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IN THE SURVEY AREA

Country Planning

A STUDY OF RURAL PROBLEMS

BY

THE AGRICULTURAL
ECONOMICS RESEARCH INSTITUTE
OXFORD

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That thee is sent, receyve in buxumnesse,
The wrastling for this worlde axeth a fal.
Here is non hoom, here nis but wildernesse:
Forth, pilgrim, forth! Forth, beste, out of thy stall!
Know thy contree, look up, thank God of al;
Hold the hye wey, and lat thy gost thee lede:
And trouthe shall delivere, hit is no drede.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

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PREFACE

FROM the moment of the mobilization of the nation for another world war it was certain that far-reaching changes in the social and economic life of the nation would be entailed, many of which would not pass away with final victory. Even if the worst fears about the duration of hostilities were not realized, it was clear that much of the old order would be destroyed; that alongside the planning of war strategy must go the replanning of civil life, if the fruits of victory were not to prove bitter in the mouths of demobilized members of the fighting services and of emancipated war-workers.

In none of the country's major activities was the need for reconstruction likely to be greater than in rural industry. Economic and social progress in country life and labour, measured by standards generally accepted, had lagged far behind that in the other great industries in which people engage. Both in his purchasing power and in the physical and social conditions of his life—housing, the public services, education, leisure and the opportunities for using it—the countryman was at a disadvantage with almost any urban dweller. Even if employment in agriculture were steadier than in other great industries, this was offset by the absence, almost complete, of opportunities in it for advancement. The consequences were inevitable: on every occasion during the past two generations when alternatives offered—migration overseas, at one time, when home industry was depressed; migration into the towns, at others, when it was active—the best of the rural workers were quick to seize them. During the past sixty years the number of land workers has been reduced by one-half, following the decline of arable farming and the increasing use of machinery; and always, it may be assumed, it is the more vigorous and enterprising who have gone, for there has been little or nothing in the circumstances of their lives to encourage them to stay in rural employment.[1]

[1] A small group of farm workers in an Oxfordshire village, who had applied to the W.E.A. for some winter courses, declined the offer of one

It was not the farmer's son who endeavoured to leave the land, for he had prospects; it was his hired man, and an industry which cannot offer a life and a living which satisfy the greater number of the workers engaged in it can never flourish. Any replanning of rural industry, therefore, would have to be concerned as much with the social side of country life as with the technical problems of food production and marketing. If plans for reconstruction were to have a sound and sufficient basis, it would be necessary to have information which would throw light upon every phase and condition of rural life and labour, social as well as economic.

Thus the survey, the findings of which are recorded in the following pages, came to be planned; it was to be a 'pilot' or experimental survey, designed to test the method and the scope of an inquiry which would provide a basis for country planning. Arrangements had been made at the Agricultural Economics Research Institute, Oxford, early in 1941, for a survey of this kind to be carried out in a considerable district in Berkshire, but they had to be abandoned for reasons which are irrelevant, and it was not until two years later that work could be begun, on a smaller scale, in an adjoining county. About half of the research staff of the Institute were then engaged on other national work, but with the help of a grant made by the Development Commissioners it was possible to enlist the assistance of a small number of outside investigators, each of them with particular qualifications for the work undertaken. It was a condition of the grant that the survey should be finished and a report presented within a prescribed period. This limited the scope of the inquiry and the degree of detail, while war-time conditions, particularly transport difficulties and the handicap of the black-out as the days grew short, have also affected the work, which was begun and finished in the last six months of the year 1943.

on land problems, saying that nothing ever had been done to improve the conditions of life for rural labour, that nothing was likely to be done, and that all that they could do was to see to it that their sons should not follow in their footsteps.

The following composed the Survey team:

From the Agricultural Economics Research Institute:

C. S. Orwin, M.A., D.Litt.	*Director of Survey and Editor of Report.*
R. N. Dixey, M.A.	*Agriculture.*
R. W. James, M.A.	*Education.*
R. S. G. Rutherford, M.A.	*Population and Standards of Living.*
H. A. Beecham, B.A.	*Health Services, Local Industries, Retail Trade, &c.*

From other organizations, or individual investigators:

G. R. Clarke, B.Sc., M.A. B. Ackroyd, B.Sc.	School of Rural Economy. *Soils in relation to Agriculture.*
B. Sutton, F.R.I.B.A.	*Housing and Public Services.*
S. G. Burden, M.A.	Oxfordshire Garden Produce Committee. *Local Government, the Churches, and Endowed Charities.*
A. F. C. Bourdillon, M.A. (Mrs. Baber) Y. Smythies, B.A.	Nuffield College Social Reconstruction Survey. *Social Organizations.*
L. W. Wood	Oxfordshire Education Committee. *Youth Services.*
A. H. Griffiths	Oxfordshire Rural Community Council. *Rural Industries.*
M. Talbot	School of Rural Economy. *Maps, &c.*
C. S. Orwin, M.A. (Mrs.)	*Photographs.*

The Survey team has been, also, the committee in charge of the work, and it has met from time to time to discuss the

various questions which arose. Each member, or group of members, of the team was responsible for that part of the survey entrusted to him or them, but there has been general collaboration in most of the work.

Much help has been given. The Ministry of Agriculture have permitted access to some unpublished data, and local organizations, professional and social, have placed their intimate knowledge of the Survey area in particular aspects at the disposal of the team. Many individuals, too, have responded freely to requests for information, and it is impossible to mention by name all the Local Government officials, the clergy, school teachers, professional and business people, and the inhabitants of the Survey area of every order, to whom the team is indebted. To each and all of them grateful acknowledgements are offered, particularly to Mr. T. O. Willson, C.B.E., M.A., Director of Education, and to Dr. H. C. Jennings, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., County and School Medical Officer, both of the Oxfordshire County Council.

In conclusion, the members of the Agricultural Economics Research Institute desire to record their great obligation to the Development Commissioners, both for their most generous financial assistance, without which the Survey could not have been organized on the scale desired, and for the encouragement which this practical expression of their interest has given.

C. S. ORWIN,
Director.

AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
RESEARCH INSTITUTE,
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

IN country planning the interests of the countryman must be the first concern, and any attempt to reconstruct the country-side will fail if it does not take into account all the circumstances of his life. The planner's task is not done when the Office of Works has scheduled a row of old houses as an ancient monument, for this does not touch the general housing problem; nor when the local authority has prepared a housing scheme for a rural district, for this may serve the needs of a section only of the community; nor when the County War Agricultural Executive Committee has made a survey of farms to discover the inefficient amongst landlords and farmers and has provided them with advice and assistance, for the root of the trouble may lie in the unsuitability of estates, of farms, or of fields, as they are defined at present, for modern estate or farm management. Planning calls for a review of these and of many other matters, such as local government, transport, education, public utilities, health services, sport, recreation, and the rest. The English country-side affords the best of all settings for life and labour, and the problem of its planning and reconstruction is how to put within reach of the country dweller all the decencies, the amenities, and the opportunities of life, which are regarded nowadays as the normal inheritance of every townsman.

It is a hard fact that rural England, notwithstanding all its variety and beauty and the opportunities which it affords for employment in sunshine and fresh air such as few industrial workers know, lags far behind any well-administered industrial area in all that it can offer alike in economic advancement, in creature comforts, and in social amenities for its dwellers. Living conditions in any beautiful village compare most unfavourably with those on any municipal housing estate. Houses themselves are too often damp, dark, ill ventilated, and ill found. Piped water is almost unknown

in most cottages, and in hundreds of villages there are no supplies even to stand-pipes in the streets. It follows, of course, that internal sanitation and arrangements for sewage disposal are equally rare. Slops are emptied in the garden, baths are non-existent, and the outside privy-vault is universal. The same unfavourable contrast may be made in other public services—gas, electricity, scavenging, &c.

In economic opportunity, too, the country dweller finds himself in many ways at a disadvantage. His children may suffer from the handicap of inferior education. The one-room school, in which children of all ages from 3 to 11 are instructed by one schoolmistress and perhaps a pupil-teacher, is still to be found, and no amount of devotion on their part can overcome the difficulties of teaching in such conditions. Senior schools for older children involve journeys by road or rail, with attendant drawbacks which are accentuated for any who may be selected to proceed to higher education—all of them unknown to most children of any age from urban homes.

For the adolescent the comparison is still disadvantageous. Agriculture is the main outlet for the boys, and almost the only one in many places since the decline of the purely rural industries and the tendency towards centralization in most of the others. In agriculture there is no apprenticeship, no recognized need for systematic training. The boy drifts into it because there is little else to do, with a determination on his own part, very often fortified and reinforced by the advice and encouragement of his parents, to get out of it directly he is old enough to leave home and fend for himself. The girls are in no better case. Only rarely and in certain country districts does some local industry offer employment to girls and young women near their homes, and most of them, after short spells of housework in farm-houses, vicarages, &c., move away to the towns, where domestic service can be followed under easier conditions with better pay, and where many alternatives to it are on offer in shops and factories.

For adult workers employment in the country, except on the land, is limited. Public services, such as the county

police, the highways, the Post Office, and the railways recruit a few, while local tradesmen, small builders, quarry owners, blacksmiths, and the like create a small labour market. Many local industries which still carried on fairly generally within living memory—corn-mills, both wind and water, tanneries, maltings, rope-walks, wheelwrights' work, harness and saddlery, boot and shoe making, tailoring, and so forth—have vanished from most country places. Here and there some woodland industries remain, but, other than the small demand just mentioned, no alternative to farm work is to be found in most districts except by emigration from the rural environment.

As to farming itself, the position is peculiar, and the evolution of it, as a way of life and living for master and man, is important. It is just a hundred years since the agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws reached its height, and Peel's Government was shortly to take the step which did more, probably, to determine the economic future of the nation than any other measure in its history. Until that time the domination of national affairs by the landed classes had never effectively been challenged, and while this is not to say that, as a consequence, the rural community as a whole was prosperous, it may be doubted whether anything approaching the differences in the circumstances of life in town and country as they are disclosed to-day were then to be seen. On the contrary, contemporary writers both of history and of fiction give pictures of the social life of the times which suggest that differences, such as there were, favoured the rural worker. Mass poverty was general, of course, amongst all the working classes, social legislation still in its infancy, the study of public health and hygiene not yet begun, workers' associations to secure better conditions still partially under the ban of the law. In so far, however, as the countryman's life was lived in the open air instead of in factory or pit, his work was healthier, and the land afforded opportunities for subsidizing a sweated wage. Further, there can be no doubt that the village community derived something from a certain sense of responsibility for it manifest in the

employer classes, which rarely had any parallel in the life of the industrial towns. It was patronage at the best, of course, pauperization at the worst, and inadequate, uncertain, and capricious at all times. But the almshouses for the aged, the endowed parochial charities, the Christmas distributions from the big house, even the Lady Bountiful with her broth and petticoats for sick and needy—all of these made their contributions towards the amelioration of conditions of life on the land during the long years before the labourer's right to a living wage was conceded.[1]

As the century drew on the balance of advantage shifted. Factory Acts to prevent the ruthless exploitation of men, women, and children in factory and mine, the organization of labour in trade unions for self-protection and advancement, and the gradual evolution of a science of public health and social service, made life better, morally and materially, for the industrial workers. But the regulation of the hours and conditions of industrial work, the combination of workers to secure larger shares of the profits of their labour, the control of public health, including housing and all the public services, which were manifest more and more in the larger centres of population as the past century proceeded, had little counterpart throughout the length and breadth of rural England. The repeal of the Corn Laws had synchronized with the completion of the inclosure of the open fields, and thirty years of unexampled prosperity for landlords, farmers, and clergy had followed—prosperity, it should be noted, which was not shared by them with their men. The industrial population was increasing more rapidly than the imported food-supplies released by the repeal, and home agriculture had to feed it.

The inclosure of fields and commons and the intensification

[1] 'When I was manager of the Magdala works', a well-known motor magnate, turned farmer, once told an agricultural audience, 'if we had a man we didn't like, or one who didn't pull his weight, we paid him off, and we never saw him again. But I find you can't do that on the land. If you get rid of a man you don't want, you see him hanging about the village every time you go out, or his wife comes round and wants to see you, or the parson tells you their children haven't got enough to eat. You've got to carry the local population, win or lose, in the country.'

of food production called for new equipment for the land, and the prosperity of farming made its provision possible. In the eastern half of England, particularly, where the largest part of the nation's bread food was grown, landlords embarked upon a great programme of construction. On the newly inclosed commons, farm-houses, buildings and cottages were going up, as the reclamation of the land proceeded. On the old inclosed lands rising standards of comfort and of farming technique had to be met by the provision of better farm-houses and buildings. Throughout the great Midland plain and elsewhere, wherever the lack of a local building stone had necessitated the construction of farm workers' cottages of a light timber framing filled in with wattle and daub and roofed with straw thatch, these poor houses now gave place to new designs carried out in brick and tile. On the land itself, also, much was done. The art of under-draining had only recently been perfected, and tens of thousands of acres were now tile-drained, ditches were cut, and watercourses straightened and scoured.

Most of the farm-houses, cottages, and buildings of the Midlands, and in varying degrees those of the rest of England also, are less than a hundred years old; they were built during the period of the Golden Age of British farming, between 1840 and 1880. Since 1880, however, all active development has stopped, and fields, farms, and homesteads appear to-day practically as they were left when the great agricultural depression set in during the last two decades of Victoria's reign.

Now what are the implications of this position? If this equipment, as planned and provided for the practice of farming so many years ago, is still sufficient for farming to-day, the only possible conclusion is that there has been neither technical progress nor social change during that time; that the best farm practice to-day marks no advance on the standards of a hundred years ago; that neither science nor invention have made any contributions to rural life and industry; that great changes in the social and economic standards of the people have not affected the farmer's business.

But what are the facts? During the past sixty years farm practice has undergone a revolution. There have been great advances in knowledge of matters such as the breeding and feeding of crops and stock. The old cropping rotations, designed to make the farm self-sufficient in feeding-stuffs for live stock and in manure for crops, have given place to better and cheaper systems of producing food and maintaining fertility, as the range of imported feeding-stuffs and of artificial fertilizers expanded. Power machinery, limited then to the steam-engine, has shown immense development, particularly in association with the internal-combustion engine. The travelling milking-bail has shown how to reduce the costs of clean milk production, how to maintain the fertility of light land without sheepfold or dung-cart, and how many thousands of acres of rough grazings and of land now derelict might still be reclaimed for more intensive use. Finally, there has been a revolution in the conditions governing the employment of labour. The farm worker, unorganized and isolated, his labour sweated and no prospect but the workhouse for his old age, now enjoys a statutory minimum wage, regulated hours of labour, holidays with pay, besides, of course, National Health and Unemployment Insurance and the Old Age Pension. Farming itself is a dynamic industry, showing continuous change and evolution, but the units in which it is practised, and their equipment, remain substantially unaltered to-day at the point to which they had evolved some sixty years ago.

Consider what has been happening during the same time in urban areas. The past two generations have been periods of the greatest activity in social and industrial life—in slum clearance and the provision and equipment of houses for greater comfort and convenience; in the spread of public utilities and public services of many kinds; in the organization of education, public health, and social services. Pits have been electrified; factories have been built and equipped, and scrapped, rebuilt, and re-equipped as changing circumstances required. It would have been more difficult, obviously, for public authorities to undertake clearances of slum

houses from the villages, and to provide farms and cottages with water, gas, electricity, indoor sanitation, and so on, on the present local basis of public finance, than it was to provide these services in the towns. In the face of the long period of economic depression, too, which overtook the farming industry after the 'seventies and extinguished some 50 per cent. of the capital invested in the land, the reassembly of fields and farms in units better adapted to modern technical conditions, the scrapping and rebuilding of obsolete equipment, the maintenance of roads, fences, drains in conditions of efficiency may have been beyond the strength of private enterprise.

This difference between town and country in the rate of industrial and social progress in recent times has only to be realized, however, to indicate the field for reconstruction which awaits the country planner. The towns have had their failures, of course, as well as their successes, and only the pen of a Cobbett could find words to describe the pass to which uncontrolled development has brought too many of them. But in their industrial efficiency and their civic consciousness they set standards and provide examples which the rural reformer cannot disregard. Country problems, of course, are different, but there are common factors in the human needs and aspirations of town and country folk alike.

These, then, seem to be the problems of country planning. *First*, how can rural industrial life be reorganized—and farming in particular—so that it may give better returns both in goods and in services, while providing more opportunity and a higher standard of living to those engaged in it? *Second*, how can living conditions in the country be improved, particularly housing and the services of the house, so as to bring standards of comfort in rural areas more into conformity with those of the towns? *Third*, how can the handicap which the small scale of so many village communities imposes upon the organization of the churches, upon education, on all the welfare services and the help, spiritual, moral, and material, which the nation sets out to provide for the countryman and

his family, be removed? *Lastly*, given satisfactory answers to these questions, can anything be done to preserve the amenities of the country-side and the beauty of the rural scene, so that the destruction and the desecration arising from want of thought, from lack of taste, or from the pursuit of profit, which were spreading through the country on an ever-increasing scale in the years before the war, may be brought under control?

CHAPTER II

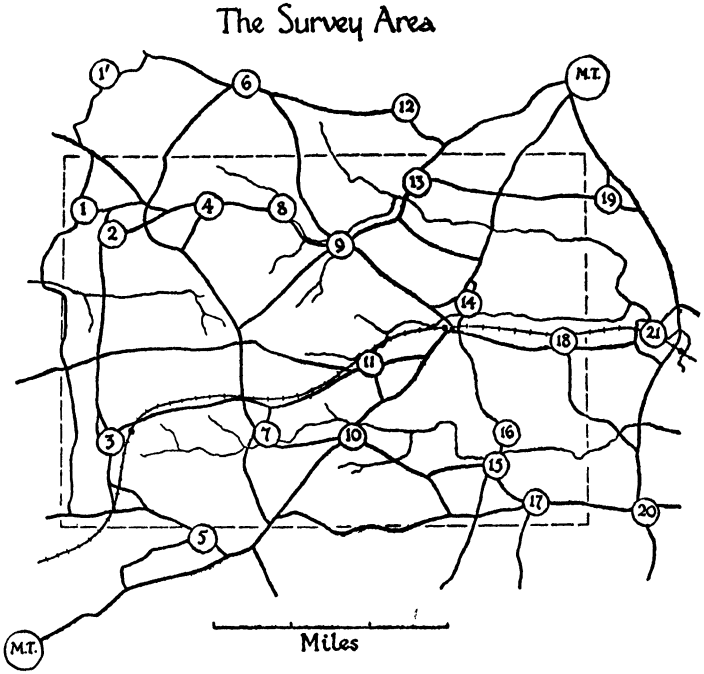
THE EXPERIMENTAL PLOT

SELECTION OF THE SURVEY AREA; THE TOPOGRAPHY; COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT; THE POPULATION; STANDARDS OF LIVING; SHOPPING FACILITIES.

SELECTION OF THE SURVEY AREA

IT is a far cry, still, to the time when the planning and reconstruction of the country-side will be going actively forward. At present the basic information upon which they should rest does not exist. Abstract examination and academic discussion of the problems have established certain principles. Further progress depends, now, upon transferring the work from the council chamber, the conference room, and the drawing-office to the village, the farm, and the field, to see what men, women, and children are doing, and to discover how far the conditions under which their lives are lived are a help or a hindrance to them. Only in this way can principles be confirmed or corrected, first, and then reformulated for translation into practice. The arguments against the one-room school, for example, can be stated and agreed in the Education Committee, but a decision to abolish all of them would involve consideration on the spot, in each case, of the reconstruction of buildings and of the restaffing which it would necessitate, or, alternatively, of the arrangements for transport of schoolchildren to neighbouring schools. A national scheme to bring water-supplies into every village would necessitate a survey of existing supplies and of all natural resources, such information not now being available. Other great problems, such as the conflict between private and community interests, the question of the distribution of the burden of the cost of reconstruction and the relations of local to imperial taxation which it raises, have still to be investigated. While these and so many more of the practical issues which are raised by the decision to plan still remain to be faced, it is obvious that the actual siting of the

experimental plot, of the area selected for a pilot survey of the physical, industrial, and social conditions of rural life as a preliminary to planned reconstruction, is unimportant. All the fundamental human needs are the same—housing, health services, education, and the amenities and oppor-



tunities of life. Places and areas will differ as to the nature and the extent of their own deficiencies, but this should not discount the value of generalizations from the study of a particular locality. Any district, mainly agricultural, in any part of the country, can serve as the raw material of research in the needs and in the methods of rural reconstruction.

The Topography

On this assumption it must be understood that the site

of the survey described in the following pages has no special significance, no particular bearing upon the problems of country planning. It was selected for its convenience for study and for other reasons quite unconnected with the objects in view. It forms part of a broad tract of country in a south-midland county, where the belt of the oolite, which gives rise farther south to the bold escarpment of the Cotswolds, is interrupted by pockets of the underlying lias, typical of the valleys running down it from the north and west.

The area covered by this site comprises some 24 square miles, or about 15,000 acres, being all that which is included within the borders of one 6 in. Ordnance Survey sheet. It lies comparatively high, for the most part between the 400-ft. and the 500-ft. levels, and rising to 600 ft. at places in the north and west where runs the watershed dividing Thames and Severn. It is here that the rivers and streams watering the area have their sources—the largest of them winding westward to meet the Avon in the Vale of Evesham, and smaller streams running eastward, rapidly and narrow at first, and then broadening out as they flow more gently through the lower country towards the Cherwell.

By its situation between two main lines of rail, and served itself only by a single line which crosses it to connect them, the area is comparatively remote. Nor has the advent of motor transport affected it very much, for only one main road traverses it. It includes nine parishes and parts of six others. There are three large villages, two on the eastern and one on the western boundaries, and between them are nine small ones, none being distant more than two miles from its nearest neighbour. The market foci of the area are two towns situated one to the north-east and the other to the south-west of it, and roughly equidistant from its centre at about seven miles.[1]

[1] The market towns of England are spaced, one from another, at intervals approximately of ten to fifteen miles—the distance which could be covered conveniently by horse transport. The coming of motor vehicles of all kinds has raised the practicable limit of travel for the conduct of a day's business to some thirty or forty miles, and we are witnessing the

Agriculture, of course, is the predominant industry, the only other of any account being ironstone mining. There are some stone pits, a small brewery, and a few—very few—small rural industries, such as hurdle-making, blacksmithing, &c. Here and there the streams have been harnessed in times past to supply power for milling, but most of the mills are now derelict or diverted from their original purposes to generate electricity for domestic use. Of the total area about 87 per cent. can be accounted for as farming land. The remainder consists of woodlands, allotments, parks, playing-fields, quarries, a golf course, a landing-ground, a branch railway, roads, and villages.

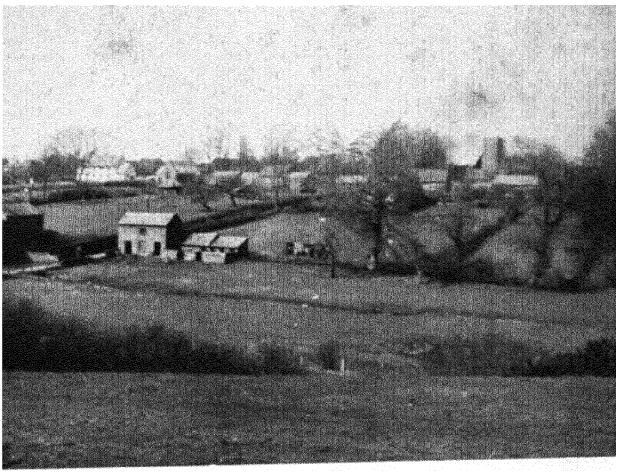
The soils are variable, being mainly medium and heavy loams in the south and east where they derive from the lias, while in the north and west the oolite has given rise to limestone and sandy soils.

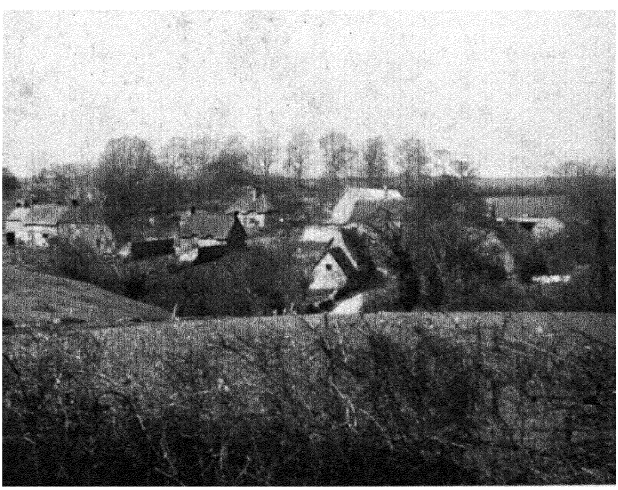
Climate and rainfall are those of the English Midlands. The western side of the area is subject to strong westerly winds by reason of its elevation and its proximity to the steep Cotswold escarpment. In general, however, the district forming the experimental plot for this economic and social survey is typical of much that is rural England. There is nothing strongly marked nor individual about its topography, its soils, or its agriculture; industrial expansion has only just begun to affect it. Its standards of housing and public services, of estate equipment, education, and social organizations are those of any part of the country where things change slowly, where the story of the people is the story of English husbandry and its dependent crafts and industries.

Communications and Transport

Only one main road crosses the Survey area, the one joining the two market towns on either side of it. It passes through two only of the villages. The rest are connected with it, with each other, and with roads and places outside the area by a network of secondary roads, the old parish roads,

expansion of market towns at such intervals and the decline of those intermediate to them. This is one of the problems of country planning.





TWO SMALL VILLAGES





VILLAGE STREETS

the layout of most of which is lost in antiquity. Many of them have their origins in the bridle roads, 'ways', and paths which took their course down the furlongs and along the headlands of the open fields, serving the joint purpose of access to the farmers' scattered holdings and of communication between village and village, as often appears from a comparison of existing roads with the trackways on a pre-inclosure map.

Nor is the area better served by the railway. A main line passes along its eastern boundary at a distance of about four miles, but to the north, west, and south of it there is none within some eight miles. A single line passes across the middle of the area from east to west, communicating with the market towns and linking it to the main lines on either side. Only two of the villages, Nos. 3 and 14, have stations on this line, and there is a halt at No. 18. There are four trains each way on week-days and none on Sundays.

It follows that the villages of the Survey area are dependent for transport, alike to the market centres and to main-line stations, very largely upon the bus services. These are organized mainly to give shopping facilities, and every village is served by not less than three buses on two days a week, the market-day and Saturday, while some of the larger ones and those better placed have up to a dozen services on these days. A few of the villages have no bus transport during the rest of the week or on Sundays, but most of them have services ranging from one to eight every day. The trouble is, of course, that most of the services originate outside the area, and it is said that the buses, most of them single-deckers, are often full before they reach it.

Farmers and others have their own cars, and some of the industrial workers who live in the villages are carried to and from the factory, outside one of the market towns at which they are engaged, in works buses. There are carriers who ply between the villages and the market towns.

The Population

It is common knowledge that the numbers of agricultural

workers have fallen steadily and heavily during the past two generations, and this is true, also, of the rural population as a whole. The conversion of ploughland to pasture, the decay of rural industries and of village tradesmen, the tendency to use more machinery and fewer men—these and other things have combined to reduce the demand for labour on the land and the opportunities for other employment in the countryside.

TABLE I

Changes in the Population of the Survey Area, 1881–1931

Civil parish no. on map	*1881*	*1891*	*1901*	*1911*	*1921*	*1931*	*Changes in 50 years*	
							Nos.	*%*
I. *The larger villages*								
3	1,232	1,265	1,386	1,349	1,236	1,153	− 79	..
14	1,538	1,340	1,340	1,335	1,384	1,080	−458	..
20	1,958	1,777	1,490	1,466	1,339	1,234	−724	..
Total	4,728	4,382	4,216	4,150	3,959	3,467	−1,261	−26
II. *The smaller villages*								
1	431	420	394	368	316	301	−130	..
2	267	276	255	265	297	332	+ 65	..
4	358	287	255	234	241	209	−149	..
5	416	387	310	292	308	194	−222	..
7	265	245	211	226	215	224	− 41	..
8 and 9	357	320	301	318	270	297	− 60	..
10	324	282	250	222	237	229	− 95	..
11	221	219	169	138	121	168	− 53	..
12	418	375	366	367	313	281	−137	..
13	158	164	159	132	144	158	..	..
15 and 16	378	397	286	316	263	239	−139	..
18	131	136	149	161	160	173	+ 42	..
Total	3,724	3,508	3,105	3,039	2,885	2,805	−919	−25
III. *All villages*	8,452	7,890	7,321	7,189	6,844	6,272	−2,180	−26
IV. *The administrative county*	144,908	143,753	137,124	136,436	132,579	129,082	−15,826	−11

The Survey area illustrates the general experience. With two exceptions all its village populations have declined steadily, the fall amounting to about 25 per cent. in the aggregate, during the fifty years, 1881–1931. Population in

the administrative county in which the area is situated fell also during the same period, but not so severely, the growth of industrialism in some parts and of residential housing in others having offset some of the rural decline. This fall, as it appears from the accompanying figure, has been fairly constant throughout the period. The gradual recovery of agricultural prices in the early years of this century, and the stimulus of the first German war, caused some check to the decline, but it resumed its former rate when the post-war slump set in. To-day, probably, there are fewer people living and working in the Survey area than at any time within the past 100 years.

The problem of the economic and social organization of these small communities is the most difficult, perhaps, of any that will confront the country planner, and it is discussed in the general summary at the end of this report. In the meantime an analysis of the occupations of the people now living in ten of them, two large and eight small, may throw a little light on the position.

Agriculture is the largest single occupation, but it accounts for less than 31 per cent. of the occupied population. The number of farmers and farmers' relatives together exceeds that of the farm workers, and this reflects the prevalence of small family-farms. Factory workers, male and female, account for 19 per cent., and business and professional workers for about 10 per cent., of the total, and details of these and other occupations may be seen in the accompanying table, covering ten parishes of the area.

The distance of the home from the place of work is of some importance, as bearing upon the housing problem if there is to be any planned decentralization of industry in the future. Should factory workers be housed in new towns adjoining their work, or should they be absorbed in existing village communities within a convenient radius? An analysis of the 1,221 workers, male and female, showed that nearly 800 of them (64 per cent.) live within three miles of their work, nearly 300 (23 per cent.) live within five miles, about 100 (9 per cent.) have to go between five and ten miles, while

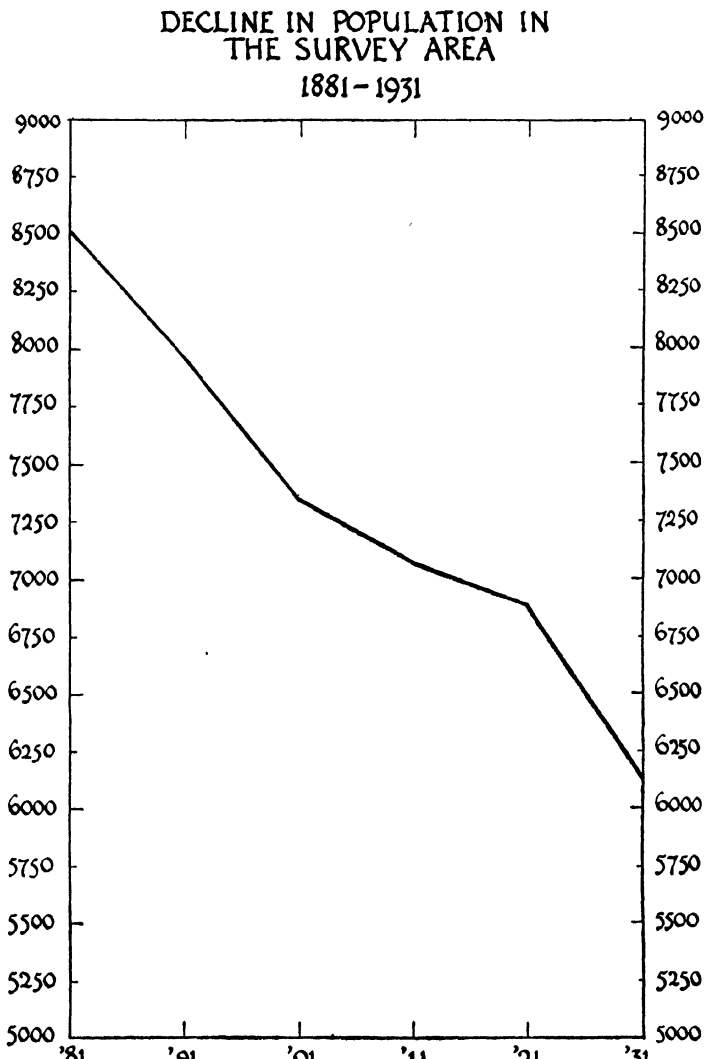

DECLINE IN POPULATION IN
THE SURVEY AREA
1881 – 1931
9000
8750
8500
8250
8000
7750
7500
7250
7000
6750
6500
6250
6000
5750
5500
5250
5000
'81
'91
'01
'11
'21
'31

TABLE II

The Distribution of Occupations in Ten Villages of the Survey Area

Main occupation	*No.*	*Percentage of those 'gainfully' occupied*
Farmers and smallholders: 107 working farmers, 57 farmers' relatives, 4 smallholders	168	13·7
Agricultural workers[1]	127	10·4
Ancillary agricultural occupations: 37 gardeners, 4 casual agricultural labourers, 8 tractor drivers, 5 thatchers, 3 blacksmiths. 2 *each*: farm bailiffs, tractor repair labourers, hay and straw merchants, hay tiers. 1 *each*: cattle food distributor, corn merchant's assistant, estate agent, farm carpenter, landowner, miller, mole-catcher, motor plough driver, saddler, seedsman's traveller, Thames Conservancy employee, threshing gang proprietor, tractor contractor, tractor contractor's foreman, W.A.E.C. officer	80	6·6
Total: Agricultural	375	30·7
Factory workers: 149 male, 83 female	232	19·0
Distributive trades	105	8·6
Building trades (including 18 carpenters)	68	5·5
Transport workers	38	3·1
Public utility workers: 24 postal service, 14 roadmen, 5 electric power co. employees	43	3·5
Domestic servants	90	7·4
Professional workers: 31 schoolmistresses, 31 office workers, 15 nurses, 14 schoolmasters, 8 clergy, 5 civil servants, 4 business men, 3 policemen, 2 insurance co. agents. 1 *each*: rent collector, drill sergeant, University scientist	116	9·5
Others: 47 ironstone workers, 44 aerodrome labourers, 17 general labourers, 13 brewery employees, 7 cobblers, 6 'odd-jobs-men', 6 timber merchant's labourers, 3 golf-course employees, 2 hairdressers' assistants, 2 members of the Observer Corps. 1 *each*: stone-quarry proprietor, stone-quarry labourer, lime-pit labourer, sand-pit labourer, wig-maker, sexton, member of the N.F.S.	154	12·7
Total: Non-agricultural	846	69·3
Total: Gainfully Occupied	1,221	100·0
Housewives	816	..
Retired persons	359	..
Children	659	..
TOTAL RESIDENT POPULATION	3,055	..
Absent in H.M. Forces	182	..

