.08
Lincoln	12,581	2.52	20,384	4.30	1.78
Norfolk	17,357	3.64	28,020	5.98	2.34
Suffolk	12,912	3.46	21,478	5.93	2.47
Berkshire	6,118	2.42	11,396	4.83	2.41
Sussex	11,095	1.84	16,108	2.94	1.10
Hampshire	13,040	1.63	18,339	2.65	1.02
Gloucestershire	34,815	4.91	53,710	8.21	3.30
Somerset	12,428	2.82	20,067	4.67	1.85
Devon	51,723	7.81	65,219	10.31	2.50
Cornwall	12,742	3.95	21,282	6.60	2.65

The rent paid for cottages in the rural districts has generally very little relation to the accommodation or comfort provided, or to the earnings of the occupier. Indeed, the best cottages are not infrequently the lowest rented. 1s. to 2s. a week are the usual rents in the rural districts, 1s. 6d. being, I believe, the most usual. In the purely rural districts rents do not appear to have risen much in the last forty or fifty years, notwithstanding the improved class of new cottages, and the increase in the cost of building. But I think that there are fewer cottages now rented as low as a 1s. a week than formerly.

As between county and county, the rents in the purely rural districts appear to be generally about the same, notwithstanding the difference in wages. But rents of cottages near towns, not belonging to owners of estates, where other classes compete with the farm labourers for them, have certainly risen. Thus, a man on the Essex side of Hertfordshire may be earning 14s. to 15s. a week and paying 1s. 6d. for his cottage, while a man on the Middlesex side may be earning 17s. to 18s. a week, and paying 2s. 6d. to 4s. for his cottage.⁴⁶

It is also satisfactory to be able to say that local authorities are often more active than formerly in administering the Sanitary Acts; and, further, that many landowners, with decreasing rentals and with the cost of building increasing, have spent, and are continuing to spend, considerable sums of money on erecting good cottages, from which no direct remunerative return is obtainable. Landowners and estate agents generally say that a pair of cottages now cost at least 350*l.*, and many put the sum higher. It is apparent that with rents at 1s. 6d. per week, and with rates to pay and repairs to execute, there is no direct profit on such an outlay.

But in order to attract a good class of tenant, a farm must be equipped with good accommodation for man and beast, and the landlord has to look at his profit from the rental of each farm as a whole, rather than at the profits arising from the component parts.

As showing how one evil leads to another, it is worth while

⁴⁶ In his General Report to the Royal Commission on Labour, Mr. W. C. Little compared the cottage rents in districts where the yearly earnings of ordinary labourers averaged 17s. a week and upwards with the rents of cottages in districts where the earnings averaged under 15s. a week, and came to the following conclusions:—"It is clear from this comparative statement that cottages which "are rented of those who are not estate owners are frequently let for as much "money in districts of low earnings as in those of higher earnings, and that the "rents of estate or farm cottages vary very little as between districts of high "and low earnings." C-6894, xxv, of 1894, p. 120.

to turn our attention back to the first half of the past century when the lavish administration of the Poor Law and the provisions concerning Settlement and Chargeability, which gave direct encouragement to idleness, thriftlessness and early marriages,⁴⁷ were also responsible for bad cottage accommodation and overcrowding, immorality and other attendant evils. Until the Union Chargeability Act (1865), which threw upon the union instead of the parish the maintenance of the poor, each parish had a direct interest in reducing the number of its resident labourers. Numerous landowners, in order to avoid high rates, and to prevent an increase of birth settlements, adopted the policy of not only refraining from building cottages on their properties, but of keeping empty or pulling down existing ones. Dr. Simon, in his Report to the Privy Council in 1865, said that the practice prevailed "on a very large scale."⁴⁸

But, to say the least of it, the practice was a selfish one, for it enabled the landlord to have his estate cultivated by men to whose support he contributed nothing in sickness or old age, or, as Mr. H. J. Little put it, "the landlord had, in fact, often been "obtaining a portion of his rental at the expense of his neighbours."⁴⁹ The labourers, where the landlords had thus acted, had to seek shelter in the dilapidated and often crowded open villages with high rents, resulting in a state of things which became a great reproach to rural life, and which has left its mark to the present day in some districts.

A further consequence was that the labourers, their wives and children often had to walk long distances to their work from the open villages. Caird states, in 1851, that it was "the commonest "thing possible" to find agricultural labourers lodged at such a distance from their regular place of employment that they had to walk an hour out in the morning and an hour home in the evening—from 40 to 50 miles a week. The distance to the villages from the farms was so great that in one county the farmers used to provide their men with donkeys.⁵⁰

Dr. Simon, in his report to the Privy Council for 1864, said :—

⁴⁷ The "Report from the Select Committee on Agriculture" in 1833, says: "The great abuse would seem to be more prevalent in the southern counties, "where wages are paid out of the rate, where the system of roundsmen has been "longest established, where the father of the family receives an increased "allowance on the birth of each child, where the supply of labour is redundant, "and where a premium is thus indirectly offered to improvident marriages and to "an increase of population" (pp. 6 and 7).

⁴⁸ "Seventh Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council," 1864, p. 10.

⁴⁹ "Memoir on English Agriculture." See "Journal of the Royal Agricultural "Society of England" for 1878, p. 779.

⁵⁰ "English Agriculture in 1850-51," p. 516.

“ While great owners are thus escaping from poor-rates through the depopulation of the lands over which they have control, the nearest town or *open* village receives the evicted labourers:—the nearest, I say; but this ‘nearest’ may be three or four miles distant from the farm where the labourer has his daily toil. To that daily toil there will then have to be added, as though it were nothing, the daily need of walking six or eight miles for power of earning his daily bread. And whatever farm-work is done by his wife and children is done at the same disadvantage. Nor is this nearly all the evil which the distance occasions him.

“ In the open village, cottage-speculators buy scraps of land which they throng as densely as they can with the cheapest of all possible hovels. And into these wretched habitations (which, even if they adjoin the open country, have some of the worst features of the worst town residences) crowd the agricultural labourers of England.”⁵¹

Another evil following this chain of evils was the gang system. The labourers being congregated together in the open villages, frequently in irregular work, and long distances from the farms, it became the practice for gangs of men, women, lads, girls, and children to be formed, by a gang-master, who contracted with the farmers to do certain operations. He was, therefore, the middleman, and he appears to have been frequently a sweater of the worst kind, trading on the poverty of all, and on the necessities of those who had no characters to enable them to obtain any other class of employment. He also made money by selling necessities to the members of his gang.

The bargain the gang-master made with the farmer was based on a piecerate contract, but he paid the workers day wages, and extracted from them the longer hours and the increased exertions incidental to piecework; thus putting in his pocket the extra profit they would have made if their bargains had been direct with the farmer. The workers, including children, had sometimes to walk six or seven miles to their work, and if the distances were too great, the gang-master sometimes drove them in carts or the farmer sent for them.⁵²

Immorality appears to have been often rife in these gangs, and the example of some of the gang-masters appears to have been degrading and ruffianly. As the result of the Sixth Report of the Children’s

⁵¹ “Seventh Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council,” 1864, p. 11.

⁵² “Reports of Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture,” 1843, pp. 222—25. Also see “Sixth Report of Royal Commission on the Employment of Children and Young Persons in Trades not already Regulated by Law” (1867).

Employment Commission in 1867, legislation happily interfered by the passing of the Agricultural Gangs Act of 1867. Children under 8 years of age were prohibited from working in gangs; mixed gangs of males and females have also been prohibited, and gang-masters for men gangs and women overseers for women gangs have to be licensed by the magistrate.⁵³ The Education Acts of the "seventies" subsequently were the means of preventing children working to the same extent in the fields. The higher wages in the "seventies" were responsible for the withdrawal of many of the women, particularly the married ones, from field work, and since then the gradual and steady demand for country girls as domestic servants and shop assistants has almost wholly deprived the English farmers of this class of labour.

Position of the Agricultural Labourer in 1903 compared with 1850.

I will now proceed to shortly state in what respects the farm labourers are better off at the present time than they were in 1850.

1. Their earnings are greater, due both to higher payments and more regular employment.

2. They are, in fact, better off than when they had the additional assistance of their wives and children, and they have not to sacrifice the comfort of their homes, the economy of their household arrangements, and the education and worldly prospects of their children.

3. Prices of most of the commodities of life are cheaper. Rent in rural districts has scarcely risen if at all. The result is that the labourers and their families have a greater quantity and a better quality of food than formerly. They furnish their cottages better, dress better, and have money to spend on trips, thus getting their views and ideas enlarged.

4. Work is less arduous owing to shorter hours, the introduction of machinery and to better tools.

5. There are more opportunities of obtaining allotments.

6. Education is free.

7. Sanitary arrangements and water supplies in the villages are better attended to.

8. Cottage accommodation, while not dearer, is better, due both to the superior class of buildings now erected to replace the old ones, and also to the decrease in the population in a good many rural villages, which has tended to reduce over-crowding and to leave the worst cottages empty.

⁵³ The powers of magistrates have since been transferred to the District Councils (56—7 Vic., c. 73).

9. Compensation can be obtained for accidents in the course of their employment.

Migration from the Country Districts.

According to the 1901 census, the number of male agricultural labourers (including foremen and bailiffs) in England and Wales was 631,728, as compared with 774,762 in 1891, a decrease of 18 per cent. The decrease in the acreage of arable land in the same period was 785,296 acres, or 6 per cent., and the increased use of farming machinery would account for a certain decline. But the fact that at the time of the 1901 census 49 militia battalions were embodied, and numbers of army reserve men were also serving with their regiments, should also be taken into consideration. At this period, too, the mining and other industries were active and wages high, and men were attracted to them from the rural districts. As compared with 1851 there was a falling off in the number of male agricultural labourers of about 40 per cent., and, making every allowance for exceptional circumstances attending the census of 1901, it is evident that the number of labourers engaged in farm work has, from one cause or another, considerably diminished during the last half-century.

Many people may perhaps say that an ordinary farm labourer even in the low-wage counties, earning, at the present time, from 15s. to 16s. a week, with 1s. 6d. a week to pay for his cottage, is perhaps not in such a bad position, particularly if he is comfortably housed and has a garden, and a young son at home also earning money. He may also derive some assistance from an allotment, from keeping a pig or poultry, from clothing or coal clubs, and he may also belong to a sick club or benefit society. Still, it requires very careful management, even with these advantages, for a family of four or five in such circumstances as these, to feed and clothe themselves,⁵⁴ having regard to the standard of modern living.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ A labourer in the western counties said to me last autumn: "You are bound to dress the children better now they go to school and meet other children, and they must be dressed up to the mark or they would be thought nothing of now."

⁵⁵ According to the Board of Trade "Report on the Wages and Earnings of Agricultural Labourers in the United Kingdom" (Cd-346 of 1900), the average total weekly earnings of ordinary farm labourers (including the estimated value of allowances in kind) in England in 1898 were 16s. 10d.; the earnings in ten counties were from 14s. 5d. up to 15s. 6d.; in nineteen counties from 15s. 6d. up to 18s.; in nine counties the earnings were from 18s. up to 20s. In Northumberland and Durham they were between 20s. and 21s. Generally speaking the earnings of men in charge of animals were 1s. to 2s. higher than those of ordinary farm labourers.

Still the farm labourer's position, improved as it is, does not appear to be sufficiently good, nor the conditions sufficiently attractive, to restrain him from accepting work in the populous centres, or in such occupations as the police force, the postal service, the railways, the mines, the brickyards, or the building trades.

The fact is that he is now able to sell his labour in other markets than the agricultural one, and he would have probably done so years ago if he had had the opportunity. He goes where he can earn the highest wages, and he does not differ in this respect from any other class of the community. He and his wife also go where life is less monotonous, and to some extent, perhaps, to raise themselves in the social scale.

We are seeing the effect of education for the first time upon a new generation of farm labourers. Fifty or sixty years ago the farm labourer commenced to work on the land at 6 or 7 years of age. He grew up uneducated, narrow-minded, and unenterprising. If he had had the wits, he had no means of locomotion, nor facilities for obtaining employment elsewhere. The young women were in a similar position. The then existing law of settlement also tended to keep him in his parish.⁵⁶ The farmer then had a complete monopoly of the rural labour market.⁵⁷ He could employ as many or as few as he liked, when he liked, and as long as he liked. There were the agricultural gangs, and any amount of cheap labour of women and children. Every dog has his day. The farmer has now to compete with other employers for his labour, and the labourer can select his employment and his employer.

No longer the ignorant, ill-clad yokel, but educated, and able to use the press, the posts, railways, and bicycles, and with the aid of friends and relations already employed in various pursuits elsewhere, he can now sell his labour outside his own parish. Unless agriculture can offer him as good terms as other callings, he is not likely to remain on the land on smaller wages for the sake of fresh air, or for breeding healthy children to cultivate it. Anyhow, it is better for him and for the country generally that he should leave the rural districts voluntarily to obtain employment elsewhere, than to be driven out for lack of it.

⁵⁶ Purdy, "Earnings of Agricultural Labourers in England and Wales, 1860," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 1861, p. 345. Caird, "English Agriculture in 1850-51," pp. 516 and 517. "Report from the Select Committee on 'Agriculture,' 1833, p. vii. "Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Burdens affecting Real Property," 1846, p. xii.

⁵⁷ H. J. Little's contribution to the "Memoir on English Agriculture," *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, 1878, p. 505.

The farmer may bemoan his absence, but some other employer is profiting by his presence.

Most of us, I expect, would like to see as many people as possible living in the agricultural districts either as small farmers or farm labourers. We should like to see them leading simple, healthy lives, surrounded by the fewest temptations. It is all very well, however, to say that more people should be employed on the land, but under what conditions? Does any one want to go back to the period between the "twenties" and the "fifties," when the rural population was so plentiful in many counties outside the northern ones that there was not enough employment to go round; when landowners and farmers had to support large bodies of able-bodied men and their families, and were nearly overwhelmed by the rates in some districts in consequence?⁵⁸ In 1851 Caird said "the agricultural labourer in the southern counties, while he derives from his labour the means of a very scanty existence, is almost everywhere felt as a burden instead of a benefit to his employer."⁵⁹ I do not believe that any of the agricultural classes want those days again.

In the "twenties" farmers, in some counties, did not use machinery, in order to employ men who would otherwise have been out of work.⁶⁰ In the "thirties" there were constant disturbances in some of the low-wage counties, "a general feeling of insecurity" and alarm throughout the southern and eastern counties of "England,"⁶¹ and according to the report of the Poor Law Commission in 1833,⁶² the resentment at the condition in which they lived found frequent expression in rick burning and other acts of violence.

This is what Mr. Thurnall, a farmer and corn merchant of Duxford, Cambridgeshire, told the Select Committee on Agricultural Distress in 1836:—

"With respect to the labourers, we are paying 50 per cent. more for labour than we ought to do, as a sort of premium of insurance,

⁵⁸ "Report from the Commissioners for Inquiring into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws," 1834, pp. 36—38; "Report of the Poor Law Commissioners on the Continuance of the Poor Law Commission, and on some Further Amendments of the Laws relating to the Relief of the Poor," 1840, pp. 9 and 10.

⁵⁹ "English Agriculture in 1850-51," p. 513.

⁶⁰ "Report from the Select Committee on Labourers' Wages" (1824).

⁶¹ "Report of the Poor Law Commissioners on the Continuance of the Poor Law Commission, and on some Further Amendments to the Laws relating to the Relief of the Poor" (1840), p. 10.

⁶² "Report from the Commissioners for Inquiring into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws" (1834). Part V of Appendix B 1, "Answers to Rural Queries.—No. 53."

"to prevent our farms being burnt down . . . . . In the village near me we had 13 fires in one year and a half."

