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is a first step to progress. It is interesting to note that at many of the leading American Agricultural Colleges a necessary qualification of admission is a thorough acquaintance with agriculture on the part of the candidate. This enables a student to appreciate the bearings of science on agriculture to an extent that is otherwise impossible. Having regard to the improvement of the efficiency of the Agricultural Department at Reading, the Deputation recommend: close contact with the farmer, the appointment of specialists in every section of agriculture, the encouragement of research, insistence on acquaintance with the practice of agriculture before, or at an early stage of, the course of academic study, and the postponement of much of the study of pure science till the later stages of the course.

W. SOMERVILLE

AGRICULTURAL WAGES IN ENGLAND AND IN INDIA.

ACCORDING to the Report on the wages of agricultural labourers in 1907, which has recently been published by the Board of Trade, the average earnings of adult males regularly employed in ordinary agricultural labour, as distinguished from the more skilled horsemen, cattlemen and shepherds, were for England, 17*s.* 6*d.* a week, or exactly half-a-crown a day, including Sundays. In that year the average price of wheat in England and Wales was about 30*s.* per quarter of 480 lbs., or three-farthings per lb. So that the English unskilled agricultural labourer received as wages and allowances an amount which ensured him, for each of the 365 days of the year, the equivalent in value of 40 lbs. weight of wheat at the price of the day.

An inquiry into agricultural wages was made in the Punjab in December, 1909, and it is interesting to compare its results with those for England. The Punjab is the northernmost of the great provinces of India and contains a population of twenty millions, a little less than half the population of the United Kingdom. Wheat is the principal crop, and much of the wheat grown there finds its way to this country. On the average of the last six years, the price of wheat in the Punjab was 24*s.* per quarter, or $\frac{2}{3}$ *d.* per lb..

The inquiry has shown that there is an extraordinary diversity in the rate of wages between the different districts. In the neighbourhood of Dehli, the commonest rates of daily wages paid for unskilled agricultural labour are 3*d.* or 4*d.*, and many villages report their customary rate as 2*d.* a day. On the other hand, in

the centre of the Province, which has within recent years been opened up by the construction of great canals at State expense, the commonest rate is *6d.* a day, but in many places as much as *8d.* a day is paid. In such circumstances a merely arithmetical average would be misleading, but it may be said roughly that for the Province as a whole the present average rate of agricultural wages is about *5d.* a day. Measured in wheat this means that, when the agricultural labourer can find employment, he is content with the equivalent of 8 lbs. of wheat per day, as compared with the English labourer's wages of 40 lbs. per day all the year round. Measured in millet, the cheapest food-grain in common use, his daily wages would purchase 11 lbs. weight of grain. But the Punjab labourer can by no means reckon on getting employment all the year round. He is usually engaged by the day, and only when there is work to be done. He may get considerably higher wages at harvest-time if the crops are heavy, but at the slack times of the year he has much difficulty in getting employment, and in seasons of drought there is no employment to be had in the fields, and he is forced to migrate in search of work, or, if the scarcity has deepened into famine, to accept the famine relief wage of about $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ per day, which experience has shown is enough to keep him in good health and bodily vigour, until the rain comes and he can again find employment near his home. It is not usual to employ ploughmen by the month or year, but where this is done the ploughman's total annual emoluments work out to an average of only about *4d.* a day.

An inquiry into agricultural wages was also made in 1906 in the adjoining United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, which have a population of forty-eight millions, and it was found that while in the western districts neighbouring on the Punjab the usual rate was *3d.* a day, wages gradually decreased as one approached the congested districts in the south-east bordering on Bengal, where the usual daily wage was $1\frac{1}{2}d.$, just enough to buy about 4 lbs. weight of the cheapest food-grain, out of which the labourer had to find not only necessary food, but clothing and comforts for himself and his family. In that part of India the half-a-crown a day earned, Sunday and Saturday, year in year out by the English ploughman, would secure the services of no less than twenty Indian coolies, willing to work for twelve hours or more a day! It is an appalling thought that there are millions of our fellow-subjects, for whose welfare we are responsible, who are dependent on such a pittance, and contented to marry and multiply down to such a low standard of comfort. Yet, on the

whole, except in times of pestilence or famine, they for the most part lead healthy, peaceful, almost happy lives, little troubled by anxiety for the future, which they leave to Providence and to the Government.

It is gratifying to learn that there has been in recent years a marked rise of wages, and a corresponding improvement in the standard of living. In the Punjab, sixty years ago, the common rate of wages was only 2*d.* a day; twenty years ago, it was about 2½*d.*, now it is 5*d.*—so that the rate of wages has doubled in the last twenty years. This means a great increase in the prosperity of the poorest classes, as compared with their condition a generation ago, and there seems every reason to hope that this improvement will be maintained, and will lead to a steady advance in health, comfort, intelligence and all that makes for progress.

JAMES WILSON.

THE PLACE OF CHARGE AND RECOVERY IN THE MINORITY REPORT OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE POOR LAWS.

It is often forgotten by those who criticise the Minority Report that its proposals are designed, far more specifically than those of the Majority Commissioners, for the *Destitute*. The conscious purpose of the Minority is to confine their proposed Public Assistance to those whose private means are insufficient to enable them to reach the current Standard of Efficiency. It is, the Minority would argue, admittedly essential for the public well-being that every member of the community should reach such a standard. We impose so much knowledge, so much health, so much self-restraint upon the whole population because it is vaguely realised that ignorance and disease and self-neglect are dangerous to society as well as to the individual. Hence our Education Acts, our Public Health Acts, our Factory Acts, our Mines and Ships and Railways Regulation Acts, and a thousand Laws against the aggression of one man on another. This Standard of Efficiency the well-to-do can reach by means of their own incomes, and with them the State does not interfere; but wherever it becomes impossible for any individual to reach the current "National Minimum" by means of his own income, then, and only then, does it become necessary for the State, merely in its own interest, to interfere and to see to it that the lack is made good, from the Rates and Taxes. Public Assistance may, therefore, the Minority argue, conveniently be restricted to those who