[1] Including 10 prisoners-of-war.

nearly 50 of them (4 per cent.) travel daily more than ten miles to work.

The principal employer of non-agricultural workers is a big factory outside the market town. The map on page 276 shows the numbers of workers from each village who are employed there.

There has been some reduction in the total of agricultural employment during the war. Farming being a reserved occupation, its contribution to the Forces has been relatively small, but factories and aerodromes have taken their toll. Losses have been partially replaced in various ways, and the war-time balance sheet appears as follows:

Agriculture's War-time Labour Balance Sheet

Dr.		*Cr.*	
Gained from:		*Lost to*:	
Schools	2	Forces	20
Housewives	5	Factories	21
Distributive Trades	1	Aerodrome	8
Other occupations	1	Ironstone	3
No occupation	2	Other occupations	1
	11		
Prisoners of war	10		
	21		
Balance, being net loss	32		
	53		53

STANDARDS OF LIVING

All proposals for the improvement of standards of living depend in the last resort upon the real incomes of the workers. There have been very few investigations of recent years of family budgets of country folk, and these relate entirely to the pre-war period. It was beyond the scope of this Survey to organize a thorough investigation in the area, but with the assistance of members of Women's Institutes, fifty-three housewives were found who were willing to supply information about their household expenditure.

There was no attempt to sample the whole area, and the

inquiry was restricted to three of the smaller villages with no big industry other than agriculture, and two of the larger ones, one of which includes workers in a neighbouring factory while the other is dependent upon the ironstone quarries for the bulk of local employment, direct and indirect. The inquiry followed the usual form of a list of questions and account books, suppplemented by a few visits, and ultimately forty-five usable budgets were obtained. These were not enough, obviously, to admit of much classification, but they were split into six occupational groups: A. agricultural workers; B. farmers; C. smallholders; D. industrial workers; E. professional workers (comprising three elementary school teachers, a secondary schoolmaster, and a policeman); F. retired persons. The resultant groups include from 3 to 18

TABLE III

Constitution, Income, and Expenditure of Forty-five Families

Occupation of head of household	A *Agricultural worker*	B *Farmer*	C *Smallholder*	D *Industrial worker*	E *Professional worker*	F *Retired*
No. of households	11	4	4	18	5	3
	Nos.	*Nos.*	*Nos.*	*Nos.*	*Nos.*	*Nos.*
Average ages						
Over 21 . .	2·27	2·50	2·00	1·94	2·40	2·00
Under 21 . .	0·63	1·25	1·00	1·78	1·40	..
Average family .	2·90	3·75	3·00	3·72	3·80	2·00
Add Lodgers .	0·63	0·25	0·25	0·51	..	0·67
Total family and lodgers . .	3·53	4·00	3·25	4·23	3·80	2·67
Equivalent to adult males . .	*2·99*	*3·56*	*2·78*	*3·24*	*3·21*	*2·37*
	s. d.	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*
Average total weekly income . .	86 8	*	*	104 11	151 0	42 6
Average total weekly expenditure .	81 1	87 6½	56 10½	92 2	149 11½	67 7½
Average per adult male . .	*27 1*	*24 5*	*20 2*	*28 5*	*46 9*	*28 3*

* Not recorded.

households—samples so small as to demand care in their interpretation, but the figures have been tabulated and they serve to suggest where the emphasis may be expected in expenditure at various income levels. The expenditure was recorded in the month of July 1943.

There were lodgers in all the groups except that of professional worker, and including them, the households correspond exactly to the national average of 3·79 for agricultural workers.[1]

Total income ranged from 17*s.* 9*d.* per adult per week amongst the retired persons, to 47*s.* amongst the professional class. Weekly records of farmers' and smallholders' incomes were not available, these being calculable only at the end of the farming year. Total expenditure varied very closely with total income, the exception being the retired persons, who spent some 50 per cent. more, and it must be assumed that they were anticipating income or drawing upon savings. All the groups were able to supplement their food purchases by produce of many kinds from their gardens or farms. This was valued at country prices, and it represented weekly additions to the food consumed ranging from 1*s.* 8*d.* per adult in the retired persons' households to 4*s.* 3*d.* amongst the farmers'. For the purposes of budget calculations, too, the farmers and smallholders live free of house-rent and rates, these items being aggregated with the rents of their agricultural land.

In the next table the total weekly expenditure by each occupational group is analysed under the following headings: I. Food; II. House and Services; III. Medical, Insurance, and Clubs; IV. Amenities.

Food. There is not much difference between the groups in their expenditure upon food, agreement being due in part, no doubt, to rationing, for there was no evidence that ration allocations were not fully taken up. Extra rations available—sugar for jam, cheese, meat pies—were drawn by those entitled to them, and the wives of the farmers and smallholders were unanimous that their husbands ought to be on the same

[1] Figure kindly supplied by Professor A. L. Bowley.

TABLE IV

Analysis of Total Weekly Expenditure

	A	B	C	D	E	F
	s. d.	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*	*s. d.*
I. *Food*						
Purchased	32 8½	33 9½	27 9	39 10½	37 1½	24 0
Home-grown, valued at	6 4	15 0½	14 1½	4 7½	5 9	4 5
Total Food	39 0½	48 10	41 10½	44 6	42 10½	28 5
Average per adult male	*13 1*	*13 8½*	*15 0½*	*13 9*	*13 4½*	*12 2½*
II. *House and services*						
Rent and rates	4 6	..	..	8 4	9 9½	8 10
Fuel and light	6 11½	9 11	6 6½	7 0	4 11	11 9
Clothing	14 6	1 9	6	7 9½	21 6	1 11
Laundry and domestic help	..	5 0	6 0	4	5 1½	..
Sundries	3 2½	2 6½	2 0½	5 10½	38 9½	5 4½
Total House, &c.	29 2	19 2½	15 1	29 4	80 1½	27 10½
Average per adult male	*10 0*	*5 4*	*5 5*	*8 11*	*24 11*	*11 5*
III. *Medical, insurance, and clubs*						
Medical services and medicines	11	10	9	3 10	2 10½	9
Medical and hospital insurance	1 7½	3 4	..	1 1	1	6
Life and endowment insurance	4 6½	..	2 0	2 6½	1 11	1 8
Clubs and trade union subs.	6½	4 3	2 3	1 5	..	..
Charities	7½	1 9	1 4½	10½	..	8½
Total Medical, &c.	8 3	10 2	6 4½	9 9	4 10½	3 7½
Average per adult male	*2 8*	*2 10*	*2 3*	*2 9*	*1 3*	*1 3*
IV. *Amenities*						
Drink and tobacco	7 3	12 3	3 7	7 11	8 4	6 5
Travelling	1 5	4 4	1 6	2 9	7 11	7
Entertainment, papers, books, &c.	2 3	7 9½	2 7	2 6½	11 7½	4 7
Total Amenities	10 11	24 4½	7 8	13 2½	27 10½	11 7
Average per adult male	*3 4*	*6 9*	*2 6*	*4 0*	*8 5*	*4 7*

footing as the farm workers for the extra cheese allocation. These two classes, however, appear to be more able to supplement their rations from their own resources than the others.

House and Services. It is clear that the agricultural worker has a cash advantage over the other groups in his payments for rent and rates. It will be interesting to see whether this will continue when his wages reach more of a parity with those of industrial workers. The glaring discrepancies between the groups in their expenditure on some of the other items is due to special outlays by one or two households. The heavy payment for 'Sundries' by the professional workers' group, for example, was explained by the purchase of prams by two families and of a bookcase by a third. The high charge for 'Laundry and domestic help' in the smallholders' group is due entirely to payments by one family in which the wife is professionally engaged outside the home.

Medical, Insurance, and Clubs. It is not possible usefully to comment on these expenses.

Amenities. Money spent upon the luxuries and semi-luxuries of life seems to be determined, apart from the amount of total income, by the occupation. Thus, the farmer can smoke on the job and can get away from it, and so it appears that his expenditure on drink, tobacco, and travelling is more, proportionately, than that of the other groups. The professional class, represented as it is in this inquiry so largely by teachers, has more leisure and more inclination for reading, and its expenditure upon books and entertainments is proportionately high. The smallholders' group, too, reflects the long hours of work and the low cash standard which are commonly associated with their calling, in the economies which must be practised in any amenity expenditure.

Further generalizations would be inadmissible on the volume of evidence provided by this inquiry. It points the method, however, and enough has been done to show that, given more time, it could have been extended to provide a broader sample.

Shopping Facilities

'Shopping centres' are mostly to seek in the Survey area. The three larger villages are fairly well equipped with the usual food shops, except fishmongers, and there is a sprinkling of other businesses—drapers', boot-repairers', tailors', watchmakers', hardware, and cycles and radio.

In the smaller villages the housewife's opportunities are more limited. Nearly all of them have a general shop—sometimes connected with the Post Office—and some have more than one. There are few butchers, and hardly more bakers, and the people are dependent upon the service of travelling tradesmen and upon expeditions to the market town for many of their requisites.

Doubtless this is as it always has been in greater or in less degree. In times not so long past the dwellers in the small villages and scattered homes were more self-reliant than they are to-day. The rounded bread-ovens, thatched or stone-slated, which form such pleasant features of every old house and cottage in the Survey area, recall the time when every woman baked for her family. Pig-keeping and bacon-curing, clothes-making and boot-repairing, gardening and gleaning, all of these things made the country-folk more independent of the shops than they are to-day, but the market towns were always there to supply such other needs as their means could satisfy. That, of course, was how the towns came to be, and with the introduction of cheap and rapid transport they have seized the opportunity to extend their services by taking standard goods—bread, groceries, meat, &c.—out to the villages, and by organizing transport—cheap railway fares and special buses on market-days—to bring the villagers into the towns to make their own selections of other goods.

This, of course, is as it should be. It reduces the housewife's toil, extends her choice, and relieves the monotony of which she may sometimes be conscious in her daily round.[1]

[1] In her book *Lark Rise* Flora Thompson has described the daily life of country folk in a hamlet not far from the Survey area, in the 1880's. The story brings out the isolation and self-dependence of village life sixty years ago.

In the Survey area both of these methods of marketing are apparent. An enterprising co-operative and industrial society has set itself to organize the delivery of goods to all the villages within a ten-mile radius of the market town, either through branch stores at convenient sub-centres, of which there is one in each of the three larger villages in the area, or direct from head-quarters. Every member in the area can depend in peace-time upon a daily van delivery, and upon a visit three times a week from the travelling meat shop. In war-time there is a daily delivery of milk and bread and a fortnightly delivery of all other goods. A full service is offered, which includes, even in war time, groceries, milk, meat, bread, coal, oil, hardware and other household equipment, newspapers, and the services of carpenters and bricklayers. Savings facilities are offered to members, and there is, of course, the potent attraction of the 'divvy'.

Competitors of the Co-operative and Industrial Society are the other large stores in the market town and the general shops in the villages. It is said that owing to reduced delivery services since the war, many of those who used to shop away register now, for rationed goods, with the village shopkeepers.

For shoppers travelling to the market town the special bus services have been noted already, and other special arrangements for the convenience of country customers include an extension of the hours of business in many of the shops on market-day.

CHAPTER III

FARMS AND FARMING

SOILS; TYPES OF FARMING; THE STRUCTURE OF FARMS AND FIELDS; FARMS AND SOILS; FIELDS.

As noted already rather more than 86 per cent. of the land of the Survey area is farming land. Most of it was inclosed about the beginning of last century, and there is ocular evidence that, except for one or two sandy heaths and some wet places in the valleys, the whole of the area has been under the plough at one time or another. Here and there, on the stronger soils, very high-backed lands and headlands heaped with the cleanings of old mouldboards are still sharply defined under their protecting grass covering, and they suggest an early reversion to grass husbandry following the collapse of corn prices after the Napoleonic Wars. Arthur Young visited the locality on one of his tours, and it is interesting to recall his suggestion that the time had come when advantage should be taken of the allotment and inclosure of the common grazings to bring them under the plough, and to rest some of the old ploughlands for a while, in grass. History is repeating itself to-day.

SOILS

The soils of the area have been studied and classified in great detail. For the purposes of this Survey the various types have been grouped into four main kinds, each one of which is sufficiently uniform for farming practice and for convenience of description, although in fact it comprises several minor variations. (See Map, *Surface soils and roads.*)

Sands. Sandy soils occur capping some of the high ground; they are light, hungry, inclined to sourness, and they have lost much of their 'body' through erosion. Under the plough these soils are always short of humus and plant food, while under grass they grow only thin, upland herbage of little value.

Limestone. This gives rise to light, brashy soils with a

SURFACE SOILS AND ROADS



good lime content. They are easy to work, well drained, and particularly suitable for hurdling sheep.

Ironstone Loams. These are the red lands which are so characteristic of some parts of the Midlands. Arthur Young describes them as being 'uncommonly good'. They are easily worked and make very fine corn lands, always with the proviso that in this area the crops grown upon them will not stand drought. Farmers say that they want rain once a fortnight.

Heavy Loams and Clays. Like the last named these are good soils, and though less suited to the plough, they make very good grassland. In the area of the Survey, however, there is very little really strong land.

Even when the soils are thus simplified, their diffusion over the area is very complex, and it is hardly possible anywhere to travel so far as a mile across country on the same soil. There is one large block of sand about two miles by one, and another which is about one mile square. The limestone occurs in three narrow and irregular strips. There are three large areas of the ironstone loam, each about one mile across at its widest, but the heavier loams and clays are widely interspersed among the three other kinds of soil. Areas predominantly of one soil are frequently interrupted by small outcrops of the others. In all this the Survey area is no exception, for this mosaic of surface soils is manifest generally throughout the country.

Types of Farming

With the exception of the poorest sands, most of the soils in the area are very good corn-growing lands. Farming before the end of last century seems to have followed, for the most part, a five-course rotation with three corn crops. Wheat and oats were the principal grains; bulky crops of barley could be grown, but it was rarely a quality sample and most of it was fit only for grinding. Hurdled sheep on the big breadths of roots, and yarded bullocks in the big straw-yards, were the live stock of the system, and the animals served to maintain the soil fertility. Most of the area was

unsuited to breeding flocks, this being attributed locally to lack of lime in the soil. Certainly the few farms on which the limestone comes near the surface have always been sought after by neighbouring farmers as places on which to run lambs. Some of the stronger land was bare fallowed instead of carrying root crops for sheep. Calves were raised, and there was some butter production for the market.

This system was sound enough in its day. The farms were largely self-sufficient, the live stock being kept mainly on home-grown foods. The sheepfold and the dung-cart maintained soil fertility. The large areas of roots and the occasional bare fallows kept the land clean. Labour was cheap and plentiful. This sort of farming, however, could not survive the great economic changes of the last few decades. Falling corn prices and rising wages wiped out profits, and nothing so sharply defined, which would conserve the resources of the soil so well and employ so much labour, seems to have established itself in its place, even after a generation or more of masters and men has passed. But while a tribute is due to the old, self-contained husbandry, it must be remembered that in its very self-sufficiency it cut itself off ultimately from the advantages of cheap feeding-stuffs and fertilizers, and that much of its financial success was owed to sweated labour.[1] The changes which have been forced upon the area are well illustrated by one farm of about 1,100 acres which, within living memory, employed more than 50 men and carried a large flock of breeding ewes. This farm to-day, split into three holdings, provides work for no more than 12 men, and it has lost touch almost entirely with the Golden Hoof.

The reconstruction of the farming system of the Survey area which the agricultural depression of the 'eighties and 'nineties necessitated, might have been based on the motto 'Go slow'. Clearly there was nothing to be gained by forcing the pace of the old arable farming system. As Sir John Lawes put it, high farming was no remedy for low prices, and when

[1] When Arthur Young surveyed the county in 1808 the farm worker's wage was 6*s*. a week, and a hundred years later it was no more than 12*s*.

you were losing money on what you produced there was no advantage in selling a quantity. The most general response to changing conditions here, as elsewhere, was to reduce corn production during any time of low prices, and to put more and more of the ploughlands down to grass; this continued right up to the outbreak of war. By contrast, there were a few men, here and there, who found ways of carrying on, such as Samuel Farmer in Wiltshire, George Baylis in Berkshire, John Prout in Hertfordshire, and, of course, all the Scottish farmers from Aberdeenshire to the Border. The generality of farmers, however, sought salvation in the reduction of the cultivated land by grassing it down and in the reduction of the labour force, and so it was in the Survey area.

Hurdle flocks have been reduced, with serious consequences to the arable land in the lighter parts. Only a few of the more progressive farmers have turned to artificials—never used in the old days except for superphosphate applied to roots—or to clover, mustard, or rape ploughed in, to do the work once done by sheep and bullocks. The only men who fold sheep to-day are those with a son or two on the farm, for paid men will not work the long hours, and the produce of their labour would not pay their wages even though they would. It is much the same story of bullock fattening, once an integral part of the arable farming system, for the low prices of beef and the scarcity of the right kind of labour have virtually put an end to it. Nor is it only the shortage of labour, but also its cost. Like many other parts of England, the Survey area is revealed as being almost devoid of adequate water-supplies for its farms and fields. In summer time many farmers would have a man employed full time with the water-cart, hauling water to bullocks on waterless pastures day after day. Even in winter some had to cart water to their yarded bullocks, a cost which could not be contemplated to-day. As a consequence yards have become dilapidated, gradually, through disuse. Fences are down, sheds are ruinous, and even where there is a well from which the stock was once watered, the top is decayed and fallen in, or the pump is beyond repair.

The most general response, then, to changing economic

conditions up to 1939 was to put land down to grass. This was associated with an increase in milk production here as in other districts, and it was facilitated by the steady development of road transport which was going on at the same time. The development of dairying was, indeed, the natural and proper resort of farmers. Beaten by the prices of corn in the open world-market, they turned from plough farming to grass farming and produced milk for the home market, protected naturally from overseas competition by the perishability of the commodity. The opening of a depot by one of the big milk-distributing firms in the market town, and a milk-collection service organized in connexion with it after the war of 1914–18, were additional incentives, but unfortunately there were limiting factors, of which water-supplies and buildings were the more important. The provision of water for the farms in this area, as over the country generally, was entirely fortuitous. On some farms springs had been tapped or wells sunk to supply the buildings. On some, streams and ponds sufficed to water the pastures. On very few was there cowshed accommodation conforming to the standards rightly required by the local sanitary authorities. These holdings had been equipped by the landowners for corn and meat production, and, at a time when rents had fallen, a fresh capital outlay on the provision of water and of milking-sheds for a new system of farming was often beyond their means.

A good many farmers, unable for these reasons to take up dairying, turned to stock-raising and to the grass breeds of sheep, with the consequence that, except on those holdings where the use of artificials was understood and where the farmer and his family could provide most of the labour, such ploughlands as remained showed considerable deterioration from their former high state of fertility, owing to the want of the sheepfold and of farmyard manure.

This, then, is the background against which the general layout of the land for farming in the Survey area has to be examined. A prosperous, self-contained system of corn and meat production had broken down by the beginning of the century, and grass farming of one kind or another had

taken its place. The old arable system flickered into a semblance of life once more during the war of 1914–18 and the year or two which followed, only to drop back again in the very early 'twenties. A few men who were able to embark upon the growing dairying industry were carrying on, thereafter, with moderate financial success and the maintenance of a fair standard of output from their land. Others, unable to exploit this opportunity for lack of the necessary equipment or by their own inadaptability, drifted on under semi-ranching conditions with the production of grass sheep and a few dry stock. Many of them would have found it difficult, probably, to survive more than another few years under pre-war conditions.

The Structure of Farms and Fields

With these facts in mind the structure of the farms and fields of the Survey area can now be examined to find out, if possible, whether these are determined by the dictates of physical or economic conditions, or what other circumstances may account for their particular shapes and sizes. Has the nature of the soil, for example, been the overriding influence, or is it the type of farming which has influenced present arrangements? Or again, how far has the farmer's mechanical equipment set optimum limits to the sizes of his fields and farms? Failing all these explanations, how can the present layout of the land be accounted for, and can its continuance be justified?

The Sizes and Shapes of the Farms. The Survey area shows the preponderance of small farms, a preponderance which is general throughout the country. Nearly one-half of the area (46 per cent.) is occupied by holdings of less than 150 acres. There are 123 farms in all, and three-quarters of them are these small to medium-sized units. There are no very large farms, the biggest being 525 acres; only 5 per cent. of the total number are over 300 acres, and the average size of farms for the whole area is 109 acres. The predominance of the medium-sized farm is clearly brought out in the following table:

TABLE V

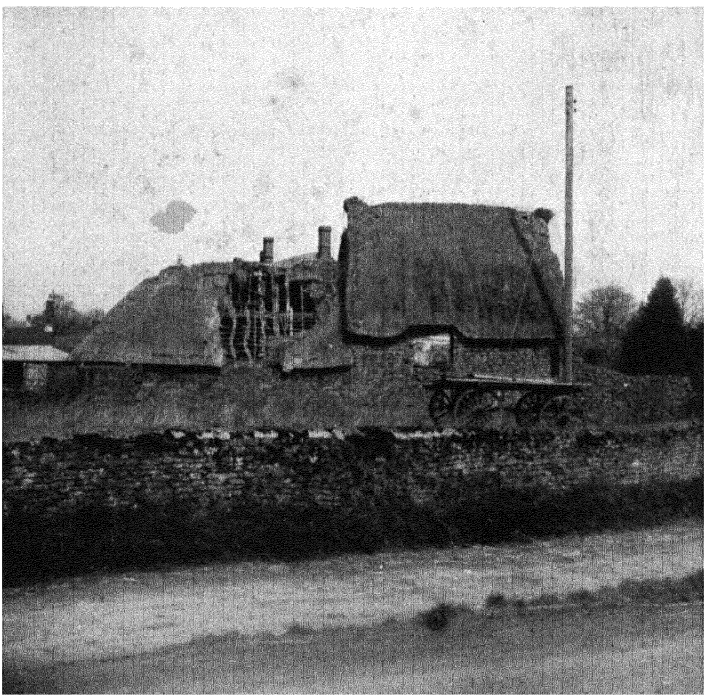
Size Groups of Farms

Acreage	*No. of farms*		*Percentage of area*	
5 to 50 acres	44	..	7·3	..
50 to 100 ,, ...	23	..	12·2	..
Farms between 5 and 100 acres .	..	67	..	19·5
100 to 150 acres	28	..	27·1	..
150 to 300 ,, ...	22	..	34·9	..
Farms between 100 and 300 acres .	..	50	..	62
Farms exceeding 300 acres . .	6	6	18·5	18·5
	123	123	100	100

Six farmers in farms exceeding 300 acres hold about as much land as sixty-seven farmers in farms of less than 100 acres, but the predominant type is the man farming in the middle group, between 100 and 300 acres. Numerically these are almost as important as the smallholders, and they occupy more than three times as much land as either the larger or the smaller farmers.

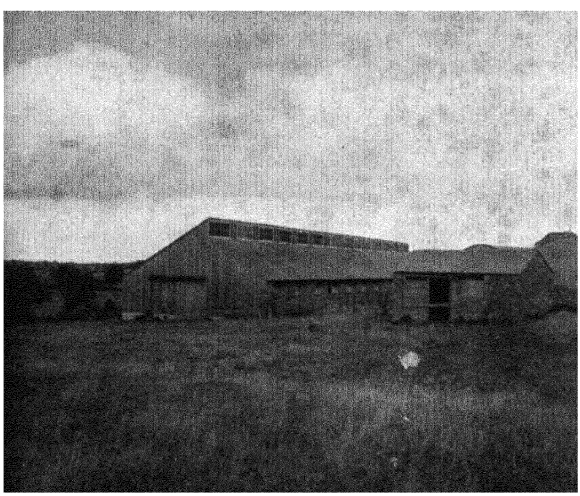
Large and small farms are intermixed. No part of the area is characterized by one or the other.

A twofold explanation is offered for the rarity of large farms exceeding 300 acres. There has been little flexibility in the size of the farmer's holding since the inclosure of the open fields. A successful man can expand his business only by taking on a nearby holding, or, less often, by taking odd fields which may occur, here and there, unequipped as separate holdings. Or a farmer with sons who take kindly to farming may add one or two holdings to his business, and the boys will hive off into them when they want to marry and be independent. Thus the parent business contracts to its original size. Only in rare instances does the farmer take his sons into partnership and continue in an expanding business, and no example of such organization has been found in the Survey area. Where the farm is increased by the



DERELICT FARM BUILDINGS





FARM BUILDINGS
Above: Old steading. *Below*: Modern pig house

addition of odd parcels of land, here and there, the mere difficulty of managing the awkwardly arranged holding imposes a limit on indefinite expansion.

In this connexion a feature of the farms in the Survey area, and one which is common to many parts of the country, is the number which do not lie compact in ring fences. In the Survey area more than 25 per cent. lie in two, three, and even up to six detached blocks.

TABLE VI

Farms Ring-fenced or Scattered

	No.	*Per cent. of total no.*	*Range of size*
			Acres
Ring-fenced farms . .	90	73	5–513
Farms in 2 blocks . .	21	17	16–300
Farms in 3 blocks . .	9	7	94–525
Farms in 5 blocks . .	2	2	38–127
Farms in 6 blocks . .	1	1	139
	123	100	..

The Convenience of the Layout. The problems which this scattering presents may best be considered in connexion with a discussion of the general layout of the farms for convenience of working, though no two persons given the task of classifying the farms on this basis would produce exactly the same result, for too many of the issues depend upon individual judgement.

In the first place, it may be assumed that it is not until a farm is larger than about 50 acres that its layout has much effect upon its convenience. If, for example, a 50-acre farm were to consist entirely of fields only 10 chains wide placed end to end, the distance from one end of the farm to the other would be not much more than half a mile. Farms under 50 acres, therefore, may be neglected. Secondly, most of the farms which lie in scattered parcels consist of one main block, with one or more very much smaller outliers. Thus, it may be assumed that apart from the special problems which arise because a farm is scattered, any conclusions reached from a

study of the ring-fenced farms will be applicable also to the area as a whole. For the present, therefore, the scattered farms may also be omitted.

Although there may be occasional exceptions, it is a fair generalization to say that the longer and narrower a farm



FIG. 1.

becomes the less convenient it is to work.[1] In this area something like two farms in three are reasonably well proportioned, only six of the total of 123 being excessively long and narrow. This does not mean, however, that all, or even most, of them are conveniently laid out. Those which can so be described number only seventeen, and they range in size from 55 to 513 acres, the main characteristics which they have in common being that they are compact, well served by roads, and their buildings are suitably sited (Fig. 1). Even so, a few awkward features appear in some of them. One has an occupation road a quarter of a mile in length. Another has no

[1] One exception is the farm of this kind bordered by a road running the length of one of its longer sides. None of the very long farms in the area adjoins such a road.

farm-house, the farmer living in a village four miles away. A third is cut into by a large narrow field which does not go with the holding.

The next group of farms in order of convenience comprises those where the general layout is good, but where considerable inconvenience is caused by poor access. There are

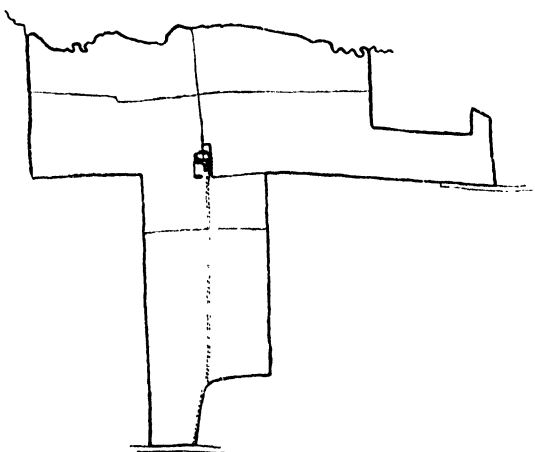


FIG. 2.

eleven of them. The far corner of one of these farms consists of steep grass slopes on clay. Given a satisfactory water-supply, the obvious place for the buildings would be central to the arable land, near the two roads that skirt it. Instead, they are on the edge of the clay, 700 yards from a road. Another of the farms would lose nothing by having the buildings in a village which it adjoins, instead of on the opposite side of the holding, half a mile along a poor farm-track. The shape of another farm gives rise to a long occupation road which would be avoided if the farm were laid out in a square (Fig. 2). The other farms in this group, some quite compact, are all in their different ways very inconvenient to reach.

Next comes a group of ten farms, suffering from a variety of defects of layout, not so seriously, however, that some reasonably easy adjustments would not make them into workable units. Most of them include blocks of land which, for one reason or another, are remote and inaccessible. Five suffer either from having long narrow strips of land protruding from one corner or from having similar strips in-

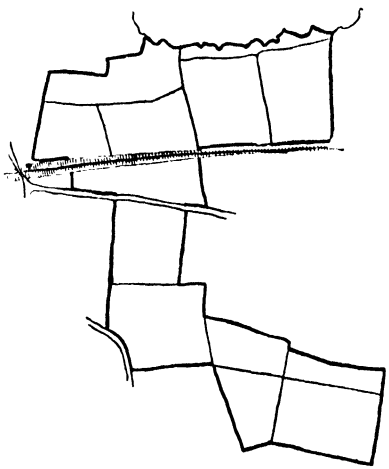


FIG. 3.

truding from adjoining farms. All of them would be greatly improved by being rounded off or squared up.

Finally, there are fourteen farms where the inconvenience of layout is such that nothing short of complete reshaping would make them workable. Some are needlessly cut up, or cut into, by intervening fields in other occupation (Fig. 3), and most of them are long and narrow, so that many of the fields are hard to reach. As already noticed, there are six farms which are excessively elongated. Two of them touch roads only at one end. Three others stretch between two roads, so that their far ends must be reached either by circuitous journeys or along great lengths of farm-track (Fig. 4).

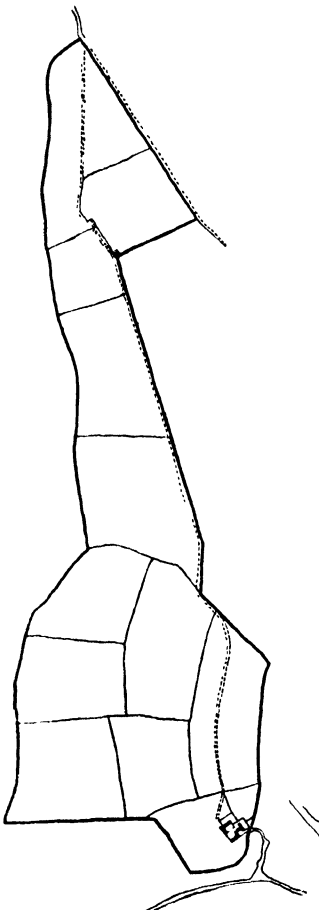


FIG. 4.



FIG. 5.

On four of them the farm-houses and buildings are at one end of the farm, being either in or handy to a village, thus avoiding long occupation roads, which is their only convenience. On a fifth the buildings are central, but a quarter of a mile from a

road. The sixth has been built up by adding field to field, and now lies in the form of an irregular L, with a road along one branch and across the other (Fig. 5). The buildings are about equidistant from the two ends of the farm, but they are 400 yards from a road.

The position is summarized in Table VII.

TABLE VII

Convenience of Farm Layout

	No. of farms	*Per cent. of total no.*	*Range of size*
			Acres
1. Farms with convenient layout	17	33	55–513
2. Farms with convenient layout but poor access	11	21	54–173
3. Farms inconvenient, but capable of improvement without great alteration	10	19	54–396
4. Farms inconvenient, and incapable of much improvement without drastic change	14	27	55–313

Farms of all sizes are found in each group. As already indicated, some small farms are workable only because they are small; others are very inconvenient in spite of being small. On the other hand, some larger farms are inconvenient because they tend to straggle, while others, owing to their size, tend to gain access to roads at several points and thus to be relatively easy to work.

On the assumption that the method of classification used in Table VII groups the farms roughly in order of convenience, the relationships between the sizes of farms and their convenience is worth noting.

It would seem that, up to a point, a large farm runs a greater risk of being inconvenient than does a small one, but that when the extremes of inconvenience are reached, the small farms again predominate. This would bear out the obvious conclusion that although a small farm is less likely to have remote fields or other inconvenient features, it can

tolerate degrees of inconvenience which would make a larger farm quite unworkable owing to the greater distances entailed. A very long and very narrow farm, for example, can still be worked provided that it be of moderate size. The same layout on a larger scale would be unmanageable.

TABLE VIII

Sizes of Farms and Convenience of Layout
(as in Table VII)

	1	2	3	4
	%	%	%	%
Farms over 150 acres . .	35	45	60	29
Farms under 150 acres . .	65	55	40	71
	100	100	100	100

That the length of a farm in relation to its breadth has a good deal to do with its convenience of working is further illustrated from the same four groups of farms. Only 12 per cent. of the farms in the 'convenient' group are more than three times as long as they are broad, whereas the corresponding proportion among the 'very inconvenient' farms is 79 per cent.

The foregoing analysis leaves out of account the group of farms mentioned earlier which consist of one main block with one or more much smaller off-lying parcels. This form of layout often arises where the farmer is also something of a dealer, and takes a little grassland from another farmer to graze a few dry stock—young heifers, for example, to be sold as down-calvers, or poor cows which he hopes to sell improved in condition. Apart from questions of layout the practice has its disadvantages, as a man who takes keep on another man's place seldom attends to hedges or ditches or to the proper maintenance of watercourses. Occasionally it is an advantage for a man to have a field or two placed conveniently for his business as a dealer although at a distance from his farm, but in many cases these fields would be equally useful and a good deal more convenient were they adjacent to his main holding.

Although a majority of the multiple-block farms are of the kind described, nearly one in three of them includes two blocks of about equal size. There are two ways in which this kind of layout has come into being. Either the family grows up and the farmer feels they can do with a bit more land, or a successful smallholder wants to expand. Unless adjoining land is available, a scattered farm is the result. Five of the 2-block farms are arranged in this way, the distances between the blocks being $\frac{1}{4}$ mile, 1 mile, $1\frac{5}{8}$ miles, $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles, and $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles respectively. Two of the 3-block farms and the two 5-block farms are similarly arranged. It is not a popular plan, as much time is spent travelling between the main parts of the farm, quite apart from occasional visits to the smaller outlying fields.

The 6-block farm may be used as an illustration of what a scattered holding may mean. If the farmer wanted to look round his farm, he could start by walking over the 72 acres at home. He would then drive half a mile and inspect the 5-acre field; then drive five-eighths of a mile to see 16 acres; then one and three-quarter miles to see 8 acres; then drive a mile and one-eighth, leave the road and walk 300 yards, to see another 6 acres; walk back 300 yards and drive seven-eighths of a mile to see two fields of 12 and 14 acres, and finally drive one and three-eighths miles home—a total distance travelled from home to home of six and a quarter miles to inspect a holding of 139 acres (Fig. 6).