"To what," he was asked, "do you attribute those?" His reply was: "To the desperate state of the labouring class . . . . . The difficulty is to get employment . . . . ." ⁶³

In 1846 a large Essex farmer told the House of Lords Committee on the Burdens on Land, that he employed a very considerable number more men than he required, to keep them off the parish; and that since the disturbances took place in the neighbourhood, he had put away his machinery in winter, very much to his detriment. He added: "*If I were to use machinery to any great extent some resentment would be exhibited upon my premises.*" ⁶⁴

In 1851 Caird refers to frequent rick burning in some districts. In Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire he says that rick burning was of almost nightly occurrence, that the farmers there went in fear of their lives, and that "a man might as well expose his life to the risk of a shot from a Tipperary assassin, as live, like a Cambridgeshire farmer, in constant apprehension of incendiarism." ⁶⁵

Then proceed to the period from 1854 to the end of the "sixties," which is looked back on as a halcyon time for farmers, when many of them lived well, saved money, and bought land. I do not for one moment suggest that many farmers did not show much consideration towards their men, and often made sacrifices to employ them as regularly as possible, and to keep old men off the rates who had given them their life service. Neither do I say that a number of labourers, somehow or other, to their lasting credit, did not find it

⁶³ Mr. Thurnall also said: "Last year they were in a very deplorable state indeed, and a great number are now where they cannot get employment, and particularly the young men; the farmer frequently will employ the men with large families, to prevent their being relieved by a rate, and it makes the young men very desperate indeed, so much so, that they have told me lately, the married men as well, that they would go upon the highway and rob. I am an overseer at this moment, and several of the best and honest labourers have said to me, that they are shocked to make a declaration of that kind, but that before they will go to the union workhouse they will rob on the highway."

Asked if the want of employment had any demoralising effect on them, he replied: "It has demoralised nearly the whole of them, they are in a very desperate state, they are in such a state of excitement, that they are ripe for everything in the world" ("First Report of Select Committee appointed to Inquire into the State of Agriculture," 1836, pp. 119 and 120).

Mr. Henry Morton, who farmed in Bucks, Herts, and Middlesex, also told the Committee that wages were high at one time owing to fear on the farmer's part of rick burning (*ibid.*, p. 186).

⁶⁴ "Report from Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Burdens affecting Real Property" (1846), pp. 23 and 24.

⁶⁵ "English Agriculture in 1850-51," pp. 467 and 468.

possible to bring up large families honestly and respectably. But I do say that for numbers of the labourers these were still days of comparatively low wages, irregular work, and bad and overcrowded cottages; and no one would wish to see again many of the circumstances existing which were referred to in the reports of the medical officers to the Privy Council for 1863 and 1864, and in the Reports of the Royal Commission in 1867-69 on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture. In 1874 the labourer revolted against the conditions of his employment, and a great unexpected fight was made by him for higher wages. The bitterness then exhibited by the labourers leads one to believe that they must have been long harbouring a sense of injustice.

In 1875 Mr. Frederick Clifford said that the labourer "must migrate in order to work." He also said, "we must remember, too, that the agricultural districts will bear a great deal of depletion, not only without injury to farmers and labourers, but with positive advantage to both. It is not really to the advantage of farmers in any district that there should be a redundant population; for if the nominal rate of wages be thereby kept somewhat lower than it is elsewhere, the rates are higher. Moreover, low wages generally mean depression and discontent among the labourers, and bad, nerveless, dear work." . . . . . "Will the taste for emigration grow, and, after a time, sensibly affect the farm labour market? Or will it do more than restore a healthy balance between supply and demand?" . . . . . Even then, when the weekly wages were higher than they are now by 1s. a week in Norfolk and Suffolk, Clifford said, "it is questionable whether, out of his present earnings, the married labourer, however thrifty, can support a family and pay the weekly sum which is necessary to secure for himself an adequate provision in sickness and old age."⁶⁶ No doubt, in the "seventies," the position of the labourers had become a considerably better one than in the "fifties" and "sixties," and in 1878 Caird said that "The general condition of the agricultural labourer was probably never better than it is at present."⁶⁷ But I have already shown that as late as 1895, in some districts, certainly in some of the eastern counties,

⁶⁶ "The Labour Bill in Farming," *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, 1875, pp. 125—127.

⁶⁷ See Caird's contribution to "Memoir on English Agriculture," *Journal of Royal Agricultural Society of England*, 1878, p. 302. Published also separately, under the title of "The Landed Interest and the Supply of Food."

all the men were by no means regularly employed.⁶⁸ Since 1896 I believe that, generally speaking, they have been regularly employed, and farmers have complained of a shortage of men, particularly in 1900 and 1901, when there was an exceptional demand for labour in the towns, owing to commercial prosperity, and when the country districts had men called up for active service in South Africa. Under what conditions, I therefore ask, is the labourer to remain on the soil? The conditions of larger numbers, crowded cottages, low wages and irregular work, or smaller numbers and the reverse. Is it to be when the farmer or the labourer has the whip hand of the labour market?

It is doubtful whether we shall see an agricultural millennium quite yet, when the farmers shall tell us they have sufficient men at the wages they can afford to pay, and the labourers, that their wages are sufficient and their work regular. But pending the arrival of that desirable time, it will certainly be to the advantage of the economic condition of the labourers, if competition enables them to bargain on fairly even terms with their employers.

Who can say whether the migration from the country districts to the towns will continue to the same extent as recently? Is it not possible that new methods of locomotion will open up the more remote country districts, and make farming more profitable and life less monotonous for the labourer? May it not enable more people to visit the country, and also to live there, and make it possible for manufactories to be erected outside the large urban centres, thus giving direct and indirect employment in the neighbouring villages and on the farms at good wages. And if more decentralisation of government should exist in the future, giving more importance to, and creating greater activity in, provincial districts, may not this all operate in the direction of increased employment in the rural districts?

We have been told by witnesses at various inquiries during the past thirty or forty years, that the farm labourer is decreasing in

⁶⁸ I reported to the Royal Commission on Agriculture on the county of Suffolk in that year, and I stated that in 1893 and 1894 in a number of districts men were in irregular work even in the summer time, that I had often seen men standing idle in several villages, and that evidence was given that this state of things was not uncommon.

In the winter of that year I stated that a very considerable number of men were in irregular employment, and in fact I went down in the early part of 1895 to try and get some idea of their numbers. This is fully borne out by the fact that a number of farmers in west and north-west Suffolk reduced the wages to 9s. a week in the autumn of 1894 (C-7755 of 1895, pp. 75 and 76).

See also Rew's Report on Norfolk (C-7915 of 1895, p. 40), and the Final Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture (C-8540 of 1897, pp. 37 and 38).

stamina owing to migration to the towns. This allegation, I think, is somewhat apt to come from people of mature age, who think that their own times produced the high water mark of excellence. I remember the late W. G. Little, a great authority upon agricultural labour, and a well-known tenant farmer himself, saying to me, "if all my friends the farmers have said about the deterioration of the "farm labourer is true, they must be a race of monkeys by now." Reporting to the Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons, and Women in Agriculture in 1867-69, a generation ago, the late Hon. Edward Stanhope, an Assistant Commissioner, said: "The younger portion of the labourers are being attracted into "the towns, leaving only the old or the ignorant behind."⁶⁹ The Vicar of Bures in Suffolk in a communication to the Rev. J. Fraser, another Assistant Commissioner, states that the farmers were complaining that all the sharper lads were migrating to London and other large towns, and that "'the clods of the valley' alone remain."⁷⁰ The Chairman of the Board of Guardians in the Hungerford Union, Berks, also said that "the farm work is now practically left to boys "and old men."⁷¹ I heard much evidence of this character on two Royal Commissions ten years ago. In Herefordshire, a few months ago, an old labourer of 80 years said to me, "the men get weaker "every generation, and so do horses and stock."

Is there not, perhaps, too great a tendency on the part of the older farmers to remember the days when the hours were longer, the work more arduous owing to there being no machinery and inferior implements? Days when wages were low, and the labourer often worked excessive hours at piecework at hay and corn harvest to enable him to pay his way. Days when corn was threshed with the flail, ploughs were made of wood, stacks were made without elevators, and hay and corn were cut by hand.⁷² Old labourers have told me, and farmers have corroborated it, that to earn extra money they sometimes reaped corn till 9 or even 10 o'clock at night by moonlight, and slept in the fields for a few hours till they could commence again at dawn. But because economic and scientific causes have combined to make the labourer's work less arduous than formerly, is there proof that he is incapable of the same exertion and the same endurance as the men of a former generation?

⁶⁹ Appendix, Part I, to First Report (1868), p. 91.

⁷⁰ Appendix, Part II, to First Report (1868), p. 183.

⁷¹ Appendix, Part II, to Second Report (1869), pp. 405 and 401.

⁷² See Caird's "English Agriculture in 1850-51."

Clifford said in 1875, "I cannot help thinking that there is, among the mass of our English peasantry, a great reserve of power waiting to be called out, and ready for use if adequate inducements are offered"⁷³ May this not be true to some extent to-day?

The medical authorities I have consulted as to the deterioration of our rural population doubt if there is evidence to warrant such an allegation. At any rate they say that it requires proof.

Has the better feeding during the last twenty-five years of higher wages and lower prices, the improvement in cottages, in drainage, water supply, the cessation of married women working in the fields, done nothing to maintain if not to improve the stamina of the race? Has medical science and skill been of no avail? Is it not possible, indeed, that the men on the land now, notwithstanding the migration, are quite as good as the average man of fifty years ago? If this is so, it may be better to breed from a small, well-nourished race than a large ill-fed one.

If evidence is required to prove that stamina, strength and courage are still to be found in the lads from the rural districts, the graves around Colenso, Spion Kop, and Waggon Hill are surely witnesses.

Compare the condition of the farm labourers in the Northern counties during the last century with those of the South. In the North there have been mines, and the big manufacturing centres which competed with the farms, and kept labour comparatively scarce, wages high, and work regular.⁷⁴ The men in the North

⁷³ "The Labour Bill in Farming," *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, 1875, p. 97.

⁷⁴ The "Report from the Select Committee on Labourers' Wages" in 1824, alluding to the system then prevailing of paying labourers' wages out of the rates, said: "The effects of this system very clearly show the mistake of imagining that 'indiscriminate relief is the best method of providing for the happiness of the 'labouring classes. Employers, burdened with the support of a surplus population, endeavour to reduce the wages of labour to the lowest possible price. Hence, 'where the system to which we allude has gained ground, the labourers are found 'to live chiefly on bread, or even potatoes, scarcely ever tasting meat or beer, or 'being able even to buy milk; while in other parts of the country, where high wages are still prevalent, the food and whole manner of living of the labourer are on a 'greatly better scale" (p. 5).

See also evidence of Mr. Charles Howard (East Yorks) upon the "Select Committee to Inquire into the State of Agriculture" in 1836, Second Report, pp. 53 and 54.

Also evidence of Mr. George Culley, C.B., accompanying my Report on the Agricultural Labourer to the Royal Commission on Labour, C-6894—III of 1893, p. 138; also see Dr. E. Smith's "Report on the Food of the Poorer Labouring 'Classes in England," Appendix No. 6 to the "Sixth Report of the Medical 'Officer of the Privy Council," 1863, p. 265.

were not pauperised by the old Poor Law system, nor underfed. They have had the intelligence and the means to spend money on the education of their children, who, in their turn, endeavour to preserve their parents' old age from the stigma of 'pauperism'.⁷⁵ Their wages have been sufficient to enable many of them to save money and start on small farms. Scores of farmers in the North, or their fathers before them, have been farm servants. They have been right away through from the beginning of last century a finer race, physically and intellectually, than the Southerner, as every report and book bears testimony, and to-day they are still a splendid race.⁷⁶ Good feeding for generations has

⁷⁵ Caird's "English Agriculture in 1850-51," pp. 513—515; "Report from the Select Committee on Agriculture," 1833, pp. vi and vii; "Extracts from information received by the Commissioners for Inquiring into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws," 1833, p. 169; "Report from the Select Committee on Labourers' Wages," 1824, p. 5.

⁷⁶ Speaking of Northumberland, Sir Francis Doyle said, in 1843: "It is a rare thing to find a grown-up labourer who cannot read and write, and who is not capable of keeping his own accounts." ("Reports of Special Assistant Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture," p. 300.)

Mr. Grey, of Dilston, a noted Northumberland agriculturist, wrote in 1831: "In contrasting the condition of the peasantry in the Southern with that of the Northern parts of the Kingdom, it would be highly improper to pass over unnoticed the superior education of the latter, and the effect which is produced by it upon their worldly circumstances, as well as upon their moral and religious character . . . . In the school attached to almost every village, children are found not only able to read and write at a very early age, but most expert in all the common rules of arithmetic, and not unfrequently capable of extracting the square and cube root with great expedition and accuracy. And even the young men, who labour in the fields all the day, often spend a couple of hours in the evening in school, to advance themselves in such acquirements." See Statement appended to the article by Mr. L. Hindmarsh "On the State of Agriculture and Condition of the Agricultural Labourers of the Northern Division of Northumberland," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 1838, p. 414.

See Clifford, "Labour Bill in Farming," *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society*, 1875, pp. 91—98. Mr. Clare Sewell Read is reported to have said in 1874, when addressing an agricultural association in Norfolk: "And I also come reluctantly to the conclusion that the highly paid Scotch hind is a cheaper and better man than the Norfolk labourer, and that, after all, there is no such thing as cheap labour." (*Ibid.*, pp. 95 and 96.)

See also my Report on the Agricultural Labourer to the Royal Commission on Labour, C-6894—111 of 1893, p. 24, comparing position of farm labourer in the North with that of those in the Eastern counties. Also see pp. 12 and 13. Also evidence of William Gray, a Scotchman, who had collected gangs of men for railway work during a period of thirty years: "Certainly in the counties where they are better fed they work better," p. 12 (note). See also evidence of the late Mr. George Culley, C.B., p. 138. See also evidence of Mr. Hindmarsh, p. 103 (note).

The Scottish farmers who were farming in Suffolk when I was reporting on that county to the Royal Commission on Agriculture, informed me that the cost of labour was greater in Suffolk than in Scotland. C-7755 of 1895, p. 78.

done much for them in body and brain.⁷⁷ Will anyone deny that a healthy competition for labour in the North has been a benefit not only to the labourer but to the community? Which is the better race to breed from now, the Northerner, or the Southerner?

The proposition that the labourer is less skilled is, I suggest, more capable of proof, though the inefficiency is probably exaggerated. The modern labourers are not trained to farm work from early childhood. In former times they frequently did piecework at 8 or 9 years of age under their fathers' eyes, while many lads were brought up in the farm houses and taught every branch of farm labour under the farmer's supervision.

It is certainly the case that many of the most enterprising of the labourers are finding employment on the railways, in the police force, and in other occupations. Farmers have suffered especially from the loss of horsemen, cattlemen, and milkers. This class of men, apart from the desire for higher wages, dislike the long hours and the Sunday work on the farms, and often seek situations in towns as carters or draymen. Their loss is a real inconvenience to farmers, and the competition for them is getting keener in the districts where the milk business is increasing. On farms where milk is sent away by train the work begins very early, and Sunday is by no means a day of rest. Men who really understand animals cannot easily be procured. The instinct is born in them, and they have to be bred. Many farmers, however, realise that it is very false economy to let men of this stamp go if they can be retained for a few shillings a week more, and some concessions made as to Sunday work. The extra expense is small compared with the welfare of a large herd of milking cows, a flock of sheep, or a valuable lot of horses. To quote Sir James Caird, "No labour is more unprofitable than that which is underpaid."⁷⁸ And it may be added, that an industry which depends so much on the weather for its success, requires willing workers as well as efficient ones.

⁷⁷ Dr. Edward Smith, in his "Report on the Food of the Poorer Labouring Classes in England" in 1863, says: "Although the health and strength of the people may be moderately well maintained on the existing dietary, it is more than probable that mental vigour and activity, as well as moral courage and enterprise, are less where the diet is low. The labourers and their families in purely agricultural districts appear dull and unintellectual, not given to think, . . . and hence in a national point of view this class may be healthy, but not equal in general value to others." Appendix No. 6 to the "Sixth Report of the Medical Officer of the Privy Council," 1863, pp. 264 and 265.