Layout in relation to Roads. The area is well covered by roads, and most of the farms are well served, though several could be made more convenient without great difficulty. Only three farms do not touch a public road at any point. The condition of occupation roads, of which there are a good many of considerable length, is generally poor, which imposes a handicap on farm transport.

Position of Buildings. The farm-house is adjacent to the farm buildings on 83 per cent. of the farms, 43 per cent. of them being in or close to villages, and 40 per cent. out in the country. For every farm which has its main buildings on a public road there is another where they are approached by

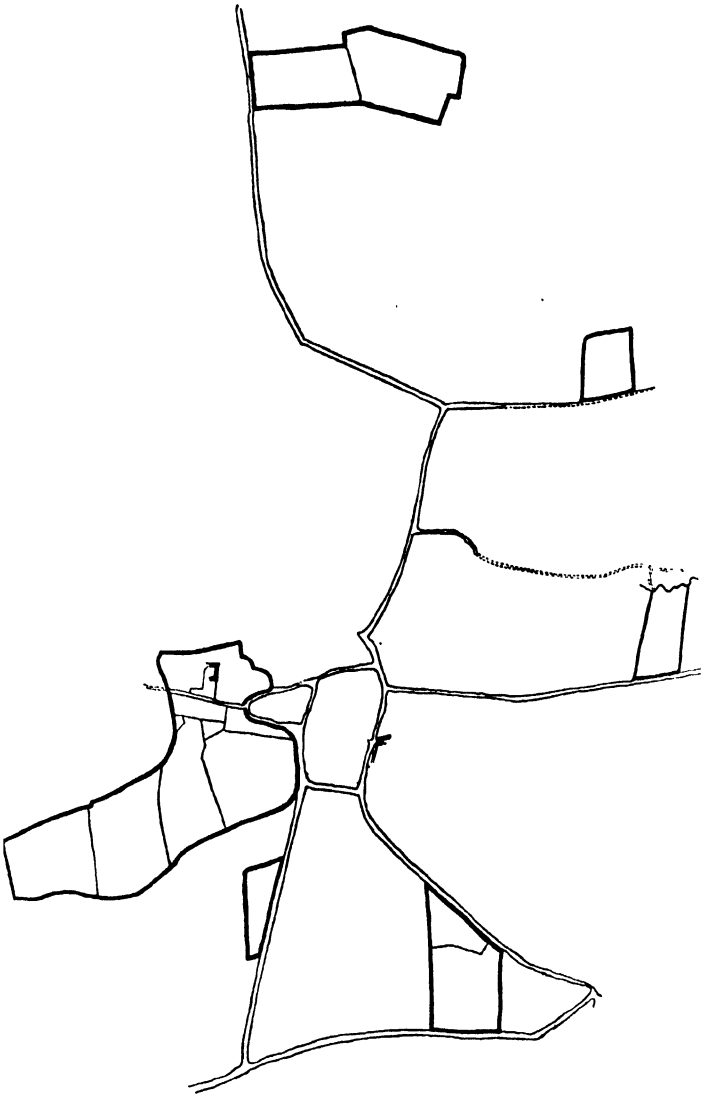


FIG. 6.

a road of varying length across the farm—sometimes indeed across other farms. The buildings are more or less central on two out of every five farms, and at one corner, at one end, or in a nearby village, on the other three.

Summary of Farm Layout. A farmer is influenced in his choice of a farm by many factors, all of which are of importance, therefore, in assessing its worth. But not all of them come within the scope of a study of farm layout. This discussion, for example, has concentrated upon the size, shape, and degree of dispersal of each farm, its accessibility by road, and the position of its buildings. The condition of the buildings, the provision of water-supplies and electricity, the number and position of workers' cottages have been disregarded for the time being as having more to do with the equipment of a farm than with its layout.

Two other assumptions have been made, viz. that every holding of less than 50 acres, except those which are scattered (of which, in this area, there are six), is sufficiently workable to be counted convenient, and that the mere existence of a few outlying fields is not of sufficient consequence to make a farm, otherwise convenient, difficult to work. Further—and it is well that this should be noted—this analysis has judged the layout of the farms according to standards which prevailed before scientific progress had pointed the way to modern farming methods. No farm has been pilloried for failure to give full scope for an attested herd or a combine-harvester.

Classification by the method used here reveals the following position:

	Farms where the layout is	
	Convenient	*Inconvenient*
	No.	No.
Farms of more than 50 acres		
Ring-fenced . . .	17	35
Scattered . . .	7	20
Farms of less than 50 acres	38	6*
	62	61

* Inconvenient because scattered.

On a very conservative estimate, therefore, it would seem that not more than half the farms are convenient as they stand, even for the kind of farming for which they were designed. Of the farms of 50 acres and more, which cover more than 92 per cent. of the area, the layout of no less than 70 per cent. of them is in need of improvement. This, without taking any account of the rearrangement which would be necessary to give full scope to modern machinery and equipment.

The more common and obvious defects of layout are:

1. Lack of compactness due to the length or irregular shape of the farm, or to its lying in two or more parcels.
2. Long occupation roads.
3. Remoteness of some fields, due either to a long, thin protuberance from one corner of the farm, or to intersection by a railway, &c.
4. Boundaries broken into by fields in other occupation, on farms which otherwise would be well rounded off.
5. The misplacement or absence of buildings.

In short, it may be said, first, that farm layout follows no recognizable plan; second, that it incorporates a large measure of inconvenience.

Farms and Soils

In the foregoing section it was noted that a considerable proportion of farm holdings are dispersed amongst several blocks. This alone makes it improbable that farm boundaries would coincide at all exactly with different kinds of soil. But the Survey discloses equally that the ring-fenced farms rarely lie entirely on one kind of soil. The explanation might be advanced that the farms have been laid out deliberately to include shares of the different local soils in each. That this is most improbable, again, may be inferred from the number which do lie wholly on one or other of the four kinds, for they amount to 25 per cent. of the total.

Broadly speaking, the larger the farm, the more the variation of soil, a condition which would tend to arise unaided by planning. When, too, it is noticed that one farm of 247 acres is all on one soil whereas another of only 99 acres spreads

over all four, the presumption is reinforced that the relation of farm layout to soil is largely haphazard.

TABLE IX

Farm Layout in Relation to Soil

	No.	*Per cent. of total number*	*Range of size*
			Acres
Farms on 1 soil . .	31	25	5–247
Farms on 2 soils . .	59	48	9–256
Farms on 3 soils . .	28	23	20–525
Farms on 4 soils . .	5	4	99–301

FIELDS

The Survey area contains rather more than 1,200 fields, the size-groups and their relative importance being shown in the following table:

TABLE X

The Fields in Size Groups

	No. of fields	*Per cent. of total No.*
Smaller than 10 acres . . .	605	49·6
Over 10 acres but less than 20 acres	487	40·0
,, 20 ,, ,, ,, 30 ,, .	101	8·3
,, 30 ,, ,, ,, 50 ,, .	22	1·8
,, 50 acres	4	0·3
All fields	1219	100·0

Half the fields are less than 10 acres and only one in ten is more than 20 acres. There is only one larger than 60 acres, a big field of 115 acres, recently divided into five. Fields of almost any size are to be found on any farm. Farmers of course prefer rectangular fields, but more than 75 per cent. of those in the area have irregular boundaries.

Except for fields inclosed almost within the last century from commons and wastes, when the landlord or farmer was

able to start from scratch, so to speak, and could shape his inclosures more or less as he wished, the sizes and boundaries of English fields were determined long ago by the men who evolved the open arable field system. Land was ploughed in furlongs which varied in size and shape according to the lie of the land, drainage being the determining factor and the ploughing laid up and down the slope. When the direction of the slope of the surface changed, the furlong was closed and a fresh one was started to follow the new angle. In course of time ploughing threw the surface up into ridge and furrow, and the big open fields became patchworks of furlongs, the sizes and shapes of which were dictated by topography and convenience of access. A glance at any old map of open fields brings this out very clearly. Upon inclosure the obvious thing was to allot the land to its new owners in blocks of furlongs making up the share of each, rather than to carve out new blocks regardless of the ancient divisions which everybody knew. Equally obvious was it that the recipients of these allotments should partition their new farms into fields by fences made round the old furlongs. This caused no interference with the existing layout for ploughing, which was obviously well designed, and the old common ways and occupation roads gave the necessary access. The names which many fields bear to-day can be traced back to the names of the old open-field furlongs from which they were formed.

Otherwise, the remoteness of so many of the fields from the farmer's ideal of tidy rectangles is dictated by physical features of various kinds. A watercourse, an ancient highway, a hill, a bit of marshy ground, and, of course, such artificial features as railway lines, new highways or old ones straightened, the encroachments of building estates—all of these causes tend to result in irregular, and often inconvenient, field boundaries.

CHAPTER IV

FARM RECONSTRUCTION

THE OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND; WATER-SUPPLIES; ELECTRIC POWER AND LIGHT; OUTLINES OF RECONSTRUCTION; AN EXAMPLE.

SINCE the inclosure of the open fields there has been a good deal of consolidation of farms, and doubtless occasional subdivision, but there has been no systematic motive behind the changes. They have come about through the uncoordinated initiative of individual farmers and landowners. As a result there are farms, here and there, which combine many of the characteristic features of good farm layout, but the number which is wholly satisfactory is small indeed.

It is not to be expected that complete agreement could be reached on what constitutes good layout, and, in fact, some desirable features conflict. Take only the position of the farm-house. There are obvious conveniences in having the house on a road and near a village. On the other hand, the convenience of having the house near the middle of the farm is equally clear. On many farms it would be impossible to site the house so that it could take advantage of both arrangements. Thus the ideal farm layout is often a balance between conflicting advantages rather than a realization of agreed objectives. Although the evidence suggests that a high proportion of the farms in the Survey area are badly laid out, it would be impossible to assert that the existing arrangements are entirely without merit. Some people, indeed, may claim that the advantages outweigh the difficulties and disadvantages of reorganization.

In the first place, anyone in search of a farm should have a wide variety of choice. Secondly, the variation of soil to be found on almost every farm reduces the risk of crop failures and increases the range of products which can be grown and of the uses to which the land can be turned. Thirdly, very few even of the poorest holdings have nothing but poor land.

Against these arguments it may be advanced that the choice of farm open to a new-comer is limited by the number

of farms of the kind he wants which happen to be on offer at the time. The fact that a farm has a variety of soils means that more implements are wanted, or at least that time has to be spent adjusting implements to the different soils to be worked. Seeing that the soil often is not homogeneous even throughout each field, cultivations cannot always be done to the best advantage on the whole of a field at the same time, and the crops may ripen irregularly. Variety of soil leads also to multiplicity of undertakings, so that the farmer seldom gains the skill of the specialist. Finally, nearly every farm has sacrificed something to the holdings adjacent to it, and even if replanning could not convert the Survey area into one of model farms, it might bring about some very great improvements. The fact that some readjustment of farm boundaries has been effected, at the instigation of the County War Agricultural Executive Committee, would indicate a measure of agreement on this point. Even under the spur of war-time necessity, however, these readjustments have been confined to a few isolated cases, in which some speedy improvement could be expected from a relatively simple change. No general reorganization has been attempted, nor probably even contemplated. A comprehensive plan would have to take account of divergent opinions, and where they could not be reconciled it would have to choose between them. But before even considering the problems of replanning, it would be as well perhaps to look at some of the obstacles which any reorganization would encounter.

The two main circumstances which control the present layout of the farms are the ownership of the land and the adequacy of the water-supplies.

The Ownership of the Land

A general picture of the incidence of landownership in the Survey area might best be gained, perhaps, by following an imaginary pack of hounds running a straight-necked fox across country from the south-western to the north-eastern corner of the area, though the direction matters little.

	Yards
First comes a run of 510 yards across a farm rented from landlord A. Then follows landlord	510
B's farm, which is 580 yards across, but is cut in	130
two by a strip of land occupied by another owner,	170
landlord C. The next farm belongs to a college,	450
landlord D, after which follows a short run across	670
the corner of a farm owned by landlord E, who	180
lives 150 miles away. A return to landlord D's	
farm for nearly ¼ mile leads to the next farm,	400
landlord F, which, too, would give a run of nearly	270
¼ mile were it not cut into by the corner of a farm	30
owned by landlord G, who lives two counties off.	160
There follows a return to landlord F's farm before	220
an owner-occupier's holding is reached, landlord	160
H. The next farm, too, is occupied by its owner,	140
landlord I, and then follows a run of nearly ½ mile	
across landlord J's land.	830
Next comes other college land, landlord K, fol-	575
lowed by another owner-occupier, landlord L, and	800
another farm owned by college D.	370
The next is a large farm, owned by still another	
college, landlord M, and then follows a series of 6	950
small farms, each belonging to a separate owner:	
Landlords N	180
O	710
P	360
Q	290
R	130
S	170
There follows a farm occupied by landlord T,	100
another owned by a local resident, landlord U,	480
another occupied by its owner, landlord V, and	130
finally hounds cross a farm owned by a resident in	
a town some 20 miles distant, landlord W, and	
pass out of the area.	1,070
	10,635

It is seen that this six-mile point crosses twenty-seven farm boundaries and passes over twenty-three separate properties. The longest consecutive distance on one man's land is less than two-thirds of a mile.

Turning now to a more precise examination of the area as a whole, it may be said that either landlords or their agents have been identified for 115 farms. There are 112 individual ownerships, varying in size from one acre to a little over a thousand acres, as shown in Table XI.

TABLE XI

The Sizes of Estates

Estates	*No.*	*Acres*	*Proportion of total acreage*
			%
Below 10 acres . . .	19	108	8
Between 10 acres and 50 acres	34	923	
„ 50 „ „ 100 „	19	1,248	34
„ 100 „ „ 150 „	9	1,186	
„ 150 „ „ 200 „	12	1,981	
„ 200 „ „ 250 „	9	1,981	26
„ 250 „ „ 300 „	3	822	
„ 300 „ „ 350 „	2	628	
And one of 572 acres	1	4,167	32
„ „ 736 „	1		
„ „ 759 „	1		
„ „ 1,037 „	1		
„ „ 1,063 „	1		
Total	112	13,044	100

The largest estate, 1,063 acres, is owned by a college, and comprises one group of 3 farms (127, 115, and 54 acres each), another group, also of 3 holdings (232, 87, and 15), one farm of 397 acres in 3 separate parcels, and one small farm of 36 acres.

The next largest eatate, 1,037 acres, is also owned by a college, and consists of one group of 2 farms (144 and 65 acres each), one farm of 108 acres with 7 more acres let to an adjacent farm, and 2 single farms of 388 and 325 acres respectively.

The largest acreage held in one piece by one owner amounts to 759 acres, and consists of 3 farms (513, 205, and 41 acres), one of which the owner farms himself.

About one-third of the area is held by the five larger owners, a quarter of it by fourteen owners whose estates run between 200 and 350 acres, another third by forty owners, each holding between 50 and 200 acres, and the remaining 8 per cent. by fifty-three owners, none of whom owns more than 50 acres in the Survey area.

The land is divided among the different types of landlord, as shown in Table XII.

TABLE XII

Types of Landlord

	No.	Per cent.	Acres: Owned and farmed	Acres: Owned and let	Acres: Total owned	Proportion of tota acreage
						%
Owner-occupiers						
(*a*) who own all the land they farm, and farm all the land they own	18	16	980	..	980	8
(*b*) who farm some of their own land and let the rest	6	5	467	998	1,465	11
(*c*) who farm their own land and rent some more from other owners	16	15	961	..	961*	7
	40	36	2,408	998	3,406	26
Colleges, &c.	7	6	..	3,826	3,826	29
Charities	7	6	..	509	509	4
Public bodies	2	2	..	364	364	3
Local industrial Companies	2	2	..	241	241	2
Private persons (other than owner-occupiers)	54	48	..	4,698	4,698	36
	112	100	2,408	10,636	13,044	100

* This group rents 907 acres from other landowners shown in this table.

The most numerous class of landlord consists of private persons, usually individuals, but sometimes trustees, and so on, who do not farm the land which they own in this area,

though some of them farm elsewhere. Nearly half the landlords come into this group, and together they own just over one-third of the area.

Next in point of numbers are the owner-occupiers, who hold just over a quarter of the whole area. Forty farmers fall in this group, so that rather more than one farmer in three owns all or part of the land he farms.

Nearly 30 per cent. of the Survey area is owned by six colleges and the governors of an endowed school. Their land in the area represents only a small proportion of the estates which they own.

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners, glebes, and local charities account for 4 per cent. of the area, the County Council and a holding described as Crown land for 3 per cent., and two industrial companies for 2 per cent.

Of the 112 owners, eighty-three own single holdings each of which is in a ring-fence, seven own single holdings each of which lies in scattered parcels, and twenty-two own more than one holding each. These last, however, rarely form compact estates, as may be seen from the analysis given in Table XIII of the seventy-one farms which they own.

Four of these farms are themselves divided into scattered parcels of land, while the remaining sixty-seven lie in thirty separate parcels. The largest number of farms lying together and sharing the same landlord is three.

Little more need be said to show that the distribution of the area according to the ownership of the land is kaleidoscopic, but it may be of interest to see how this arrangement affects the farmers. Eighty are either their own landlords or farm under one landlord each. Twenty-five have two landlords, eight have three landlords, and two have four landlords. The farms with four landlords are 153 and 145 acres respectively; those with three landlords 301, 276, 149, 137, 127, 114, 26, and 22 acres. It is by no means the larger holdings which have the most landlords.

Leaving out of account any question of whether particular owners, or types of owners, make good or bad landlords, it is clear that any course calling for joint action—let alone

TABLE XIII

Distribution of Seventy-one Farms owned by Twenty-two Landlords

Owner	*Total number of holdings*	*Ring-fenced farms*		*Scattered farms*
		Detached	*Marching together*	
A	2	1	..	1
B	4	2	2	..
C	2	..	2	..
D	8	1	3 3	1
E	4	4	..	..
F	4	2	2	..
G	4	1	3	..
H	4	1	3	..
I	2	..	2	..
J	3	2	..	1
K	3	..	3	..
L	6	2	2 2	..
M	3	..	2	1
N	2	..	2	..
O	3	..	3	..
P	2	..	2	..
Q	2	2	..	..
R	2	2	..	..
S	3	3	..	..
T	3	..	3	..
U	3	3	..	..
V	2	2	..	..
22	71	28	39	4

replanning—is likely to be exceedingly difficult where ownership of the land is so multifarious. Any drainage scheme, for example, or a water-supply, or a plan for the control of vermin, and almost any readjustment of farm boundaries to facilitate the better use of the land for productive purposes, will affect the interests of several owners, some of whom may live at a distance, and all of whom enjoy different financial standing and may have very different ideas about what should be done. In this area, with its high proportion of small private owners, it is all too easy to find even ordinary works of maintenance

and repair held over because the rent of the farm is the only source of income of an absentee landlord.

WATER-SUPPLIES

Water-bearing strata lie not far below the surface in most parts of the area, and springs break from the hill-sides in many places. The main watercourses and their tributaries provide many drinking-places in the fields through which they flow. Thus there is no shortage of water. Nevertheless the very abundance of these cheap sources of supply has hindered the development of less primitive and more satisfactory systems. Many farm buildings have been sited and fields laid out, evidently, with a view to using existing natural supplies. The farms have been taken to the water rather than the water to the farms.

By way of illustration little more need be said than that, of 119 farms for which information is at hand, no fewer than seventy-three depend on streams for their field water-supplies, nine on springs, six on ponds, four on wells, two on rain-water collected from roofs, and ten on combinations of these sources of supply. On eight farms water has to be carted to the fields. Only seven farms have fields served by piped supplies, and of these no more than three draw their water from the mains.

Turning to the farm buildings, 43 per cent. are supplied from wells, 32 per cent. by pipe-line, 5 per cent. by rain-water, 3 per cent. by streams (150 yards distant in one case), and on no fewer than 17 per cent. of the farms, including those which have no buildings, any water which may be required has to be fetched from the village or from some other distant point. Nor do all of the thirty-eight homesteads with piped supplies draw water from the mains. For many it is piped from springs.

Two main conclusions are apparent. First, that the positions of many of the farm-houses and farm buildings have been determined by the luck of the divining rod rather than because they were the most convenient for the working of the farms. Second, that an overriding factor in deciding

whether a field can be used for live stock is whether it has access to a stream or spring. Thus, the type of farming has been dictated largely by the existence or absence of surface supplies, or the ease or difficulty of tapping underground water. It follows that any plan which aims at exploiting such modern practices as alternate husbandry, or at the application, even, of the ordinary rules of animal health or of milk production as they are understood to-day, must wait upon the provision of an up-to-date water-supply. In the absence of such provision any reorganization of farm layout would be restricted, just as the present farm layout is restricted, by the need to conform to the primitive arrangements now prevailing.

Electric Power and Light

Electricity has played no part, of course, such as water has, in determining the layout of farms, but the contribution which it should be able to make in any period of agricultural reconstruction is very considerable.

The extent to which it has been harnessed already to the service of the farmers of the Survey area can be summarized in a very few words. The public supply is in use only on nineteen farms—about one in every seven. Twenty-five farm-houses are lit by electricity, seven of them by their own generating plants. Five farms, two of which have their own plants, are using electric power. Only eleven farmers have electric light in their buildings—less than one in ten.

Now, the up-to-date mechanized farm is based upon an efficient workshop, the first requirement of which is power. Power is needed, also, in the food stores and the milking-sheds; lighting is essential in farm-houses, cottages, and buildings. Thus any reconstruction of farming designed to use everything that will make for efficiency in food production, and for the greater amenity of life for those engaged in it, must make electricity available, at a reasonable cost, for every purpose to which it can be applied with advantage.

Outlines of Reconstruction

Some measure has now been taken of the existing

arrangement of farming units in the Survey area, of how they came to be laid out as they are, of the merits and drawbacks of the present plan, and of the difficulties which would impede any large measure of reform.

It is no part of this discussion to suggest that the difficulties form an insuperable bar to progress, but it would be hard to escape the conclusion that they would have to be circumvented, if not entirely removed, before the improvement of farming could become the guiding principle of any reconstruction of the area. Even if the aim were no higher than to make the farms fit for the kind of farming which was in view when they were laid out, it would have to be made possible, by one means or another, for them to be replanned as to size and layout according to predetermined standards, based, not upon the geographical or financial limits of this or that estate, nor the chance presence of some obsolete water-supply, but upon farming needs. Unless this could be done, there would be little hope of fundamental reform. A few buildings could be repaired, a few farm boundaries straightened, a few occupation roads made more passable, a few fields made ploughable, and so on. But, by and large, the end would be as the beginning, a miscellaneous collection of haphazard farms and fields of all shapes and sizes, largely unrelated to soil conditions, of which something like 50 per cent. would be needlessly difficult and uneconomic to work. If the intention were more ambitious, namely to design a farm layout which could turn to good account the best of modern farming methods, the need to start with a slate as clean as possible would be the more pressing.

Assuming for the present, then, that the obstacles to replanning were removed, there would need to be agreement on the principles or standards upon which it should proceed. Should the area be one of large farms, small farms, or of farms of all sizes? What weight should be given to considerations of soil? Should the steadings be in villages or in the open country? Should labour be drawn from villages or from service cottages on the farms? These questions, and others like them, hinge too much upon opinion to admit of simple

answers. The most that can be attempted at this stage is to clarify some of the issues and to gather up such arguments as may appear to point in particular directions.

The essence of farming, of course, is the use of natural resources, but the extent to which they can be developed is governed almost entirely by economic conditions, and in so far as these depend at any place and time upon national and international relations, they cannot easily be predicted. In the field of British agriculture, however, certain facts are obvious enough. One of these, if not the first, is that labour is leaving the land and the younger generation is not being attracted to it. So long as Britain remains a highly industrialized community this trend is not likely to be reversed, though its effects might be mitigated, perhaps, if life on the land could be made more remunerative and its amenities improved. Another fact is that whatever the political and economic set-up, British agriculture has to fight its way. Its traditional enemies are overseas agriculture and the non-agricultural industries of the home country, and whatever help it may receive in its struggle, the nearer it can come to standing on its own feet the better. There is no general agreement on how this can be achieved, but certain pointers are not lacking. However little can be said in favour of agricultural depression, it has this, at least, to its credit, that it throws into relief certain features of the industry which in other circumstances might remain hidden. For example, although a great deal of land went out of cultivation during the inter-war depression, no inconsiderable acreage of derelict land was actually reclaimed during that time. And so far as the great bulk of the land is concerned, there was no sign, even then, of any shortage of men willing to farm. Moreover, although a great many farmers were nearing poverty and a small proportion was going bankrupt, there were always some who made good livings from the land. It would seem that so long as there is any demand at all for agricultural produce there are men who will manage, somehow, to meet it. What class of men are they, and how do they do it? A great number, no doubt, are those who simply cut their costs to a minimum by employing

semi-ranching methods. A smaller number find success in catering for some specialized market. But there is a third group, not numerous perhaps, but highly instructive to observe. They are men of vigorous personality and good organizing ability, who adopt every up-to-date scientific and mechanical advance as it comes along. Some, indeed, they discover for themselves. They keep their minds open, and their methods pliable, so as not to find themselves so tied to one plan as to be unable to give any new proposition a fair trial.

If any lesson can be learnt from these considerations, it is that the outlines, at least, of agricultural reconstruction need not wait upon the hope that general economic conditions may be settled first. They can be drawn at once, provided that they are designed to fit a framework of certain broad principles. These are, that full scope should be given to modern scientific and mechanical methods, that allowance should be made wherever possible for flexibility, that full rein should be given to initiative and the capacity for organization, and that provision should be made for such social and economic conditions as may be attractive to labour.

How can these principles be applied in the Survey area?

To begin with a brief review of the natural features, here is a stretch of some twenty-four square miles of moderately elevated, undulating country with good natural drainage. The soils are light rather than strong, and a fair proportion consist of very good corn land. In times gone by these conditions pointed clearly to the kind of farming which used, in fact, to be carried on over much of the area, namely corn-growing on the higher ground, with grazing on the steeper slopes and in the valleys. The live stock were hurdled sheep and bullocks. No part of the area is more than 1½ miles from a village, and there was no difficulty about the supply of labour on which so much of the system depended.

It was a typical mixed-farming system, which relied on such natural resources as existed, and made little or no demand on newfangled devices. Little fault could be found with it in the days when, unaided by the State, wheat sold for 60*s*. a

quarter and wool fetched 2*s.* a lb., and when labour was to be had in plenty at 10*s.* or 12*s.* a week. On the same basis it could be revived to-day. But whatever the price of produce in the future—and those which have been mentioned may not be exorbitant—nothing is more certain than that labour of the necessary kind can never again be so plentiful, nor wages so inadequate, as to maintain the system in solvency. Some other plan must be found by which the uses to which the natural features of the area can be put may be reconciled to the economic conditions of the day, a plan sufficiently elastic, too, to keep pace with changing needs.

It is not improbable that almost as many systems could be found to meet these conditions as theorists to propound them, but this need not discourage the endeavour to work out one, if only as an illustration.

Taking the old system in its heyday as a starting-point, it is significant that the mixture of crops and stock was not itself the main objective. The system really revolved round corn, the chief purpose of the live stock being to provide the fertility with which the corn could be grown. This being so, corn production could be retained as the predominating interest to-day, provided that it could be carried on inexpensively and that fertility could be maintained by some means which did not make such heavy demands on labour as is made by penning sheep or by carting and spreading dung. So far as the corn-growing is concerned, the intensified use of modern mechanical equipment is clearly indicated, while for fertility the use of leys and artificial fertilizers might be extended, with or without the introduction of movable milking bails, or folded pigs and poultry.

How would these methods fit in with the principles which have been enunciated?

There is little doubt that mechanized arable farming, if undertaken on a scale large enough, gives full play to initiative and organizing ability. It demands, too, the exercise of scientific knowledge in matters such as the control of diseases and pests and the use of fertilizers. Incidentally, it may be suspected that the reliance of the old-fashioned farmer upon

the sheep-fold, and the nostalgia for it which still prevails, is founded, partly at least, upon the fact that the sheep gave him a ready-made manure applied direct where he wanted it, while he lacked the knowledge essential to the choosing, mixing, and application of artificials. Whatever the truth of this, it cannot be denied that the need for up-to-date technical knowledge would offer plenty of scope in modern corn production for the best brains which the industry could command.

Nor would such a system, with its minimum of permanent equipment, fail on the score of flexibility. If the emphasis to begin with were upon corn, it could be shifted at any time at the dictates of changing fortune. One of the pioneers of modern farming, Mr. A. J. Hosier, began his system of milk production with the travelling milking bail on permanent grassland, at a time when corn prices were depressed. When the Wheat Act was passed in 1932, and corn-growing became once more profitable, the grassland, with its stored-up fertility, was ploughed for corn cropping, and temporary grass leys were laid down for the dairy herds. In the reverse case, with corn once more unprofitable, the leys could be lengthened, the production of industrial crops such as flax and sugar-beet could be increased, or, if necessary, the arable land could once more be diminished, leaving milk, pork, and poultry to take their turns. Thus those who worked the system would take advantage of economic changes instead of being defeated by them.

Finally, the system holds out better prospects for labour than could be expected from many others. It would afford ample opportunities for mechanics and technicians who valued an open-air life, whose technical knowledge would entitle them to wages more or less comparable with those of their opposite numbers in other industries, and whose skill with mechanical contrivances would increase the volume of their output so much as to make it possible for the industry to pay those wages. Milking by bail machines, the use of tractors, combine-harvesters, and the like, would step up the output per man to a plane where good wages could be afforded.

Some such reorganization would appear to promise success, at any rate so far as concerns the lighter soils which form the bulk of the Survey area. There remain the heavier soils and the wetter ground in the valleys. That these could play no direct part in the system need not debar them from sharing in its benefits. Those that fell within the boundaries of the bail-milking farms could profitably be used for dry cows, for isolation paddocks, and also for raising heifers, an activity in which other parts of the area could join. This would still leave room for specialist pig and poultry keepers, fruit-growers, and so on.

The plan is advanced, not as the only one, or even as the best that could be recommended, but as a background against which to see more clearly some of the problems of reconstruction. Let it be supposed that this plan, or something like it, were in view, what changes of farm layout would be involved?

Take, first, the relation of farm to soil. It has been seen that the present layout takes virtually no account of soil differences, and that on many farms this cannot be avoided. Although it is common knowledge that a farmer's preference is for a uniform soil, and of course a good one, it is probable that, in an area where soils are so variable, little can be done beyond securing that the belts of soil suitable for arable cultivation are earmarked for that purpose, while the land which is difficult to plough is set aside for grass and orchards. Even this would show some advance on the present rather patchwork arrangement, by which so many small farmers are compelled to keep land under grass which is naturally suited for ploughing, so that they may have somewhere to run their stock, while others, with farms where grass is the appropriate crop, have to keep some land under the plough, largely in order to grow roots and straw. It may be noticed in passing that this defect of the present layout has become more obvious under war-time conditions, when the authorities, in order to avoid asking more of some men than of others, have had to order the ploughing of some fields which would be better in grass, while leaving others in grass which should be ploughed.

Next, consider the size of farm. Although the early belief that mechanized farming demanded very wide expanses is being modified in the light of experience, there can be no doubt that the present size of farm—109 acres on average, with more than 75 per cent. of the holdings smaller than 150 acres—is a good deal too small for good use to be made of modern equipment. A medium-sized combine-harvester will get through some 200 acres of corn in a season. Assuming this to occupy about two-thirds of the arable land, 300 acres of ploughland would be indicated. If a full-sized milking bail were to be run as well, an additional 150 acres or so of leys, or rather more of permanent grass, would be needed. Presumably, therefore, the typical farm on this class of land would be not less than about 450 acres, and could, of course, be larger. Elsewhere there would be smaller farms, the sizes of which could vary within any limits which allowed them to be fitted conveniently between the main mechanized holdings.

The layout of fields offers more scope for differences of opinion, but the majority would agree that the present size—10 acres on average, and 50 per cent. of them smaller than this—is unnecessarily small. Some reformers, no doubt, would advocate an almost complete sweeping away of hedges, in imitation of other areas where combines and milking bails range over broad reaches of rolling country. This would not be supported by those who know the area, and whose experience has taught them the value of shelter for crops and stock. Local opinion seems to favour a field of about 20 acres as being large enough for modern equipment while not too large to have shelter. Where possible, the fields should be rectangular, running north and south, and bounded by good hedges. Smaller divisions needed from time to time for grazing could be made with electric fencing or temporary barbed wire. Whatever may be said in favour of having variety of soil on a farm, there is nothing to recommend variety of soil in a field. So far as may be practicable, therefore, account should be taken of soil divisions.

Turning now to the steadings, reference has been made to the difficulty of securing the siting which is the best in all

respects. Few farms, for example, can enjoy the advantages of having a steading which is both central to the farm and is also near a village. Some guidance here is furnished by local preferences. It is found in this area that, other things equal, competition is always at its keenest for farms with steadings on a road, and near, but not in, a village. It is of less importance that the buildings should be central, though if they are, so much the better. When the reconstruction here pictured comes to be examined in more detail, it may well be found possible, with the larger, and therefore the fewer, farms which would result, to meet these conditions on a higher proportion of farms than is possible with the present layout.

It is generally agreed that the house should be near the farm buildings, and with fully mechanized farms weight will be added to this arrangement, because the farmer will want not only to be at hand to keep his eye on ailing beasts and so on, as he does now, but also to direct the workshops, stores, offices, and the like which will make the modern steading more than ever the hub of a sizeable business.

The design of the farm buildings would call for special consideration. Many of the present buildings would become superfluous owing to the rearrangement and enlargement of the farms, and it would be a matter of relative cost and expediency to make use of others which happen to fit the new plan. Few of the main steadings would be adequate for modern needs as they stand, and nearly all are ill-arranged for economy of labour. Some might be sufficiently improved by carefully planned alterations and additions, but the solid construction of many of them would make it as difficult to bring them up to date as would the dilapidated condition of others. In the long run, there can be little doubt that a fresh start would be the only really satisfactory course. In that event, great care should be taken to avoid the mistakes of the past, especially the mistake of building too well. If the systems of farming are to be flexible, so should be the steadings. Solid structures are not only expensive to build, but they are difficult to convert when needs change. It is possible, as has

been suggested by Mr. Clyde Higgs, that a plan as good as any would be to have walls supporting one large roof, with movable partitions under the covered space.

There remains the most important of all considerations, that of labour, upon which hangs every proposal for the reconstruction of farming.

Some mention of wages has been made already, and it has been seen that the plan of reconstruction would make for higher rates. This alone, however, could not be expected to call forth enough labour of the kind required, because it is not only the discrepancies between wage-rates in agriculture and in other industries that draw men away from the countryside. There is also the relative absence in the country of the ordinary comforts and amenities of modern life. What is the position at present?

In an area such as the Survey area, which contains a village every few miles, it is natural that many of the farm workers should live in the villages, and some idea of living conditions in them will be gained from other sections of this report. Some of the single men, too, lodge with the farmers for whom they work. But under the traditional farming system, here, as in most parts of the country, there are many others, mostly the key-men—that is, cowmen, shepherds, and carters—who live on the farms in tied cottages.

There are 123 farms in the area, and forty-one of them, one in three, possess one or more tied cottages. As there are eighty-two of these altogether, there is an average of two tied cottages for every three farms in the area, or two for each farm on which there are cottages. The largest number of cottages on any one farm is five, and these are on a 325-acre holding.

Thus, although the tied cottage is the recognized way of providing house-room for many farm workers, 45 per cent. of the land in the Survey area makes no such provision. Moreover, at the present time, only forty-five of the eighty-two tied cottages, or little more than one-half, are let to men working on the farms. That this reflects the decline in the demand for labour, as arable land went out of cultivation and

men were replaced by machines, is true, of course, but it is by no means the whole truth. It must not be supposed that the cottages no longer occupied by farm workers are all let to men who work in other industries, for several of them are standing empty. This is not so much because they are dilapidated or insanitary, though some have become so through disuse, as because they are remote and inaccessible. One of the best cottages in the area, certainly the best in its own parish, is on a farm which has been kept in a high state of cultivation, on which the farmer has always been able to offer employment to a good man. Yet the cottage has been unoccupied for nearly thirty years because it stands out in the fields, 300 yards from the road, and this is but one example of many.

TABLE XIV

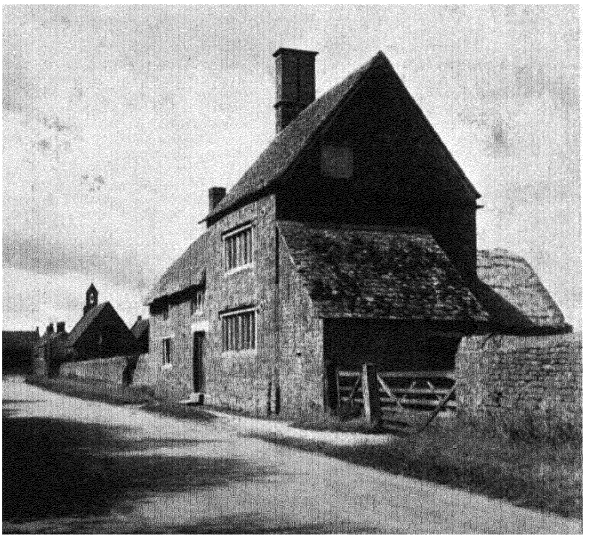
Farms and Tied Cottages

	No. of farms	*No. of cottages*	*Total area of farms*		*Average size*
Farms			Acres	%	Acres
Without tied cottages	82	0	6,022	45	73
With tied cottages	41	82	7,355	55	175
	123	82	13,377	100	109

The inaccessibility of farm cottages is not only a matter of muddy boots and of distances from shops or schools, but also of the prohibition it imposes on conveniences generally. In a recent survey which inquired into the water and electricity services of the district, the idea that these ordinary conveniences might be available to the farm cottages was thought to be so improbable that they were not even included in the investigation.

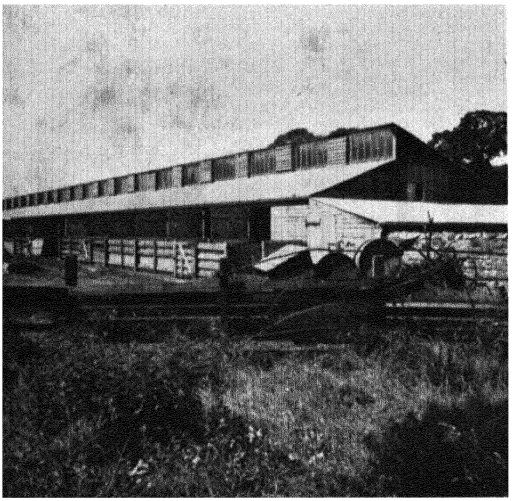
Faced with the position which is disclosed in the Survey area, it is clear beyond any argument that plans for the rehabilitation of agriculture must contemplate an almost complete rehousing of farm workers.

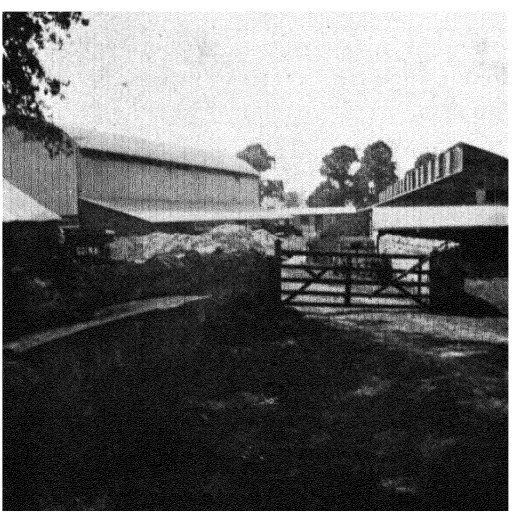
Looked at exclusively from an agricultural point of view, the importance of having the worker near his work is para-





FARM HOUSES





MODERN STEADINGS

mount. A farm of any size, especially one with a considerable head of live stock, is a place where emergencies continually arise without warning. There is no need to catalogue them; they vary from accidents and sickness amongst the animals to breakdowns of machines or to overheated ricks, and they need immediate attention from skilled men. The system of tied cottages grew up in answer to this need, and it was accepted by master and man alike as natural and inevitable. On the whole, too, it has worked a great deal better than many people care to admit, especially those who look at farming from a distance.

Nevertheless, there is something distasteful about a system which allows a man with a family and few resources to find himself without a home as a result of some trivial disagreement with his employer, and it is clear that the time will soon come, if indeed it be not now, when agricultural employment must be relieved of this risk. Many workers have already found one solution by leaving the land, and it will be of little avail to retain the old system if it only result in empty cottages. Until recently, if the fertility of a farm seemed to demand a flock of sheep, for example, it was only the sheep that the farmer had to consider. There would be no difficulty in finding shepherds prepared to accept the social and domestic conditions provided. This state of affairs no longer prevails, and it is more than probable that the choice in future will lie between abolishing the system of service tenancies and having no labour at all. To put it on the lowest grounds, the economic interests of the farm are no longer served by a system which shows such disregard of the workers' interests and social conditions.

In the modern community the solution should not be difficult. In fact, with a telephone and a motor bicycle, the workman of the future, living a mile or two away amongst his friends in the village, may yet be nearer to his work than was his predecessor living in isolation in a cottage on the farm. Given these means of communication, it becomes possible to meet the very moderate preferences of the workers and their families for some community life, without injuring the work of the farm. In any event, it is surely easier to transport a

single breadwinner to his work than to transport his wife to the shops and his children to school. The alternative, namely to leave his wife and children to make their own way to the places where they must go, is no longer open. They have already found their way, and there they propose to stay. It is doubtful whether any inducement could be offered which would bring them back, in any numbers, to their cottages on the farms, and tied cottages at that.

The plan will be, then, to house the workers in the villages or towns, where they should be able to draw water from taps, where gas and electricity should be available for cooking and light, where the roads are metalled, and the bus passes the door. The key-men will ride to and from their work on motor bicycles or in small cars, while the other men will be picked up each morning by the farm motor-van and taken home again at night—as is done already, as a matter of course, in some of the more intensively farmed areas of the country.

If it be objected that the plan will involve a good deal of house-building, the answer is that the house-building will be needed in any event. If it were attempted to retain the tied-cottage system, at least for the stockmen, the fact must be faced that the number of men willing to risk their roof with their job is steadily diminishing. If the standard of farming is to be maintained, therefore, and good men attracted to it, tied cottages in the reconstructed country-side will have to be built near the steadings, where there will be a chance of providing them with modern conveniences, and it will be necessary, also, to have so many additional houses in the villages that a man who left his job on the farm would be sure of suitable accommodation elsewhere. In the long run, it is only on this condition that he would be willing to take a tied cottage, and it could not be assured unless there were more cottages than families.

This, then, is an example of the kind of reconstruction of which agriculture stands in need, and of its implications. It may appear to be ambitious, and to some, no doubt, almost utopian. But it is doubtful whether any scheme involving

less change could ensure the efficiency of the farming of the area and the contentment of those upon whom it would depend for success.

An Example

There are 123 farms falling within the Survey area, and a glance at the figure on the following page shows how they are laid out to-day (Fig. 7). Assuming that the efficiency of agricultural production be the sole object in view, the essentials of a planned layout of the Survey area would be these:

1. The holdings should be compact, accessible, and convenient to work.
2. The ploughland should be in one piece, and with as little soil variation as possible.
3. Farms should be large enough to admit of mechanical cultivation, from which it follows that:
4. Severally, they should be about 450 acres and upwards in size.

Whatever the layout adopted, it is hardly to be expected that all these requirements could be met on every farm, and a glance at the map which shows the variations in the surface soils and the run of the roads (see p. 26) is evidence of the need for compromise. Many plans could be drawn, but one which goes a long way towards incorporating the more valuable features of a good layout is illustrated in Fig. 8 and is referred to, subsequently, as Plan I. Such a plan could be achieved only at the expense of a great deal of disturbance not only of occupiers but also of owners. This does not destroy its value, however, as something to be kept in view as an indication of the direction in which reforms should move.

Most of the farms shown on the plan (Fig. 8) are roughly square or rectangular, shapes which make for compactness. Most of them, again, are traversed by metalled roads. The main soil divisions are respected to the extent that the ploughable land on almost every farm has a great preponderance of one kind of soil, and enough of it lying together to allow the use of up-to-date machinery. At the same time the farms

FARM BOUNDARIES, 1940



FIG. 7.

FARM BOUNDARIES RE-PLANNED
(I) WITHOUT REGARD TO
EXISTING ESTATE BOUNDARIES

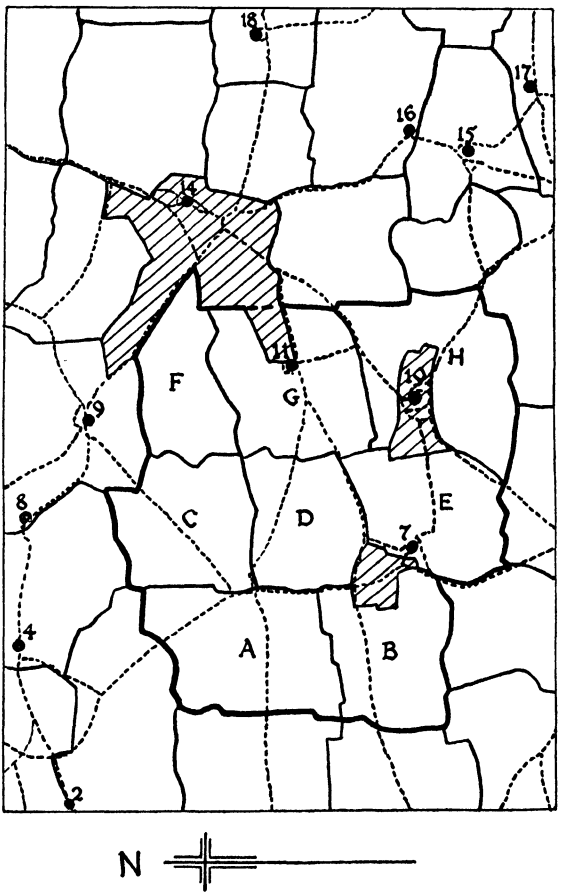


FIG. 8.

are not rigidly uniform in size or type; they vary from about 800 acres down to 300 acres, and three areas are reserved in the vicinity of villages for smallholdings, allotments, and accommodation land. Not counting these last, the whole area, as replanned, would contain some twenty-eight farms, averaging a little over 450 acres each, as compared with the present layout which comprises 123 farms averaging 109 acres.

To facilitate more detailed examination and description of the proposals, a central block of between 4,000 and 5,000 acres in the Survey area has been taken. It consists at present of twenty-three farms averaging 120 acres, and parts of twenty-five other farms. The new layout combines them into eight farms, and provides also for three groups of smallholdings, as shown in Fig. 9.

The average size of the farms, excluding smallholdings, is 521 acres, ranging from a large arable farm of 654 acres to a small grazing farm of 397 acres. Four of them are mainly arable, three are mixed, and the eighth is the grazing farm.

Three of the four mainly arable farms have their ploughlands in large, single blocks mostly of one kind of soil, and amounting to 87, 70, and 91 per cent. of their total acreages, respectively. The fourth has 67 per cent. of its area in two large and one small block of good ploughing.

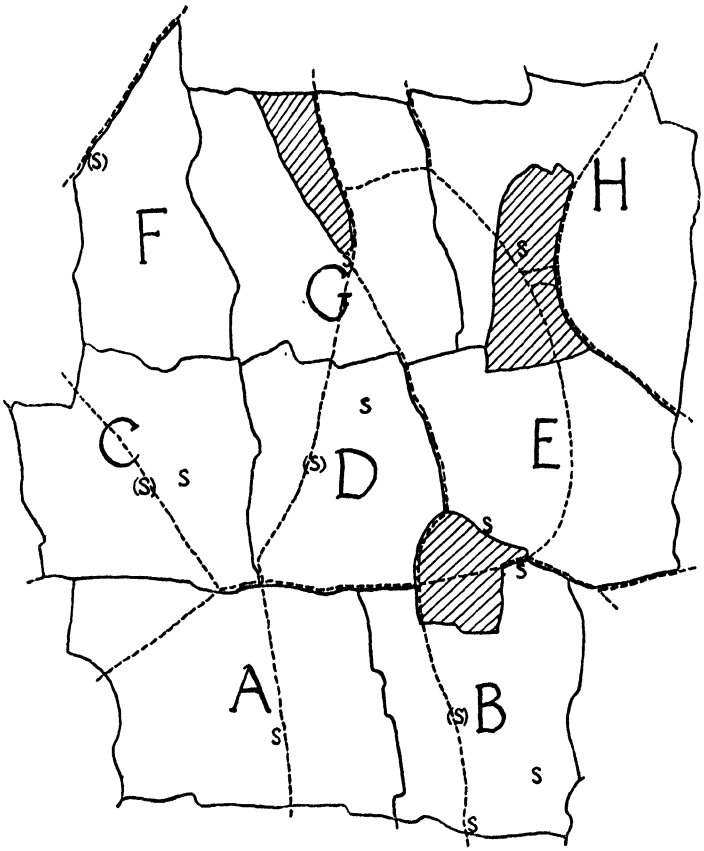
The three mixed farms have 37, 50, and 52 per cent. respectively of their acreages in arable land, lying, almost all of it, in a single block in each.

The grazing farm is mostly on the heavy side—some 66 per cent. of it—but this is relieved by substantial patches of dry-lying land dispersed over the farm.

Details of the shape, size, and surface soil of each farm are given in Table XV.

As to access, seven of the eight farms have good roads running across them. The eighth is not so well served, but the good road along one side is probably sufficient for this mainly grass farm. No part of any farm, with the same exception, is more than three-quarters of a mile from a hard road.

(I) EIGHT FARMS RE-PLANNED



S = existing steadings
(S) = proposed steadings

FIG. 9.

TABLE XV

Details of eight Farms and three Smallholding Areas (Plan I)

Farm	*Shape and approximate size*	*Type of farm*	*Acreage*		
				Acres	
A	Rectangular. 1¼ by ⅞ mile	A light-land arable farm	1. A large block of arable, consisting of: Sandy soils	400	
			Limestone soils	159	
			2. A patch of ironstone loams	12	
			3. Interspersed among the sandy soils there are patches of heavy loam	83	
					654
B	Nearly square. 1 by ⅞ mile	A mixed farm with good grazing	1. A block of heavy loams and clays	327	
			2. A belt of dry-lying ironstone loam at one side	152	
			3. A patch of similar soil in middle of farm	28	
			4. Three small patches of sand	9	
					516
C	Nearly square. 1 by ⅞ mile	A mixed farm	1. A block of sandy soils	280	
			2. A block of heavy loams and clays	296	
			3. Small patches of limestone soils	14	
			4. A small patch of ironstone loam	3	
					593
D	Nearly square. ¾ by ⅞ mile	A mainly arable farm	1. A block of sandy soils	324	
			2. A belt of heavy loam along one side	140	
					464
E	Nearly square. ¾ by ⅞ mile	An arable farm	1. A block of sandy soils	152	
			2. Two belts of ironstone loams lying either side of 1.	161 72	
			3. A small block of heavy loam	36	
					421

Farm	*Shape and approximate size*	*Type of farm*	*Acreage*	Acres	
F	Triangular. 1¾ by ¾ mile	A mainly grazing farm	1. A large block of heavy loams and clays	262	
			2. Seven patches of sand interspersed in 1.	86	
			3. A small block of ironstone loam	49	397
G	Square. 1 by 1 mile	A mixed farm	1. A block of ironstone loam	242	
			2. A block of heavier loam and clay	270	
			3. A patch of sand in middle of 2	49	561
H	Nearly square. 1⅛ by 1 mile	An arable farm	1. Two large blocks of ironstone loam	201 148	
			2. A large block of heavier loam and clay	134	
			3. A small detached block of ironstone loam	29	
			4. A similar block of heavy loam	54	566
					4,172
		Smallholdings, allotments, &c.	Round village 1. A block of sandy soil	56	
			2. A patch of ironstone loam	13	
			3. Two patches of heavy loam	6	75
		,,	Round village 1. A block of sandy soils	50	
			2. Another similar	37	
			3. A block of heavy loam	11	98
		,,	Alongside village 1. A block of ironstone loam	44	
			2. Two patches of heavy loam	6	50
					4,395

As regards the main steadings, there are well-placed houses and buildings on four of the eight farms (see Fig. 9). On three others there are good steadings, though they are not so conveniently sited as they might be. There is no steading on the eighth farm, but this is the grazing farm, and being near a village it could be worked from there. Alternatively, there is a good site on the farm where a new steading could be built.

Thus, on farm A there is a good steading, nearly central to the farm, on a good road.

On farm B there is a choice between three existing steadings, one in a village at one side of the farm, another on a road at the other side, and a third which is central to the arable land and 600 yards from a road. Alternatively, there is an almost central site on a good road where a new steading could be built.

On farm C there is a choice between a steading which now stands 400 yards from the road and a new one to be built on a central site on the road.

On farm D there is a similar choice.

On farm E a steading exists in the village, central to one side of the farm.

On farm F a new steading would be needed, unless one in a village about one-third of a mile from the farm were used.

On farm G there is a good steading on the outskirts of a village, central to the farm and on a good road.

On farm H there is a steading as on farm G.

Modern farms of 500 acres or so would need more accommodation than is provided by the existing steadings, most of which to-day serve much smaller farms. Moreover, as was mentioned earlier, it is by no means certain that much would be saved in the long run by trying to make use of buildings which are out of date, particularly in the way in which they squander labour. Completely new steadings, lightly constructed and capable of easy conversion to meet changing conditions, might not only be more suitable but might even turn out to be cheaper in the end. It must be recognized, however, that many people might prefer to make use of existing buildings, at any rate to the extent of using them as

the nucleus round which new workshops, garages, stores, and offices could be added as required. Were it decided to retain steadings which now lie off hard roads, they would be made a great deal more convenient by metalling or concreting the occupation roads and fencing them, so as to lighten transport and to avoid the continual opening and closing of gates with the attendant risks of straying live stock.

This, then, is an example of how a rationalized layout might work out in practice. It takes no account of the difficulties which stand in the way of reorganization, but it shows merely the sort of results that might be expected from the application of the principles which emerged from the foregoing discussion, in which the economic efficiency of agriculture was given precedence over other considerations. Looked at solely from that point of view, there can be little doubt that the new farms mark a great advance on the present layout. The typical farm is large enough to provide scope for the man of ability and initiative, yet not so large as to make his duties of organization and supervision burdensome. Its size, too, justifies the full use of modern machinery and equipment, not only for field operations but also for stationary work, thus avoiding the dilemma of the small farmer who has to choose between doing without mechanization or buying machines which he cannot fully employ. Then, again, the arable fields march together, and as their soils are much of the same kind, the cultivation policy and the equipment for carrying it out would be standardized for the farm. A unit of this size, too, enjoys the advantages that come from buying requisites in bulk, and it would afford whole-time secretarial and accounting work for a clerk and storekeeper.

There would be great savings of time and energy. The work in hand would not be held up while a broken part was taken to town to wait its turn to be repaired. The farm would have its own well-equipped central workshops, and the machinery would be in charge of the farm fitter, who would see to it that there were no avoidable breakages, and that urgent repairs were given priority. There would be much less coming and going than on many smaller but ill-arranged

farms; every job would be within easy reach, and a man sent to stop a small gap in a hedge would not be gone for the rest of the day.

These are some of the economic implications of the plan, and they are all on the credit side. The social effects are perhaps less clear-cut.

Even allowing a reasonable number of smallholdings, the plan implies a gradual reduction of some 60 per cent. in the number of farms, with a corresponding reduction, of course, in the number of farmers. Presumably this would happen only as the present generation gave up and farms could be thrown together, but in the end many men who would have become their own masters under the old arrangements would have to forgo this privilege under the new. The larger farms would offer responsible, if subsidiary, posts, however, which would be well paid and generally more attractive than the prospects for most of the small, struggling, individualist farmers. It cannot be claimed, however, that the change would represent nothing but gain, and it is a matter of opinion where the balance of advantage rests.

So far as the farm workers are concerned, there would be nothing but gain. Their numbers might not be so great as of those who could find employment under a policy of smallholdings and manual labour, but the openings for cutting down waste of time and effort, for introducing labour-saving machinery and for skill in handling it, would render each man's work more productive and therefore better paid. And apart from wages it is fundamental to the plan that it should include an almost revolutionary improvement in the amenities of village life.

Turning to the position of the landowners, great changes would be called for if the plan were to be carried through exactly as drawn, and so long as agricultural efficiency were the prime motive it is difficult to see how to avoid a great deal of disturbance. The multiplicity of ownerships, together with the lack of correlation between the boundaries of properties and the factors which make for good, modern farms, has been shown to be a major obstacle in redesigning

a satisfactory layout. Further, so long as engrossment of farms remained a part of the plan, as in this area it surely must, the landowners could not avoid being greatly affected. It is not inconceivable that some method could be found by which the owners of the several holdings which, when thrown together, might constitute one of the larger farms on the new plan, could continue as owners of their original properties. One of their number, or a small committee of them, might be given executive powers to carry out the duties of the whole body. The remainder, however, would lose many of their privileges and most of their responsibilities, and would merely receive the net rent of that proportion of the farm which occupied their land. Some of their capital in buildings no longer needed would be lost, while the new capital required for new buildings would bring in smaller returns, as rents presumably would be lower.

There is one class of landowner who would be much more seriously affected, namely the small owner-occupier who is so characteristic of the Survey area. He might continue as owner in the modified way described, but it would be very exceptional for him to be able to remain as an occupier.

Unless the execution of the plan were to be postponed until existing owners parted with their interests in the ordinary course—which would be to defer action indefinitely—it would seem that disturbance of some kind must be faced. Would it be possible, without detracting too much from the advantages of the scheme, to lessen the disturbance by drawing the boundaries of the new farms in a way such that no owner would have his land partitioned more than it is already? In other words, could each new farm be planned so as to consist of a group of properties, the owners of which would be the composite landlord of the new farm? If such a plan were to result in something less than the maximum of farming efficiency, it would at least avoid the maximum of disturbance of landowners.

Whether a compromise of this kind could be effected in any particular area or not, would depend very largely on the size and layout of the several properties, and for that reason

FARM BOUNDARIES RE-PLANNED (II) WITHOUT DISTURBING EXISTING ESTATE BOUNDARIES

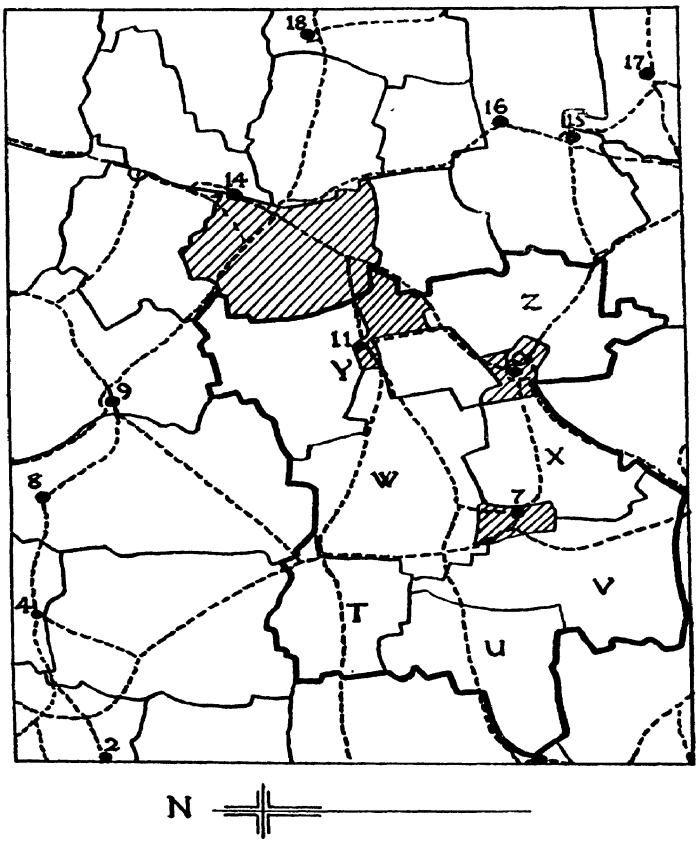


FIG. 10.

(II) SEVEN FARMS RE-PLANNED

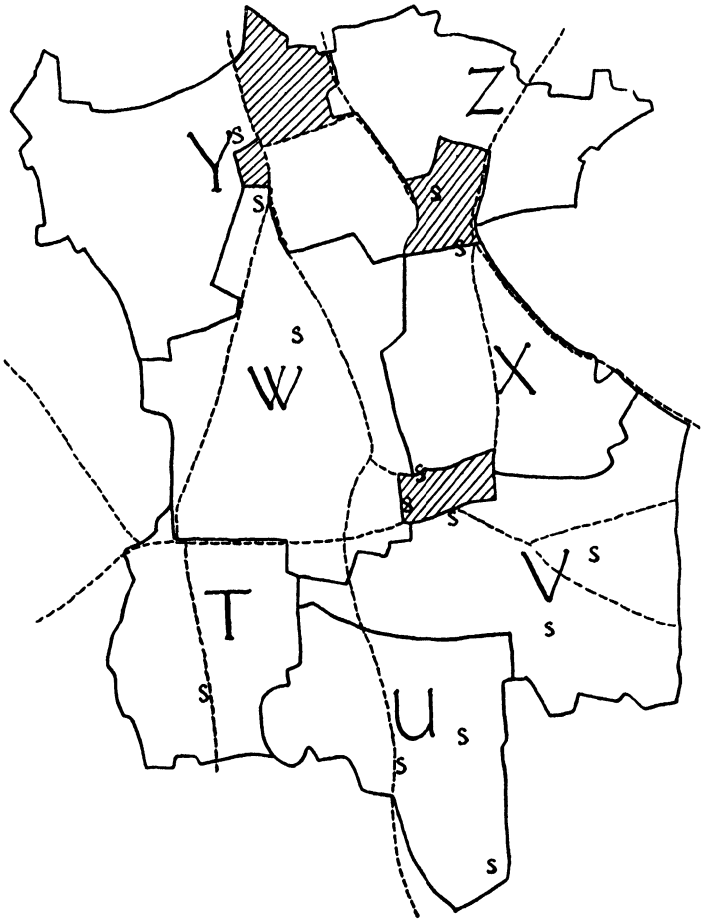


FIG. 11.

it would be a matter of chance. As a general proposition, therefore, a great deal more information would be needed than is provided by this Survey. But so far as the Survey area itself is concerned, an attempt has been made to draw up a plan on this basis, and the result, which is referred to as Plan II, is shown in Fig. 10. For detailed comparison with the agricultural efficiency Plan I, Fig. 8, seven of the farms are shown on a larger scale in Fig. 11. These cover an area which corresponds as nearly as possible with the eight farms of Plan I, Fig. 9.

Each of the farms in Plan II would comprise several properties (shown in Table XVI), but none of their boundaries would cut across the boundary of an estate.

TABLE XVI

Estates Comprised in Seven Specimen Farms (Plan II)

	No. of landowners		
Farm	*Owner-occupiers*	*Other*	*Total*
T	2	1	3
U	0	2	2
V	1	8	9
W	5	4	9
X	1	5	6
Y	0	3	3
Z	1	5	6

The number of landowners concerned with each farm would vary from two on farm U to nine on farms V and W, the awkward shapes of these two farms being due to the awkward shapes of some of the component properties. As in Plan I (Fig. 9), areas are available for smallholdings and allotments, the land set apart for these being owned by seven landlords.

The plan shows that in this area a farm layout on lines which take account of the various ownerships is at least possible. Whether it would involve too substantial a sacrifice of the other principles of planning—those based entirely on agricultural efficiency—is not easy to judge, but the following comparison between the two plans throws some light on the

question. Table XVII gives particulars of Plan II, corresponding to Table XV for Plan I (pp. 72–3).

TABLE XVII

Farm	*Shape and approximate size*	*Type of farm*	*Acreage*		
				Acres	
T	Roughly square. $\frac{7}{8}$ by $\frac{7}{8}$ mile	A light land, arable farm	1. A large block of sand	317	
			2. Interspersed among the sandy soils there are 8 pockets of heavy loam	55	
					372
U	L-shaped. 1 by $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles	A mixed farm	1. A large block of ironstone loam	195	
			2. A block of heavy loam	151	
			3. Two patches of sand (36, 3)	39	
			4. A small patch of ironstone loam	12	
					397
V	An irregular, inverted T. $1\frac{1}{2}$ by $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles	A mixed farm	1. A large block of ironstone loam	323	
			2. Two small blocks of the same (79, 15)	94	
			3. A block of heavy loam	158	
			4. Four other blocks of the same (62, 55, 1 and 1)	119	
			5. One patch of sand	6	
					700
W	An irregular rectangle. 1 by $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles	A mainly arable farm	1. A large block of sandy soils	330	
			2. Three other blocks of sandy soils (60, 13, 12)	85	
			3. A large block of heavy loam	204	
			4. Three patches of the same (24, 8, and 2)	34	
			5. A block of ironstone loam	161	
			6. A patch of the same	10	
					824
X	A blunt-ended triangle. $\frac{3}{4}$ by 1 mile	An arable farm	1. A block of ironstone loam	142	
			2. A patch of the same	7	
			3. A block of sandy soil	128	
			4. Two patches of heavy loam (35, 23)	58	
					335

Farm	*Shape and approximate size*	*Type of farm*	*Acreage*	Acres	
Y	An irregular rectangle. 1 by 2 miles	A mixed farm	1. A block of ironstone loam	150	
			2. A large block of heavy loam	366	
			3. 6 patches of sand scattered among No. 2 (48, 44, 31, 18, 7, and 4)	152	
					668
Z	An irregular square. 1 by 1¼ miles	A mainly arable farm	1. A large block of ironstone loam	190	
			2. A smaller block of the same	103	
			3. A small patch of the same	10	
			4. A block of heavy loam	106	
			5. A smaller block of the same	23	
			6. One patch of sand	15	
					447
					3,743
		Smallholdings, allotments, &c.	Alongside village A block of sand		26
		,,	Alongside village		
			1. A block of ironstone loam	131	
			2. A patch of clay	6	
					137
		,,	Alongside village		
			1. A patch of sand	22	
			2. A patch of clay	17	
			3. A patch of ironstone loam	10	
					49
					3,955

Shape and Size of Farms. So far as shape is concerned, no more than a glance at the two maps (Figs. 9 and 11) is needed to show that Plan I makes for more convenient farms. They are more symmetrical, and free from the indentations and protuberances which are unavoidable features of the farm boundaries in Plan II.

As to size, there is little to choose between the two plans. In Plan I the farms range from 397 acres to 654 acres,

averaging 521 acres. In Plan II they range from 335 to 824, averaging 535 acres. In each, the arable land is parcelled out so as to provide adequate scope for mechanical cultivation on nearly every farm.

Soils. It has been pointed out that, so far as is possible, the arable land of a farm should be of one kind and it should all lie together. Each of the two plans provides four arable, or mainly arable, farms. Two farms in Plan I have all their arable land of one kind and in one piece, another has 92 per cent. of it so, and only the fourth has so little as 61 per cent. in one piece. In Plan II, on the other hand, only one farm has all of its arable land in one piece.

Similarly, each plan provides three mixed farms, and it is seen again that the arrangement of the arable land on the farms in Plan I is better than it is on those in Plan II.

Taking all the farms together, Plan I disposes of 88 per cent. of the arable land in single blocks of homogeneous soil, the corresponding proportion in Plan II being only 67 per cent.

Access. It was noticed earlier that the area is well served by roads, so that it should be possible in almost any reasonable plan to avoid leaving fields excessively remote. Plan II, however, is rather less satisfactory in this connexion than Plan I.

Steadings. Either plan offers a wide choice of existing steadings, and good sites for new ones if they were preferred.

Summarizing the comparison between the two plans, it is clear that from the point of view of farming efficiency Plan I is to be preferred. On the score of convenience of working and of access it shows some advantage over Plan II, and on the much more important score of economical and efficient cultivation it is a long way ahead. There can be no doubt that, even in an area of small properties such as this, which gives considerable latitude in the drawing of new farm boundaries without cutting across ownership boundaries, it is impossible to preserve intact the purely agricultural principles of planning and at the same time to respect existing estate boundaries.

Whether some compromise such as that which is illustrated here would be possible or desirable on a comprehensive scale is again a matter of opinion. All that can be said is that, so far as this example goes, there is a conflict between maximum farm efficiency and private interests in property which cannot be ignored.

CHAPTER V

RURAL INDUSTRIES

AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES: Smiths. NON-AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES: Ironstone; Stone Quarrying; Brewing; Plush.

AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES

IN the Survey area agricultural industries are badly represented. A small hurdle-making business is carried on just outside the boundary of the area, but there is too little woodland to sustain woodland enterprises, and, apart from the non-agricultural industries described below, the only activities are those of a few village tradesmen, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, and saddlers, serving the farms.