⁷⁸ "English Agriculture in 1850-51," p. 73.

And where is the old-fashioned all-round man, the older farmers ask, who could mow, thatch, make ditches and fences? Gone, is the reply, because machinery does some of his work; gone, because the thatching is largely gone, and because barbed wire takes the place of fences. But if the labourer has become less efficient for want of training, it is surely possible to provide the village boy with some theoretical and practical knowledge of rural economy to a far greater extent than it is at present done, without interfering with his general education. The report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Employment of School Children in 1901 says that the general effect of the agricultural evidence was "that the present education of country children has been too literary and not sufficiently practical, and has done little to interest children in agricultural work. The present education tends to fit them only for town life and give them a distaste for agriculture."⁷⁹

Botany and elementary chemistry could be taught in all rural schools, and lectures on the rearing, feeding, and tending of animals and fowls given, while practical instruction could be given outdoors in all branches of farming, including information about machinery and engines to some of the older boys. Again, the girls will be all the more useful if instructed in fowl rearing and feeding, and butter making.

The passing of the Education Acts of the "seventies" has deprived this generation of farm labourers of their early agricultural education, and, having trained them to be clerks, we marvel that they become clerks.

Some agricultural education in the schools will at any rate give the farmers a more useful lot of labourers, even if it does not result in retaining many more on the soil. And agricultural knowledge may prove of use some time or another to many a man in his career. It would be another string to his bow, and if he failed in a town and joined the numbers of the unemployed, he would not be incapable of undertaking work on the land in this country, or in the Colonies, which are asking for men.

But agricultural education is not the only thing necessary in the rural districts to attract the labourers to remain on the land; higher wages have to be paid, and, I take it, if the farmers can get more efficient men, they will not grudge the money.

The farmers cannot, and, indeed, do not, I am sure, expect to return to their former monopoly of labour. If they now have to pay higher wages, they have, on the other hand, saved in the number

⁷⁹ Cd-849 of 1901, p. 15.

of men they employ by the use of machinery, which has also given them the additional advantage of securing their crops quicker. They have also saved labour by altering their system or course of farming. On the other side of the account the farmers may, however, put shorter hours of work, perhaps less efficient labour, and the loss of the lower paid labour of women and children. Whether the actual cost of cultivation has increased I will not attempt to discuss now, but if the land is to be cultivated, as I am sure it will be, with the demands of an increasing population for food for themselves, and fodder for animals, men are as necessary as manure, and their market value must be paid as in the case of any other commodity. Arrangements among the staff of the farm to minimise the Sunday work as far as possible, and concessions of "off" days, Bank Holidays and occasional half-holidays, are well worthy the consideration of employers, and the more amusement and recreation that can be given in the villages the better. It may be possible to increase the "three acres and a cow" labourer who is to be found in Cheshire, and, in some districts in the neighbourhood of the market towns, to encourage the creation of small holdings of a few acres, where a man with the rest of his family can have a cow or two, pigs and poultry, and grow vegetables, keep a pony and do a little carting, and also work for farmers at odd times. This class of men does exist in some localities, and they sometimes get on to larger holdings afterwards.

Then, again, the labourer must be provided with a decent and comfortable home, with a garden, as near other dwellings as possible, so that he and his family are not isolated from their neighbours, or from the shops and the schools.

All these things, it may be argued, cost money. So does every great undertaking, whether it be the reclamation of Egypt or South Africa, or the future prosperity of our own country districts, but is there any reason why the expenditure should not be reproductive in the end? The cultivation of this country is a great undertaking, not only from a monetary but from an economic and national point of view. Some share of securing the progress and development of agriculture may fall on the Government, but it can do little without the active assistance of the landowners and the farmers.

Modern farming, with the lower prices for grain and the keen competition which exists, requires men of business, whether landowners or tenants, and there is no reason why the country should lack them in the future. That there have been heavy losses among landowners, particularly, of course, those who bought land at the

top price, and among farmers who farmed at the higher rentals, we are very well aware. But the men who have pulled through the period of declining prices, the men who have bought land at the large reduction, and are not encumbered by mortgages, and the new men who are farming at the lower rentals and on somewhat different systems than formerly, how do they stand to-day? If farming is getting on to a sounder basis, and I have heard it asserted by men of large experience in the agricultural districts that this is the case, may not we still look forward to seeing a rural population earning a fair livelihood, and leading a healthy and contented life on the land?

APPENDIX I.

Rates of Wages Paid by Messrs. J. and E. Lee and J. B. Lee, Stocksfield Hall, NORTHUMBERLAND.

Year.	Single Hind's Wages per Week.		Double Hind's Wages per Week.		Women Workers (Ordinary) per Day.		Women Workers (Harvest) per Day.		Year.	Single Hind's Wages per Week.		Double Hind's Wages per Week.		Women Workers (Ordinary) per Day.		Women Workers (Harvest) per Day.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.		s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
1831	11	—	—	—	—	8	1	6	1863	16	—	30	—	1	—	2	—
'32	11	—	—	—	—	8	—	10	'69	16	—	30	—	1	—	2	—
'33	11	—	—	—	—	8	—	10									
'34	11	—	—	—	—	8	1	6	1870	16	—	—	—	1	—	2	—
'35	10	6	—	—	—	8	1	6	'71	16	6	—	—	1	—	2	—
'36	10	6	—	—	—	8	1	6	'72	18	—	—	—	1	3	2	6
'37	10	6	—	—	—	8	1	6	'73	21	—	—	—	1	3	2	6
'38	10	6	—	—	—	10	1	6	'74	23	—	—	—	1	4	3	—
'39	11	—	18	—	—	10	1	6	'75	24	—	—	—	1	4	3	—
1840	12	—	20	—	—	10	1	6	'76	22	—	—	—	1	6	3	—
'41	12	—	18	—	—	10	1	6	'77	23	—	—	—	1	6	3	—
'42	—	—	19	—	—	10	1	6	'78	21	—	—	—	1	6	3	—
'43	—	—	20	—	—	10	1	6	'79	18	—	—	—	1	6	3	—
'44	—	—	22	—	—	10	1	6									
'45	—	—	18	—	—	10	1	6	1880	18	—	—	—	1	3	2	6
'46	12	—	20	—	—	10	1	6	'81	20	—	28	—	1	3	2	6
'47	13	6	22	—	—	10	1	6	'82	20	—	28	—	1	3	2	6
'48	12	6	22	—	—	10	1	6	'83	20	—	34	—	1	3	2	6
'49	12	—	23	—	—	10	1	6	'84	19	—	35	—	1	3	2	6
1850	11	—	22	—	—	10	1	6	'85	18	—	35	—	1	3	2	6
'51	11	—	22	—	—	10	1	6	'86	18	—	26	—	1	3	2	6
'52	11	—	—	—	—	10	1	6	'87	18	—	26	—	1	3	2	6
'53	12	—	19	—	—	10	1	6	'88	18	—	26	—	1	3	2	6
'54	14	—	26	—	—	10	1	6	'89	18	—	30	—	1	3	2	6
'55	14	—	27	—	—	10	1	6	1890	20	—	32	—	1	3	2	6
'56	14	—	27	—	—	10	1	6	'91	20	—	34	—	1	3	2	6
'57	16	—	27	6	1	—	1	6	'92	20	—	34	—	1	3	2	6
'58	16	—	27	6	1	—	1	6	'93	20	—	—	—	1	3	2	6
'59	15	6	27	—	—	10	1	6	'94	20	—	—	—	1	3	2	6
1860	16	—	27	6	—	10	1	6	'95	20	—	31	—	1	3	2	6
'61	16	6	28	—	—	10	1	6	'96	20	—	31	—	1	3	2	6
'62	15	6	28	—	—	10	1	6	'97	20	—	—	—	1	3	2	6
'63	15	6	27	6	—	10	1	6	'98	20	—	29	—	1	3	2	6
'64	15	6	27	6	—	10	1	6	'99	22	—	31	—	1	3	2	6
'65	15	6	28	—	—	10	1	6	1900	22	—	44	—	1	6	3	—
'66	16	—	30	—	1	—	2	—	'01	22	—	43	—	1	6	3	—
'67	16	—	30	—	1	—	2	—	'02	22	—	38	—	1	6	3	—

In addition to the above wages, hinds have their cottage and garden rent free, coals led, 60 to 80 stones of potatoes, 2 bushels of wheat in the year, and 20s. for extra hours in harvest.

The double hind's wages vary according to the age of the youth, who is almost always a son.

Of late years, since the binder came in, we have paid very little harvest wages to women; but last harvest (1902) was an exception, as the crop was so badly laid and twisted.

Particulars relating to Weekly Cash Wages, &c., of Ordinary Agricultural Labourers Employed on the Home Farm of an Estate in WARWICKSHIRE.

1. *Rates of Weekly Cash Wages, 1825-1902.*

Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in		Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in		Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in	
	June.	December.		June.	December.		June.	December.
1825...	s.	s.	1851....	s.	s.	1877....	s.	s.
'26....	9	9	'52....	10	9	'78....	13	13
'27....	9	9	'53....	10	10	'79....	12	12
'28....	9	9	'54....	10	10	1880....	12	11
'29....	9	9	'55....	11	11	'81....	12	11
1830....	9	9	'56....	11	11	'82....	12	11
'31....	9	9	'57....	10	10	'83....	12	11
'32....	9	9	'58....	10	10	'84....	12	11
'33....	9	9	'59....	10	10	'85....	12	11
'34....	9	9	1860....	10	10	'86....	12	11
'35....	9	9	'61....	10	10	'87....	12	11
'36....	9	9	'62....	10	10	'88....	12	11
'37....	9	9	'63....	10	10	'89....	12	11
'38....	9	9	'64....	10	10	1890....	12	11
'39....	9	9	'65....	10	10	'91....	12	11
1840....	9	9	'66....	10	10	'92....	12	11
'41....	9	9	'67....	10	10	'93....	12	11
'42....	9	9	'68....	10	10	'94....	12	11
'43....	9	9	'69....	10	10	'95....	12	11
'44....	9	9	1870....	10	10	'96....	12	11
'45....	9	9	'71....	10	10	'97....	12	11
'46....	9	9	'72....	12	12	'98....	12	11
'47....	9	9	'73....	12	12	'99....	12	11
'48....	9	9	'74....	14	14	1900....	12	11
'49....	—	—	'75....	14	14	'01....	12	11
1850....	10	9	'76....	13	13	'02....	12	11

2. *Allowances in Kind.*—None.

3. *Variation in Allowances since Earlier Years.*—They once had a gallon of beer or cider per day for four weeks in haytime and four weeks' harvest, but now they have 1*l.* for haytime beer and 10*d.* or 8*d.* per day for beer in harvest, and 6*d.* per day for beer money when threshing.

4. *Amount of Piecework in 1902, as Compared with Fifty Years Ago.*—(a)—Hay and corn harvest.—Amount is less now than fifty years ago, as there is less grass and corn cut by hand. (b) Other work such as hoeing, &c.—Rather less piecework too under this heading.

5. *Earnings by Piecework in 1902, as Compared with Fifty Years Ago.*—If paid at old rates they would earn less, as they would do less, but they expect to be paid at a higher rate and to work shorter hours.

6. *Instances of Piecework Rates in 1850 and 1901 respectively.*

	Mowing Grass.	Reaping Wheat.	Cutting Beans.
	Per Acre.	Per Acre.	
1850.....	2 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i>	9 <i>s.</i> to 10 <i>s.</i>	9 <i>s.</i> to 10 <i>s.</i>
1901.....	5 <i>s.</i>	14 <i>s.</i> ,, 17 <i>s.</i>	12 <i>s.</i> ,, 14 <i>s.</i>

7. *Amounts Paid for a Month's Hay and Corn Harvest respectively in 1902 and Fifty Years Ago.*—(a) Hay harvest.—No information as regards fifty years ago. The men have now 5*s.* per week beer money and 4*d.* per hour overtime after 5.30 p.m., in addition to regular wages, for four weeks. (b) Corn harvest.—It would be about 8*d.* per day more now than fifty years ago.

Particulars relating to Weekly Cash Wages, &c., of Ordinary Agricultural Labourers Employed on a Farm in HERTFORDSHIRE.

1. *Rates of Weekly Cash Wages, 1789-1902.*

Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages.	Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages.	Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages.	Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages.
	<i>s. d.</i>		<i>s. d.</i>		<i>s. d.</i>		<i>s. d.</i>
1789....	8 -	1818....	10 -	1847....	8/- to 9/-	1875....	13 6
		'19....	8/- to 9/-	'48....	8/- ,, 9/-	'76....	13 6
1790....	8 -			'49....	8/- ,, 8/6	'77....	13 6
'91....	8 -	1820....	8/- ,, 9/-			'78....	13 6
'92....	8 -	'21....	9 -	1850....	8 -	'79....	13 6
'93....	8 -	'22....	9 -	'51....	8 -		
'94....	8 -	'23....	8/- to 10/-*	'52....	8 -	1880....	13/- to 13/6
'95....	8 -	'24....	8/- ,, 10/-	'53....	8 -	'81....	13/- ,, 13/6
'96....	8 -	'25....	8/- ,, 10/-	'54....	10 -	'82....	13/- ,, 13/6
'97....	8 -	'26....	8/- ,, 10/-	'55....	10 -	'83....	13/- ,, 13/6
'98....	8 -	'27....	8/- ,, 10/-	'56....	10 -	'84....	12/- ,, 13/6
'99....	8/- to 9/-	'28....	8/- ,, 10/-	'57....	10 -	'85....	12 -
		'29....	8/- ,, 10/-	'58....	11 -	'86....	12 -
1800....	8 -			'59....	11 -	'87....	12 -
'01....	8 -	1830....	8/- ,, 10/-			'88....	12 -
'02....	8 -	'31....	8/- ,, 10/-	1860....	10 -	'89....	12 -
'03....	8 -	'32....	8/- ,, 10/-	'61....	10 -		
'04....	8 -	'33....	8/- ,, 10/-	'62....	10 -	1890....	12 -
'05....	8 -	'34....	8/- ,, 10/-	'63....	10 -	'91....	12/- to 13/-
'06....	8 -	'35....	8/- ,, 10/-	'64....	10 -	'92....	12/- ,, 13/-
'07....	9 -	'36....	8/- ,, 10/-	'65....	10 -	'93....	12/- ,, 13/-
'08....	9 -	'37....	8/- ,, 10/-	'66....	10 -	'94....	12 -
'09....	9 -	'38....	8/- ,, 10/-	'67....	11 -	'95....	12 -
		'39....	8/- ,, 10/-	'68....	11/- to 12/-	'96....	12 -
1810....	9 -			'69....	11/- ,, 12/-	'97....	12 -
'11....	9 -	1840....	8/- ,, 10/-			'98....	13 -
'12....	9/- to 10/-	'41....	8/- ,, 10/-	1870....	11/- ,, 12/-	'99....	13 -
'13....	10 -	'42....	8/- ,, 10/-	'71....	11/- ,, 12/-		
'14....	10 -	'43....	8/- ,, 10/-	'72....	11/- ,, 12/-	1900....	13 -
'15....	10 -	'44....	8/- ,, 10/-	'73....	13 -	'01....	13 -
'16....	10 -	'45....	8/- ,, 10/-	'74....	13 6	'02....	13 -
'17....	10 -	'46....	8/- ,, 10/-				

* Wages are stated to have rarely exceeded 9s. in the years 1823-46.

2. *Allowances in Kind Given in Addition to Cash Wages.*—Beer at harvest time.

3. *Variation in Allowances since Earlier Years.*—None.

7. *Payments for Haytime.*—Previous to 1840 men received ordinary wages in haytime, with 2s. and beer extra per week. At the present time [1902] 3d. per hour is paid for overtime, together with 6 pints of beer per day. *Payments for Harvest.*—Up to the year 1840 ordinary wages were paid during harvest but provisions and beer were given, Sundays included. In 1902 men received 3s. 6d. per day in harvest and 6 pints of beer per day.