Sixty years ago the industrial life of the area was better balanced, before the agricultural depression and changes in the organization of British industry had combined to make many little local enterprises obsolete. Every village had a working water-mill, and some had two, but with one exception they are now derelict or converted to other purposes. Every village, too, had at least one blacksmith, and in the larger ones there were saddlers and wheelwrights. Other trades or industries represented were maltsters, coopers, stonemasons, thatchers, and builders' men of every kind. The shoemaker, that is to say the man who made boots and shoes as distinct from those, to-day, who hand them out ready made over the counter, was ubiquitous, and there were one or two tailors.[1]

The turn-over from ploughland to grass in the last fifty years, and, more recently, the displacement of horses by the motor-car on the road and by the tractor on the farm, have almost eliminated the saddler. The wheelwright, too, has suffered loss of trade. Carts and wagons have been displaced, to some extent, by trailers and lorries, but these are well within the scope of the village wheelwright, and the reason of

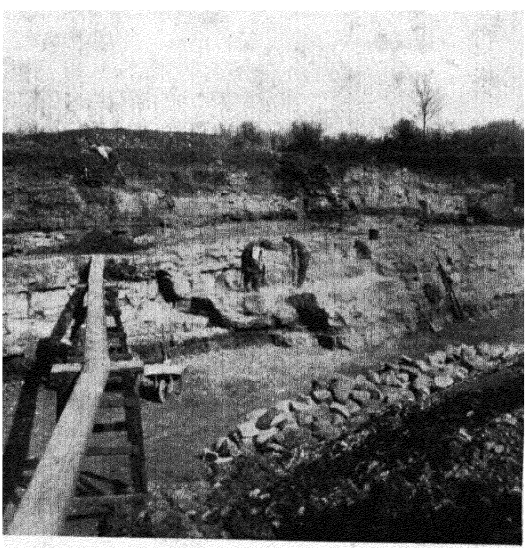
[1] Information from Kelly's Directories.

his decline is the increasing competition of factory products. It is impossible to avoid regretting the loss of local tradition in the construction and character of wagons and carts, produced by the finest craftsmanship and decorated with considerable artistic taste, for which the uniformity of the mass-produced lorry can never compensate. It serves its purpose and it is cheap, but village society is the poorer by the loss of the craftsmen whom it has put out of business.

Smiths. The smiths were the most numerous class in this category, and at one time it seemed that the motor would make them, too, almost obsolete. In the villages of the Survey area their numbers have fallen from sixteen to three during the last fifty years. Those who remained were making livings with difficulty by turning their skill to the production of wrought iron work and luxury goods. Recently, however, it has been realized that with the rapid increase in the use of machinery of all kinds on the farm, there is a great opening for the blacksmith's shop, modernized both in its equipment and in the training of its staff, to deal with its repair. Through the Rural Industries Committee of the County Rural Community Council, and its organizer, classes of instruction in oxy-acetylene welding and in tractor repairs have been arranged for blacksmiths, and through a Loan Equipment Fund administered by the National Council of Social Service, considerable sums have been advanced to them for the purchase of modern tools and machines.

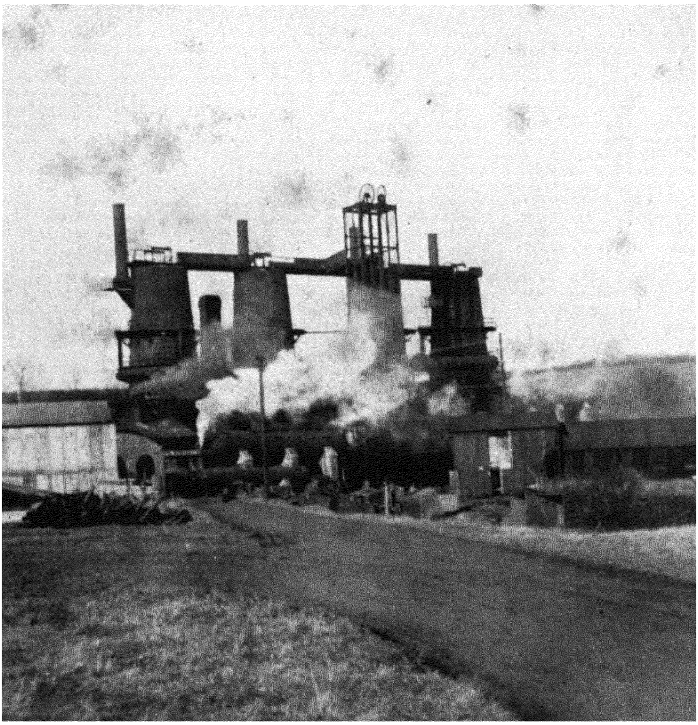
Advantage has been taken of these facilities in the Survey area by the three remaining smiths, who realize the great opening offered by the increasing mechanization of farming. The handicap, at present, is the congestion in shops which now are called upon to accommodate large machines brought in for overhaul, for which they were never designed. There are still horses to be shod, too, and the shake-out amongst the farriers has gone further than the substitution of machinery on the farm justifies. At the moment, it is probable that shoeing-smiths are more in demand in the Survey area than mechanics. The reason of the shortage is economic. There is no accepted scale of charges for





RURAL INDUSTRIES

Above: Blacksmith's shop and yard. *Below*: Stone quarrying



IRONSTONE WORKS

shoeing, and price-cutting has killed the trade. Young men want something better than a mere subsistence wage 'for scrambling about under a horse all day'.

Here, at all events, is one rural industry which may adapt itself to the conditions of modern usage; it may safely be conjectured that the village blacksmiths who have survived will not go the way of the miller, the maltman, the tanner, and the other country tradesmen who have vanished from the rural scene.

Non-agricultural Industries

Ironstone. In a good many places in this district of the Midlands, ironstone has been dug from time to time. In a corner of the Survey area digging has been carried on for the past fifty years, with varying success. Originally the stone was calcined at works adjacent to one of the larger villages of the area, but higher production costs led to the removal of this process elsewhere some twenty years ago. Employment in this small industry has fluctuated rather violently. It rose to sixty men during the industrial boom at the end of the last war, dropped to thirty when calcination ceased, and, still lower, to twenty men working only half-time, during the economic slump. Since then the industry has looked up once more, and under the stimulus of the war-time demand eighty men are employed, which is the maximum number possible with the present plant. Output has fluctuated at different times from 500 tons to nearly 4,000 tons a week. The quarries are operated by a South Wales company.

Ironstone workers are all local men, and they tend to come from the same families. They work a forty-eight-hour week, and their earnings in peace- or in war-time have been about twice as much as those of the local farm-workers. On the other hand, their employment is more precarious, and the long periods of depression from which the industry has suffered at intervals have left their mark upon the village.

The ironstone is relatively low-grade, and although there are reserves for a good many years to come at the present rate

of quarrying, production after the war is likely to suffer from the competition of higher-grade stone.

All the stone is hand-picked. While the workings, old and new, are perfectly obvious, there is nothing about them suggesting even remotely the devastation and spoliation which is raising such a problem in some other parts of the Midlands.

Stone quarrying. The local limestone is in demand for building, road-making and repairs, &c., and two small quarries on the western side of the Survey area are in operation.

Brewing. There is one small brewery supplying local houses, a few of which are tied to it. In normal times employment is given to about twenty men, all of whom live in the same village. If the present demand be sustained, the management estimates that employment and output could be increased by 50 per cent. Brewers' grains are sold wet to local dairy farmers, and there is a small demand for yeast from pig-keepers.

Plush. Mention must be made of an old industry which spread through a few villages on the northern border of the Survey area and outside it during the past 100 years or more—the manufacture of plush. The whole process, weaving, fulling, and dyeing, was carried on in various places and the plush from these little looms supplied uniforms and liveries for several European courts and Eastern potentates, as well as for many of the noble families of this country and for the gay cloaks dear to the Spanish races everywhere. The decline of royalty, the passing of the great houses and their liveried staffs, and changes in fashion, all combined to depress the industry, which has dwindled steadily since the last war. A few looms were still working in one of the villages when the present war broke out, and there were some apprentices in training, but the exigencies of war service carried them off. The factory failed, also, to secure an adequate allocation of wool, and, although one loom is still working, the industry seems unlikely to revive. There was a time when the big manor farm and the plush mill employed all the men in this village: to-day, nearly everyone goes away to work.

CHAPTER VI

RURAL ADMINISTRATION

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN RURAL AREAS. LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE SURVEY AREA: Parish Meetings; Parish Councils; Rural Districts. PUBLIC ASSISTANCE. THE FUTURE OF RURAL ADMINISTRATION: Parish and Rural District; The County Council; CONCLUSIONS.

IT is a far cry to the days when parochial government was a reality in which everyone took an active part. Then, the manor court was the administrative authority, and besides having full responsibility for the peace, the poor, the highways, &c., it exercised complete control over farming in the open fields. All freeholders and tenants of the manor had to attend the court, and its executive officers were selected from their number. Thus its people controlled their own affairs, social and industrial, by a scheme of administration maintained by the consensus of public opinion, without recourse to the law of the land and at very small cost.

All this has changed, and in place of attendance at the court, of sharing in the responsibility for its by-laws, of serving on the jury charged with the duty of securing the observance of such by-laws and fining offenders, of taking his turn as bailiff, constable, overseer, or surveyor—instead of this personal participation in the active administration of his parish, the rural dweller to-day can do no more than cast a vote for the election of someone to represent him on a larger local administrative unit, the executive functions of which are carried out by salaried officials. After holding up his hand at a Parish Meeting, or making a cross on a ballot paper, the man in the field has no further part nor lot in the administration of his country-side.

Local administration to-day is based upon the Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1894, the former having set up the County Councils, while the latter brought into being the District Councils, the Parish Councils, and the Parish Meetings. The Local Government Acts, 1929 and 1933, introduced

important modifications, particularly in the administration of Public Assistance.

Local Government in Rural Areas

The smallest unit of local government in the country is the rural parish, and the *Parish Meeting* is the foundation of administrative authority in the parish. The Parish Meeting under the existing law may be classified in the following categories:

i. A parish meeting established in a rural parish, *not* having a separate parish council, being thereby the local government authority for the parish and vested with executive powers and duties, meeting at least twice annually;
ii. A parish meeting established in a rural parish, having a separate parish council, vested with powers of supervision, authorization, and election of parish councillors, meeting at least once annually;
iii. A meeting of the electorate convened at any time by the chairman of the parish council, by any two parish councillors, or by any six local government electors.[1]

The *Parish Council* is elected triennially by the Parish Meeting in those villages with populations exceeding 300, and also in those smaller ones in which the Parish Meeting so resolves or to which the County Council has given permission to elect a Parish Council. Election of members is by nomination and show of hands at the Parish Meeting, though a ballot may be demanded.

To facilitate joint action in certain matters and some local centralization of administration, particularly of finance, parishes are grouped together in Rural Districts, under the *Rural District Council*, each constituent parish having the right to elect a representative to serve on it. He or she is not necessarily a member of the Parish Council where there is one, nor necessarily resident in the parish represented. Election takes place at a Parish Meeting held for the purpose.

The final authority in local administration is the *County*

[1] From *Local Government Reform as it affects the Rural Parish.* National Council of Social Service, 1943.

Council. Parishes are grouped to form Electoral Districts, each of which returns one representative.

This survey is not concerned to present a complete analysis of the present-day working of the whole local government system. It is concerned mainly with the work of the Parish Meeting and the Parish Council, although the impact of the larger bodies, the District Council and the County Council, on the affairs of the parish has to be brought into the account.

The field of work which appears to await the attention of Parish Meetings and Parish Councils is extensive and impressive. Here is a summary of their principal existing functions.[1]

Subject	*Scope of Powers*
1. Allotments and Gardens	Provision and management.
2. Lighting and Watching	Provision of public lighting.
3. Public Libraries	Provision and maintenance.
4. Baths and Wash-houses	Provision of public baths, bathing places, and wash-houses.
5. Burial Grounds	Provision and maintenance.
6. Public Improvements	Provision and maintenance of recreation grounds, walks, shelters, and seats (other than on public highways).
7. Land	Acquisition, disposal, and acceptance of gifts.
8. Offices	Provision.
9. Village Halls, Playing Fields	Provision and maintenance.
10. Rights of Way	Maintenance.
11. War Memorials	Maintenance and protection.
12. Postal and Telegraph Services	Payment of loss on services.
13. Gifts	Acceptance and administration.
14. Parochial Charities	Appointment of trustees and submission of accounts.
15. School Managers	Part appointment.
16. Expenses	Precepts and loans.
17. Sewerage and Water Supply	Notice of proposals.

[1] From *Local Government Reform as it affects the Rural Parish.* National Council of Social Service, 1943.

Small wonder if the would-be social reformer is stirred when he learns, for the first time, of this magnificent field of work. Small wonder, perhaps, if this should be followed by feelings of disillusionment and indifference when he learns that most of it is a mirage, owing to the statutory limitation of parochial expenditure to the produce of a rate which is rarely, if ever, sufficient to provide the public lighting, the libraries, the baths and wash-houses, the recreation grounds and playing-fields, and all the other services and amenities which were contemplated, apparently, when the Local Government Act was passed. Expenditure by the Council is limited to the produce of a fourpenny rate, though it may be as much as eightpence with the consent of a Parish Meeting. In practice, therefore, the smallest administrative bodies of our local government system are reduced to watching the interests of their parishes and recommending action to higher administrative bodies with wider financial powers, rather than taking direct action themselves. It will be useful to see how the system is working, to-day, in the Survey area.

Local Government in the Survey Area

Parish Meetings. Parish Meetings are the administrative organization in nearly half of the villages, the populations of which range from 158 to 332. With one exception it seems hardly too much to say that in all these villages the spirit of self-government is non-existent. In three of them there have been no Parish Meetings for years. 'If a Parish Meeting is summoned, nobody comes to it', said one chairman. In another village an annual meeting is held, but no interest is taken in it. 'The chairman and myself were the only people present last time', said one of the villagers. In most of these places the general practice seems to be for the chairman of the Parish Meeting to continue in office from year to year and to do anything that has to be done, after consultation, possibly, with one or two friends. 'When he has had enough', he arranges for someone else to take the job, calls a Parish Meeting, and gets it settled. Sometimes he will not take even this small amount of trouble. In one place, in which the

chairman is seldom resident, he himself does nothing nor does he call a meeting to elect someone in his place. One or two people remarked that 'something ought to be done', but they would not go to the length of sending him an official demand for a Parish Meeting. The apathy displayed may be more than merely regrettable. In one village the chairman is also chairman of the charity trustees, and to-day he is sole trustee, for death vacancies have not been filled. 'Supposing he dies,' a villager said, 'there's nobody who would know anything about it'.

In two of the villages, administered by Parish Meetings, the opinion was volunteered that all villages should have Parish Councils. On the whole, people willing to express their opinions say that they do not like one man being, as it were, judge and jury of village affairs. 'What we want is a Parish Council and then we might get something done.' They do not seem to know that the Parish Meeting could resolve to elect a Council, if public opinion could be stirred up to demand it.

Local government in those villages of the Survey area with only a Parish Meeting is nearly everywhere a farce. This is not to say that the Parish Meeting system cannot be made to work, for in special circumstances it has proved itself effective. In one small village where there is an endowed school, a number of public-spirited people associated with it have educated the villagers in their rights and duties as citizens, such as why an empty house pays no rates, or how local charities are administered. Subjects affecting the people are discussed at the annual Parish Meeting, and raised again at subsequent meetings. In one year, when a water scheme was under discussion, the Parish Meeting met six times, and eventually carried it through. This successful undertaking was due less, however, to the excellence of the administrative machinery for getting such things done than to the energy and persistence of one or two public-spirited people.

It should be recorded that one person in this place preferred the Parish Meeting to the Parish Council as an instrument of public business, on the ground that the general body

of the people did not know the run of the discussions inside a Parish Council meeting, whereas at open meetings of the electors of the parish 'everybody could have their say'. Again, however, there seems to be some lack of information about the powers of the electors, or some reluctance to use them, for a Parish Meeting must always be called on the demand of any six electors who wish to raise a particular issue, so that the advantage of public discussion need not be lost in the deliberations of a Parish Council.

Parish Councils. These are elected in the villages of the rest of the area, generally, of course, the larger villages with populations, three of them, of over a thousand. At the other end of the scale four of those having Parish Councils are below the 300 mark. In these small villages the number of councillors elected is five, while in the larger ones they range from eleven to fourteen. The larger councils generally have their own clerk, paid or unpaid, and they meet regularly, about four or six times a year. Usually there has been some competition for seats on the Council. Representation tends to be restricted to the clergy, farmers, and 'retired gentlemen', although in the larger villages there has been a tendency, lately, to have a sprinkling of working-class representatives. The smaller the Council, the more likely is it that the members will be drawn all from one class. The method of election does little to help to ensure satisfactory representation. Elections to the Parish Council are by show of hands at the Parish Meeting. In such a small community as a village, where everybody knows everybody, this seems particularly ill-advised. Not one of the people interviewed in the Survey area supported this method of election, while the opinion was repeatedly expressed that election should be by ballot. Apart from removing the fear of giving offence, the ballot system itself would help to create interest in local affairs by making people aware of their responsibilities as electors.

The importance of this question is strikingly illustrated by an election in the Survey area a few years ago. After the result of the elections by show of hands had been declared, six of the electors demanded a ballot, the results of which

were almost a complete reversal of the hand-counting. Six persons were elected to the Council; one man who had received 20 votes 'by hand' polled over 100, and the candidate who had been at the bottom of the hand-count received more votes by the ballot-box than were given to the one who received most by show of hands. Counting votes by show of hands is a complex business when there are as many as twelve councillors to be elected, and the method is open to abuse. One man who scraped on to a council with 20 hands to his credit was told afterwards by a friend of his who was one of the tellers, 'And you wouldn't have got twenty if I hadn't added a few!'

The business which Parish Councils have to transact is generally very small. Unless the village is being stirred by some burning question, such as electrification or water-supply, little interest is shown. Their duties cover the same field as that of the Parish Meetings, their main function being to draw the attention of higher authorities to jobs that want doing. The chairman of one of the smaller Parish Councils in the area, who acts also as clerk, said that his only regular duties concerned the allotments. In another village a member said that the Parish Council did little except to deal with allotments and foot-paths. In still another of the smaller villages the Council was reported as dealing with 'charities, stiles, and foot-paths'. The chairman of a fourth, who has held that office for twenty years, said his Council does nothing, and 'needs new blood'.

In one of the larger villages a relatively active Parish Council deals with the burial ground, street lighting, allotments, foot-paths, and certain charities. In another the clerk said that practically all the powers conferred by the Local Government Act, 1894, had now been transferred to the Rural District Council or the County Council, and the public interest which the Act had aroused had consequently died out. As he has been in office ever since the Act was passed, his opinion is valuable.

Rural Districts. The Local Government Act, 1894, provided for the grouping of rural parishes in convenient

numbers and areas to form Rural Districts. Each constituent parish is entitled to send one councillor to represent it on the Rural District Council, who must be elected by ballot should there be more than one nomination. As originally constituted, the District Councils were the rating authority, and they had responsibilities in the districts generally for public health and sanitation, repair of certain highways, &c., for which a general rate was levied upon all parishes. Further, they could undertake work in considerable variety on behalf of their constituent parishes. Thus, a parish unable to secure land for allotments, or desirous of a water-supply or a sewerage system, could apply to the District Council, following a resolution of a Parish Meeting, for the provision of these things. The decision in such matters rested with the Rural District Council, and if the services required were provided, the Council, as the rating authority, would levy a special rate on the parish benefiting, or even on a part of the parish if only a part of it benefited, as might happen, for example, with a sewerage scheme, to provide for interest and sinking-fund charges on the capital cost involved, and for maintenance of the works.

It is sometimes said that the Parish Councils are unable to do much because of their very restricted financial powers, for they are only entitled to incur expenditure not exceeding a sum represented by a 4*d.* rate—or 8*d.* if approved by a Parish Meeting. With so small a sum—a penny rate in some of the small parishes in the Survey area would bring in about £3—obviously very little can be done. This was undoubtedly one of the reasons why most of the powers given to Parish Councils by the Act of 1894 were taken over by the Rural District Council. 'The Parish Council can't even spend £5 on the War Memorial without the consent of the County Council', said a parish councillor.

A more real restriction, however, on the effectiveness of the Parish Councils is their personnel. Consisting largely of farmers and property owners, the councils are unwilling, it is often said, to press for improvements in village life, such as scavenging, water-supply, sewerage, housing, &c., for fear of

increased rates. This bogy is apt to appear whenever any improvement is proposed. If a village desires sewerage, water, or scavenging, a Parish Meeting must be called and if the proposal be agreed, the Rural District Council is asked to take the necessary steps to provide the service, the cost of which—or, in special cases, part of the cost—must be borne by the parish in question by the addition of a 'special' rate to the general rate. For example, one of the larger parishes in the Survey area is paying a special rate of 8*d.* for sewerage, in addition to the general rate; another pays 5*s.* 2*d.* extra for sewerage, water, and scavenging, while the third pays 1*s.* 6*d.* extra under the same headings. Amongst the smaller parishes, one pays a special rate of 2*s.* 5*d.* for water and scavenging, another pays 10*d.* extra for sewerage, and a third 1*s.* 8*d.* for water. The other parishes in the Survey area have none of these services for the villagers generally, though the big houses in all the villages have their own private services, and consequently there are no additions to the rates. It follows that there is no equality of services or of rates in rural areas, even amongst villages within the same Rural District. Thus, in one of the parishes of the Survey area the annual rate amounts to 15*s.* 4*d.* (10*s.* 2*d.* general rate and 5*s.* 2*d.* special rate), while in another, four miles away, it is 10*s.* (general rate) only, no services being provided. This, it is suggested, is a highly unsatisfactory state of affairs. It means, first, that property owners who fear increased rates can block all proposals for providing certain services for the people, most, if not all of which are, in fact, no more than the ordinary decencies of twentieth-century existence, and such as are the common expectation of every town dweller. This blocking will occur either on the Parish Council or on the Rural District Council or on both, if necessary. Secondly, it means that costs of public administration are spread unevenly over the villages, and a small, progressive place may have to carry a heavy burden of rates. If services such as sewerage, water, scavenging and lighting were provided wholesale over a wide area, instead of piecemeal, costs would be less, and better services would be provided.

What the larger area should be, who should be the controlling authority, and how the provision of the services should be made and maintained, are large questions. It was suggested during the Survey that the Rural District should be the unit of organization of services, and that special rates would then be merged in the general rate. It is probable that services maintained by Public Health authorities, such as, for example, Infant Welfare Clinics, can be organized best in districts relatively small. A water-supply, on the other hand, might be provided most efficiently if it covered a large part of a county or parts of two or three counties, for natural watersheds take no account of local administrative boundaries. The distribution of electricity, again, should be organized, probably, even more widely, and a national basis might not be too large. It does not seem sufficient, therefore, to propose that the existing provision for the supply of certain services and the payment for them on a parish basis should be abolished, and that, instead, the Rural District should be the unit both for the organization of the services and for the levy to defray their cost. This is possible already, and operative in some places, but it does not go far enough, and the problem will have to be examined in further detail later in this report.

Public Assistance

A word is necessary about the administration of Public Assistance, for the changes introduced by the Local Government Act, 1929, which abolished the local Boards of Guardians and transferred their work to the County Councils, affected rural communities particularly.

The Boards of Guardians were identical, for all practical purposes, with the Rural District Councils, their members sitting first as one body and then as the other. For the administration of the Poor Law the essential difference in organization, then and now, was that every parish elected a Guardian to represent it on the Board. In the multitude of little villages up and down the country, of which those in the Survey area are typical, the practical effect was that each parish had a Guardian who knew, probably, or who could

always find out very easily, all the circumstances of the sick and needy and could represent them to the Board. Under the new organization by counties, areas have been constituted under Guardians' Committees, each of which has a paid Public Assistance Officer, or sometimes two, whose duty it is to investigate cases, to report to the Committee, to pay out-relief, and so forth. This officer normally attends at each of the villages in his area for an hour or two on a stated day in each week.

At the time of the Survey there were comparatively few cases of destitution in the area, and in some of the smaller villages the officer was not attending regularly as there was nothing for him to do. At the larger villages he was regularly in attendance. A member of the Guardians' Committee living in one of them said that the actual duties in connexion with poor relief were largely done by the officer, and it was exceptional for the Committee to refuse to confirm anything he had done. As the Committee meets only monthly, a fair amount is left to the discretion of the officer—particularly in times less prosperous than the present. The Committee decides on the amount of relief to be given in every case, each being decided on its merits. There is no scale of payments, at least no written scale, but in actual fact the members of the Committee do carry a rough scale in their heads, and the sort of remark that is commonly made when considering a case, such as, 'Let's see, how much do we usually give in the case of a widow and five children?' is proof of this. But the Guardians' Committee in the Survey area refuses to draw up a scale of relief—the common argument against such a course being, 'We don't want to do that, or it might transpire that we were giving more (or less) than X committee.' This seems an argument with nothing to commend it, and to an outsider it is surprising that there should not be some standard scale of reliefs—which, of course, the Committee could vary in particular cases.

In one village it was said that, on the whole, people are not nowadays ashamed of accepting relief—the fact that relief is now called public assistance has helped. Nevertheless, old-

age pensioners are always glad when they can get supplementary pensions, as a good many of them now do, and can 'come off' public assistance.

There were few complaints about the working of the Guardians' Committee, or of the Public Assistance Officer, or about the relief. The present administration under the County Council was compared by one man with the old system under the Board of Guardians. He told of an old man who had worked 60 years for the same farmer, and then had to appear before the Guardians for relief. The farmer was on the Board and after hearing the old man's plea, rapped out, 'Give him a 1*s.* a week or let him go into the House'. This cannot be regarded as typical, in any way, of the work of the old Boards of Guardians, and it must be remembered that the social legislation which provided Old Age Pensions and National Health and Unemployment Insurance has done more to alleviate the hardship of sickness, destitution, and old age than all the recent changes in the administration of the Poor Law.

Two improvements were suggested by people in the Survey area. First, it was considered that a definite scale of reliefs should be introduced; second, it was thought that Guardians' Committees might deal with cases with greater understanding and sympathy if a proportion of their members were drawn from the classes which supply most of the cases applying for relief.

The Future of Rural Administration

Parish and Rural District. The problem at this stage is the efficiency of the present scheme of parochial and district organization. Everyone in the Survey area with whom these matters were discussed was opposed to any extension of the present executive powers of the Parish Councils. At the same time, no one wished to see the councils abolished. Criticism was not so much of the Parish Councils, which most people think of as existing 'to express to higher authorities the aspirations of the local people', but of the higher authorities

for not taking action on their requests. 'When our Parish Council makes a representation to the R.D.C. or to the County Council', said one villager, 'nothing is done.' In proof of this stricture, he told how their clerk had asked the County Council to clean up the village streets, which they did once, but never came again. On the other hand, another man in the same village seemed quite satisfied—'the Parish Council meets and they talks things over amongst themselves'. At another place in the area, too, the remark was made: 'Anything we want doing is referred to the R.D.C. who are quite helpful.' Perhaps the inhabitant of a place having only a Parish Meeting made the strongest case for the retention of the parochial organization, when he said, 'Local people do know local conditions'. The restriction of their powers, however, to making representations, was urged in another of the smaller villages 'because there are not enough people competent to do things'. Not unnaturally, perhaps, dissent from this point of view was strongly expressed by a prominent resident in one of the larger villages, who said that the Parish Council knew far more about its needs than the Rural District Council, and if it had real responsibility the people would take more active interest in local affairs. The undoubted apathy, he thought, was not surprising, because the main concerns of most people—proper housing, sanitation, &c.—were for all practical purposes outside the province of the Parish Council.

This question of the relative powers of Parish and Rural District Councils raises the issue of the effectiveness of the latter in local government. With one exception, all Rural District Councillors interviewed deplored the encroachment of the County Council. 'The R.D.C. is the most competent local unit, for each member of it knows the needs of the parish he represents.' It should be noted, however, that parish representatives are not necessarily members of their own Parish Councils and the views they hold may conflict with those of the Council. There was a case in the Survey area some time ago, where a request from a Parish Council for a water-supply was successfully opposed on the Rural District

Council by its own parish representative, until a serious drought brought home to him the need.

As things are at present, action by Rural District Councils is held up for lack of money. A penny rate in the Rural District in which the Survey area is situated brings in about £200, so that a district rate of a shilling (the proportion of the total rate retained by the district) only gives them £2,400 to spend. Almost their only business is to administer the Housing and Public Health Acts, and to act as the assessment and rating authority. Even in these matters it was complained that effectiveness was restricted 'by red tape and lack of money'. The example of the new farm-workers' cottages was given. 'If the Government had said, "You are to build 20 cottages, get on with it", the job would have been done by now.' This man thought that organization should be from the bottom upward and outward, that is to say, from the Parish Councils up to the Rural District Councils and then outwards by co-operation between neighbouring Rural Districts. This, he thought, would facilitate the organization of comprehensive schemes, notably water-supplies, which should cover wider areas. Instead, the tendency seemed to be to organize more and more from the top downwards, from Whitehall through the County Council—so that the Rural District Councils would become mere district offices of the County Councils and the voices of the village people would not be heard at all.

The parochial basis of representation on the Rural District Council is the cause of serious difficulties in its work. The boundaries of the Rural District being purely arbitrary and fixed entirely for administrative convenience, it follows that there is no such thing as district loyalty on the part of its members, in the sense that loyalty and affection are given to the parish or county. As a result, Rural District Councillors tend to put the good of their own parishes before the good of the district as a whole. This parochialism is a real stumbling-block, and it is often inimical to the best interests of the parishes themselves. As an instance, the Rural District Council of the Survey area had proposed the organization of

a comprehensive scheme for the collection of salvage from all the villages. It was turned down because some of them had already organized make-shift schemes of their own, and their representatives opposed the general scheme on the grounds of expense (it might have meant 1*d.* or 2*d.* on the rates), and in the 'our-scheme-is-good-enough-for-us' spirit. In the absence of any real corporate feeling, it is difficult to see how this narrow approach to the work of the Rural District Councils can be reformed.

If the Rural District Council is to be retained, either in its present form or with added responsibilities, there seems to be general agreement in the area that it needs a good deal of reform, particularly in its personnel. Each parish in the district elects one representative, by ballot if an election be called for, but more often than not the same representative is returned, unopposed, time after time. Only people with some leisure and means are able to act as councillors, for meetings are held in working hours and no payments for loss of time or for travelling expenses are made. This means that the councils are composed almost entirely of landowners, clergy, farmers, owners of businesses, 'retired gentlemen', and the like, for it is virtually impossible for any working man to contemplate election. The Rural District Council of the Survey area is a representative body only in so far as it includes people from most of the professions and vocations, and two women. It is unrepresentative in that there are very few members directly representing the working classes, who make up the bulk of the population. Nine-tenths of the councillors are reckoned to be independent or retired. Further, it is an aged body, about half the members being over 60 and only two of them under 40 years of age. 'Whatever powers the R.D.C. gets, it will never function properly until it gets better personnel.'

If this be agreed, how is the personnel to be improved? A good deal would be achieved if it were made possible for wage-earners to attend. At present, two days in each month are required for the meetings of the local Rural District Council. They are held in working hours, in the near-by

market town, and no expenses are paid. Two simple reforms would make it possible for working men to accept nomination. First, employers should be obliged to release employees who happened to be councillors, for attendance at meetings. Second, councillors should be reimbursed for wages lost through attendance at meetings, and for travelling expenses necessarily incurred. In summer-time an alternative to the first proposal would be to hold all District Council meetings in the evening, as are all Parish Meetings. With these reforms, it should be open to any competent person to accept nomination for the Rural District Council, and this might bring about its real invigoration. Another reform urgently needed, however, is to secure that the parish representatives should also be members of their Parish Councils; if not already members, they should be co-opted on election to the Rural District Council. It would be impossible, then, for the anomalous situation noted above to arise, in which a recommendation from the parish to the Rural District Council was opposed by its own representative.

The idea prevails in many places that a contest for a seat on the Rural District Council is a personal matter between the candidates. If a member who has represented his parish for several years past be challenged, he is inclined to resent it as a personal reflection, whereas it should be regarded merely as a sign of awakened interest in what should be a truly democratic rural administrative system.

The County Council. It is not the purpose of this survey to deal at any length with the organization of local administration under the County Council. The recent tendency seems to be to centralize the administration of rural affairs more and more in the hands of this body, while, on the other hand, the impression created by investigation in the Survey area is that few people feel any association whatever with the county organization, nor any personal responsibility for it.

The reasons are not far to seek. Everything that has been said about representation on the Rural District Council applies equally to the County Council—only more so. County Councillors are drawn almost exclusively from land-

owners and farmers and people of independent means. In many instances they have given and are giving real service to the community, but in a democracy other interests should be represented, and this is virtually impossible until members can claim payment for time lost and for expenses incurred in attending meetings of the Council and its committees. Elections for the County Council are as rare as they are for the Rural District Council. When a member wishes to retire, he will arrange, normally, for a successor. The parishes in the Survey area fall into four electoral divisions, and in no one of them was the election of the present representative contested.

In fact, the County Council is a self-perpetuating body, for all practical purposes, which depends a great deal upon a team of very efficient officials, and it is in this that it has the advantage of the Rural District Council which cannot often afford to employ full-time, highly qualified, professional men.

Conclusions

Clearly, there is plenty of scope for some reconsideration of the organization of local government. The need for certain reforms is obvious. It is a question whether the Parish Meeting should not give place everywhere to the Parish Council. In the county of the Survey area, 40 per cent. of the rural parishes have nothing more than a Parish Meeting, which too often means, in practice, that there is no parochial organization at all.

There are good grounds for suggesting that the election of members for the Parish Council by show of hands should be abolished and that the ballot should be compulsory.

The Chairman of the Parish Council might be given more standing, with the title, perhaps, of Chairman of the Parish. He should be the person to whom any stranger to the place would naturally apply for information. In fact, his position would be somewhat analogous to that of the *maire* of a French village.

There is clear evidence that the chosen representative of

the Parish on the Rural District Council ought, *ex officio*, to be a member of the Parish Council, if not one already.

Members both of the Rural District Council and of the County Council should be entitled to payment for time lost and for expenses necessarily incurred in attending meetings. Employers, also, should be required to release workmen elected to either of these bodies for the time necessary for service upon them.

Generally, everything possible should be done to remove the present apathy towards local government. The survey showed that there is very little interest in it among the ordinary people. The older people put up with their primitive living conditions, believing there is no remedy. The younger people put up with things so long as they have to, and move off into towns when they can. The broadening of the basis of representation is the first step, and education, both in school and in adult classes, could do much to arouse in young and old a sense of their personal responsibility for the present state of affairs, good or bad. A less popular, but possibly more effective, measure would be the abolition of the practice of compounding with landlords for the payment of cottage rates. In theory, of course, every householder pays rates. In practice, a large number of them pay only through their rents, and the rating authority levies upon their landlords. Direct payment for the cost of local government might do more than anything else to arouse the sense of responsibility for it. It may be expected, too, that the war-time organizations for Civil Defence will have developed responsibility and qualities of leadership latent in many people and by no means the monopoly of any one class of the community.

When all is done, however, there remains the fundamental problem of the finance of local government. In the last resort, it is not a question of whether there should be a Parish Meeting or a Parish Council, or whether the Rural District Council or the County Council should be the body responsible for doing this or that. These are matters merely of relative efficiency and expediency. The big question is how to provide and pay for, in sparsely populated districts and

amongst small communities, the public services of all kinds which are available, nowadays, to the great mass of the people resident in larger communities. It is a question which will come up again when the standard of these services in rural areas to-day is under consideration.