Particulars relating to Weekly Cash Wages, &c., of Ordinary Agricultural Labourers Employed on Mr. Thomas Girling's White House Farm at Frostenden, SUFFOLK.

1. *Rates of Weekly Cash Wages, 1836-1902.*

Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in		Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in		Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in	
	June.	December.		June.	December.		June.	December.
	s.	s.		s.	s.		s.	s.
1836....	10	9	1859....	9	9	1881....	11	12
'37 ...	10	10				'82 ...	12	12
'38....	10	10	1860....	11	11	'83....	12	12
'39....	12	10	'61....	11	11	'84....	12	11
1840....	10	10	'62....	10	11	'85....	11	11
'41....	10	10	'63....	9	9	'86....	10	11
'42....	10	10	'64....	9	9	'87....	10	10
'43....	10	10	'65....	9	9	'88....	10	10
'44 ...	10	10	'66....	10	12	'89....	10	10
'45....	10	11	'67....	11	11			
'46....	10	10	'68....	11	12	1890....	10	11
'47....	12	12	'69....	10	10	'91....	11	12
'48....	10	8	1870....	10	11	'92....	12	12
'49....	8	8	'71....	12	11	'93....	11	11
1850....	8	8	'72....	12	12	'94....	11	10
'51....	8	8	'73....	13	13	'95....	10	10
'52....	8	8	'74....	13	14	'96....	10	11
'53....	9	12	'75....	13	13	'97....	11	11
'54....	12	12	'76....	13	13	'98....	11	12
'55....	12	13	'77....	13	14	'99....	12	12
'56....	12	12	'78....	13	13	1900....	12	12
'57....	11	11	'79....	12	12	'01....	13	12
'58....	10	10	1880....	12	12	'02....	13	13

2. *Allowances in Kind Given in Addition to Cash Wages.*—Beer would average about 10s. per man per annum. Fuel carted free.

3. *Variation in Allowances since Earlier Years.*—None.

4. *Amount of Piecework in 1902, as Compared with Fifty Years Ago.*—

(a.) Hay and corn harvest.—Owing to machinery, piecework is now much reduced, and men are paid extra wages per day for hay harvest, up to, say, 3s.
(b.) Other work, such as hoeing, &c.—Men will not, as a rule, take hoeing by piecework. They prefer day work.

5. *Earnings by Piecework in 1902, as Compared with Fifty Years Ago.*—Men would earn much more now by piecework, if they would only do it.

6. *Instances of Piecework Rates Fifty Years Ago, Compared with 1902:—*

	Hedging and Ditching.	Draining.	Hoeing.
	Per Rod.	Per Score Rods.	Per Acre.
Fifty years ago	9d. to 10d.	3s. 6d. to 4s.	2s. 6d. to 3s.
1902.....	1s. to 1s. 4d.	4s. 6d. to 5s. 6d.	3s. 6d. ,, 5s.

7. *Payments for a Month's Corn Harvest Fifty Years Ago and in 1902.*—Fifty years back harvest was 5l. to 6l. per month; now it runs from 7l. 10s. to 9l.

Particulars relating to Weekly Cash Wages, &c., of Agricultural Labourers Employed on a Farm in ESSEX.

1. Rates of Weekly Cash Wages and Harvest Wages, 1850-1902.

Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages.			Harvest Wages (for Five Weeks).	Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages.			Harvest Wages (for Five Weeks).
	Day Labourers.	Horse-men.	Stock-men.			Day Labourers.	Horse-men.	Stock-men.	
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	£ s.		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	£ s.
1850	8 -	9 -	9 -	5 -	1877	12 -	13 6	13 6	7 10
'51	8 -	9 -	9 -	5 -	'78	13 -	14 6	14 6	7 10
'52	8 -	9 6	9 -	5 -	'79	13 -	14 6	14 6	7 10
'53	8 -	9 6	9 6	5 -	1880	12 -	13 6	13 6	7 10
'54	9 -	10 6	10 6	6 -	'81	12 -	13 6	13 6	7 10
'55	10 -	11 6	11 6	6 -	'82	12 -	13 6	13 6	7 10
'56	11 -	12 6	12 6	6 -	'83	12 -	13 6	13 6	7 10
'57	10 -	11 6	11 6	6 -	'84	12 -	13 6	13 6	7 10
'58	10 -	11 6	11 6	6 -	'85	11 -	12 6	12 6	7 -
'59	8 -	9 6	9 6	6 -	'86	11 -	12 6	12 6	7 -
1860	9 -	10 6	10 6	6 -	'87	11 -	12 6	12 6	7 -
'61	10 -	11 6	11 6	6 -	'88	11 -	12 6	12 6	7 -
'62	11 -	12 6	12 -	6 -	'89	11 -	12 6	12 6	7 10
'63	9 -	10 6	10 6	6 -	1890	11 -	12 6	12 6	7 10
'64	9 -	10 6	10 6	6 -	'91	12 -	13 6	13 6	7 10
'65	9 -	10 6	10 6	6 -	'92	12 -	13 6	13 6	7 10
'66	10 -	11 6	11 6	6 -	'93	12 -	13 6	13 6	7 -*
'67	11 -	12 6	12 6	6 -	'94	12 -	13 6	13 6	7 10
'68	12 -	13 6	13 6	6 10	'95	11 -	12 6	12 6	7 -*
'69	11 -	12 6	12 6	6 10	'96	11 -	12 6	12 6	7 -*
1870	10 -	11 6	12 6	6 10	'97	11 -	12 6	12 6	7 -*
'71	11 -	12 6	12 6	6 10	'98	12 -	13 6	13 6	7 10
'72	12 -	13 6	13 6	7 10	'99	12 -	13 6	13 6	7 10
'73	13 -	14 6	14 6	7 10	1900	13 -	14 6	14 6	7 10
'74	13 -	14 6	14 6	7 10	'01	13 -	14 6	14 6	7 15*
'75	12 -	13 6	13 6	7 10	'02	13 -	14 6	14 6	7 15†
'76	12 -	13 6	13 6	7 10					

* For four weeks.

† For five-and-a-half weeks.

2. *Allowances in Kind Given in Addition to Cash Wages.*—Home brewed beer. Abstainers have 1s. per week extra and 20s. extra for harvest in lieu of beer.

3. *Variation in Allowances since Earlier Years.*—None.

4. *Amount of Piecework in 1902, as Compared with Fifty Years Ago.*—(a) Hay and corn harvest.—Not much piecework at haytime but a quarter more wages. Corn cut by hand (piecework) fifty years ago, now by machinery. Men earn much more now with much less effort. (b) Other work such as hoeing, &c.—Men earn 3s. a day at hoeing, thatching, tying straw and hay for London.

5. *Earnings by Piecework in 1902, as Compared with Fifty Years Ago.*—The men earn at least a third more at piecework at the present time [1902] than fifty years ago, and have more than double the amount given them to do.

6. *Instance of Piecework Rates Fifty Years Ago, Compared with 1902.*—For hoeing beans, wheat and barley the price was 3s. to 4s. per acre fifty years ago. For the same work it was 4s. to 5s. per acre in 1902.

Particulars Furnished by Mr. W. F. Parsons relating to Weekly Cash Wages of Ordinary Agricultural Labourers Employed on Certain Farms at Wootton Bassett, WILTSHIRE.

1. *Rates of Weekly Cash Wages, 1824-1902.*

Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in		Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in		Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in	
	June.	December.		June.	December.		June.	December.
1824....	s. d.	s. d.	1851....	s. d.	s. d.	1877....	s. d.	s. d.
'25....	7 -	6 -	'52....	8 6	7 6	'78....	12 6	11 6
'26....	7 6	6 6	'53....	8 6	7 6	'79....	12 6	11 6
'27....	7 6	6 6	'54....	9 6	8 6	1880....	11 6	10 6
'28....	7 6	6 6	'55....	10 6	9 6	'81....	11 6	10 6
'29....	7 -	6 -	'56....	10 6	9 6	'82....	11 6	10 6
1830....	7 -	6 6	'57....	10 6	9 6	'83....	11 6	10 6
'31....	7 6	6 6	'58....	10 6	9 6	'84....	11 6	10 6
'32....	7 6	6 6	'59....	10 6	9 6	'85....	12 6	12 6
'32....	7 6	6 6	1860....	10 6	9 6	'86....	12 6	12 6
'34....	7 6	6 6	'61....	10 6	9 6	'87....	11 6	10 6
'35....	8 6	7 6	'62....	9 6	8 6	'88....	11 6	10 6
'36....	8 6	7 6	'63....	9 6	8 6	'89....	12 6	11 6
'37....	8 6	7 6	'64....	9 6	8 6	1890....	12 6	11 6
'38....	8 6	7 6	'65....	10 6	9 6	'91....	12 6	11 6
'39....	9 6	8 6	'66....	11 6	10 6	'92....	12 6	11 6
1840....	9 6	8 6	'67....	11 6	10 6	'93....	12 6	11 6
'41....	9 6	8 6	'68....	11 6	10 6	'94....	12 6	11 6
'42....	8 6	7 6	'69....	11 6	10 6	'95....	12 6	11 6
'43....	8 6	7 6	1870....	11 6	10 6	'96....	12 6	11 6
'44....	8 6	7 6	'71....	11 6	10 6	'97....	13 6	12 6
'45....	8 6	7 6	'72....	11 6	10 6	'98....	13 6	12 6
'46....	8 6	7 6	'73....	11 6	10 6	'99....	14 -	13 -
'47....	9 6	8 6	'74....	12 6	11 6	1900....	14 -	13 -
'48....	9 6	8 6	'75....	12 6	11 6	'01....	15 -	14 -
'49....	8 6	7 6	'76....	12 6	11 6	'02....	15 -	14 -
1850....	8 6	7 6						

2. *Allowances in Kind, in Addition to Cash Wages.*—Free cottage, sometimes food for overtime in hay harvest, also from 3 quarts to a gallon of beer per diem.

3. *Variations in Allowances since Earlier Years.*—None stated.

4. *Amount of Piecework in 1902, as Compared with Fifty Years Ago.*—(a.) Hay and corn harvest.—No piecework in hay harvest, all mowing being now done by machinery, as well as much cutting of the corn. (b.) Other work, such as hoeing, &c.—Hoeing is still much done by hand, but there is little piecework besides.

5. *Earnings by Piecework in 1902, as Compared with Fifty Years Ago.*—He would earn far more [at the present time].

6. *Instances of Piecework Rates Fifty Years Ago, as Compared with 1902 :—*

	Reaping Wheat.	Cutting Hedges.	Making Faggots.
	Per Acre.	Per Perch.	Per 100.
Fifty years ago {	7s. to 9s.		
	(12s. if badly laid)	4d. to 6d.	2s. 6d.
Now (1902) .... {	12s. to 14s.		
	(20s. if badly laid)	7d. ,, 8d.	4s. 6d.

7. *Amounts paid for a Month's Hay and Corn Harvest, respectively, in 1902 and Fifty Years Ago.*—A month's wages for an ordinary man fifty years ago would be about 40s. or 44s., with beer. Labourers employed in assisting to harvest the corn crops were paid about 3s. per diem on fine days.

Particulars relating to Weekly Cash Wages, &c., of Ordinary Agricultural Labourers Employed on Mr. J. H. Arkwright's Home Farm near Leominster, Herefordshire.

1. *Rates of Weekly Cash Wages, 1819-1902.*

Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in		Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in		Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in	
	June.	December.		June.	December.		June.	December.
1819....	s. d.	s. d.	1847....	s. d.	s. d.	1875....	s. d.	s. d.
	10 -	10 -		10 -	9 -		12 -	12 -
1820....	10 -	9 -	'48....	9 -	8 -	'76....	14 -	14 -
'21....	9 -	9 -	'49....	9 -	8 -	'77..	14 -	14 -
'22....	8 -	7 -	1850....	8 -	8 -	'78....	14 -	13 -
'23....	8 -	8 -	'51....	8 -	8 -	'79....	13 -	13 -
'24....	8 6	8 6	'52....	8 -	8 -	1880....	13 -	13 -
'25....	9 -	10 -	'53....	9 -	11 -	'81....	13 -	13 -
'26....	10 -	10 -	'54... 11 -	11 -	11 -	'82....	13 -	13 -
'27....	9 -	9 -	'55....	11 -	11 -	'83....	13 -	13 -
'28....	9 -	9 -	'56....	11 -	11 -	'84....	13 -	13 -
'29....	9 -	9 -	'57....	11 -	11 -	'85....	13 -	13 -
1830....	9 -	8 -	'58....	11 -	11 -	'86....	12 -	12 -
'31....	9 -	9 -	'59....	11 -	11 -	'87....	12 -	12 -
'32....	8 -	8 -	1860....	11 -	11 -	'88....	12 -	12 -
'33....	8 -	8 -	'61....	11 -	11 -	'89... 12 -	12 -	12 -
'34....	8 -	8 -	'62....	11 -	11 -	1890....	12 -	12 -
'35....	8 -	8 -	'63....	11 -	10 -	'91....	12 -	12 -
'36....	8 -	8 -	'64....	10 -	10 -	'92....	12 -	12 -
'37....	8 -	8 -	'65....	10 -	10 -	'93....	12 -	12 -
'38....	9 -	9 -	'66....	10 -	10 -	'94....	12 -	12 -
'39....	9 -	9 -	'67....	11 -	11 -	'95....	12 -	12 -
1840....	9 -	9 -	'68....	11 -	11 -	'96....	12 -	12 -
'41....	9 -	9 -	'69....	11 -	11 -	'97....	12 -	12 -
'42....	9 -	8 -	1870....	11 -	11 -	'98....	12 -	12 -
'43....	9 -	9 -	'71....	11 -	11 -	'99....	12 -	12 -
'44....	8 -	9 -	'72....	11 -	11 -	1900....	12 -	12 -
'45....	9 -	9 -	'73....	11 -	11 -	'01....	12 -	12 -
'46....	9 -	9 -	'74....	12 -	12 -	'02....	12 -	12 -

2. *Allowances in Kind Given in Addition to Cash Wages.*—Cider; fuel carted.

3. *Variations in Allowances since Earlier Years.*—No material variation.

4. *Amount of Piecework in 1902, as Compared with Fifty Years Ago.*—
(a.) Hay and corn harvest.—Less now than fifty years ago. (b.) Other work such as hoeing, &c.—Rather less.

5. *Earnings by Piecework in 1902, as Compared with Fifty Years Ago.*—Men could earn more if they would work the same number of hours.

Particulars relating to Weekly Cash Wages, &c., of Ordinary Agricultural Labourers Employed on a Farm in DEVONSHIRE.

1. *Rates of Weekly Cash Wages, 1850-1902.*

Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in		Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in		Year.	Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in	
	June.	December.		June.	December.		June.	December.
	s.	s.		s.	s.		s.	s.
1850....	9	9	1868....	13	13	1886....	15	15
'51....	9	9	'69....	13	13	'87 ..	15	15
'52....	9	9	1870....	14	14	'88....	15	15
'53....	9	9	'71....	14	14	'89 ..	15	15
'54 ..	10	10	'72....	15	15	1890....	16	16
'55....	10	10	'73....	15	15	'91....	16	16
'56....	10	10	'74....	15	15	'92....	16	16
'57....	10	10	'75....	15	15	'93....	16	16
'58....	10	10	'76....	15	15	'94....	16	16
'59....	11	11	'77....	15	15	'95....	16	16
1860... 11	11	11	'78....	15	15	'96....	16 to 18	16
'61 .. 11	11	11	'79....	15	15	'97....	16 „ 18	16
'62....	12	12	1880....	15	15	'98....	16 „ 18	16
'63....	12	12	'81....	15	15	'99....	16 „ 18	16
'64....	12	12	'82....	15	15	1900....	18	16
'65....	12	12	'83....	15	15	'01....	18	16
'66....	12	12	'84 ..	15	15	'02....	18	16
'67....	13	13	'85....	15	15			

2. *Allowances in Kind Given in Addition to Cash Wages.*—A quart of milk per day, cottage and garden, manure for garden, cider in haytime and harvest and other busy times in summer, some food when busy carrying hay.

3. *Variation in Allowances since Earlier Years.*—More cottages are provided now than formerly. In earlier years men had all their food for a month at corn harvest, but this has been abolished now that the hardest work is done by machinery, and money payment substituted (*see below*).

4. *Amount of Piecework in 1902, as Compared with Fifty Years Ago.*—(a.) Hay and corn harvest.—In consequence of machinery there is no piecework in hay and corn harvest as formerly. (b.) Other work, such as hoeing, &c.—Hoeing is mostly done by piecework, more so than formerly. Sheep shearing is done by piecework now, instead of the men having food.

5. *Earnings by Piecework in 1902, as Compared with Fifty Years Ago.*—Excepting hay and corn harvest, a labourer would earn considerably higher wages now by piecework, although men do not work so hard nor as long hours as formerly.

6. *Instances of Piecework Rates in 1850, Compared with 1902:—*

	Hedging.	Hoeing Twice.
	Per Perch. 6d.	Per Acre. 10s.
1850.....		
1902.....	1s. to 1s. 3d.	15s.

7. *Payments for Hay and Corn Harvests in 1902 and Fifty Years Ago.*—(a.) Hay harvest.—Owing to use of machinery at present time, men do not get food, except cake or bread and cheese with their tea, but they often get 1s. per day extra when carrying. (b.) Corn harvest.—The old custom of giving men all their food for a month or six weeks' corn harvest has given way to a money payment of 30s. extra for harvest, with cider, and tea and cake at four p.m.

APPENDIX II.

Average Weekly Cash Wages of Ordinary Labourers employed on certain farms in England and Wales, and the Average Prices of British Wheat in each of the years 1850 to 1902; also the percentage fluctuations of such Wages and Prices Year by Year, as compared with the year 1871. (See annexed diagrams.)

[The Cash Wages are exclusive of extra payments for piecework, hay and corn harvests, overtime, &c., and also of the value of allowances in kind.]

1. Year.	Average Cash Wages per Week.					Percentage fluctuations in Wages as compared with the Standard Year 1871.					Average Prices of British Wheat.	
	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.
	England and Wales (67 farms).*	North-ern Counties (8 farms).	Midland Counties (22 farms).	Eastern Counties (13 farms).	Southern and South-western Counties (21 farms).	England and Wales (67 farms).*	North-ern Counties (8 farms).	Midland Counties (22 farms).	Eastern Counties (13 farms).	Southern and South-western Counties (21 farms).	Price per Imperial Quarter.	Per centage fluctuation in Prices.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.						s. d.	
1850	9 3½	11 5	9 8½	8 7½	8 5½	77·0	75·2	79·5	74·9	77·3	40 3	71·0
'51	9 2½	11 4½	9 8½	8 3½	8 5½	76·3	74·8	79·4	72·0	77·5	38 6	67·9
'52	9 3	11 4½	9 7½	8 6½	8 6	76·7	74·8	79·0	74·0	77·7	40 9	71·9
'53	9 11½	11 10½	10 4½	9 11	9 ½	82·7	78·2	84·8	86·1	82·7	53 3	94·0
'54	10 9	12 7½	11 2½	11 1½	9 5½	89·1	83·0	91·8	96·7	86·3	72 5	127·8
'55	11 ½	12 9	11 5½	11 5	9 10	91·5	84·0	94·0	99·1	89·9	74 8	131·8
'56	11 1½	13 4½	11 6	11 4½	9 9½	92·1	87·9	94·2	98·7	89·7	69 2	122·1
'57	10 11½	13 7	11 3½	10 10	9 10	90·8	89·4	92·3	94·0	89·9	56 4	99·4
'58	10 9	13 5½	10 10½	10 4½	9 10	89·1	88·6	88·9	89·9	89·9	44 2	77·9
'59	10 8½	13 6½	10 9½	10 1½	9 9½	88·6	89·2	88·6	87·7	89·5	43 9	77·2
1860	10 11	13 7½	11 0½	10 7½	9 11½	90·5	89·8	90·3	92·0	91·0	53 3	94·0
'61	11 ½	13 8½	11 2½	10 9½	10 1	91·7	90·3	91·6	93·5	92·2	55 4	97·6
'62	11 ½	13 7½	11 3½	10 5½	10 1	91·4	89·7	92·7	90·8	92·2	55 5	97·8
'63	10 11½	13 7½	11 3½	10 ½	10 2½	91·0	89·6	92·5	87·2	93·5	44 9	79·0
'64	11 ½	13 7½	11 3½	10 2	10 3½	91·4	89·6	92·3	88·2	94·3	40 2	70·9
'65	11 2½	13 9½	11 4½	10 3	10 6	92·7	90·9	93·2	89·3	96·0	41 10	73·8
'66	11 6	14 2½	11 6½	11 ½	10 8	95·3	93·6	94·7	95·8	97·5	49 11	88·1
'67	11 11½	14 3½	12 2½	11 6½	10 10½	99·0	94·0	99·8	100·0	99·2	64 5	113·7
'68	12 ½	14 7½	12 2½	11 8½	10 10½	99·7	96·4	99·8	101·4	99·6	63 9	112·5
'69	11 10	14 9	12 ½	11 1½	10 9½	98·1	97·1	98·3	96·7	98·9	48 2	85·0

* Including 3 farms in Wales. The figures for these 3 farms are not included in any of the columns numbered 3 to 6 and 8 to 11.

Average Weekly Cash Wages of Ordinary Labourers—Contd.

1.	Average Cash Wages per Week.					Percentage fluctuations in Wages as compared with Standard Year 1871.					Average Prices of British Wheat.	
	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.
Year.	England and Wales. (67 farms).*	North-eastern Counties (8 farms).	Midland Counties (22 farms).	Eastern Counties (13 farms).	Southern and South-western Counties (21 farms).	England and Wales (67 farms).*	North-eastern Counties (8 farms).	Midland Counties (22 farms).	Eastern Counties (13 farms).	Southern and South-western Counties (21 farms).	Prices per Imperial Quarter.	Percentage fluctuation in Prices.
	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.						s. d.	
1870	11 10½	14 10½	12 —	11 —	10 10½	98·3	97·9	98·6	96·0	99·4	46 11	82·8
'71	12 —	15 2½	12 2½	11 6½	10 11½	100·0	100·0	100·0	100·0	100·0	56 8	100·0
'72	12 8½	15 10½	13 —	12 4	11 4	105·2	104·4	105·2	107·1	103·6	57 0	100·6
'73	13 3½	17 2½	13 9½	13 —	11 6½	110·4	113·4	112·8	113·0	105·5	58 8	103·5
'74	13 6½	17 8½	14 —	13 2½	11 8	112·1	116·6	115·0	114·6	106·7	55 9	98·4
'75	13 6½	17 10	14 1	12 11½	11 8½	112·3	117·4	115·4	112·5	106·9	45 2	79·7
'76	13 8	17 8½	14 1½	13 —	11 11½	113·3	116·6	115·5	113·4	109·3	46 2	81·5
'77	13 8	17 9½	14 1½	12 10½	12 —	113·3	117·0	115·9	111·8	110·1	56 9	100·1
'78	13 7½	17 5½	14 —	13 —	12 —	113·0	115·1	115·0	112·8	110·3	46 5	81·9
'79	13 3½	16 7½	13 8½	12 5½	12 —	110·0	109·3	112·3	108·0	109·7	43 10	77·4
1880	13 2½	16 8½	13 8	12 —	12 —	109·3	110·2	111·9	104·7	110·1	44 4	78·2
'81	13 2	16 8½	13 7½	11 11½	12 —	109·2	110·0	111·6	104·0	110·3	45 4	80·0
'82	13 2½	16 9½	13 7	12 —	12 1½	109·5	110·6	111·3	104·7	110·7	45 1	79·6
'83	13 3	16 10½	13 7½	12 —	12 1½	109·8	111·1	111·8	104·3	110·9	41 7	73·4
'84	13 2½	16 11½	13 6½	11 11	12 1½	109·3	111·8	110·8	103·4	110·7	35 8	62·9
'85	13 0	16 11½	13 3½	11 4½	12 1½	107·8	111·5	109·0	98·7	110·5	32 10	57·9
'86	12 10½	16 8½	13 2½	11 2	11 11½	106·7	109·9	108·4	96·9	109·1	31 —	54·7
'87	12 8½	16 6½	12 11	10 11½	11 11½	105·5	109·1	105·8	95·1	109·5	32 6	57·4
'88	12 8½	16 8	12 10½	10 8	12 1	105·2	109·7	105·5	92·6	110·5	31 10	56·2
'89	12 9½	16 8	12 11	10 11½	12 2	106·0	109·7	105·8	94·9	111·2	29 9	52·5
1890	13 —	16 11½	13 3½	11 —	12 4½	108·1	111·5	108·7	95·7	113·3	31 11	56·3
'91	13 4	17 3	13 5½	11 9½	12 5½	110·5	113·6	110·4	102·5	113·9	37 —	65·3
'92	13 5	17 4½	13 7½	11 8	12 7	111·2	114·4	111·6	101·3	115·0	30 3	53·4
'93	13 3½	17 4½	13 6	11 4	12 6½	110·2	114·4	110·6	98·4	114·9	26 4	46·5
'94	13 2½	17 4½	13 4½	11 —	12 6½	109·7	114·4	109·7	96·0	114·9	22 10	40·3
'95	13 2½	17 4½	13 4½	11 —	12 7	109·7	114·4	109·7	95·5	115·0	23 1	40·7
'96	13 3½	17 4½	13 5½	11 1½	12 8½	110·4	114·4	110·4	96·4	116·4	26 2	46·2
'97	13 5	17 4½	13 6½	11 5½	12 9½	111·2	114·4	110·8	99·5	117·0	30 2	53·2
'98	13 8½	17 5½	13 8½	12 3	13 —	113·6	114·8	112·3	106·3	118·9	34 —	60·0
'99	13 11	17 5½	14 —	12 6	13 1½	115·4	115·1	114·8	108·5	120·2	25 8	45·3
1900	14 5½	18 1½	14 5	13 —	13 8½	120·0	119·3	118·1	113·0	125·3	26 11	47·5
'01	14 7	18 2½	14 5	13 1½	13 10	120·9	120·0	118·1	113·9	126·5	26 9	47·2
'02	14 7	18 2½	14 5	13 1½	13 10½	120·9	120·0	118·1	113·9	126·7	28 1	49·6

* Including 3 farms in Wales. The figures for these 3 farms are not included in any of the columns numbered 3 to 6 and 8 to 11.

ENGLAND AND WALES.

*Percentage Fluctuations in Weekly Cash Rates of Wages of Ordinary Agricultural Labourers, as Compared with Rates prevailing in 1871,
Based on Returns relating to 67 Farms in England and Wales.*

EASTERN COUNTIES OF ENGLAND.

Percentage Fluctuations in Weekly Cash Rates of Wages of Ordinary Agricultural Labourers, and in Average Prices of British Wheat, as compared with Rates and Prices prevailing in 1871. The Wages Curve is Based on Returns relating to 13 farms in the Eastern Counties of England.

NORTHERN, MIDLAND, AND SOUTHERN COUNTIES OF ENGLAND.

Percentage Fluctuations in Weekly Cash Rates of Wages of Ordinary Agricultural Labourers as Compared with Rates prevailing in 1871, Based on Returns relating to 8 Farms in the Northern Counties, 22 Farms in the Midland Counties, and 21 Farms in the Southern and South-western Counties.

[NOTE.—The curves shown for these three groups of counties are each based on the average rates of wages in the particular group in 1871, not on the average rate of wages in the three groups taken together.]

APPENDIX III.

Table showing the Earnings of Individual Ordinary Labourers in the undermentioned made to such Labourers, and the Rate of Weekly Cash Wages prevailing

Ref. No.	County and Rural District.	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Rates of Weekly Cash Wages.							
1	NORTHUMBERLAND. Hexham	<i>s. d.</i> { 11 - 11 -	<i>s. d.</i> 16 6 16 6	<i>s. d.</i> 16 6 16 6	<i>s. d.</i> 20 - 20 -	<i>s. d.</i> 20 - 20 -	<i>s. d.</i> 22 - 22 -
2	DURHAM. Stockton-on-Tees ...	{ 12 6 12 6	13 6* 13 3*	15 4 15 3	18 - 18 -	19 - 19 -	20 - 20 -

3	CUMBERLAND.
	Carlisle †.....
		Paid Half-yearly.					{ a {
							b {
							c {

4	WESTMORLAND. Kendal	Ditto					
5	Kendal	{ 12 - 12 -	13 - 13 -	17 - 17 -	18 - 18 -	20 - 20 -	20 - 20 -
6	LANCASHIRE. Fylde †	{ a { 12 - 12 - 11 - 11 - 10 - 10 - 6 - 6 -	12 - 12 - 12 - 12 - 12 - 12 - 12 - 12 -	14 - 14 - 14 - 14 - 14 - 14 - 13 6 13 6	18 - 18 - 17 - 17 - 16 6 16 6 16 - 16 -	18 - 18 - 17 - 17 - 16 6 16 6 16 6 16 6	18 - 18 - 17 - 17 - 17 - 17 - 16 6 16 6
7	YORKSHIRE. Thirsk	{ 10 - 10 -	12 6 11 6	13 - 13 -	16 - 15 -	15 - 15 -	15 - 15 -
8	DERBYSHIRE. Belper	{ - -	16 - 16 -	17 - 17 -	18 - 18 -	20 - 20 -	20 - 20 -
9	RUTLAND. Ketton	{ 9 - 9 -	12 - 12 -	13 - 13 -	15 - 15 -	13 6 13 6	15 - 15 -

NOTE.—The Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in roman type refer to the summer months; those in italics to the winter.

* 1859.

APPENDIX III.

years, taken from Account Books by Employers, together with the Allowances in Kind on the Farms on which they were Employed in those years.

1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	Allowances in kind given in addition to Cash Payments.	Ref. No.
Total Cash Earnings. (Including amounts earned as weekly wages, hay and corn harvest, piece-work and overtime.)							
£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		
29 12 -	43 18 -	43 19 -	53 - -	53 - -	58 4 -	Cottage and garden rent free; coals led; 80 stones potatoes and 2 bushels barley.	1
33 16 -	39 - -*	40 - -	47 2 -	54 12 -	57 15 6		
31 4 -	34 - -*	39 3 9	46 16 -	52 - -	47 16 -	Cottage and garden rent free; coals; 40 stones potatoes; and beer during haytime and harvest.	2
28 12 -	36 8 -*	40 3 5	49 8 -	49 8 -	52 - -		
28 12 -	36 8 -*	39 - -	46 16 -	44 4 -	49 8 -		
12 - -	20 - -	34 - -	34 - -	30 - -	36 - -		
14 - -	25 - -	40 - -	42 - -	34 - -	40 - -		
8 - -	14 - -	18 - -	22 - -	26 - -	28 - -		
10 - -	16 - -	20 - -	26 - -	28 - -	30 - -	Board and lodging.	3
8 - -	10 - -	12 - -	14 - -	16 - -	18 - -		
10 - -	12 - -	14 - -	16 - -	24 - -	26 - -		
—	22 - -	26 - -	28 - -	22 - -	27 - -	Ditto.	4
31 10 -	34 2 -	44 10 -	47 16 -	53 - -	53 - -	Beer was allowed during haytime and an allowance of skim milk each day up to and including 1891. From 1892 to 1901 there were no allowances. In 1902 6d. per day was paid during haytime in lieu of beer.	5
31 4 -	31 4 -	36 8 -	46 16 -	46 16 -	46 16 -		
28 12 -	31 4 -	36 8 -	44 4 -	44 4 -	44 4 -	Beer during haytime and a load of firewood each year.	6
26 - -	31 4 -	36 8 -	42 18 -	42 18 -	44 4 -		
15 12 -§	31 4 -	35 2 -	41 12 -	42 18 -	42 18 -		
29 19 11	36 1 7	39 9 1	42 19 -	39 7 -	42 - -	Cottage and garden rent free; coals led; sticks for fuel found; potato ground found, manured and ploughed; 2 pints of beer each day during haytime and harvest, and if leading late another pint and cheese and bread; and straw for pigs.	7
30 2 1	39 1 2	30 10 2	42 19 -	39 7 -	38 12 -		
26 13 5	35 2 6	41 6 11	42 19 -	39 7 -	44 8 -		
—	43 5 3	46 18 9	55 4 2	50 2 -	57 14 -	Cottage and garden rent free; potato ground; fuel carted, and beer in haytime and harvest. In 1850 beer was the only allowance. In some cases cottages were let at a moderate rent.	8
29 - -	36 - -	39 - -	44 - -	41 10 -	45 - -	None.	9

† Farm servants paid half-yearly:—(a) best men; (b) second-class men; (c) women.