CHAPTER VII

HOUSING AND THE PUBLIC SERVICES

THE VILLAGES. THE HOUSES: The Old Cottages; The 'Addison' Houses, 1919; The 1924 Scheme; The Reconditioning Scheme, 1926; The 1936 Scheme; The Housing Act, 1938; The Agricultural Workers' Houses, 1943. THE PUBLIC SERVICES: Water; Sewerage; Light and Heat; Scavenging. RECONDITIONING AND IMPROVEMENT: Maintenance; Reconstruction; Roofs; Accommodation. THE POST-WAR PERIOD: Demand; Principles of Policy.

'One cannot move about the countryside without realizing that many of the farm houses and farm buildings are a social and economic disgrace to Britain. Still more disturbing is the obsolescence, inadequacy of accommodation, and the insanitary and derelict condition of a large proportion of the cottages of rural workers.'

'It's all very well to have a house that looks like a Christmas card, but it's better to have one that's watertight.'

THE first of these quotations is from the Presidential Address delivered to a Property Owners' Association by the general manager of one of the great building societies. The second is the *obiter dictum* of a country plumber.

In some of the foregoing chapters the economy of the farming system under the present layout of fields and farms has been considered. The Survey area demonstrates clearly enough that the amount of reconstruction and re-equipment which is needed to remove the handicaps under which farming is practised is very considerable. Turning from the economic to the social side of rural life, from the sphere of men's work to that in which the woman rules, housing and the public services rank first, and call for the fullest examination. It would be useless, surely, to improve the position of the farm worker and his earning capacity, while leaving the conditions of his home life at a mid-Victorian level, with all that this imposes in the way of domestic drudgery, physical discomfort, and too often, it may be feared, of physical unfitness, on his wife and family.

The rural scene owes much of its beauty to the architecture

of its humbler dwellings. Nothing is more characteristic of any locality than the form and structure of its older cottages: stone walls and mullioned windows, in districts of building stone; timber framing with mud-and-stud, or later, with brick filling or weather tiles, in the woodland districts; brick, in the clay country, or brick and flint where chalk and clay converge; while here and there, where small deposits of suitable material occur, or where skill in handling some particular stuff was developed, delightful survivals of some bygone local building tradition. Roofs, too, may be equally characteristic: thin stone slates where the local stone would split; great heavy slabs where it would not, and where strong oak timber was available for rafters, purlins and principals to support them; tiles of various kinds in the clay country; thatch, anywhere and everywhere in the southern half of England—wheat or rye straw commonly, but reed in a few places in the east.

More recently, however, the desire for the utmost economy in building construction, and facilities for cheap transport, have introduced brickwork and slate into every part of the country, and the all-conquering 'Flettons' and thin Welsh slates, blue or purple, have made their appearance in many unsuitable settings.

The Villages

The villages of the Survey area have a definite local character, and there has been singularly little admixture of modern styles and materials. The area is so exclusively agricultural, and so remote, until recently, from the pressure of industrialism, that the demand for new houses has been very small. Agriculture has not been an expanding industry for a long time. The decline of arable farming during the past two generations, together with the increasing use of machinery, have reduced the demand for labour, and the evidence of the villages is that there are fewer houses, not more, than there used to be. In the Survey area, too, few replacements, if any, have been called for, such as were common enough in districts of less substantial building, for

the local material is stone, rich, orange-brown stone, which outcrops here and there in the neighbourhood, and it has been used everywhere in rugged courses of rubble walling. Doors and windows are furnished with the traditional drip-stones, door-jambs are of dressed stone, the windows stone-mullioned, with deep interior splays. There is no local stone, however, which will split to give stone slates like those of the true Cotswold country, and these have been imported only for the more important buildings, while the roof coverings of the cottages and farm buildings are straw thatch. These local materials, with their rich colour and rough texture, used as they are with little architectural ornament and with an instinctive sense of proportion, impart real character, charm, and dignity to the villages of the Survey area.

Omitting the three larger ones, there is a great similarity between village and village. Parishes are so small that the inclosure of the open fields caused little change in the location of the population. Farm workers live, for the most part, in the villages, walking or cycling to their work, and about half of the farm-houses and buildings lie in the villages too. The gain to the social life of this arrangement is obvious, but the absence of any provision of the public services, almost complete everywhere in the Survey area notwithstanding this concentration of population within the villages, is a problem which will have to be considered.

There is only one big country house in the area, a fine example of Tudor, and earlier, architecture, standing in a small park, and there are two smaller ones. The absence of others is explained, probably, by the high proportion of corporate, non-resident landlords in the area—colleges and schools. The number of small freeholds is large.

In the larger villages the composition of the buildings and of the community is more mixed. They owe their relative importance to the positions that they occupy on one or other of the two main roads. They contain more residential property, more new buildings, and one of them has developed a small housing estate. Two at least of them have higher proportions of industrial workers—engaged locally, for the

most part, in one of them, in the other, going out to work in a factory some miles away. Neither of these two, nor any other places in the Survey area, can be said to be 'dormitory' villages in the sense that strangers are invading them in any numbers. What was happening before the war was that agricultural workers were becoming industrial-minded with the opportunity of better-paid work within reach, but there was a declared reluctance, on their part, to leave their villages in favour of the town. The great increase in the industrial demand for labour which has arisen since, raises, at once, the whole question not so much of the location of industry as of the location of industrial workers' dwellings. Given a new factory in a rural area, should its workers be housed in a garden village or model housing-estate laid out around it, or should advantage be taken of available transport facilities to assimilate them in groups to the village communities already established within, say, a ten-mile radius of the factory? And if the second alternative be preferable, how should the new additions to the old villages be made, so as to secure the maximum of assimilation with the minimum of discordancy?

The common practice both of Local Authorities and of speculating builders is to select sites on the edges of the villages—a field, or the village allotments—upon which to execute their housing schemes. The new houses, raw as most new houses must be, stand out stark and staring on the bare site, with no setting, no background, their gardens mere pieces of land fenced off from the field, without a tree or a bush or even a hedgerow to suggest a natural boundary. Inevitably, the new houses are the most remote from shops, inns, schools, and places of worship. Inevitably, all the tenants are new-comers, strangers, probably, to the villagers and to each other. If there be enough of them, they may come to form a community of themselves, but not for a long time will they assimilate themselves to the old community so as to form one unit for social purposes, and it will be difficult for the village to escape classification, in future, as being of the 'dormitory' type.

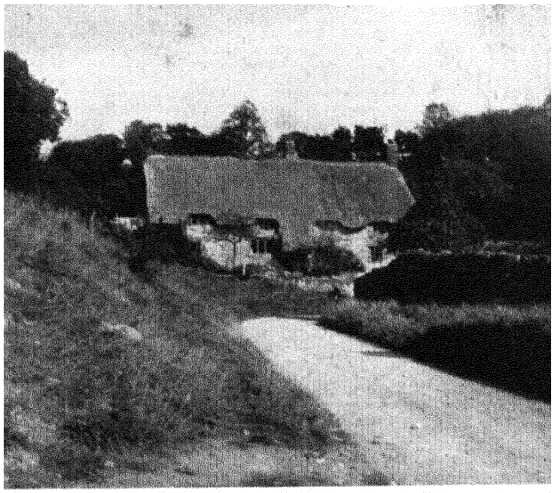
On the other hand, there are arguments for building on a clean site, on which there is ample room to allow of a good layout, and where land may not have such inflated values as in the village itself.

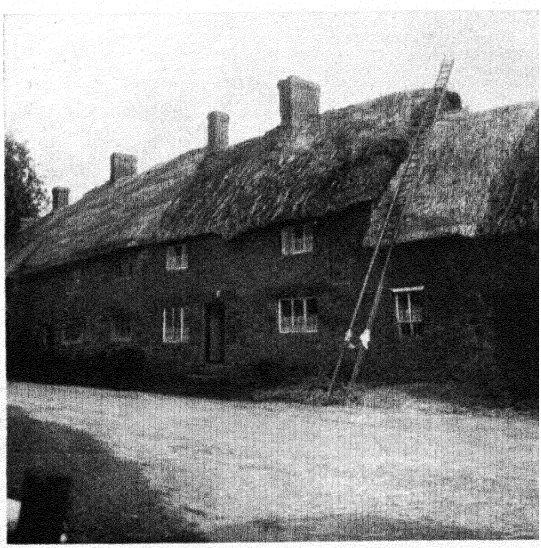
The alternative is to join the pleasant huddle of houses centred on the church and the inn, by taking advantage of every vacant site upon which a house or houses could be built, with due regard to air-space and lights. This policy would enable full advantage to be taken, in the most economical way, of public services such as are available in the village. It would avoid the segregation of the new-comers, and would tend to promote their absorption into the community life. It would almost compel attempts to harmonize the new buildings with any local traditional styles, whereas recent experience in the Survey area shows that satellite estates are put up in the manner most economical at the moment, untrammelled by local building conventions.

The most obvious disadvantages of adding to the housing within the village are the higher site values, and the impossibility, almost certain, of being able to provide adequate gardens adjacent to the houses.

The Houses

The houses of the Survey area fall into fairly definite categories. There are the really old cottages which have survived in large numbers to the present day by reason of their solid construction. With the addition, from time to time, of comparatively few more, they sufficed for the agricultural and rural industrial demand during the last thirty years or so, in which the development of cheap and rapid transport brought the villages within the reach of industrial, clerical, and professional workers in the not distant towns. This, and the awakening of the public conscience to the evils of insanitary houses, overcrowding, and so forth, led to efforts on the part of the local authority, at certain dates, to provide more and better houses in some of the villages of the Survey area. Here, at all events, there has been little or no speculative





OLD COTTAGES





OLD COTTAGES

building, and nearly all the new housing has been provided by the local authority.

The Old Cottages. The older cottages, belonging mostly to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, are built with solid walls of local stone, as has been described already; their roofs, now or originally thatched, are of the usual light sapling construction. The ground floors were, and many of them still are, stone or brick paved; the upper floors were framed with heavy oak or elm beams and joists, covered with broad boards of these timbers. The original big chimneys were of stone, and while many still remain, more have been rebuilt, at one time or another, in brick.

In plan, these old cottages are simple in the extreme. As originally built, the ground floor was one large 'house-place', with a large, open fire-place and the bread oven, which forms such a pleasant bulge on the outside of the house, neatly slated or thatched, as it breaks the line of one of the walls. From this room a staircase winding round its newel-post leads to a passage bedroom, which gives access to a second and sometimes to a third bedroom. In modern times, a scullery and larder have been partitioned off from the big room on the ground floor in most of the cottages, and the bedroom has been similarly divided. Except where there has been reconstruction, the casements of the windows, particularly of the bedrooms, are too small to satisfy modern standards of lighting, and the defect is accentuated by the deep, projecting thatch. Bedroom ceilings are often very low. Accommodation is too restricted to provide space for such modern necessities as prams and cycles.

It is rare to find services such as water or electric light laid on to these cottages, even when these conveniences are available, which, in most villages of the Survey area, they are not. Water has to be fetched from the nearest well or street stand-pipe, and lighting is by lamps and candles. Sanitation takes the form of a pail closet outside, and its contents and the house slops are disposed of in the gardens, which, not infrequently, are too small to make satisfactory sewage farms. Indeed, there are some houses without

gardens, and pails must be carried through the houses to some place of deposit outside the village.

These old houses are mainly a problem in reconditioning and servicing to bring them up to modern requirements. This is a matter which is dealt with later. Before passing on, however, it is necessary to describe some old houses in quite another category.

Most people are accustomed to associate the idea of slum dwellings with the back streets and hidden courts of towns. In fact, slums just as bad as any in towns are to be found in many country villages. Work in the Survey area has demonstrated that it is no exception, and the conditions disclosed in some of its villages should be recorded. Here are some examples:

(1) A house consisting of two rooms, one on the ground floor and one above. A badly fitting front door opens into the living room, which has a stone floor, broken and uneven, a window not made to open, and it is fitted with a small range with a minute oven. There is, also, a narrow, combined larder and coal-house, the plaster of which is dropping off from damp. The staircase from the living room is in total darkness; it is in very bad condition, one stair being almost completely worn away. The upstairs room has been divided into two, at some time, by a light partition of laths covered with wallpaper. In places the laths are now falling away. The floor of the inner part is in holes, which the tenant has patched. Snow blows through the roof and the walls are damp. One room contains two double beds, the other a double bed and a washstand; there is no floor space for more furniture.

The family living in this house consists of a man and his wife, six sons, the eldest of whom is 18, and one little girl. They have been trying for seven years to get a council house, but at every vacancy they are told that there is a case more necessitous than theirs.

(2) Here is a somewhat better house, made by knocking together a pair of the two-roomed houses like the one just described. Thus, it has two living-rooms downstairs, both

with broken stone floors, a wash-house with copper at the back, and a long, narrow cupboard under the stairs where coal and cycles are kept. Upstairs are two bedrooms, each of them subdivided by screens or hangings. As, however, the windows are both on one side, the two extra rooms have neither light nor ventilation. Eight people live in this house. Properly reconditioned it might be a passable dwelling.

(3) This is another two-roomed house, occupied by an old-age pensioner, but, in fact, it is a one-roomed house, for the staircase and the floor of the upper room both are unsafe and are not used. The front door, which opens directly into the small bed-sitting room, has gaps of several inches at top and bottom, through which the wind blows, and it is unlikely that this is intentional, even though the single window opposite the door is not constructed to open. The floor is of stone and in very bad condition. The great open fire-place, filling up the whole of one wall, has never been adapted to take a modern stove. It contains an iron basket-grate which seems incapable of heating the room, and all cooking has to be done upon it. There is a small bed against the wall on the other side of the room. The rent for this habitation is said to be 3*s.* 6*d.* a week.

(4) The fourth example is a row of ancient houses which have been allowed to fall into decay to the point at which one of them has collapsed entirely. The rest have been condemned as unfit for habitation, as to which there can be no question, but occupation of them is permitted as a war-time emergency concession. Their condition beggars description, and whether it is right to permit the occupation of such breeding-grounds of ill health and disease, even under stress of war or on any other pretext, seems to be arguable.

Most of these slum houses are provided each with its own privy, but there are instances, here and there, of combined use of one by two or more families.

It is said that, before the war, property of this class was changing hands at about £50 a house. The bare minimum of repairs, or none at all, was done for the tenants, the object

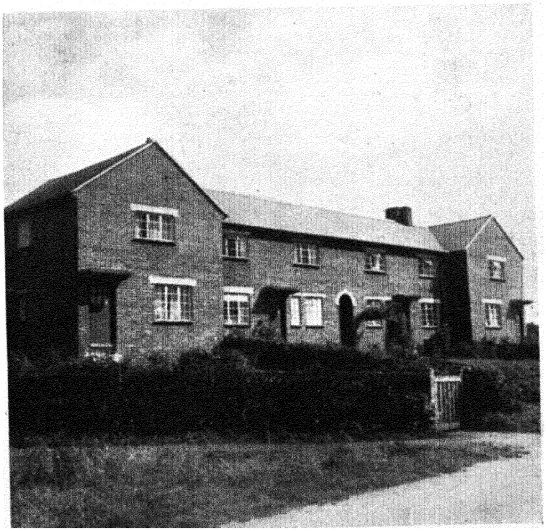
being, apparently, to get all that could be got from them before the houses were condemned.

The 'Addison' Houses, 1919. The general impression left by the smaller villages is that there was very little building in them during the half-century, or longer, which preceded the last war. *The Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890,* had given certain powers to local authorities to enter the field previously reserved for private enterprise, and to meet manifest needs for industrial dwellings. The *Housing, Town Planning, &c. Act, 1919*—the 'Addison Act'—required every local authority to exercise these powers by considering the needs of their area for houses for the working classes, and preparing schemes specifying the number and the nature of the houses they proposed to build, the quantity of land to be acquired for the purpose, and the localities in which they proposed to acquire it. When the execution of an approved scheme was found to involve the local authority in an annual loss exceeding the produce of a 1*d.* rate on the area chargeable with the expenses of the scheme, the balance was to be recoverable from the Treasury.

Under this Act a good deal was done all over the country to mitigate the housing shortage, and in most villages of the Survey area a few cottages were built. They were of two types, the parlour type and the non-parlour type, the former having parlour, kitchen, and scullery, and three bedrooms; the latter, living-room, scullery, and three bedrooms. Both types provide larders, and coppers in scullery or kitchen. There is accommodation for coals, bicycles, and prams. As to sanitation, where water is laid on and the villages are sewered, as happens in two only of them in the area, baths and water-closets are provided. In one or two other villages, where there is piped water but no sewage disposal, there are baths and indoor chemical closets; in the rest the chemical closets are the only provision.

The Addison cottages are distinguishable everywhere in the Survey area by their Mansard roofs. They have little or nothing in common with the building tradition of the neighbourhood. Faced as they are with the local stone,

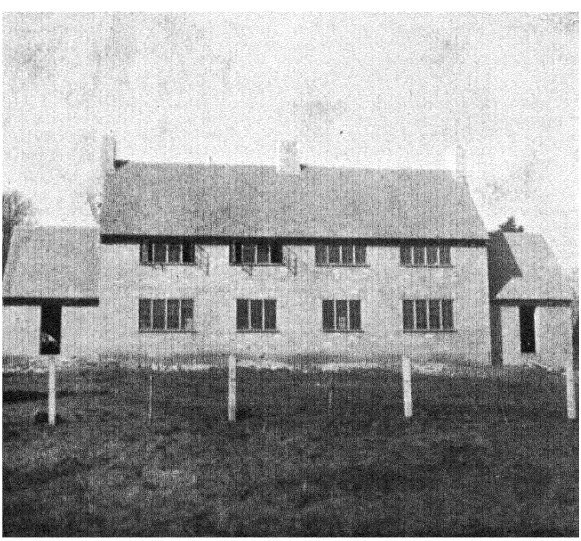




COUNCIL HOUSES

Above: 'Addison' Act, 1919. *Below*: Housing Act, 1936





COUNCIL HOUSES
Agricultural Workers' Houses, 1943

however, and roofed with stone slates, they are not unsightly. They are well planned and roomy, and from the point of view of occupation they mark a distinct advance.

The 1924 Scheme. The Housing (Financial Provisions) Act, 1924, differentiated between the erection of houses for agricultural workers and those intended for general occupation, by larger grants for the former. Under the terms of the conditional grant about fifteen houses were built in the Survey area, and they were occupied originally by agricultural workers. Where these tenants have turned since to other occupations, they have been allowed to remain in the council houses.

The Reconditioning Scheme, 1926. A departure in housing subsidies was made in 1926 by the enactment of the *Housing (Rural Workers) Act.* This was designed to increase the cottage accommodation of the country-side by encouraging landlords to repair and improve cottages, structurally sound, which had become dilapidated or which fell short of modern standards of comfort in the accommodation they provided, and were likely to be condemned. Grants up to two-thirds of the cost of the work, with a maximum of £100 per cottage, were payable, subject to the approval of the local authority, with a stipulation that any house thus reconditioned must be let at not more than the normal agricultural rent. Subsequent Acts, the last of them passed in 1942, have introduced various alterations in the amounts and conditions of the grant.

The restriction on the amount of the rent chargeable for these cottages, combined with a certain reluctance on the part of some local authorities to collaborate with landowners in operating the Acts, may explain why comparatively little advantage has been taken of them. In the Survey area there was little evidence of any reconditioning under the Acts.

The 1936 Scheme. Under the provisions of the *Housing Act, 1936,* the Government was prepared to make grants to local authorities for two purposes. These were (i) for slum clearance, and (ii) for the re-accommodation of overcrowded families. This Act has been applied in one of the larger

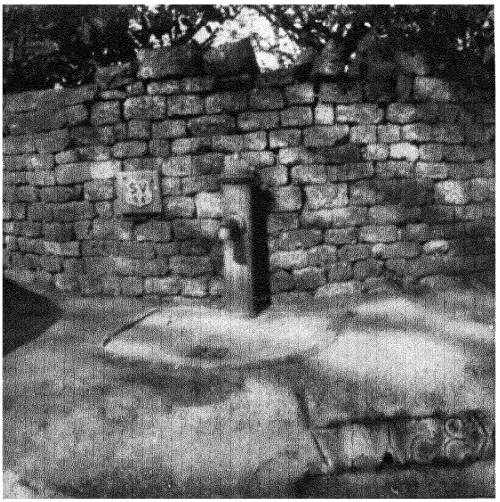
villages of the Survey area, in which certain clearance areas were made and accommodation for three overcrowded families was applied for, resulting, altogether, in the building of an estate of forty-eight new council houses on the outskirts of the village. Further reference is made to this housing scheme later.

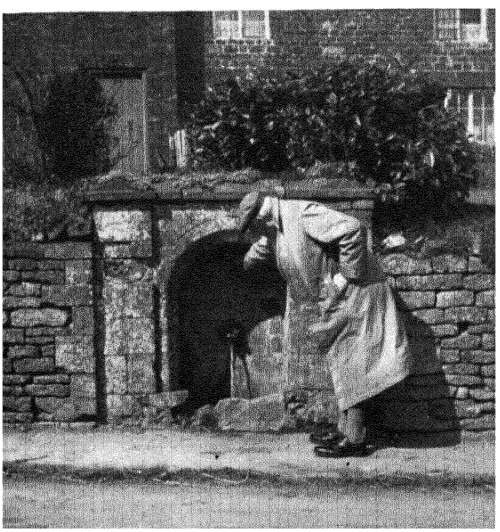
The Housing Act, 1938, provided an Exchequer subsidy of £10 a year for forty years for each new house built by a local authority, or by a private person with the approval of the local authority, for the use of agricultural workers. It does not seem to have been exploited to any extent in the Survey area.

The Agricultural Workers' Houses, 1943. Early in that year it was announced by the Minister of Agriculture that 3,000 houses were to be built forthwith in rural areas, for the exclusive use of farm workers. Allocations were made to the counties, and it was left to their War Agricultural Executive Committees to allocate them to the villages where the need was greatest. Erection devolved upon the appropriate Rural District Councils. Two or three villages have been selected within the Survey area, in each of which a pair of these houses has been built. In planning and accommodation they are good, and attempts have been made to assimilate them to their surroundings. The bricks of which they are built and the cement tiles with which the roofs are covered harmonize fairly well with the old buildings. All have ample accommodation according to present-day standards—a large kitchen, good scullery with sink and copper, built-in cupboards, water-closets, bathroom with hot and cold water, pram and cycle room. Upstairs are three large, light bedrooms. Water, of course, is laid on; a public supply is a prerequisite to any new building.

The Public Services

Water. In six only of the villages are there piped water-supplies, and in two only of these are many of the houses connected to the mains. In the others, a few stand-pipes are set up at convenient points and the people take their buckets





WATER SUPPLIES. 'PIPED'





WATER SUPPLIES
Above: Dipping-place. *Below*: Drinking-water tank

and cans to them. In all the rest of the villages water is got from wells, open springs provided with dipping places, and streams.

These are the conditions in a district which is naturally full of water, containing, as it does, the sources of four or five streams which sufficed to operate more than a dozen mills at one time, before they pass out of the Survey area. In one of the larger villages the wells and springs were condemned some time ago, and some 1,200 people are dependent now for their drinking water upon water carted from a distance and run into galvanized cisterns placed in the streets.

The full inconvenience of the prevailing absence of water-services falls most severely upon the working people. The larger private houses and the farm-houses, although equally dependent upon wells or springs, are equipped, as a rule, with mechanical pumps and with water-storage inside the house. This is one of the obstacles to the provision of public supplies, for the bugbear of higher rates is always raised by those who have arranged for their own comfort, and who object, perhaps not unnaturally, to contributing to that of other people. In two of the villages, schemes for public water-supplies were brought forward in recent years, only to be resisted on these grounds—one of them successfully, the other for a long time.

The difficulty of cost is a real one in these small villages. The cost of an installation and mains may be almost as great for a community of 200 as for one of 2,000, apart, of course, from the actual connexions to houses, which are usually charged upon the landlords. It may be suggested that this difficulty arises only from the parochial view which is taken in the Survey area, as in so many districts, of the water problem. Somebody in a small rural parish starts an agitation for a public water-supply, or it may be that an active Rural District Council prepares a scheme for the village, owing to insufficiency of the existing sources, or their contamination, or both. After much discussion, opposition in the parish may be overcome, and the District Council takes steps to install a complete little system—

perhaps an artesian well, a little shed containing an oil-engine and pump, a reservoir on a hill-side—to supply the little village. A year or so later the next village decides in favour of a supply, another little unit is planned and installed, and so the work of servicing the housewives of the rural district proceeds.[1] It is suggested, first, that the supply of water to the householders of every village in the country should have priority amongst schemes for rural reconstruction after the war. Second, that the village is not an adequate unit for supply, and that the District Council is not the proper administrative authority. The water problem is bound up with the physical features of the country-side, and watersheds, springs, and watercourses take no account of administrative boundaries. In the hands of authorities constituted to act within water-bearing areas naturally defined, the problems both of the supply of water to the smaller communities of the country-side and of its cost should be in a fair way to solution.

Wherever public water-supplies have been provided, landlords should be obliged to connect their houses to them.

Sewerage. The natural corollary to water-supplies is sewerage. The disposal of slops by flinging them on that part of the garden lying next to the house is a dirty business at best, even when the drudgery of drawing water from a well or fetching it from a stand-pipe down the road constrains the housewife to the maximum of economy in its use. When water is available on the turning of a tap, consumption rises rapidly, and when baths and water-closets have been fixed in nearly every house in addition, disposal on the surface of the garden will no longer be possible.

Nothing is commoner, however, than to find water-supplies without sewerage—no water-closets, sinks with waste-pipes discharging into buckets, and baths without waste-pipes at all. In the Survey area, for example, two only

[1] The Downland country in a county adjoining that of the Survey area, for example, is punctuated at its foot with little pumping equipments, reservoirs, and water mains, each supplying a little village in the vale half a mile below.

of the villages have sewerage as well as water, and the interdependence of the two services in contributing to the maximum of domestic comfort and the minimum of unpleasant work seems very imperfectly to be realized. All the large houses in the area, whether connected to public water-supplies or providing their own, have private disposal systems, so that the installation of a general service may be opposed, as has happened with water-supplies, on the score of increased rates. But there is another reason why agitations to secure village water-supplies are rarely associated with demands for sewerage as well. Village water-supplies begin and end, as a rule, in stand-pipes in the streets, the advantage to the larger number of the people being that they can have pure water from a tap at all times, instead of water from a well, probably contaminated, which may run dry. Until house connexions are obligatory, no strong desire for sewerage is likely to be expressed.

The problem differs from that of water-supply in that opportunities for joint systems accommodating two or more villages must be rare. But this raises no difficulty, and country planning must contemplate the provision of both services simultaneously. In passing, it may be noted that there is strong advocacy, in some quarters, of the prevailing privy system or of the chemical closet, on the grounds that the mixture of their contents with ordinary garden soil is sewage disposal in its most sanitary form, while it represents also a valuable source of fertility for the countryman's garden. The soundness of this theory cannot be disputed. In practice, however, there are obvious objections to a system which calls for a walk down the garden in any weather and at any hour of the day or night, and the soundness of the theory itself depends upon more attention to the condition of the privies and more care in the disposal of their contents than can always be assumed. Incidentally, of course, the advocacy of the system comes, as a rule, from those who rarely have to use it, and there can be little doubt as to what the verdict of the people most concerned would be.

Light and Heat. Electric light and power are available in eight of the villages, supplied by the grid, and gas is provided also in two of them by local companies. The rest of the villages of the Survey area seem to be regarded as too far from the grid to make the supply of current practicable.

Very little use is made of electricity except for lighting, and in most places only the larger houses and the council houses take it even for this purpose. While there is some indifference on the part of the older people, who are content with the oil lamps and the candles to which they are accustomed, the explanation seems to be, in part, the cost of the current, and, in part, the want of any power to compel the owners of house-property to wire it. Tenants, particularly those of the smaller houses, cannot be expected to incur the cost of wiring, and the cables pass over many cottages which have not been connected. As to the cost of the current, it is notorious that the present method of distribution, which segregates town and country communities, makes current relatively expensive to the latter. Many people think that this is one of the handicaps which country planning should remove, and that the grid should be taken to all villages, all houses wired for light and power, and current provided at flat rates alike in town and country.

Scavenging. The District Council makes monthly collections of house refuse in the villages of the Survey area. This compares unfavourably with the weekly—or more frequent—collections in larger centres, but it may be admitted that country dwellers are not usually incommoded by the longer intervals, for what is left for collection after any live stock and the garden compost heap have taken their toll, is mostly cinders and tins.

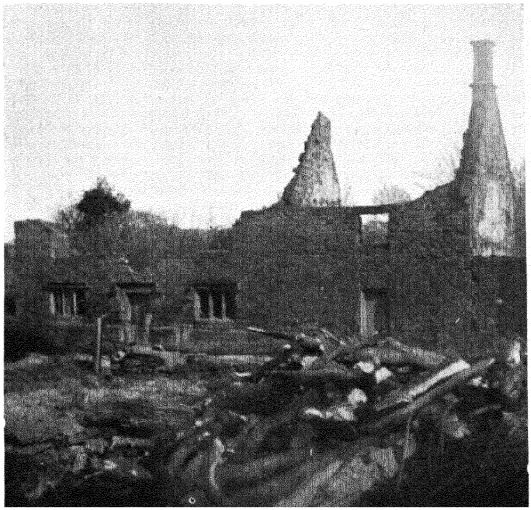
Reconditioning and Improvement

It must be admitted that the first impressions given by most of the smaller villages, beautiful as they are, is one of picturesque dilapidation, and a standard of life of an earlier century. The former, at all events, of these impressions needs some qualification. Every village contains a few





PICTURESQUE DILAPIDATION





DERELICT HOUSES

derelict houses, and the thatched roofs of a great number of others are disintegrating, owing to the difficulty—in some of the villages, the impossibility—of finding thatchers. But the structural condition of the houses generally, is sound, owing to the durability of the stone of which they are built; there is no doubt that most of them are capable of fulfilling all the requirements of modern standards of accommodation, convenience, and comfort without loss of their individual character, given some reconstruction and reconditioning inside and out.

Maintenance. As noted already, landlords in the Survey area seem to have made little use of the subsidy payable by Government for repairing and reconditioning under the Housing (Rural Workers) Acts, 1926–42, but this is not to say that there have been no attempts at reconditioning the old houses. On the contrary, a good deal has been done to maintain and, here and there, to improve them. As to maintenance, attention has been concentrated mostly upon the roofs. In a stone country, without stone slates, it was inevitable that straw thatch should be the roofing used, and it is the blend of warm colours and the contrast of enduring and perishable materials which contribute so much to the character of the villages and to their charm. Thatch has many advantages as a covering. In an arable farming district straw is cheap; the timbers and spars needed to carry it are light and cheap; it makes a good roof to live under—warm in winter and cool in summer. Against these, thatched roofs have some serious drawbacks. They need skilled men to lay them, and rural craftsmen get fewer every day; even when well laid the replacement rate is high; there is the ever-present danger of fire, and when straw thatch gets alight, the total destruction of the dwelling is almost a certainty, as witness the ruins which every village can show.

For one or other of these reasons there has been a good deal of re-roofing of houses in the Survey area, using other materials. The earlier examples demonstrate the use of Welsh slates. Straw requires a high-pitched roof so that the rain-water may run off quickly, without soaking in. Smooth,

thin slates are more durable, they can be laid much flatter, and they are light enough not to call for strong and expensive roof timbers. The substitution, however, causes a complete alteration in the character and appearance of the house, by giving it a low, smooth roof, dull blue or unpleasing purple, in place of the high-pitched, rough-textured thatch, of every gradation of colour, from gold when newly re-laid to bronze-black in its last stages.

Recently, all-conquering corrugated iron has been used when the old houses need re-roofing, and it is employed even more generally to replace straw thatch on farm buildings. Corrugated iron is very cheap, it is so light that only very light roof-timbers are needed for it, and if it be protected from rusting by paint or tar, its life is long. Quite often corrugated iron sheets are laid on the old thatch, so that there is no alteration in the pitch, but this is not to say that the appearance of the house is unaffected, for no treatment of its surface can remove the inherent ugliness of this material and its incongruity in such a connexion.

Here and there, cement tiles, most modern of all roofing material, have been employed, not unsuccessfully, as a substitute for straw thatch. They tone, passably, with the old stone, but their precision and regularity seem hardly to harmonize with the rough rubble walls, while inevitably they provoke comparison with the natural Cotswold slates on some of the larger houses.

As to structural improvements, the opportunity has been taken here and there, when re-roofing, to raise the height of the walls a foot or two to give more air-space and headroom in the bedrooms. Sometimes this is done in stone and sometimes in brick, which may be left bare or it may be plastered over to tone better with the old wall. Another common improvement is the substitution of wooden window frames and larger casements for the stone mullions and the little casements of the original builders. There is no question of the value of both of these alterations to those who live in the houses. When the windows of an old house have thus been enlarged, its walls raised, and the high-pitched thatched roof





OLD HOUSES RECONDITIONED
Above: Corrugated iron replacing thatch
Below: Welsh slate replacing thatch, walls raised and larger windows





OLD HOUSES, UNTOUCHED AND RECONDITIONED SIDE BY SIDE

replaced by a low-pitched covering of Welsh slates, there is no doubt that its occupants are better found. It must not be assumed, however, that this is the only form which reconstruction of these old houses can take, or that the demolition order of the local sanitary authority is the only other alternative.

Reconstruction. Notwithstanding the new housing provided of recent years by the public authorities, and only rarely by private enterprise, by far the greater number of the people in the Survey area live in old houses, privately owned. For the most part, living conditions fall far short of modern standards of comfort, but there is little evidence of any sense of democratic power or responsibility in the villagers which would enable them to bring about improvements. The attitude of the older generation is that improvements can only raise rates and rents, and they seem content to continue under the conditions in which they have been born and bred. 'What's been good enough for me is good enough for the young 'uns.'

The 'young 'uns', on the contrary, are heartily dissatisfied with things as they are, but they seem to have no desire to leave their native villages, and would jump at the chance of getting roomy cottages with proper services, at almost any distance from their work. They will not be satisfied to spend their free time carrying buckets of water from the nearest well or pump, or even from a tap down the street; or emptying their slops or burying the contents of their earth-closets in the garden; or sleeping, three in a bed, in a passage bedroom; or coming home after a hard day's work without the chance of a bath. Nor will the young housewives be content with only one living-room in which cooking, washing, ironing, and all other domestic work must be done, in close company with husband, children, and visitors; with no light nor water; with no sink drain, and often without even a sink; with food spoiling in hot weather for want of a proper larder; without cupboards and storage room—not to mention the frequent difficulty of leaking roofs and damp walls. In short, the young country dwellers of to-day will not put

up any longer with the standards of comfort of the last century.