‡ Men marked (a) are solely or partly in charge of animals, e.g., cowmen, shepherds, teamsmen.

§ Lad.

Table showing the Earnings of Individual Ordinary

Ref. No.	County and Rural District.	1851.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1901.
		Rates of Weekly Cash Wages.					
		<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>
10	WORCESTER. Persnore	—	10 —	10 —	11 —	11 —	12 —
		—	10 —	10 —	11 —	11 —	12 —
11	WARWICK. Stratford-on-Avon	10 —	11 —	13 —	14 —	14 —	13 —
		9 —	10 —	12 —	13 —	13 —	13 —
12	Shipston-on-Stour	10 —	10 —	10 —	12 —	12 —	12 —
		9 —	10 —	10 —	11 —	11 —	11 —
13	OXFORD. Banbury	—	10 —	10 —	11 —	11 —	12 —
		—	10 —	10 —	11 —	11 —	12 —
14	HERTFORD. Berkhamstead	—	—	12 —	13 —	13 —	13 —
		—	—	12 —	13 —	12 —	13 —
15	Bishop's Stortford ...	—	—	—	14 —	12 —	14 —
		—	—	—	14 —	12 —	14 —
16	CAMBRIDGE. Newmarket †	—	—	12 0	12 —	12 —	13 —
		—	—	11 0	12 —	11 —	13 —

† The time lost by the four men (exclusive of Christmas Day, Good Friday, and two Fair days) was as follows:—

1871.	1881.	1891.	1901.
17 days	12 days	20 days	6 days
17 "	6 "	2 "	4 "
21 "	20 "	5 "	18 "
No record of any absence	15 "	19 "	8 "

Labourers in each of the undermentioned years—Contd.

1851.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1901.	Allowances in kind given in addition to Cash Payments.	Ref. No.
Total Cash Earnings (including amounts earned as weekly wages, hay and corn harvest, piece- work, and overtime).							
£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		
—	27 2 3	30 15 —	29 17 —	31 13 9	29 13 —	Two pints of cider each day up to about 1886, but since then from 1st April to end of year only.	10
—	25 4 3	28 3 6	29 1 5	30 9 7	27 4 9		
—	22 15 2	26 8 7	27 10 7	29 15 —	26 6 5		
30 — —	33 2 —	33 12 —	38 16 —	39 6 —	39 6 —	Beer during the summer months. Up to 1875 the allowance was greater.	11
27 8 —	30 — —	30 — —	35 — —	33 18 —	34 12 —	Formerly a gallon of beer or cider each day for four weeks in hay time and four weeks in harvest. Now £1 is paid in lieu of beer or cider for hay time, 10d. or 8d. per day during harvest, and 6d. per day when threshing.	12
27 8 —	30 7 —	30 — —	35 4 —	34 — —	34 12 —		
30 — —	32 12 —	32 12 —	37 16 —	36 10 —	37 5 —		
—	27 10 —	28 — —	30 — —	32 — —	33 10 —	Beer, but quantity not so great now as formerly.	13
—	28 10 —	30 — —	28 — —	30 — —	35 — —		
—	32 5 —	31 — —	30 — —	31 — —	32 — —		
—	—	37 14 —	41 12 —	34 14 —	39 16 —	Beer during hay time, harvest, for threshing days, and for some few special jobs throughout the year. Quantity varies from 2 pints per day up to 6 pints on busy days in harvest.	14
—	—	34 12 —	38 10 —	—	—		
—	—	—	44 7 7	46 7 2	47 2 8		
—	—	—	42 4 11	45 2 2	43 17 11	Beer for thrashing, hay-time, and when sowing artificial manure or carting coal.	15
—	—	—	39 5 2	46 4 10	45 6 5		
—	—	—	43 4 3	47 17 1	44 18 3		
—	—	34 1 —	36 8 8	33 14 5	39 6 8	Three pints of beer per day during hay time and when threshing. For harvest, 3 bushels of malt and 3 lbs. of hops or its equivalent in money. The allowance of beer for threshing was formerly 2 pints per day.	16
—	—	33 16 2	33 6 6	39 11 11	38 6 6		
—	—	30 16 8	32 15 11	37 — —	37 9 —		
—	—	36 1 —	36 5 —	33 18 10	40 12 3		

NOTE.—The rates of weekly cash wages in roman type refer to the summer months; those in italics to the winter.

Table showing the *Earnings of Individual Ordinary*

Ref. No.	County and Rural District.	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
		Rates of Weekly Cash Wages.					
	LINCOLN.	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>
17	Louth ..... {	15 - [*] <i>15 -[*]</i>	13 6 <i>13 6</i>	15 - <i>15 -</i>	15 - <i>13 6</i>	15 - <i>15 -</i>	16 6 { <i>15 -</i> {
	NORFOLK.						
18	Depwade ..... {	13 - [†] <i>13 -[†]</i>	10 - <i>10 -</i>	11 - <i>11 -</i>	13 - <i>13 -</i>	11 - <i>12 -</i>	13 - { <i>13 -</i> {
	SUFFOLK.						
19	Blything ..... {	8 - <i>8 -</i>	11 - <i>11 -</i>	12 - <i>11 -</i>	11 - <i>12 -</i>	11 - <i>12 -</i>	13 - { <i>12 -</i> {
20	Thingoe ..... {	8 - <i>8 -</i>	10 - [‡] <i>—</i>	10 - <i>10 6</i>	13 - [§] <i>12 -[§]</i>	— <i>—</i>	— { <i>—</i> {
	ESSEX.						
21	Tendring ..... {	9 - <i>9 -</i>	12 - <i>11 -</i>	12 - <i>11 -</i>	13 - <i>13 -</i>	12 - <i>13 -</i>	14 - { <i>15 -</i> {
22	Lexden and Wins- tree ..... {	9 - <i>9 -</i>	11 - <i>10 6</i>	12 - <i>12 -</i>	14 - <i>14 -</i>	12 - <i>12 -</i>	14 - { <i>14 -</i> {

23	Chelmsford ..... {	8 -
		<i>8 -</i>
		9 -
		<i>9 -</i>
			10 -
			<i>10 -</i>
			11 6
			<i>11 6</i>
				11 -
				<i>11 -</i>
				12 6
				<i>12 6</i>
					12 -
					<i>12 -</i>
					13 6
					<i>13 6</i>
						12 -
						<i>12 -</i>
						13 6
						<i>13 6</i>
							13 - {
							<i>13 -</i>
							14 6
							<i>14 6</i> {

	SUSSEX.						
24	Rye ..... {	10 - <i>10 -</i>	12 - <i>12 -</i>	12 - <i>12 -</i>	13 6 <i>13 6</i>	13 6 <i>13 6</i>	15 - { <i>13 6</i> {
25	SOMERSET. Wellington ..... {	— {	8 - [¶] <i>8 -[¶]</i>	9 - <i>9 -</i>	13 - <i>13 -</i>	12 - <i>12 -</i>	13 - { <i>13 -</i> {
26	MONMOUTH. Chepstow ..... {	— {	12 - <i>12 -</i>	12 - <i>12 -</i>	13 - <i>13 -</i>	14 - <i>14 -</i>	16 - { <i>16 -</i> {
27	GLAMORGAN. Cardiff ..... {	9 - <i>9 -</i>	12 - <i>12 -</i>	14 - <i>14 -</i>	13 - <i>13 -</i>	15 - <i>15 -</i>	18 - { <i>18 -</i> {

Note.—The Rates of Weekly Cash Wages in roman type refer to the summer months; those in italics to the winter.

* 1855.

† 1854.

‡ 1860.

Labourers in each of the undermentioned years—Contd.

1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	Allowances in kind given in addition to Cash Payments.	Ref. No.
Total Cash Earnings. (Including amounts earned at weekly wages, hay and corn harvest, piece-work and overtime.)							
£ s. d. 45 12 5*	£ s. d. 42 18 6	£ s. d. 40 11 3	£ s. d. 38 17 5	£ s. d. 43 4 2½	£ s. d. 45 3 11	None.	17
45 2 9*	37 13 11	41 6 11	41 3 0½	44 1 -	43 17 8		
45 6 10*	45 8 11	50 19 9½	39 9 1½	42 13 -	43 - 6		
35 3 -†	31 9 6	33 13 6	38 19 -	36 5 -	39 7 -	None.	18
33 4 -†	30 8 6	31 15 6	38 19 -	36 5 -	39 7 -		
28 - -	35 6 -	38 16 -	44 - -	46 - -	47 - -	Fuel carted, and beer to the value of 10s. per annum. Three pints of beer per day during haytime. For harvest, 3 bushels of malt up to and including 1871.	19
27 17 -	30 7 6†	29 15 6	40 14 -§	—	—		
29 1 -	30 7 6†	30 19 6	40 14 -§	—	—	Fuel, straw for pig; and sometimes food and beer.	20
31 8 6	33 10 -	35 18 -	39 3 6	41 2 6	43 17 9	Home-brewed beer, valued at 1s. per week.	21
26 10 -	31 18 -	34 16 0	40 2 -	34 16 -	39 12 -		
26 - -	30 - -	32 - -	36 - -	41 - -	41 - - ^a	Home-brewed beer. At present time abstainers get 1s. per week and, for harvest, 20s. in lieu of beer. Horsemen and stockmen have cottage and large garden at a low rental.	22
27 - -	32 - -	35 - -	39 - -	43 - -	44 - - ^b		
30 - -	35 - -	40 - -	40 - -	45 - -	45 - - ^c		
29 - -	33 - -	35 - -	39 - -	44 - -	44 - - ^d		
33 10 5	37 8 5	37 10 10	33 10 11	33 19 11	36 11 8½	Up to 1855 all old wood was carted free, but afterwards over hours were paid for and cartage was charged.	23
31 3 1	34 4 5	33 14 10	33 14 7	35 14 9	38 19 -½		
31 9 2	35 2 5	36 13 3	37 15 1½	38 14 1	36 12 -		
27 4 8	30 5 10	34 1 9	41 4 -	34 8 -	37 19 1		
—	24 15 0¶	28 - -	37 - -	38 - -	42 - -	Cider on threshing days, and during haytime and corn harvest. Up to 1873, 3 pints of cider each day. Straw for pigs. Good cottages and about 20 perches of land are let for 1s. per week. Within the last 25 years cottages have been improved and gardens enlarged.	24
—	38 2 -	39 1 -	41 15 -	43 6 -	45 16 -		
—	37 9 -	38 3 -	40 14 -	41 18 -	42 9 -	Potato ground and beer or cider when threshing, harvesting, or doing extra work.	25
—	37 1 -	38 12 -	39 7 -	41 2 -	42 3 -		
29 8 -	38 9 -	43 8 -	42 16 -	46 5 -	52 6 -	Cottage and garden rent free; firewood found; coals supplied at cost price, carted free; 9 gallons of beer for hay-time and 18 gallons for harvest; food on threshing days; and straw for pigs.	26
28 15 -	36 7 6	43 8 -	42 16 -	45 14 -	—		

§ 1878.

|| The figures relate to the following classes of men :—(a) common labourer; (b) capable task workman; (c) horseman; (d) stockman.

¶ 1863-4.

APPENDIX IV.

Examples of the Food of Agricultural Labourers Forty or Fifty Years Ago, and at the Present Time, in Cumberland and Wales, and Summary for the Eastern Counties.

CUMBERLAND.

Men boarded and lodged in the Farm-house.

(i.) Forty or fifty years ago :—

Breakfast.—Porridge and milk, barley bread and cheese.

Dinner.—Boiled pudding, very little butcher's meat, and a good deal of bacon and pork, potatoes and bread.

Tea or Supper.—Boiled milk and brown bread. Sometimes cheese (Dutch). On Sundays, tea with bread or cake.

Present time :—

Breakfast.—Porridge with milk and treacle or sugar, tea or coffee, bread and butter.

Lunch ("ten o'clocks").—Tea, coffee, or milk, and bread or cake, on week-days only.

Dinner.—Pudding generally served first. Meat and potatoes. Sometimes broth and boiled beef. Vegetables other than potatoes rarely used.

Lunch ("four o'clocks").—Tea, bread and cake on week-days only.

Tea or Supper.—Tea, cake or bread and butter. Sometimes boiled milk.

(ii.) In 1850 :—

Breakfast.—Oatmeal porridge with skimmed milk, followed by brown bread, cheese and skimmed milk.

Lunch ("ten o'clocks").—Beer, perhaps, in harvest.

Dinner.—Beef or mutton (generally boiled) once or twice a week. Other days cold meat or bacon. When the meat was boiled, soup was served first course. Potatoes. Rice pudding or dumplings.

Lunch ("four o'clocks").—Beer or milk, brown bread and cheese in harvest only.

Supper.—Porridge made with oatmeal or flour, and skimmed milk.

In 1902 :—

Breakfast.—Oatmeal porridge with separated milk, or, in many cases, with new milk; followed by tea or coffee, white bread, butter and cheese. In many cases eggs in summer, and cold meat or bacon in winter.

Lunch ("ten o'clocks").—Tea, coffee, or milk, bread, butter and cheese.

Dinner.—Beef or mutton (generally roast) about three times a week, other days cold meat and pickles, stews, &c. (Bacon is not much used.) Potatoes and other vegetables always served. Milk puddings or dumplings.

Tea.—Tea, white bread and butter, fruit cake or jam.

Supper.—Milk or tea, bread, butter, and cheese.

EASTERN COUNTIES (except LINCOLN).

The Diet of Agricultural Labourers Forty and Fifty Years Ago and at the Present Time.

	Huntingdon and Cambridge.	Norfolk and Suffolk.	Essex.
<i>Forty or Fifty years ago.</i>			
Break-fast	Bread and milk (skim), or bread and lard or dripping	Bread and butter, lard, or dripping, or cheese. Tea. In some cases bread and skim milk or bread and water sop	Bread—very often dry — occasionally butter or cheese
Dinner....	Pudding or dumpling. Vegetables, when procurable. [When there was any meat it was usually sufficient only for the husband, the wife and children sharing the crust in which the meat was cooked, or the gravy from it when cooked alone.] Sunday. — Sometimes a little pork	Bread and vegetables (turnips—swede or white; potatoes or onion), or cheese of an inferior quality Sunday. — In some cases a small quantity of pork, which was often eked out for a week	Bread and cheese Sunday. — Sometimes pork or bacon. In such cases tea consisted of bread and butter and tea
Tea	Bread and lard or dripping with an onion, or sometimes a herring or a little cheese	Bread with an onion, or butter, lard, or dripping. Tea	Vegetable pudding (sometimes swede turnips and topping or carrot and parsnip). On rare occasions a little pork [In some places this meal was partaken of at midday. In such cases tea or supper consisted of bread and cheese]
Supper			

EASTERN COUNTIES (except LINCOLN)—*Contd.*

	Huntingdon and Cambridge.	Norfolk and Suffolk.	Essex.
<i>Present Time.</i>			
Break-fast	Bread, tea, and, in some cases, bacon or pork.	Bread and butter, dripping or cheese. Tea The husband in many cases has bread with cheese or meat (salt pork or bacon) or herrings when in season	Bread, butter and cheese, tea
Dinner	Salt or fresh pork, dumpling, potatoes, and vegetables, or pastry or suet roll or dumpling with jam or treacle Sunday.—Small piece of fresh meat	Pork, potatoes, dumplings (the meat sometimes put in the dumpling). In some cases no meat, in others some beef Sundays.—In many cases beef or mutton; meat of some kind in all cases, with plain or fruit pudding in addition	Bread and cheese. Butter or jam, in some cases tea. Sunday.—Roast meat or meat pudding, potatoes, sometimes a rice pudding.
Tea	Tea, bread and lard, butter or jam. In some cases cheese or a little meat [If husband is working too far from home to have dinner at mid-day, the family make shift until supper, which takes the place of dinner or tea]	Tea, bread and butter, dripping or cheese Sunday.—Cake more general in addition	Boiled pork, potatoes, bread and butter, or suet pudding, with vegetables Sunday.—Bread, butter, or jam. Tea.
Supper			

WALES.