Conditions in the villages of the Survey area present a twofold problem in country planning: how to achieve a proper standard of living for the people without further destruction of what is left of the inheritance of beauty. While there is little doubt that a number, perhaps a large number, of new houses will have to be built, the policy of the wholesale demolition of old cottages, associated with the erection of standardized 'council' houses, should be reversed. The local authority, or some higher authority if necessary, should consider the expenditure of very considerable sums in the imaginative reconditioning of the good old buildings which remain—and these would prove, probably, to be the majority—and in the provision of the public services. The position, of course, is complicated when public money is needed for the improvement of private property, but the beauty of the villages of the Survey area, and, indeed, of most other parts of the country, is a public heritage—the heritage not only of those who dwell in them, but of the nation at large. It is no part of the purpose of this Survey to suggest a way out of the difficulty, but it certainly is not to be found in the demolition order and the substitution of the modern 'council' house. The method of the Housing Act, 1936, to which reference has been made, is not the way out. In one of the larger villages it is on record that one side of a whole street of seventeenth-century cottages of solid construction and beautiful design was pulled down not long ago, their occupants being rehoused in a council colony on the outskirts of the village, designed without the smallest consideration for the traditional architectural types of the locality. A demolition order is of no profit to anyone, least of all to the owner of the property demolished, and even though there may be difficulties in applying the simple and obvious remedy for the situation—the acquisition at site value of the dilapidated property after the failure by its owner to comply with the terms of a reconditioning order under the Act of 1936—it should not pass the wit of man to

devise some solution more satisfactory than that provided by the Act. In effect, responsibility for housing has now been assumed by the State, and in the exercise of its powers and functions the preservation of all existing buildings which can be rendered fit for habitation should be a first charge upon its activities.

The work to be done in applying this principle will vary according to the locality, although the outstanding need, the provision of water-supplies, lighting, and sewerage, is almost universal; in the Survey area it has been shown that these necessaries of modern existence are almost entirely to seek. When these deficiencies have been supplied, what is wanted most is a general re-roofing of thatched houses with something more permanent and less troublesome, and the provision of extra living accommodation—sitting-rooms and bedrooms.

The first step that suggests itself, if scores of the fine old houses are to be saved from demolition orders, is that the District Councils should be relieved of some of the responsibilities now devolving upon them. At present, each of them employs an officer, known generally as the Building or the Sanitary Surveyor, who collaborates with the Medical Officer of Health to decide all questions of the fitness of the older buildings for human occupation, and the possibility of bringing them up to modern standards of fitness by additions and reconditioning. This is a task for which these officers are not necessarily qualified on the aesthetic side. Their technical knowledge is unquestioned and their pronouncements upon the actual conditions of the old buildings may be accepted; but something very much more than this is needed. Who the authority should be is a matter for careful consideration. It has been suggested that the County Architect might have the responsibility, or that there should be panels of professional architects appointed throughout the country as referees. There would be no intention, of course, of superseding the district housing authorities altogether; they would continue, presumably, to initiate action by reference of cases to the higher authorities, and by

acting as executive officers for the works of reconstruction recommended.

Roofs. Within the Survey area the crying need is for the reconstruction of roofing. It is in the thatched roofs that the trouble begins which leads ultimately to the demolition order. Even before the war there was a shortage of thatchers, due, it is said, to the unwillingness of young men to be apprenticed to this skilled but arduous craft. Now it is almost impossible to find thatchers, and the roof-coverings of scores of cottages are in a deplorable condition. There seems no doubt that the time has come when straw can be regarded no longer as an economic roof-covering, both because of its non-durability and because of the lack of skilled craftsmen to lay it, even though nothing can equal the beauty of line, colour, and texture of thatch on these old buildings. A minor objection, not always realized, is the virtual impossibility of collecting rain-water from a thatched roof.

The most satisfactory substitute seems to be the concrete roofing tile, made of cement and sand, with an admixture of the rich-coloured local stone dust. Such a tile will tone more happily with the natural walling of the houses than any other permanent roofing material. This substitution would entail new and heavier roofing timbers, at a cost beyond the means, probably, of many of the owners, but reference has already been made to the financial problem involved not only in the saving of much rural beauty, but also in the provision of new buildings if demolition is the alternative.

In the meantime there is the immediate and pressing problem of the repair of thatch all over the area. If a systematic re-roofing campaign were contemplated, any temporary work which would serve to make the disintegrating roofs watertight for a short time would suffice, and it might be possible to organize farm workers who normally are in the habit of thatching stacks and ricks for the purpose. They could patch the old roofs and make them weather-proof until the time came for re-roofing them in more permanent material.

Accommodation. Next in urgency, if many of the old houses are to be saved from demolition, is the provision of additional accommodation. In their oldest form they would consist of no more than two rooms, one above and one below, but many of these are built in pairs or in terraces, so that the simplest way of adding to their accommodation would be to throw two together. This would provide a house with a parlour, with ample scope, partly by way of partitioning the old rooms and partly by the construction of a small lean-to at the back, for the provision of all modern requirements such as bath, water-closet, larder, sink, coal-house, &c., now mostly non-existent. Similarly, on the first floor, one or both of the two large bedrooms which would result could be partitioned so as to provide three or four bedrooms as required.

The accompanying plans show a pair of these old houses before and after reconstruction. It will be seen that without seriously altering the character of the building provision is made for:

Parlour and living-room on front of the house, with a kitchen-scullery in a recess at the end of the living-room which could be completely shut off from it if preferred. A small room with bath, copper, and lavatory basin behind the parlour, separated from the kitchen-scullery by a short passage from the back door.

The kitchen-scullery containing an electric cooker, a sink, and an electric water-heater which supplies sink and bath; also a good larder.

A covered way from the back door giving access to coals and water-closet.

Above, three bedrooms and a lumber room, which could serve as a fourth bedroom; ample cupboards.

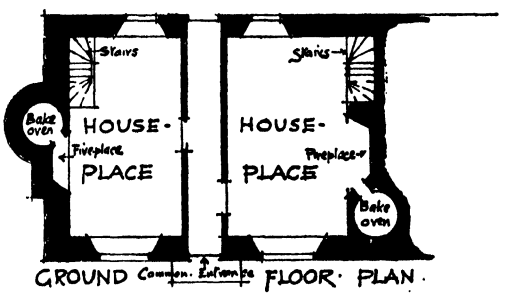
An outhouse (not shown) to accommodate perambulators, bicycles, and garden tools.

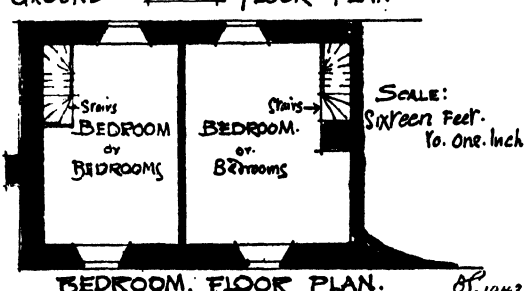
It is assumed that water is laid on, and this accommodation and these services would meet the needs of the average working-class family for some time to come.

Although such reconstruction would halve the number of

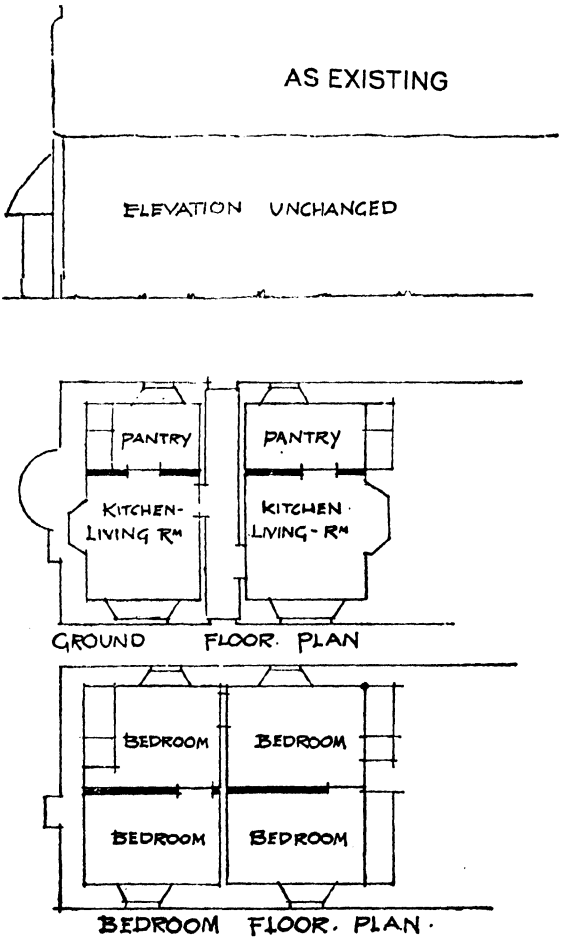


ELEVATION TO VILLAGE STREET

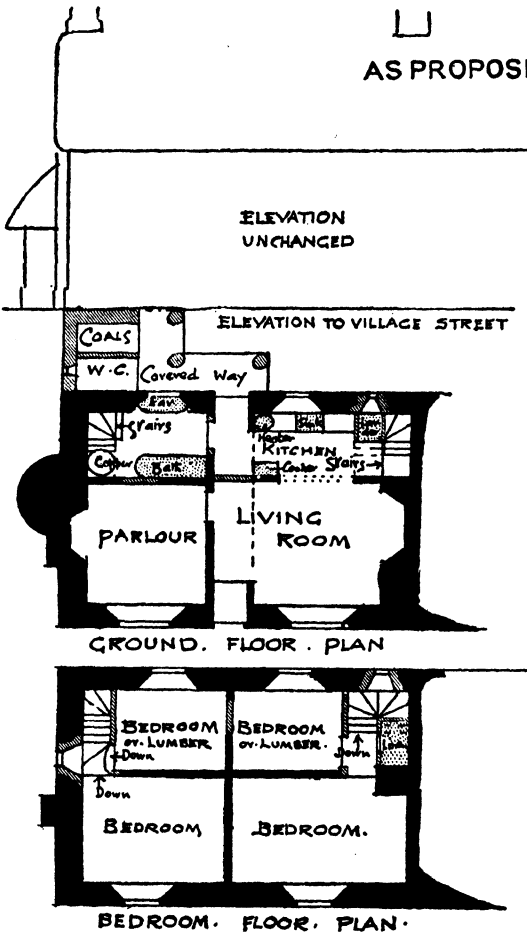




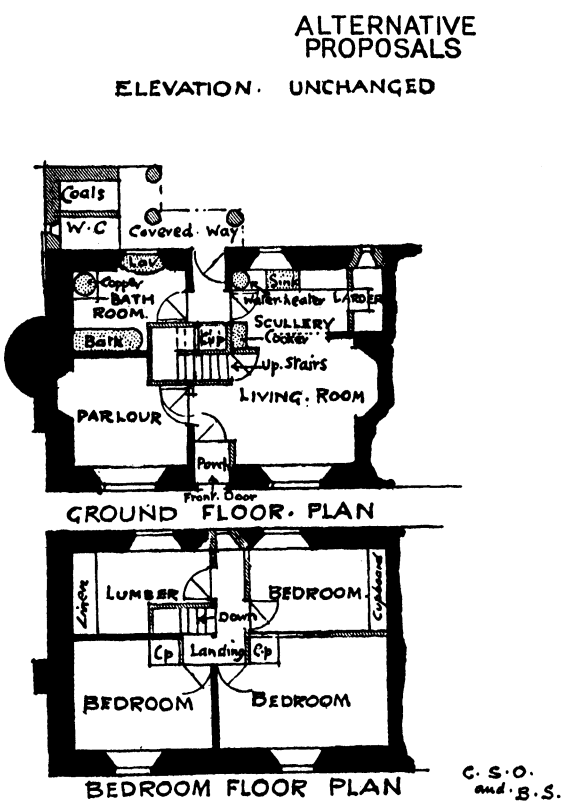
PLAN 1. Pair of cottages as originally built.



PLAN 2. Same pair to-day, showing later alterations.



PLAN 3. Same pair reconstructed as one house.



PLAN 4. Same pair, alternative reconstruction.

the houses to which it was applied, it would be a contribution to the housing problem, nevertheless, if the only alternative to it were demolition. It would also preserve the amenities of the village and the essential character of its buildings, for it will be observed that the suggested reconstruction leaves the front elevation unchanged.

It is not suggested that all the older cottages and some of the more recent ones would lend themselves so readily to

essential re-equipment. There would be the problem of different ownership of adjacent houses; of constructional difficulties; of detached houses and how to add to them. Each must be tackled according to its circumstances. Some old houses which will not lend themselves to reconstruction for family occupation might fulfil a most useful purpose at small expense, if left substantially as they are as regards the accommodation, but supplied with the public services and the fittings associated with them, and then reserved for occupation by old couples. They would help to solve the problem, which often occurs, of knowing what to do about the widow, or the old couple past work, who have a house beyond their needs which ought to be available for a young family. Given a public conscience aroused to the cramped and squalid conditions of life to which so many country dwellers are still condemned, all difficulties could be surmounted.

The Post-war Period

The Survey area comes under a Joint Planning Committee set up by the councils of the near-by market town and of the rural district. A draft Planning Scheme for the whole area under their joint jurisdiction had been proposed before the war, but it is now in cold storage until more propitious times.

During the past twenty-five years the local authority has built some 200 houses in and around the Survey area. They have not been earmarked for any particular class of the community nor for any special industry, but there is little doubt that the rents at which they were offered, which are high relative to the wages of agricultural workers and to the customary rents of farm-workers' cottages, put them above the means of the land worker at that time.

Demand. Notwithstanding this comparatively liberal provision of council houses, the Survey disclosed that there is a considerable unsatisfied demand for houses for workers of all kinds, as well as for retired persons, old-age pensioners, and for lodgings for single men and women. The number of

those who live in the villages and travel daily to their work by bus, lorry, or train has increased a great deal of late years, but the villages can hardly be described as 'dormitory' villages. This demand, however, touches only the fringe of the subject, which raises all the problems of the future location of industry and of the housing of the industrial worker in large numbers, as well as those, relatively simple, of rural reconstruction.

Over all the Survey area the agricultural demand is for better rather than for more houses. Higher wages to-day and the opportunity of alternative employment are making farm workers, particularly the younger ones, more industrially minded, and they want a higher standard of comfort in their homes. But agriculture here, as in most parts of England, is not, nor can it be, an expanding industry, and additional housing is needed for farm workers only to the extent that old houses are condemned as being past repair, or that the reconditioning of other old houses reduces the total number, here and there, by throwing two into one.

There is not much evidence in the Survey area of effective competition for houses by industrial workers, resulting in the ousting of lower-income farm workers, of which complaints are not uncommon in some parts of the country. On the other hand, there are reports from several places of workers' houses which have been improved and sold to people retired from trade and industry to live in the country, and, since the war, to self-evacuees.

The present demand, then, comes mainly from industrial workers engaged in nearby factories or in aerodrome construction. Reports show that it is general, coming from nearly all the villages of the area, and that it is of the same character in each of them.

There is a considerable demand for industrial workers' dwellings. (20)

There is a demand for about a dozen houses for industrial workers, and a potential demand for a few farm workers' houses, too, to replace those occupied by land workers who have been beguiled into industry by higher wages. (18)

It is estimated that some 90 houses will be needed for workers of mixed occupations after the war. (14)

A considerable demand from industrial workers. (8)

There is an urgent demand for good cottages by young married workers, who are obliged at present to share their parents' houses. (1–2)

There is a considerable demand here for good workers' cottages. (3)

About 12 good houses are wanted for workers of mixed occupations. (7)

This sample of the evidence of demand has been taken at random to cover the area, and the rest of the villages tell the same tale. As a post-war housing programme, however, these wants can be taken only as indicating a short-term policy, for, as suggested above, these small villages present a problem in country planning which is too large and far too complex to be solved by the erection of a few dozen houses. Some discussion of the issues involved will be found in the final chapter of this Report.

Principles of Policy. Some of the principles which might be considered as guides to housing policy in the future may now be suggested.

1. The local authority should confer with the representatives of local industry—the Farmers' Union and the directors of industrial concerns—upon the needs of their employees for additional accommodation and upon its location.
2. So far as is practicable, the installation of the three principal public services, water, sewerage, and electric light and power, in every village, should precede the housing programme.
3. All new houses should be built and fitted on the assumption that these public services will be available immediately, if not already installed.
4. So far as is practicable, the new houses should be dispersed amongst the old ones, avoiding segregation in housing estates on the fringes of the villages.
5. It follows, of course, that everything should be done

to harmonize the new buildings with the old, though not necessarily by an imitation of old styles nor even by the use of the same building materials.

On the first of these points it seems quite clear that housing in the post-war period, in rural areas at all events, will be the responsibility mainly of some public authority. By various Housing Acts passed in the last fifty years, the State has recognized more and more the failure of private enterprise in building to meet the needs of rural society. Where, too, the decentralization of industry has brought about any considerable demand for dwellings for industrial workers, the deplorable results of uncontrolled speculative enterprise, such as may be seen in the villages within transport distance of many factories, justify the assertion that there must be no repetition of them in the planned communities of post-war rural England. It follows that there should be the closest collaboration between the responsible public authority and the controllers of agricultural and industrial enterprise, both upon the quantity of housing required and upon its dispersion within the area of employment.

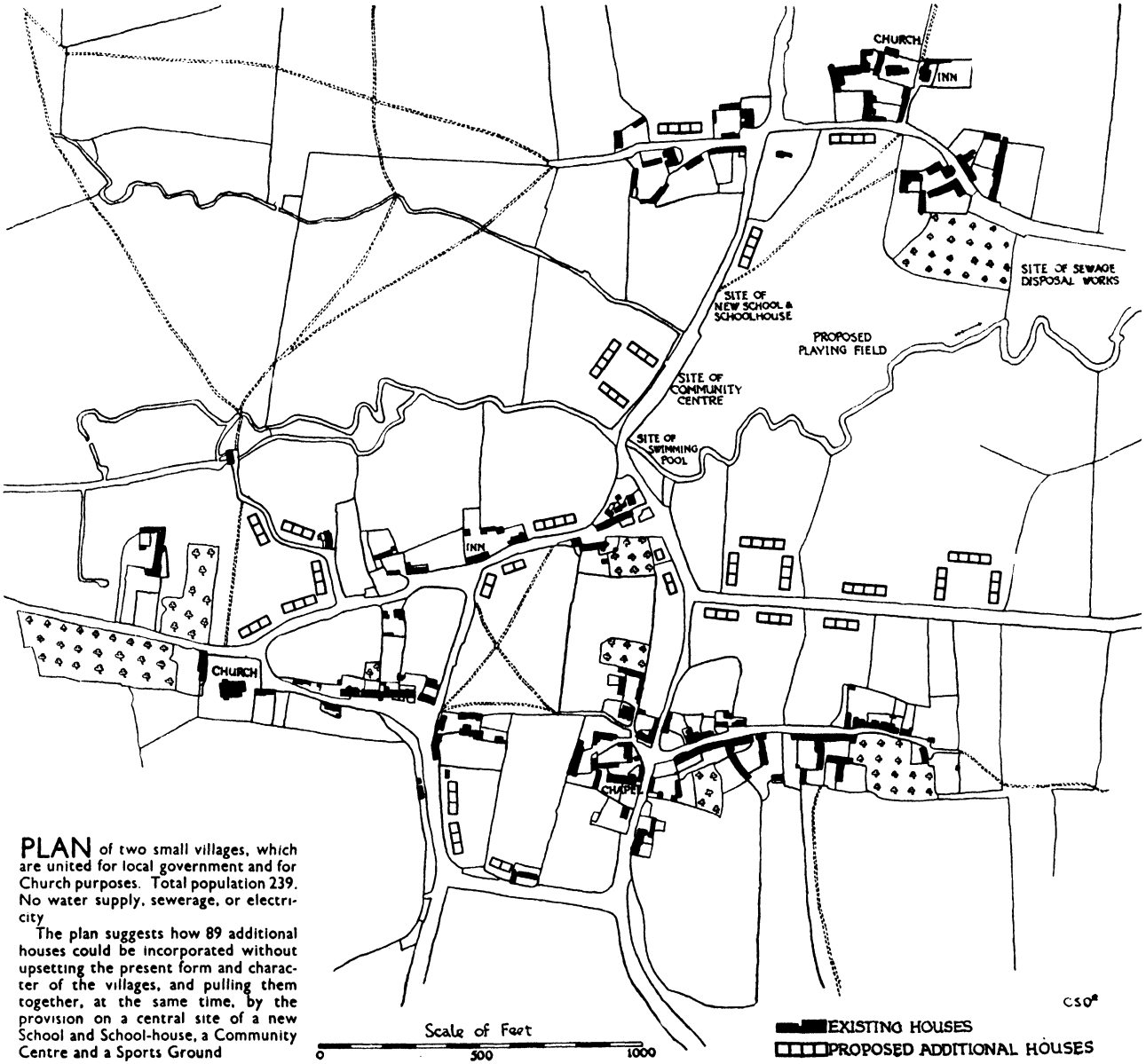
On the second and third points little more need be said, for it is generally conceded that country folk must be given the same services for the amenity of home life and the reduction of domestic toil as are enjoyed by larger communities. The problem of the cost of their provision in the more sparsely populated districts is not an isolated one; it arises also in connexion with other matters and it will be discussed later.

On the fourth point it is suggested that the structure of the village and its community life would best be preserved by taking every available opportunity for incorporating the new buildings amongst the old. The alternative, the housing estate outside the village, creates what is, in effect, a new community with no community life, for the old village from which it is segregated will contain all the things that it needs if it is to be a unit of social life—the places of worship, the school, the post office, the few shops, the public houses, the

bus stop, the village hall or community centre. All of these things should be accessible equally to the new-comers as to the older inhabitants if the former are to be absorbed into the corporate life of the place, and the segregation inseparable from the housing estate must make this very difficult, if not impossible.

Villages differ in their aptitude for assimilating new buildings without much expansion of their layout. A casual inspection of those of the Survey area suggests that a 50 per cent. addition to the housing would be practicable in all the smaller ones, while even in the larger ones a great deal could be done to avoid unpleasing suburbs such as that which has grown up against one of them. A pair here, a short terrace there, a single house somewhere else, and so on through the village, could add astonishingly in most places to the accommodation, while at the same time assimilating the new-comers into the village community instead of segregating them from it. Incidentally, the cost of housing would be reduced if the public services were already available in the villages; if not, the cost of providing them would be less in the more compact area (see accompanying Plan).

The fifth point is a question of aesthetics. As has been said already, the heritage of beauty is national, and it is for the nation to foster and preserve it in any circumstances in which it may be in jeopardy. Thus, while building in brick to-day may be cheaper than building in stone, it may be suggested that a decision to use red brick in a stone country would not be justified. Those responsible for the further development of the country-side may be urged to take a larger view of that which is required. It would be cheaper to build two-bedroomed houses or non-parlour houses, or to plan smaller rooms, but no local authority to-day would dream of going back on the higher standards of comfort and hygiene now generally accepted, so as to economize a few pounds. Similarly, the exterior of the house, both in design and materials, should respect the local building tradition, even though this may raise the building cost above the minimum at which four walls and a roof could be provided. Seemliness



PLAN of two small villages, which are united for local government and for Church purposes. Total population 239. No water supply, sewerage, or electricity

The plan suggests how 89 additional houses could be incorporated without upsetting the present form and character of the villages, and pulling them together, at the same time, by the provision on a central site of a new School and School-house, a Community Centre and a Sports Ground

and harmony should be regarded as parts of the job of good building, just as essential as damp-courses and water-closets, and while it may well be that the majority of the people are not consciously aware of the need and that a minority may even prefer more garish effects, it must be remembered that the housing contemplated may be expected to last for two or three generations, during which standards of taste may improve.

In the Survey area, a region of stone buildings, it was reported that to face the new agricultural workers' houses in stone would have added some £60 to the cost of each, and this could not be contemplated. A saving could have been effected, equally, by omitting the baths or the cupboards or the drains, and it may not be too much to expect that the time is approaching when more people will consider that it is just as much a social offence to erect an inharmonious building as one that is unhygienic or ill-equipped.

This would call for some revision of building by-laws and particularly of their interpretation; this points, again, to the desirability of placing responsibility for the control of building under an authority with experience wider than that which can be expected of the District Council and its officials.

The discussion, so far, has been limited to housing for the working classes. A need may also be expected for larger houses for members of the higher-income classes. In the past these have been provided by the local builder, speculating on his own account, or by the intending occupants themselves, but not by the public authority. These villa residences are not infrequently the worst feature of all in modern village architecture, though it is one from which the villages of the Survey area are fairly free. The erection of larger houses in the future may be left to private enterprise as in the past, but subject to the same control of design and materials as is suggested for the houses erected by the local authority. Indeed, these conditions should be applied to buildings of any kind erected within the village or its precincts.

CHAPTER VIII

EDUCATION AND THE YOUTH SERVICE

INTRODUCTION. ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS: Ownership; Types of School; Sites and Buildings; Heating, Lighting, and Sanitation; Playgrounds and School Gardens; Equipment; Teachers; Curriculum; Health Services; Difficulties of the Country School. SECONDARY SCHOOLS: The County School; Endowed Schools; Continuation Classes. ADULT EDUCATION. TECHNICAL EDUCATION. THE COUNTY LIBRARY. RECONSTRUCTION: The Education Authority; Primary and Secondary Schools; County Colleges.

A. EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

THERE seems little doubt that the organization of education in the Survey area is ripe for reconstruction, quite apart from the far-reaching national changes visualized in the new educational proposals now under consideration. Inequality of opportunity, the lack of central and continuation schools, unsuitable sites, buildings, and playgrounds—these set the background for a description of the educational facilities now available. It should be recorded, however, that this is not the fault of the Local Education Authority, for all its attempts to get agreement about the establishment of central schools in the area have been opposed in one quarter or another, nor have there been requests for improved school accommodation.

Briefly, the area is served by eleven non-provided elementary schools, with county secondary schools in the market towns on either side, and two endowed secondary schools within it, one of them for boys only. The two latter, of course, draw their children mainly from outside the area, but they have a certain influence on it, and some local children attend them. There are at present no centralized senior schools, and very little provision of any kind for adult education.

The ladder from the elementary school to the secondary school is an examination taken by all children at the age of 11, on the results of which places and scholarships are awarded.

The successful children continue and finish their education in the modern, well-equipped, secondary schools of the market towns, transport being provided by bus or bicycle; the rest proceed automatically to the senior departments of their own or of neighbouring village schools.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS[1]

Ownership. With the exception of one which was endowed some time in the seventeenth century, all the schools in the Survey area are Church schools. Responsibility for their upkeep and staffing is divided, therefore, between the County Education Committee and the Church. The chief obligations now remaining with the Church are the apppointment of teachers, the upkeep of the fabric of the school, and the maintenance of playgrounds. Authority is vested in a Board of Managers, usually six in number, four representing the Church, one elected by the Parish Council, and one by the County Council. The parson is usually *ex officio* a manager, and the rest are mostly farmers and local tradesmen. Quite often the managers are all men, but in some villages of the Survey area wives of local tradesmen, retired schoolmistresses, and other local women residents serve on the Boards.

The Church of England was a pioneer in elementary education, and the majority of the children in rural England are still taught in Church schools. It may be useful, therefore, to record some recent pronouncements of the Board of Education upon the efficiency of their organization to-day.

An embarrassing feature of the public system of education for many years has been the existence within it of voluntary (or non-provided) schools, the control of which is divided between the Local Education Authority and the Managers.[2]

Most non-provided schools are in old buildings. . . . Much capital expenditure will be needed on those schools if they are to be brought and kept abreast not only of present-day educational requirements and aspirations, but also of modern standards of hygiene, ventilation and the like. It will be beyond the financial

[1] See list, p. 152.

[2] *Educational Reconstruction.* Board of Education, Cmd. 6458, 1943, Sec. 43.

resources of most Managers to meet unaided the bill which must be met if children in voluntary schools are not to be denied the advantages enjoyed by children in council schools.[1]

Of the 753 schools still remaining on the Board's Black List of Schools with defective premises, 541 are non-provided schools.[2]

Illustrations of the arguments both for and against this dual control may be found in the Survey area. Where the managers are interested in the schools and take care in choosing their teachers, there seems a good deal to be said for it, but in some villages the managers meet rarely, fail to discharge their obligations, and are purely obstructive. Lack of interest, as well as lack of money, frequently lies behind an unwillingness to co-operate. In one village in which a playground is badly needed, nothing has been done, although the County Council are willing to put up most of the money, because no one of the managers is willing to take responsibility for action. In another village, where money apparently is available, the head teacher had to wait for months for a reply to his request for repairs urgently needed to the porch of the school, and other appeals for repairs and alterations have gone unheeded. On the other hand, the head teacher of another school said that her managers were always willing to supply whatever was needed.

Much of the controversy about dual control centres round the religious question. In Church schools, Scripture lessons are given every day, the Catechism is taught, and the parson has the right of going into the school to teach Scripture. To safeguard the rights of denominations other than the Church of England, parents may withdraw their children from Scripture lessons if they wish. In effect, the only children withdrawn are the Roman Catholics; there did not seem to be evidence of any real controversy between Anglicans and Nonconformists, although, of course, it may be that this is explained by apathy. There is no general rule governing religious instruction by the parson. In one of the larger villages of the Survey area he does not attempt it, 'because the head teacher does not wish him to'; in another he goes in

[1] *Educational Reconstruction*, Sec. 46. [2] Ibid., Sec. 47.

once or twice a week; in the smaller villages, where there is no resident parson, the teaching falls to the head teacher.

Types of School. All schools in the Survey area are of one of two types: junior schools, taking children only until the age of 11, and schools which provide for children of all ages up to 14. There are four of the junior schools, and seven schools taking children of all ages. Seniors from the four villages with junior schools only are sent to one or other of the all-age schools. In two of the smaller villages the schools have been closed recently for lack of numbers, and the children go to nearby schools.

There are just over 900 children attending the schools in the Survey area.

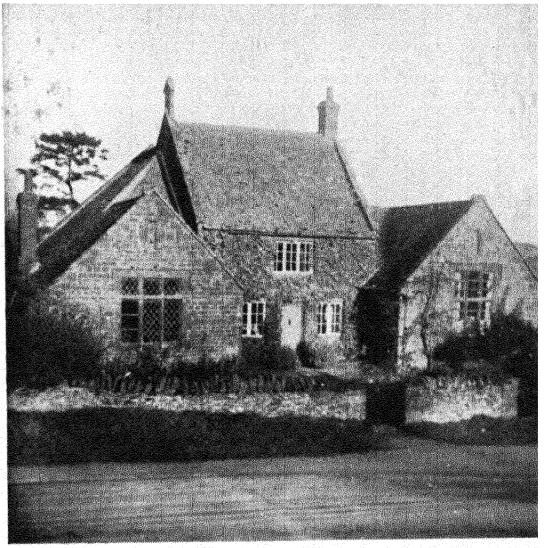
Sites and Buildings. All the school buildings date from the period 1832 to 1875, and in some respects their founders built too well. Strongly constructed stone buildings have stood the test of time, but have condemned generations of children to spend their schooldays in highly unsuitable surroundings. While there may have been good reasons for putting the schools near the church, it is very unfortunate that this has meant so often that light is obstructed by trees and that churchyards occupy the places where playgrounds ought to be. One of the larger villages provides an outstanding example of a bad site, for the school is now surrounded on three sides by a churchyard, and it has no room for expansion. At another place, where the school lies, as so often, directly on the road, without any foreground, the main room loses most of its light and all the sun by being built close to, and a little below, the churchyard and its yew trees. Another school is wedged closely between cottages, with no room for expansion, and not much room for playgrounds. One seems to be a pleasing exception, for it occupies an open site with a long view over the valley below, but even here the rooms get practically no sun, and the playground is placed precariously on a slope, which is very treacherous in wet or frosty weather.

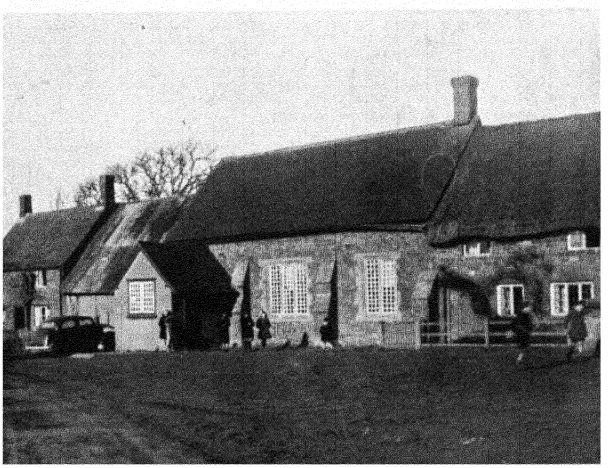
The impression left by visits to the schools is one of general dissatisfaction with existing accommodation. 'Have you seen the school at X?' asked one teacher, mentioning the name of

a village just outside the area of the Survey, 'Its buildings are not nearly so good as the new pig-sties at Mr. A's farm'. While this may be a picturesque exaggeration, conditions do indeed call for much improvement. All the schools visited have too little accommodation, five of them having only two rooms. Rooms are very often too high, making heating and ventilation difficult; windows are usually too small and narrow, dating from the time when it was considered inadvisable for children to be able to see out of them; porches or passages serve as inadequate cloakrooms; there is little accommodation for washing, or for drying wet clothes; no privacy for the teachers; no spare rooms for physical training in wet weather, or for the visits of doctor, dentist, or nurse. According to the estimates of the Board of Education, all the schools have accommodation for more children than those attending them at present. While this may be true of cubic space per child, and the rooms are not actually overcrowded, it does not obviate the major difficulty of teaching several standards in one room.

Outside, most of the schools have been designed to harmonize architecturally with the church. Inside, the visitor is greeted by a stone passage complete with clothes pegs and milk bottles. A door leads directly into the schoolrooms. Consisting originally of one room, in all the schools visited this is now divided unequally into two, by a wood-and-glass partition which often is not soundproof. The bigger schools have had other rooms added on, but the two rooms and a passage are the provision in most of the schools in the smaller villages.