(1) *Food in Farmhouse.*

North Wales (forty or fifty years ago) :—

Breakfast.—Bread and milk or porridge and milk.

Dinner.—Potatoes and bacon.

Tea or Supper.—Bread and milk.

North Wales (present time) :—

Breakfast.—Bread and milk and tea, bread and butter.

Dinner.—Broth, bacon, potatoes, carrots, cabbage and turnips. In most cases fresh meat on Sunday.

Tea.—Tea, bread and butter.

Supper.—Bread and milk and bread and butter.

WALES—Contd.

(2) Food in Labourers' Cottages.

South-West Wales (forty or fifty years ago) :—

Breakfast.—Oatmeal gruel made with water, sometimes with skimmed milk, barley bread and cheese.

Dinner.—Flummery (oatmeal steeped for some days in water and afterwards boiled; eaten with sugar or treacle), barley bread and cheese, sometimes roasted potatoes and bacon.

Tea or Supper.—Bwdram (barley meal and water, sweetened with a little sugar), and barley bread and cheese to eat with it.

South-West Wales (present time) :—

Breakfast.—Tea, bread and butter and cheese.

Dinner.—Broth made from salted beef and bacon, thickened with oatmeal, with potatoes. On Sunday fresh meat and rice and milk.

Tea.—Tea, bread and butter.

Supper.—Broth rewarmed, with bread and cheese, and sometimes a little tea.

APPENDIX V.

The forms used for the collection of the information on which the Paper was based are as follows :—

QUESTIONS RELATING TO RATES OF WEEKLY WAGES.

Particulars relating to Wages, &c., of Agricultural Labourers employed on _____. *Farm in the occupation of _____.*
County of _____.

1. Please state the **Rates of Weekly Cash Wages**, taken from Books, paid to **Ordinary Agricultural Labourers** in receipt of Men's full Wages on the above-mentioned Farm in the Months of **June** and **December** of each of the **Years 1850-1901**, or as many years as possible.

[*Ordinary Agricultural Labourers do not include Foremen, Shepherds, Cattlemen, Carters, Waggoners, Teamsters. Weekly Cash Wages are not to include payments for piecework, or extra payments during hay and corn harvest, or for overtime, or the value of any perquisites, or allowances in kind.—See questions 2 to 7.]*

Year.	Rate of Weekly Cash Wages in		Year.	Rate of Weekly Cash Wages in	
	June.	December.		June.	December.
	s. d.	s. d.		s. d.	s. d.

NOTE.—Should your records relating to Rates of Wages extend back beyond 1850, and if you would be good enough to give this additional information, I will send you another form for the purpose.

Will you be good enough to answer as many of the following questions as you are able:—

2. Please describe perquisites or allowances in kind given in 1901 to the ordinary agricultural labourers on your farm, in addition to their weekly cash wages, such as house, garden, potato ground, allotment, food, beer, cider, fuel or fuel carted, straw for pigs, &c.
3. Please state whether the perquisites or allowances in kind have varied in character or amount since 1850, or since the earliest period for which you give rates of wages. If so, kindly give particulars as far as possible.
4. Please state whether the amount of piecework given at the present time is, generally speaking, more or less than was customary fifty years ago in the case of—
  - (a.) Hay and corn harvest.
  - (b.) Other work, such as hoeing, &c.
5. Can you say, by reference to books or otherwise, whether an average able-bodied labourer would earn more or less by piecework in a year at the present time than fifty years ago.
6. If possible, please give a few instances of the rates paid for piecework fifty years ago, or at the earliest period for which you give rates of wages, compared with the rates paid for the same classes of work at the present time.
7. If possible, please give the amount paid for a month during hay and corn harvest at the present time, and also fifty years ago, or at the earliest period for which you give rates of wages—
  - (a.) Hay harvest.
  - (b.) Corn harvest.

Name _____

Postal Address _____

QUESTIONS RELATING TO YEARLY EARNINGS.

I. Actual yearly cash earnings of certain ordinary agricultural labourers in the undermentioned years :—

Note.—Ordinary agricultural labourers do not include men specially engaged in charge of animals, such as shepherds, cattlemen, carters, waggoners, &c.

(Please take three or four representative men in each year—not necessarily the same men in each year, or those who earned the most on the farm. If you cannot give figures for all of the undermentioned years, please give them for such periods as you are able.)

	Total Earnings in <i>Cash</i> , Including Amounts Earned at Weekly Wages, Hay and Corn Harvest, Piecework, and Overtime during the Year.					
	1851.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1901.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1st labourer						
2nd "						
3rd "						
4th "						

II. Please state the rates of weekly cash wages paid to the ordinary agricultural labourers in each of the years for which you state annual earnings :—

	1851.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1901.
(a) in summer						
(b) in winter						

III. Please state about what annual sum a labourer's wife and, say, 3 or 4 children would have earned by farm work in the "fifties" or "sixties."

IV. About what period did women cease to be employed regularly at field work in your neighbourhood?

Name .....

Postal Address .....

QUESTIONS RELATING TO FOOD, &C.

- (1.) Please state what is the usual food of farm labourers and their families at the present time in your neighbourhood, showing in detail what they generally have for breakfast, dinner, tea, and supper. If the food on Sundays differs from that eaten on week-days, please give particulars.

	Week-Days.	Sundays.		Week-Days.	Sundays.
Breakfast			Tea		
Dinner			Supper....		

- (2.) Can you also give information asked for in Question (1) for forty or fifty years ago? (Some of the older people in your neighbourhood will probably remember this.)

	Week-Days.	Sundays.		Week-Days.	Sundays.
Breakfast			Tea		
Dinner.....			Supper....		

- (3.) About what quantities of the following articles are consumed in a week by a farm labourer, his wife, and four children? I should also be glad to know the prices usually paid by farm labourers for these commodities:—

	Quantity.	Price.		Quantity.	Price.
		s. d. per			s. d. per
Fresh meat (beef or mutton)	}	"	Butter		"
Pork		"	Margarine		"
Bacon		"	Lard		"
Fish (fresh or cured)	}	"	Cheese		"
Milk		"	Sugar		"
Bread		"	Syrup or Treacle	}	"
Flour.....		"	Jam		"
Oatmeal		"	Tea		"
Rice		"	Cocoa.....		"
Potatoes		"	Eggs		"

- (4.) Do the farm labourers in your neighbourhood generally keep pigs, and have they gardens or allotments?
- (5.) Do the farm labourers in your neighbourhood generally belong to benefit societies, coal or clothing clubs, &c.? To what extent was this the custom fifty years ago?

Name _____

Postal Address _____

DISCUSSION *on* MR. WILSON FOX'S PAPER.

THE PRESIDENT wished cordially to thank Mr. Wilson Fox for responding so kindly, under conditions of difficulty, to the request he had made to him to prepare this useful review, especially as he was a busy man, with onerous official occupations pressing upon him. He felt it his duty, however, in view of the objects and methods of the Society, to point out, in inviting discussion, that—however interesting and fascinating were the problems opened up by a review of the general economic condition of the agricultural labourer of the present time, and the cognate topic of rural depopulation—debate on the methods of improving those conditions was very far from being their main object that evening. That was rather a purely statistical one, to check in detail the suggestive figures put before them. He felt sure that Mr. Wilson Fox himself would welcome criticism, and would thank those experts present for any help they could give him in detecting the flaws which might lurk in the data presented and marshalled in such convenient form from sources whence it was always difficult to extract comparable records. As to the general question of the distribution of labourers on the land at that moment, he would remind the meeting that they had not as yet, in sufficient combination and detail, the official occupation figures of the census to enable them to discuss that question fully. They were looking forward to having at an early date the Registrar-General's explanatory report on the census results, and when that came he had no doubt they would find the hidden meaning of the bare but remarkable figures which county by county had lately been coming into their hands. Another subject which he hardly thought as yet could be profitably discussed in great detail was the relative importance—as affecting these movements of population—of the influence of the school on the one hand, and of the railway on the other, perhaps two of the most potent factors in regulating these movements from the country to the town. With regard to the tables themselves, he would ask Mr. Fox in his reply if he would give a further explanation as to the series of earnings contrasted on p. 286, particularly as regarded the exceptional figure credited to the county of Lincoln? He thought there must be some explanation other than that which had been given by the note to the first column, and he questioned the propriety of including in that column, which referred to the year 1851, substituted data for so different a year as 1855. The later date was open to objection on account of the condition of prices at the time of the Crimean war. Another striking contrast from the same county arose in the figures of the drop in earnings between 1871 and 1881. In 1871 the gross earnings were put at nearly 51*l.*, but they dropped in the decade to 39*l.* He happened to have been very much in touch with Lincoln-

shire at that period, and was familiar with its conditions, and he could not call to mind anything which would corroborate that particular movement between those dates. Looking at the wages current in other counties, he thought there must be some misapprehension on the part of Mr. Fox's informant, or something quite exceptional in the farm selected. He considered the figures with regard to food at different dates as particularly valuable in this paper. He only regretted that they had not been able to extend the inquiry beyond the 67 farms which supplied the continuous basis of the curve of the general table. No doubt those farms were carefully selected and were really typical. For it was of the essence of dealing with statistics by means of "types" that above all things the choice of the types should be made with very great care, and this was more than ever incumbent when the aggregate records were not numerous. Mr. Fox might perhaps be able to tell them the total acreage of the farms represented in these tables, and, if he could add the aggregate number of men to whom the figures quoted applied, it would augment still further the value of an admirable and laborious piece of statistical work. It would be still more interesting if he could go further and describe the division of the land of the farms as between arable and pasture. Details on these heads might furnish the basis of an attempt to renew the older calculations on that much disputed point in agricultural economics—the cost of outlay for labour per *acre* in different parts of the country and under different forms of culture which varied so very widely at the present time.

Mr. W. H. BARFOOT-SAUNT said that, with regard to the question of yearly wages in different counties and different parts of England, it must be remembered that, though the labourers in the South-West always had been reported to be very badly paid, there were a large number of perquisites given to the men, which materially altered the case. He would give an instance in point. A friend of his in Dorsetshire, at the time when Arch was agitating in that county, was asked by his labourers if he would give them 15s. a week in cash. To this he agreed. In a few days it dawned on the men that perhaps they did not quite understand the position, so they came to him again and asked if they were to retain their potato ground and still have their coals carted and their other perquisites under the new conditions. The employer replied that they should, but that they would in future have to pay for these things at the prices they cost him, instead of having them free. The men thereupon wished to revert to the old conditions. But to this the master would not agree, because the farmers in that district had been found fault with on account of the low money wages they paid, and he did not intend to be subject to that charge any more. He believed that example was followed by many other people in the county. In his part of the country, which was chiefly pastoral, during the greater part of the year they wanted few men, but at busy times they had great difficulty in getting extra hands. The men no longer came out of the towns for haytime and harvest, and

those who did come were of very little use. There was, too, the greatest difficulty in obtaining men who were capable of doing really skilled work on the land—hedging, draining, stacking, and thatching. He attributed this chiefly to the fact that the education which the boys got in the rural schools was not suited to agricultural work. He was convinced that it was more important for a boy who was to get his living by agricultural labour to go on the land in his early years than to spend all his time, till 13 or 14 years of age, in only studying books, which neither taught him the use of his hands nor developed his powers of observation. Mr. Fox talked about boys getting a little knowledge of elementary chemistry, and botany, and so forth. That was very well for the masters, but for the men it was absolutely useless. Elementary chemistry would not teach a man how to cut a hedge, and botany would not teach him how to thatch a stack, and those were the things the labourers wanted to learn. In his neighbourhood a man could get his 1*l.* a week if he were a skilled agricultural labourer. Where men were formerly paid 2*s.* a chain for cutting a hedge, it now cost 3*s.* 6*d.*, and if one had the dyke done out also it was 4*s.* 6*d.* These were good wages, and a man could earn 4*s.* or 5*s.* a day. If the lads were taught how to work earlier, they would become more useful, and have a better chance of obtaining such wages. It had been proposed that children should be allowed to go into the fields for some time in the summer and a portion of the autumn, and attend school in the winter, as is done in Switzerland, and he believed that would be a good thing. They were kept in school now all the year round, and nothing but books were put before them, until the practical result was that their powers of observation and the habit of thinking about what they had observed—and those were the most valuable powers to either master or man—were lost.

Mr. CLARE SEWELL READ said he had seldom heard a paper which was more practically correct. He should not go into the question of the statistics, but the general conclusions and deductions Mr. Fox had brought forward were very satisfactory, and, as far as his long experience went, were very truthful. There was only one point on which he disagreed—the statement that the agricultural labourer did not taste meat more than once a week. He thought he did eat a fair quantity of meat now, whereas fifty years ago he never got anything else than a bit of bacon. He (the speaker) could take his memory back some seventy years, when he was a small boy, and remembered the harvest. In those days there was not even a horse rake on the farm. Everything was done by hand, from reaping to thatching. If the weather was not fine the harvest sometimes lasted six weeks, and looking over his father's books he found the wages were from 4*l.* 10*s.* to 5*l.* Nowadays, machinery and horses did the whole of the hard work, especially in the harvest time. In these days it was considered a tedious harvest when it lasted a month; generally speaking, the harvest in Norfolk hardly exceeded three weeks. The wages were 7*l.*, and even up to 7*l.* 10*s.* The change was greatly in favour of the working man. He

happened to read that morning an article on the rural labourer. The writer said that in some of the home counties wages were 11s. a week, and that was supposed to represent the labourer's earnings all the year round. He also said the labourer was so badly off that he could not afford to smoke. As far as the speaker's experience went, even small boys smoked cigarettes, and as to the labourers themselves, he had had the greatest trouble to prevent them smoking in the stables and stack yards, though he liked to see them enjoying their pipes after their meals or when leaving the farm. The Chairman had referred to a topic of very great importance—the cost of labour per acre in the different counties. He understood from the paper that the wage labourer in Northumberland earned 24s. a week. He should take the average in Norfolk to be something like 15s. or 16s. all the year round, including harvest wages and extra wages in turnip-hoeing, &c. During the last twenty-five years that he farmed, his average expenditure per acre—his farm being chiefly arable—was 40s. per acre. He was told that, in the county of Northumberland, if a farmer paid 30s. per acre he was considered to have been rather an extravagant employer of labour. He was convinced that the test of the worth of the labour was not what it was paid by the day or week, but what was expended on the farm per acre. The depopulation of the rural districts was much accelerated by the extravagant rate of wages which town councils and municipal authorities paid for unskilled labour. In the Borough of Paddington they had gangs of nine men who went about sweeping the streets, and who were paid 1*l.* a week. They walked about all the winter long with a broom, and generally their pipes and a greatcoat. That very morning he asked an exceedingly old man what his wages were. He replied 4s. a day. If that man had been in the country he certainly would not have got more than 1s. 6*d.* at the utmost. When municipal authorities made their living wage for unskilled labour so high, they attracted farm labourers from the country, and then all of a sudden these men were thrown out of employment, and one had them parading the streets of London begging for subsistence. He was quite sure that less task-work was done now in the country than formerly. In the county of Norfolk there was not one-fourth the task-work done there used to be. He considered task-work was the very best test of the value of labour. What task-work did was to elevate the worst man to the level of the best, whilst day work brought down the very best man to the level of the worst. The men now objected to piecework, and if they did take it, never exceeded the usual hours. The labourer of the present day was wonderfully helped by the bicycle. He was on a farm last September at four o'clock, when the labourers' day was supposed to be ended—when he was a boy it used to be half-past six—out of a dozen men employed, eight went off on bicycles. It was an off-lying farm, so their machines were of very great advantage to the labouring men. Whereas years ago they were told it was necessary to build cottages on the farm so that the labourer might be near his work, now the women said they wanted to be near the shops, the children wanted to be near the school, and

the men liked to be near a public-house. The result was seen in the fact that in the county of Norfolk alone there were very many cottages built within the last fifty years on these off-lying farms now empty and going to ruin. He agreed as to the importance of building good cottages, though he did not think anybody would build a cottage unless he was actually compelled to do so.

Mr. S. B. L. DRUCE called further attention to the remarkable set of figures already alluded to by the President—those of the total cash earnings of individual labourers on farms in Lincolnshire, compared with the cash earnings of farm labourers in other parts of the country. The table from which the figures were taken, and which was given in brief in the paper, was apparently an extract from the figures in Appendix III, and by reference to that appendix he found, under No. 17, that the farm alluded to was in the Poor Law Union of Louth. That farm showed, in 1851, very high figures, 45*l.* 6*s.* 10*d.*, which, however, had risen, in 1871, to 50*l.* 19*s.* 9*d.*—nearly 51*l.* The explanation of these figures, he ventured to suggest, might be found in the facts that, as the appendix showed, there was no allowances of any kind to the labourers beyond the cash payments, and that this particular farm was situate in a locality of very large farms. Now, from his own knowledge, he knew that corn and other allowances in kind were, and had for many years, been made on these farms, and no doubt in the table the corn and other allowances were put down at their cash value, which in the case of corn was, at the times mentioned, very high. Then, again, on these large farms the labourer's wages were a great deal higher than they were on the smaller farms lying on the east and west sides of the county. He would also draw attention to the very high figures in the same table for the county of Glamorgan, which were as high as 52*l.* 6*s.* in 1901, far higher than any of the other figures in that same column, and higher than the Lincolnshire figures. To his mind this was an exemplification of the influence which mining had on agricultural labourers' earnings. He should like to thank Mr. Fox especially for his summary of the position of the agricultural labourer at the present time, as compared with fifty years ago. No such excellent synopsis of these particulars had ever before appeared in print.

Mr. R. HENRY REW agreed that they were greatly indebted to Mr. Wilson Fox for this very able and laboriously compiled paper. He proceeded to remark on one or two statistical points. They ought to appreciate the importance which Mr. Fox had given to the total earnings as distinguished from the weekly wage of labourers, in view of the fact that too much use was frequently made of the wages figures in discussions on this subject. Mr. Wilson Fox had rightly based his arguments on the total earnings figures, although, unfortunately, they had still, for comparative purposes, to rely upon relatively small data in this respect. The average figures of total earnings showed a rise of about 50 per cent., but even that did not tell the whole story of the improvement which had occurred in the

financial position of the labourer during the past fifty years. It was, no doubt, the fact that he got the benefit of a better cottage than was represented by the rent he paid, and this was not included in the total earnings. With regard to the employment of women, the President had already warned them against making too precise use of the census figures. Those given by Mr. Fox did not appear to include women. The census returns, as now available, seemed to indicate that there had been a decrease of 50 per cent. in the number of women employed in agriculture during the decade 1891-1901. He should very much like to see the explanation, which would no doubt be forthcoming, of an apparent decrease, alluded to by Mr. Fox, of 18 per cent. in the number of agricultural labourers. If women were included, there would seem to have been a decline of over 20 per cent. in the number of agricultural labourers during the decade. If this were correct, it would mean that the ratio of decrease was double that of the preceding decade. That was rather a startling fact, but he thought those who proposed to comment on it should await further information, and especially such light as might be thrown on the subject in the final report of the census authorities, before jumping to a hasty conclusion. Eventually, no doubt, it would be a matter for discussion to what extent the decline by 20 per cent. now indicated represented the actual figures, or how far the figures were affected by the particular circumstances attending the collection of the census in 1901. With regard to the subject of the employment, he would like to quote the actual words used by the late Sir Thomas Acland in the article to which Mr. Wilson Fox had referred. The statement alluded to was made with reference to a special district in Somerset—South Petherton and Yeovil—and what Sir Thomas Acland said was that the reliance on the additional earnings of women engaged in glove-making caused the farm labourers to accept, in ordinary times, a rate of wages “below that which afforded the normal human subsistence.” Mr. Fox had put the improvement in the labourer’s position with extreme force, but they must not overlook the position of the farmer as indicated by these figures. He had made a rough calculation that if the average rate of total earnings in 1901, as given by Mr. Fox, were multiplied by the number of agricultural labourers returned in England and Wales, and the average rate of total earnings in 1851, as given by Mr. Fox, by the number of agricultural labourers returned at the census of 1851, they would get for 1901 a gross sum of 30,000,000*l.* per annum, and in 1851 a gross sum of 40,000,000*l.* per annum. But he was quite certain, and he thought Mr. Read and Mr. Fox would support him in saying, that the amount of irregularity of employment in 1851 was very much greater than at the present time. Of the 1,250,000 labourers in 1851, a considerable number were not employed during the whole year, whereas probably out of the 620,000 or 630,000 of to-day the great bulk were practically in regular employment throughout the year. Thus, from the gross total expenditure in 1851, at least one-fourth might be deducted on account of irregularity of employment, which would reduce the amount to the same figures as in

1901. He did not suggest that these figures represented the total amount paid by farmers for manual labour, because there were all the extra payments to shepherds, stockmen, and so on to be taken into account. But if they were taken for the purpose of comparison, they would indicate that farmers were paying for manual labour annually the same amount now as fifty years ago, and had incurred all the cost of machinery in addition. Everyone knew what enormous sums had been spent in the purchase of agricultural machinery since 1851, and yet, apparently, farmers had saved practically nothing from their labour bill in consequence.

Mr. T. W. HUSKINSON said that the question of wages was now, barring the question of prices, the most important to farmers. He had just been told by a farmer who probably employed from 15,000*l.* to 20,000*l.* in farming, that it would drive him out of farming. He instanced one farm where, on account of the present school system, for the same number of sheep four men now had to be employed to do the work formerly done by two men aided by a couple of boys. Boys kept at school too late were useless on the land. Personally, he should like to see the schools in the country, except perhaps for young children, closed between the middle of June and the end of September. Among the middle-classes they had something like three months in the year holidays, but the working-class schools were only closed for about five weeks. Some friends of his had got great experience in colliery work entirely during the long vacations, and on leaving college were *au fait* with their colliery interest. He found the long vacations of great value to himself, and he believed, utilised in practical farm work, they would be a similar advantage to the young of the agricultural classes.

Mr. E. H. GODFREY remarked that, on p. 290, Mr. Fox referred to the migration of Irish labourers, but dismissed the subject in one line, and put down the decrease in their number to the introduction of machinery. The Irish Agricultural Department published interesting annual statistics on the number of Irish agricultural labourers who came over to England, and it would be interesting to have figures as to the effect of that migration on the rate of wages in this country. Then there was the effect which the temperance movement might have had on the habits of labourers, and their allowances in lieu of beer. He remembered that farm labourers employed in harvest time formerly received frequent allowances of beer sent to them in the old-fashioned round wooden bottles every few hours. This practice had gone out to a large extent, doubtless owing to the fact that the price of corn did not now make it sufficiently worth while for women and children to go gleanings after harvest. Statistics as to the earnings from this source would be interesting. Mr. Fox had referred to the question of factories. Places which a generation ago were rural villages had now become small towns, such as Rushden in Northamptonshire, where bootmaking was now largely carried on. Changes like this must have had considerable

effect, not only in creating a market for produce, but also in increasing the facilities for obtaining non-agricultural employment.

Mr. JESSE ARGYLE reminded the meeting that Glamorgan was a mining district, and in such districts the wages of the agricultural labourer were high. In Northumberland, for instance, the wages of agricultural labourers were as much as 1*l.* a week. In this paper they had had the reverse of the picture which was often presented to them of people from the rural districts crowding into towns, with the result of bringing down wages and reducing the amount of work available for town labourers. The able paper now before them showed the good side of this movement, in that it had made the position of the agricultural labourer who remained very much better than it used to be. He had lived for about two years some twenty years ago in an agricultural village in the West of England, and he really marvelled how the men stood the life as they did and remained there year after year. There was absolutely nothing to amuse or brighten the labourer's life in any way. There were no means of amusement except the village ale-house, and the men used simply to stand at the end of the village street in a row whistling or singing, or staring about to amuse themselves. Young men did not stay in the villages round in those days. Of a family of seven brothers of which he knew, six came to London. When he revisited that village some time later he found that means of recreation had been provided. He would call the attention of the speaker who characterised the wages paid to labourers as extravagant, to the statement made in Mr. B. S. Rowntree's book on York and its workers as to the minimum conditions under which merely physical efficiency could be maintained. Bearing in mind Mr. Rowntree's very carefully weighed conclusions, he affirmed that in London a man could not properly maintain a wife and family on 1*l.* a week. He ventured to question Mr. Fox's statement that the rents of cottages in rural districts had not increased. He had heard of instances where rents had gone up 50 or even 100 per cent. of late years. While on the one hand there might be districts in which there were some houses empty, there were other parts where the problem of housing was quite as bad as it was in London that day. One other point was raised by a speaker who suggested that schools ought to be closed for three or four months in the autumn. That seemed to him an extremely retrograde proposal. Our children required more rather than less education than they now obtained if they were going to maintain the position of this country in the world. What they wanted to do if they wished to keep men in the agricultural districts was to do their utmost to make life worth living for them there.

Mr. J. A. BAINES, in moving a vote of thanks to the author of the paper, said that, from a purely statistical standpoint, the value of Mr. Wilson Fox's paper depended, in the first place, upon the representative character of the units selected for the analysis to which they had been subjected. If from them the conditions for

the whole country could be ascertained, the conclusions drawn were obviously of the highest importance. But, irrespective of their collective value, the statistics for each unit, taken independently, gave a vivid series of pictures for fifty years, the general tendency approximating to the same result, in itself a statistical fact of great weight. There was only one other subject to which he wished to refer, and that was in regard to Mr. Read's remarks as to the demoralization of the wage-earning class by the high rates paid for their work by municipal bodies. The complaint, judging from the instance of Paddington, amounted to an expression of dissatisfaction with the quality of the work done. In some respects this was justified by occasional inclination to regard road-cleaning as a means of keeping elderly and inefficient men on the rates outside, instead of inside, the Poor Law. But the actual rates paid, assuming normal efficiency of work done, were not higher than were justified by the rents demanded owing to the intrusion of unskilled labour from the country into cities where it took the place of specialised work. He then gave an instance where the municipal authority certainly acted in a way directly calculated to disturb the agricultural labour market in the locality, but added that the experiment was speedily terminated by the economic results that might have been anticipated.

Mr. A. WILSON FOX, in reply, dealt, firstly, with the Lincolnshire figures mentioned by the Chairman. As regarded the 50*l.* shown for 1871, the earnings of these farms did not refer to the same men year by year, of course—they could not. He did his best to get representative labourers in each year. It was an extremely difficult thing to-day to get at the earnings of fifty years ago. When Mr. Purdy, the head of the Statistical Department of the Local Government Board, read a paper before the Society in 1861, he found there were no data, even at that time, about the earnings for the whole country. It was not easy to go behind that and get the actual earnings in 1851. It had taken a great many months to get at even the figures for the 27 farms. There was a limit to the cross-examination of the farmers, who were kind enough to make a laborious enquiry into their books in order to get out the earnings. He did cross-examine these people as far as he could, and he might say that this Lincoln return came from a man whom he had known for a great many years—his family had been there fifty or sixty years, and it was one of the finest farming families in Lincolnshire. He was assured that this man did earn that sum, and earned a good deal of it by piece-work, but, as the Chairman had said, it was probably not a very representative figure for that year. With regard to the Glamorgan figure, that, no doubt, was high, but a couple of years ago the very same man who had given him figures for another enquiry showed him there was a 3*s.* rise in the year in the rate of wages. It was owing to the activity in the mines in the South Wales coal fields, and to the war. As to the cost of labour, he should like Mr. Rew to read a paper on the subject of the cost of labour per acre, for it was a very interesting enquiry. One ought

to take, as far as possible, the same class of farm, but it was very difficult to ascertain what was the same class of farm in different districts, because one had to see if it was of the same sort of soil, and so on, and to ascertain whether the character of farming was similar. Mr. Clare Sewell Read was reported in the *Times* of the 17th October, 1874, when addressing an Agricultural Association in Norwich, to have said:—"I have also come reluctantly to the conclusion that the highly paid Scotch hind is a cheaper and better man than the Norfolk labourer, and that, after all, there is no such thing as cheap labour." Another point that Mr. Read raised was about the meat eaten by labourers in Norfolk. The wages in Norfolk were about 12s. a week, but he always found that the earnings came to about 15s. a week. If Mr. Read included bacon and pork in the term meat, that was a different thing, but in the paper he limited the statement to fresh meat; and he did not think that in the low-wage districts agricultural labourers or their families did buy beef or mutton more than once a week when their earnings were 15s. or 16s. A bit of fresh meat was bought on Saturday, eaten on Sunday, and what was left over was eaten on Monday—occasionally there might be a little left over till Tuesday—but a man with four or five children and a total earning of 15s. a week, even if he got a cottage and garden at 1s. 6d. a week, could hardly eat fresh meat every day. Mr. Read had said that the rates of wages were not only very much higher, but the harvest took a very much shorter time than it used to. One of the greatest factors which went to make up the increase in the labourers' earnings was the very large extra amount earned at harvest, although the farmer, no doubt, employed fewer men now owing to machinery. He entirely agreed with what Mr. Rew had said about the census. He did not think it right to go into that question until they had the report of the Census Committee. Mr. Godfrey had raised a point about the Irish migratory labourers, and asked how far the competition of those men had affected the earnings of our own people. He thought that they did not enter into competition much with our own people. They went to Scotland and did potato lifting and potato planting, and also worked in the harvest in the north, where farmers had hired men for the ordinary work, and there were no extra men about, as there were in the open villages in the Eastern counties. Irish migratory labourers were not found below the north of Cambridgeshire. Generally speaking, nearly all the Irish went to the districts where the men were hired, and lived in the farm-houses. A point had been raised as to the rent of cottages. He did not think that in the purely rural districts the rents had increased very much since 1850. There were fewer rents at 1s. than there were fifty years ago, but in the purely agricultural districts the rents were most usually 1s. 6d. a week, and they had been so, generally, for the last forty or fifty years. That was not the case in rural districts which bordered on the urban districts. In Hertfordshire, in the purely rural districts on the Essex border, the rents were about 1s. 6d., and wages about 12s. a week, the earnings being about 14s. to 15s. a week, but on to the Middlesex

border he knew of men paying between 2s. 6d. and 4s. a week for their cottages, and earning between 17s. and 18s. a week. But as between purely rural districts in one county or another, he found, even in Northumberland, where the earnings were 20s. to 22s. a week, the cottage rents were only about 1s. 6d., exactly the same as was paid in purely rural districts in Norfolk and Suffolk. Of course, in Northumberland, near the mines, the rents went up to 3s. or 4s. a week, as they did near London. It might be a disadvantage, from the economic point of view, that the labourer did not pay an economic rent for his cottage, but certainly with the wages he got in the Eastern counties it was difficult to see how an agricultural labourer could pay more than 1s. 6d. or 2s. a week. That was one of the difficulties of landlords. If cottages cost 400*l.* a pair to build, it was extremely difficult in these times, when agriculture was not as flourishing as it once was, to find the money to build them, receiving only such rents as they did. In conclusion he apologised for the length of his paper, but he hoped that some of the points raised would form the subject of future discussion by the Society.