Even in the larger villages conditions are far from satisfactory. One of them provides a particular example of bad planning. The one large original room, exceptionally lofty, has been divided into two, and two others have been added on, but all lead one out of another, so that a child or a class may have to pass through two or three classrooms before obtaining access to the outside of the building. The infants at this school have two more modern rooms, one in particular being large and well lighted, but the smaller room leading out

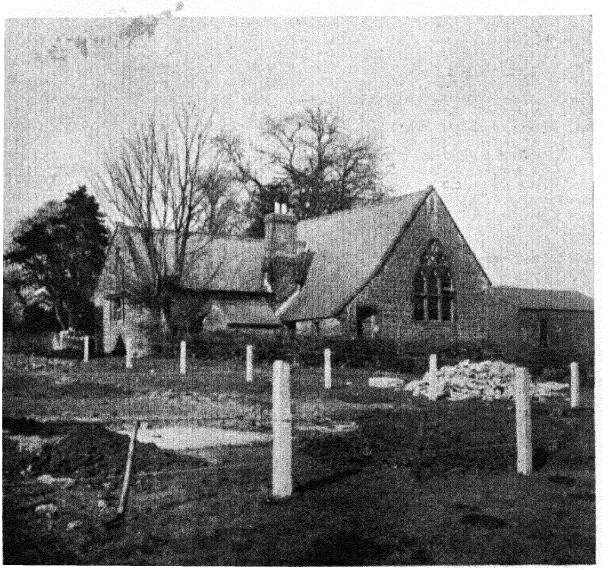




SCHOOLS

Above: Closed. *Below*: Hemmed in





SCHOOLS

Above: Juniors at play. *Below*: Built 1832

of it may be needed at any time when the health visitors arrive, when children, tables, and equipment must all be moved. One of the great needs here, and everywhere else, seems to be for a good-sized room or hall in which these inspections could take place, and where children could play or have physical training in wintry and wet weather.

Another of the larger places, its school attendance raised to 226 children by evacuation, has not enough accommodation, and, in addition to its own five rooms, is occupying other rooms and halls scattered about the village.

The question of the future of the school buildings in this area depends on the extent and character of the educational reconstruction contemplated by the new Education Bill, which will be discussed later; but even to enable the schools to exercise their present functions efficiently a great deal of additional building and reconstruction would appear to be necessary, judged by modern standards.

Heating, Lighting, and Sanitation. These depend mainly on the public services available in the village, though the best use is not always made of them. Lighting varies from village to village. Where electricity is available, as in three of them, it has been installed. Other schools still depend on lamps. Artificial lighting, however, is not often important in school hours.

Heating is generally by means of stoves, though sometimes by coal fires. The height of many rooms makes them draughty and difficult to heat, though this was not a matter of much complaint.

Very few schools have water laid on. At one which has, its usefulness is limited, as the only tap is outside the building.

No schools visited have indoor sanitation, and the privies are regular, and often prominent, features of the school playgrounds.

Playgrounds and School Gardens. Most of the schools have some sort of concrete playground, much too small in the larger schools, and sometimes in bad repair. Some of them have been able to rent rough playing-fields, but lack of equipment due to war shortage makes organized games difficult.

School gardens are encouraged for the older children, and gardening is very popular. Seeds and tools are provided by the County Education Committee, which has always been ready to rent land for gardens, but the head teachers prefer to make their own arrangements about hiring suitable ground. This leaves them free to sell the produce, and one school in the Survey area made a profit of £80 last year from its garden, enabling interior improvements to be made to the School.

Equipment. If there be any virtue in orderliness as a habit to be inculcated, then the supply of cupboards and storage space to village schools is of some importance. The selection of most of the schools for emergency rest centres has added a good deal to the miscellaneous paraphernalia that lie about, but allowing for this, more storage space for ordinary school equipment seems essential.

On the whole, the furniture is adequate, granted that the dual desk is considered good and modern enough for the village child. This type of desk is pretty general, and the infants are well supplied with small tables and chairs.

Books and stationery present difficulties to the keen head teacher. The allowance averages about 4*s.* a year for each child, and while it was not suggested that this was particularly low in relation to urban rates, one or two teachers spoke somewhat enviously of the more generous allowances under the L.C.C. and of their increasing difficulties owing to war-time prices. By contrast, the fee for books at one of the secondary schools in the area may be so much as 10*s.* a term But elementary schools which can show special need may get extra money, and the Local Education Authority makes allowances for handicraft and gardening.

Pianos seemed fairly general; wireless existed only where the head teacher had provided it himself. One head teacher was planning whist drives to raise money to buy a wireless for the school.

Schools seemed well supplied with pictures and posters, and with handwork materials. Knitting and hand-weaving were much in evidence. The use of pictures depends a good deal on the skill and interest of the teachers, and one school in

particular seemed very fortunate in having an Infants' teacher with great talent, her room being outstanding for the gay pictures on all its walls.

Teachers. The most important single factor in any school is undoubtedly the head teacher, and whatever improvements there may be in the provision of educational facilities, the personality of the teachers will remain the predominating influence on the child. Salaries are lower in the country, and while this represents no more than the differences estimated in the costs of living in town and country, it may narrow the field of possible teachers; it does not necessarily follow that the quality suffers, although qualifications and training may well be below the best. The teacher who feels a real vocation for the country will make his life there whatever the conditions, though he will probably choose counties where there are the best opportunities both for himself and for the work he wants to do, and in this respect counties vary very much. On the other hand, it must happen, often enough, that the teacher in the village school is one who has failed to obtain an urban job, while, in the county of the Survey area, there have been instances in recent years of teachers who have moved from schools in the country to others in the towns, where salaries are higher. Much can be done to improve the material conditions attaching to work in a village school and the training which precedes it, but no reconstruction or legislation can ultimately affect the quality of the work which a teacher does.

The number of teachers in the schools of the Survey area varies from one to six, according to the size of the school, but the supply is not always adequate even for the minimum standard allowed. War-time conditions are chiefly responsible for the shortage, but where there is no satisfactory teacher's house, and in some of the remoter villages, the managers are often in difficulties. At one place, one teacher had been in sole charge of the whole school of thirty-one children, ages 3 to 11, for nine months, and had only recently secured, by her own efforts, an untrained assistant. At another, the staff was only maintained at three by the readiness

of the wife of a master at a secondary school to help. At a third, two or three age-groups have had to be merged, where, before the war, a larger staff enabled them to be taught separately. The demands on a rural teacher are far more numerous and various—even in school itself—than on an urban one. Everything, from teaching to the organization of national savings and the distribution of school milk, falls on one or two people.

In nearly every school there is a certificated head teacher—a man in the larger schools, and a woman in the smaller—assisted by a varying number of trained and untrained teachers. Two of the smaller schools have only uncertificated teachers. The success of the school depends very greatly on the ability, vitality, and keenness of the head teacher, and in this respect the area seems well served. Three, especially, stand out, men who are enthusiastic, full of ideas and ambitions for their schools, keenly interested in the work and in the communities around them. All married, they live near to their schools, and out of school hours they seem to shoulder the burden of every sort of peace- and war-time village activity.

It is more difficult, evidently, for women to establish themselves in similar positions. The head teachers of two schools live away from the villages, and do not seem to participate, in anything like the same way, in the life of the community. Both, however, live in other villages, so that the reason seems personal rather than distaste for the loneliness or isolation of village life. Perhaps the happiest solution in the smaller schools is found in the married woman teacher. In one village the head teacher is the wife of a local farmer, and by virtue of her position both in the school and in her home she seems to be a real leader in the village community, even though in the school itself she is coping with an impossible task. This solution, of course, is not possible in those counties where the marriage ban is imposed.

It is difficult to assess the professional and mental isolation felt by teachers in this area, partly because it seems to depend a great deal on personal qualities. All appear to feel it in some degree, and it is very much accentuated in war-time,

now that transport difficulties have curtailed visits to near-by towns for entertainment and for cultural activities. Some of the teachers serve on national committees of one sort and another, and contrive ways and means of attending meetings. It is the wives of teachers, perhaps, who suffer most from isolation in communities where few people share their real interests.

Almost all the teachers visited have a keen interest in rural life, and most of them have a rural background, but with some experience of teaching in towns. There did not appear to be much co-operation between teachers of neighbouring villages, though this may be due partly to war-time conditions.

Curriculum. In the junior schools, after the Infant stage, the main emphasis is on a thorough grounding in reading, writing, and sums, with some history and geography, scripture, music, handwork, and physical training. Along with this training in the tools of education the child begins to learn something about living in a community.

For all those children who stay on at senior schools, either in their own villages or in neighbouring ones, the curriculum is much the same, with the addition of more English subjects and such science as the equipment of the school and the qualifications of the teachers allow, together with gardening, practical subjects, &c. Scripture lessons are given every day.

For practical subjects, there is a joint scheme in the Survey area, so that all the boys are taken to one village for woodwork and the girls to another for cookery. Only one of the larger villages has its own facilities for these subjects.

Health Services. Children attending elementary schools have three medical examinations during their years at school—one on entrance, one during their eighth year, and one during their twelfth year. These examinations are held usually in the schools themselves, as also are the annual inspections of teeth and eyes, and any necessary dental treatment. The unsuitability of the present school premises for holding medical inspections is manifest. None of the schools visited has rooms which can be set aside specially for the purpose, and children and equipment have to be moved from one of the

classrooms. The absence of water must make dental treatment difficult, as it does the treatment of any of the minor injuries which children incur while playing. Before the war, the Local Education Authority supplied trailer dental surgeries, to obviate the difficulties in the smaller schools, but these are now laid up.

Milk is provided, either free or at reduced rates. Dinners of two courses, 'befores and afters', are served in canteens in six of the schools at a charge of 5*d.* a day, or 2*s.* a week. These are appreciated, and children under 11, from a village in which the school has been closed, complained emphatically that there was no canteen in the one to which they were sent. It had been asked for, but the answer was that the numbers were not enough to justify it.

Difficulties of the Country School. A Survey of any rural area must demonstrate forcibly the inequality of educational opportunities between town and country, and bring the investigator face to face with the question: 'Why should the fact that a child is born in a rural area limit his chances of educational advancement?'

It is not suggested that the quality of teaching is in any sense inferior, but there are certain problems in the present system which no amount of wisdom and devotion can overcome. How can a teacher deal adequately with six age-groups in one room, as happens in one of the schools, with the boy of 8 and the girl of 13? 'The greatest problem in rural education', said the teacher in another village school, 'is the difficulty of teaching the backward child—the child who needs special attention and special subjects—in the same class as the normally intelligent child.'

Such limitations on the adequacy of teaching mean that the country child may well be handicapped when it comes to the examination at the age of 11 for entry into the secondary school. While the fact that a certain proportion of places are reserved for children from schools in rural areas suggests that the authorities consider this to be so, the evidence gained in the Survey area is not sufficient for any general conclusions. Certainly, the handful of children who have gone from its

village schools during the last few years to the County School, is well below the average (9·5 per cent.) for the country as a whole.

The difference in opportunities which follows success or failure in the entrance examination is fairly obvious. Success opens the door to the fuller, more balanced, much more interesting life of a secondary school, with its trained staff, its 500 children, and every opportunity for specialization in academic and other subjects, and with the way open to universities, professional examinations, and the rest. Failure, at present, dooms the child to the narrow experience of a village school, with a few score of variously aged companions, and one or two masters, or perhaps a mistress, for the rest of his school life. Under the present system, children in towns are better provided for than those in the country because their senior schools are larger, with more children, more staff, and better buildings.

It is not suggested that the answer is to make secondary education as organized to-day available for every child. The problem is to ensure that all children have equal opportunities and to provide a suitable alternative for those for whom a specialized academic education is unsuitable. Reorganization under the Hadow scheme has attempted, in recent years, to improve the lot of the senior in the village school, but it has not gone very far. The initial difficulty of trying to teach too many ages in one room has been overcome, in part, by moving seniors from most of the smaller schools to larger schools near by. If the war had not intervened, a somewhat bolder scheme might have been in operation by now, as the Education Committee had planned a new senior school for all the children over the age of 11, from nine of the villages of the Survey area. The school would have provided accommodation for 280 children, drawn from an area reaching up to 7 miles. Transport was to be by bus or bicycle.

In some villages there is strong opposition to the removal of the senior children. In one there were several protest meetings, and the children were kept away from school for some time. It has been suggested, however, that this would not have happened if the scheme had been properly explained

beforehand to the parents. The proposed new senior school would undoubtedly receive a good deal of opposition from some villages, particularly from the few which already have large schools, or where parents do not like the idea of the long journey or the long day for their children.

These are difficulties inseparable from the organization of education in sparsely populated areas, and there are obvious arguments in favour of centralized schools. The whole of the educational system envisaged in the new Education Bill rests on the assumption that the establishment of adequate primary and secondary schools is justified, and in the absence of any special arrangements for children of the rural areas it may be assumed that it is intended to apply it both to town and country. The new system is discussed more fully later in this chapter.

Elementary Schools in the Survey Area

Village No.	*No. of children*	*Ages*	*No. of rooms*	*No. of teachers*
1 and 2	60	All ages up to 14	3	3
3	226	All ages up to 14	5	6
4	29	Juniors up to 11	2	2
5		School closed		
7	24	Juniors up to 11	2	2
8 and 9	42	All ages up to 14	2	2
10	36	Juniors up to 11	2	1
11		School closed		
12 and 13	91	All ages up to 14	3	3
14	176	All ages up to 14	5	6
15, 16, 17	31	Juniors up to 11	2*	2
19	90	All ages up to 14	3	3
20	137	All ages up to 14	3	4

*One room very small.

In quite another category, there is the problem of the difficult and maladjusted child. Child Guidance Clinics are to be found to-day in most large towns, where trained psychiatrists may give advice and treatment. Segregation in special schools is avoided except in extreme cases, and the co-operation of the home is always sought. This service has not yet extended into the Survey area, and the difficulties of getting country children to the town clinics are obvious.

Secondary Schools

The County School. The whole of the Survey area is served by the County Secondary School in one of the market towns outside it. For some parts of the area, a school on the other side would seem a nearer and more natural centre, but transport is too difficult, for the railway system is inadequate, and road transport either by bus or cycle too precarious in wintry weather.

Methods of transport to senior schools from villages in the Survey area vary, some children using the train, some buses, and others cycles, which are provided under a special scheme by the County Council.

The County School is a modern, well-equipped secondary school providing an all-round education for children between the ages of 10 and 18 years, and preparing them for School Certificate, Higher Certificate, University entrance, and professional examinations, and it is well staffed with specialist teachers. In addition to classrooms and science laboratories, the buildings include a good gymnasium, school hall, library, domestic science rooms, and workshops, and there are adequate playing-fields. The buildings, however, are not above criticism; more space for some science subjects is needed; there is some adverse comment on the workmanship—none of the doors fit properly and the buildings seem unnecessarily noisy.

The curriculum is largely influenced by the need to prepare children for the School Certificate examination, and while this is a necessary preliminary for all those who want to proceed to professional work, it may not be the best target for

many children. The headmaster expressed the belief, held fairly widely to-day, that the examination system was hampering the development of new educational theory, and that the number of subjects required bewildered the ordinary child. On the other hand, he said that most parents were mainly concerned with getting for their children the kind of education which would improve their earning capacity.

Endowed Schools. Both the endowed secondary schools, the boys' and the co-educational, draw some pupils from the area. It is interesting to note that several children have been sent in the last year or so from the village school as fee-paying pupils to one of them, the co-educational school—an indication, perhaps, both of higher war-time wages and of an increased appreciation of the value of education. The social influence exercised by this school in its immediate surroundings is very remarkable.

Continuation Classes. There are no continuation classes in the Survey area.

Adult Education

It has been said that 'the measure of effectiveness of earlier education is the extent to which in some form or other it is continued voluntarily in later life',[1] and while there is much truth in this, there must be opportunity for further education as well as enthusiasm. Among the bodies providing adult education through tutorial classes and extension courses the Workers' Educational Association holds an important place. In the Survey area only one village takes advantage of the facilities offered, and it is the centre of a very flourishing W.E.A. class. Attendances at lectures have averaged between 50 and 60 in the past few years, and the members are representative of all classes of the community. The initial success of the classes may be attributed largely to the enthusiasm and energy of a few people, members of the Society of Friends, but its influence is manifest in the

[1] *Educational Reconstruction.* Board of Education White Paper, Sec. 85. Cmd. 6458, 1943.

awakened social consciousness of the community in which it flourishes.

Technical Education

Farming being the only considerable industry of the Survey area, it is natural that any technical education within it should be restricted to agriculture. In normal times classes are arranged by the County Agricultural Committee, acting through the Agricultural Organizer, in the market towns on either side of the area, in subjects such as farm book-keeping, the manuring of crops, the rationing of live stock, and so on. These have been fairly well attended, and it is noteworthy that they have attracted as many of the older as of the younger members of the farming community. An attempt to organize courses in one of the larger villages of the Survey area was not a success.

The County Agricultural Committee offers scholarships, or grants, to assist boys and girls of the age of 16 or over to proceed to Farm Institutes or to Dairy and Horticultural Schools. The demand for this form of higher education, however, has not proved to be very great, either in the county in general or in the Survey area in particular. Farmers are still inclined to think that the best place of instruction is the farm, and the fact that the grants offered do not defray all the expenses of board and instruction in the various institutions limits the numbers of those who might take advantage of them.

The County Library

There are County Library centres in nearly all the villages of the Survey area. These are run by voluntary librarians and local committees, and are open usually for one or two hours a week. The books are supplied by the County Library in the county town, and they are kept, nearly always, at the village school. Most villages have adult and junior sections, and supplies of both fiction and non-fiction works are available. In addition to using the local centres, residents may make use

of the postal service with the county town, which provides individual readers with three non-fiction books a month, outgoing postage being paid by the library and return post by the reader. By a national system of inter-borrowing between libraries, any book required is readily procurable.

County Libraries were financed originally by grants from the Carnegie Trust, and they are now a charge upon the Local Education Authority, the grants available varying widely from county to county. There is a paid staff, and the County Librarian is entrusted with the whole work of selecting and buying books and of organizing their distribution to the village centres. In war-time the work is particularly heavy, for additional centres have been established at Army and R.A.F. camps and at W.L.A. hostels.

In the County Library of the Survey area accommodation is very limited, and the smallness of the staff limits the possibility of much expansion. The library contains about 55,000 books and serves nearly 350 centres. Boxes of books for the individual centres are made up in rotation, but difficulties of transport, at the present time, mean that exchanges are only possible twice a year. Supplementary parcels are sent whenever possible. There seems little doubt that more frequent exchanges would encourage more reading, for the evidence is that the demand for books is much greater after an exchange, and falls away as the weeks and months go by.

The use of the library depends a good deal upon the energy and enthusiasm of the local voluntary help. The centres in the Survey area appear to be well used, and the records of last year's issues show that the largest number of books was borrowed in one of the smaller villages, with an average of seven books per head.

The County Library system seems to work well, and it is capable of much expansion. Better accommodation in the county town, more trained staff, and more liberal grants are obvious improvements which suggest themselves, and if these could go hand in hand with better transport arrangements, and more adequate accommodation for the local libraries, perhaps in the village social centres of the future, there seems

little doubt that they could add even more to the enjoyment and education of people living in the country.

RECONSTRUCTION

In view of the provisions of the Education Bill, 1943, the reconstruction of the educational facilities in the Survey area must be considered as a whole, for the Bill lays down that:

> The statutory system of public education shall be organised in three progressive stages to be known as primary education, secondary education, and further education; and it shall be the duty of the local education authority for every area, so far as their powers extend, to contribute towards the moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient education throughout those stages shall be available to meet the needs of the population of their area.[1]

Actually, the Bill makes very little specific provision for the application of this 'statutory system' to rural areas, and if it becomes law, the Local Education Authorities will have to devise the most suitable ways of applying it in their own districts.

The Education Authority. Under the new Bill, the Local Education Authority for each county will be the County Council, and for each county borough will be the County Borough Council. The powers of the Local Education Authority for the county are intended to include the provision of education in municipal boroughs, and hence, in the Survey area, the villages and their neighbouring market towns will become one unit. At the same time, the powers of the County Education Committee in its relations with the managers of non-provided (now to be called 'auxiliary') schools are strengthened in ways which should limit the possibility of any obstructive action, while leaving the managers some measure of control both of buildings, if they are able to meet the cost of any improvements required, and of the provision of religious education.

Primary and Secondary Schools. To consider, first, the period of full-time education, the new system divides this period into three parts—infant, primary, and secondary.

[1] *Education Bill, 1943*, 7 & 8 Geo. vi, Part II .7.

The infant and primary departments will be in one or separate schools according to numbers, and the White Paper recommends that every effort should be made to see that the premises and staffing afford the 'space, facilities and amenities suitable for the full mental, social and physical development of young children'. If the village schools in the Survey area are to be brought up to this standard, very considerable reconstruction will be necessary, and in some places complete rebuilding.

From the primary school it is intended that every child should proceed to a secondary school at about the age of 11. Equality of opportunity and a much broader conception of secondary education are two of the main pillars of the new scheme. Children will no longer be chosen on the results of the competitive test, but will proceed to the appropriate secondary school on the basis of their school records, intelligence tests, and in accordance with their parents' wishes. Three types of secondary schools are visualized—grammar, technical, and modern—all three types to have the same status, with comparable buildings, amenities, and scales of staffing. In this way, it is hoped that all types of capacity and ability may be trained, and all children given the best possible equipment for life.

It is an important part of the new system that there should be facilities for transfer from one type of secondary education to another, so that if a child should develop special aptitudes later than the age of 11, these may be given full opportunities.

In rural areas it seems probable that the three types of secondary education may all be combined in one building. The sites of such schools will need special care and foresight, and transport arrangements would need to be carefully devised in consultation with parents. The whole question of boarding schools as a part of the State system of education is still under consideration.

At all stages of a child's school life it is recommended that the State, through the Local Education Authority, should take full responsibility for his health and physical well-being. Medical inspections, medical treatment, the provision of

school meals and milk are to be obligatory on the Local Education Authority.

County Colleges. Under the new Bill, the Local Education Authority is also charged with the responsibility of providing further part-time education. It is laid down that the young person under 18 shall attend at a County College 'for one whole day, or two half-days, in each of forty-four weeks in every year while he remains a young person'; alternatively, 'where the authority are satisfied that continuous attendance would be more suitable in the case of that young person, for one continuous period of eight weeks, or two continuous periods of four weeks each, in every such year'. For the rural areas, the alternative of residential colleges giving four- or eight-week courses seems infinitely preferable, and this view was emphasized in the White Paper. Besides solving the problem of transport, residential colleges could be much more efficient and economic in building, equipment and staffing, and they would overcome the physical difficulty of attendance from distances for daily or half-day periods, while enabling a much more worthwhile period of education to be given.

For the county of the Survey, the Director of Education produced, some time ago, a comprehensive and detailed scheme. Instead of the twenty-seven schools which would be needed if day-schools were visualized, he considers that four residential colleges could serve the whole county, and they would accommodate 4,000 students.

In each college the course would include instruction in the same basic subjects—English, History, Geography, Mathematics, Science, Physical Training, with provision for Music, Art, Drama, and Religious Knowledge. In addition to this general education, each college would specialize in, and be equipped for, different practical subjects, and the scheme overleaf is suggested for the four colleges.

'Of these courses', the Director of Education suggests, '"B" would probably be attended only by girls and "D" by boys; it is probable that "A" would be mainly attended by boys, while "C" might appeal equally to boys and girls.' It is

estimated that about 140 students would be a desirable number for a course, and that a staff of 14 would be required to cover the teaching of the basic, practical, and optional subjects. A curriculum devised on the scheme as suggested below would allow adequate scope for individual choice and capacity.

One of the arguments in favour of residential colleges is that they would offer opportunities for experience in community life, in citizenship, and social training, and a recent inquiry among the members of Women's Institutes in the Survey area showed that a number of parents were anxious for their children to have such experience.

College	*Practical*	*Optional*	*Basic subjects*
A	Wood and Metalwork	Building Construction, Craft History, Drawing, Mathematics, &c.	English, History, Geography, Mathematics, Science, Physical Training, Art, Drama, Music, Religious Knowledge
B	Domestic Subjects and Horticulture	Commercial, Craft History, &c.	
C	Agriculture and Horticulture	Farm Accounts, Surveying, Craft History, &c.	
D	Electricity and Engineering	Mechanical Drawing, Mathematics, Physics, Craft History	

Adequate premises for such colleges would be of primary importance, and it is suggested that they should include workshops for practical subjects, teaching rooms, a hall, a gymnasium, a dining-hall, common rooms for students and staff, canteen, library, chapel, clinic, sick bay, and dormitories. In addition, there should be facilities for outdoor games, physical training, swimming, and room for a garden or small farm.

At any times when the colleges were not being used for courses, they could provide suitable and valuable accommodation for residential Adult Education courses and Summer Schools.

Any discussion of the proposed County Colleges would be incomplete without some consideration of the part which the Village Colleges of Cambridgeshire are playing in the education of the adolescent and of the adult. By their

endorsement of Mr. Henry Morris's fine conception of rural education combined with community life, the Cambridgeshire Education Committee has anticipated, in some ways, that which is proposed under the new Education Bill, while, in other ways, it has developed its proposals still farther.

Briefly, Mr. Morris's idea was that it was impossible to provide a full cultural and social life for every small English village community, but that the problem must be approached regionally. Further, that the regional community must be organized round its educational institutions. In the result, four Village Colleges were established in Cambridgeshire between the years 1930 and 1939, each of them the centre of a region comprising about ten villages.

The first purpose of the college is to serve as the senior school for all these villages, transport being arranged by bicycle or bus. But the buildings are equipped for much more than this. Impington, the most recent of them, has, in addition to the beautifully equipped school wing, a fine hall, with stage and cinematograph projector, and an adult wing, which provides accommodation for adult education; music, dramatic, agricultural, and other societies; technical training; recreational and country dancing; art exhibitions, &c. For the young people there are clubs of many kinds, and physical training. There is a library, which is part of the County Library service, but it has also a permanent section of its own; and a large common room available to all students and members of college societies and clubs who have reached the age of 16.

By a happy arrangement, the local Village Institute was incorporated from the start in the Impington Village College —its members use the general common room, and there are billiard, card, and table-tennis rooms, and a darts alley.

A canteen provides school dinners, and it serves refreshments, also, for meetings of classes and societies. There is a committee room available for the use of all local associations. Free transport was provided by bus to bring members from each village to the college in the evenings, and a restricted service is maintained even in war-time.

Each of the colleges is under the control of a Warden, who is also the Headmaster of the Senior School, and he has the assistance of an adult tutor. The corporate and democratic life of the college is promoted by a Students' Council, consisting of elected representatives of all the classes and societies. It had been the intention of the Cambridgeshire Education Committee to extend the provision of Village Colleges throughout the county, to the number of about twelve in all, but the war has postponed further action.

This new conception of community life seems, on the face of it, to go a long way in the directions contemplated for the education of the adolescent under the Education Bill. In Cambridgeshire, obviously, it would be unnecessary and probably undesirable to organize County Colleges independently of its Village College movement. By the addition of a hostel and a few more classrooms, a Village College such as that at Impington could provide facilities for a County College, and more, for the boys and girls attending it would be getting a wider and better education, as members of the larger and more varied community, than would be possible in the more segregated life of the County College.

B. THE YOUTH SERVICE

INTRODUCTION; THE LEADERS; THE ADOLESCENTS; FURTHER EDUCATION; YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS; MORAL WELFARE.

INTRODUCTION

When the consolidating Education Act was passed in 1921, section 86 permitted the Local Education Authority to spend money on equipment and out-of-school activities for school-children, so that an energetic school staff could organize clubs, meetings, or hobbies for the children who would otherwise roam the streets and lanes between 4 p.m. and bedtime. In 1937, the Physical Training and Playing Fields Act permitted local bodies to apply for grants towards the cost of providing and equipping halls, gymnasia, playing-fields, and swimming-baths for the whole community. No

use has been made of any of these powers in the county of the Survey area. Whatever had been done for boys and girls up to 1939 was done by voluntary organizations—the Scouts and Guides, the Young Farmers' Clubs, &c.—led and organized by men and women who have given their spare time voluntarily to the work, the money needed for the rents of premises, equipment, cost of uniforms, and for travelling being provided by the subscriptions of the members and donations from private benefactors. Not until the threat of world events in 1939 turned the attention of the Government to the dangers, moral as well as physical, that were likely to beset young people under war conditions, was public attention drawn to the situation, neither were public funds made available to support the work of the voluntary organizations, nor were the local authorities encouraged to assume responsibility for the welfare of their adolescents. A Board of Education Memorandum (1486), issued on 1 November 1939, urged local authorities responsible for higher education to put into effect some plans for the immediate problems, with an eye at the same time to a long-term policy, for 'the social, physical, and recreative welfare of those boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 20 who have ceased whole-time education'.

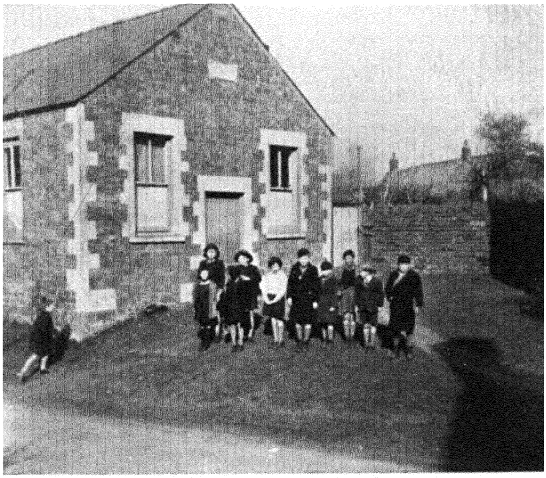
The Leaders

Work of this kind calls for leadership, and Acts of Parliament cannot make leaders. Only in two of the villages of the Survey area are there real village men who have offered themselves to help in youth work, and unless a village has a tradition of responsibility for the welfare of its adolescents, a sudden demand for leaders in this delicate business will produce no answer. It is responsible work—no less than that of leading a boy or girl through the formative years, supplying any deficiencies in the home life, and correcting the adverse effects of the dull and uncreative jobs with which the working life so often begins. This needs skill and understanding of a high order. It is no wonder, then, that in these villages, in which there has been no long tradition of leadership, the

war-time needs and opportunities have been met—if at all —by new residents, mostly war-time evacuees, or by peripatetics from the market town outside the Survey area.

To depend on travelling leaders from the outside, generally from a larger town, is one way of employing the resources which a town should possess. In the Survey area it is the war-time pre-service units which use this method. Officers of the Air Training Corps and of the Army Cadet Force come from the market town to each of the three larger villages on two evenings a week, and a scout-master is said to come occasionally to one of them. The travelling leader has little time to know his members except in the meeting times of the organization; he comes representing the bigger town, the call of which to the young people will be magnified by his presence. The growth of mutual knowledge and respect between the leader and led is retarded; the members cannot weave the personality of the leader into the fabric of village life, nor does he add one more sympathetic adult to the community. A resident leader has a chance in a small village community of becoming, like the vicar and the schoolmaster, a constant factor in the life of the place, always available for the members and their parents, knowing his team under all conditions, and able to interpret the successes, the follies, or needs of his young people to the less understanding and less sympathetic village adults; from all these opportunities the travelling leader is excluded.

It has long been customary to look to the schoolmasters as leaders among young people, but in most of the Survey villages the schoolmaster is no longer to be found. The separation of junior and senior schools, as recommended in 1926 by the Hadow Report, is now universally accepted. In rural areas, as related already, where villages are not large enough to support both junior and senior schools, it involves the setting up of senior council schools in a few strategic centres to which senior children of 11 to 14 years must walk, cycle, or be taken by special bus from their own village schools, which, up to that time, had contained all ages. The educational value of this reorganization is not in question;





THE SCHOOL BUS

Above: Juniors waiting for it. *Below*: Seniors leaving it

in its effects upon the social life of the children affected by it and of the villages from which they go, it has been found in many places little short of a disaster. The withdrawal of the older children has led to the elimination from the village of that which has proved often to be its most useful social force—the schoolmaster and his wife and family. For the children this has meant the removal of the one person for whom all of them had some consideration and respect; for the village, the loss of an irreplaceable voluntary worker in every social institution and good cause. Even in those places where the head teacher had always been a schoolmistress, the removal of the seniors to a distant school has resulted, it is said, in a general relaxation in standards of conduct and behaviour during their hours at home.

It is reported generally in the Survey area that the senior school children come back to their own village with an acquired contempt for it and for most of that which goes on in it. One head teacher said that before the reorganization she used to open her school on two or three evenings a week for boys and girls, both those at school and those who had left, to come and sing songs round the piano, to knit, play games, and to produce a concert for parents at Christmas time. Since her seniors have been taken to a senior school, they are no longer interested in these simple pursuits. They have not learnt more intelligent ways for using their leisure, but they will go back no longer to the building and to the teacher that symbolize their junior years. In another village, it was said that the behaviour of the senior children has deteriorated. They no longer owe obedience and respect, now that their own headmaster is some miles away, to any adult in their own village, and the result is a tendency towards hooliganism. In the small, hard-working, mainly agricultural villages, the removal of the man school-teacher is an irreparable loss. Boys of 11 years and over cannot be controlled in their spare time, as a general rule, by the schoolmistress in charge of the junior school. When the teacher does not even live in the village, and there are examples of this, the last ray of hope is extinguished.

Four villages in this area have headmasters, three of senior schools and one of an all-age school. The old type of village schoolmaster was a great figure in his small community; he trained the church choir, played the organ, served on the Parish Council, organized most of the village activities, and continually acted as liaison officer between the adult population and its junior members. Whatever increase there has been in the quality of the educational work in the central school, centralization has had an adverse effect on the social life of the contributory villages. Although one schoolmaster was hopeful that the difficulties would be solved in time, there is real cause for belief that these distresses may not be the birth pangs of a new order, but rather the death throes of the village as an individual community.

The Adolescents

The boy on a farm works hard because he is the servant of crops and beasts, which have their own pace in life, and needs which cannot be subordinated to the convenience of man. His day is a long one, and if his job be with animals he will have to come back for milking on Saturday afternoon and twice on Sunday, or to shut up the poultry late in the evening, or to feed the pigs at stated times during the week-end. He is entitled to a week's holiday in the year, not counting public holidays. With a good master he will learn most of the processes of the farm; if he be mechanically minded he may spend much of his time with the tractor. With a bad master he may be given only the repetitive and uninteresting jobs. When his working day is over, he will help his father on the garden or allotment, when daylight permits.

Apart from farm work, there are a few local jobs to be done at the village shops or garages, but most of the adolescents in the Survey area travel to one or other of the two market towns on either side of it, to work in the shops or factories there. Transport is by bicycle, public omnibus, train or—for the workers in one factory—a works bus. The hours spent in travelling must be added to the working day, so that the time spent away from home is the real measure

of the amount of labour that the adolescents sustain. Those who cycle long distances in all weathers and in all conditions of health may feel the strain, and the ill effects on growing boys and girls are accentuated, sometimes, by inadequate feeding arrangements. Until a municipal restaurant was established in the larger of the towns, the diets of these boys and girls would vary greatly. Those who could lunch at good works canteens, or who took good sandwich packets from home, were well off, but there were many others less well served who could not afford café or restaurant prices for more than 'a bun, a cup of tea, and a long sit-down'.

Many have expressed the opinion that the chief desire of the boys and girls is to enjoy the varied pleasures of the big town. Some boys, it is said, join the pre-service units, especially the Army Cadet Force, because it gives them the opportunity of an occasional parade in the town. In one of the smaller villages, it was said that the girls pick for their boy-friends those who can talk most about it, its shops, cinemas, and dances, and the farmer's boy is second in the race—in fact, the boys who stay most willingly on the land are the sons of the farmers, not of the farm workers. The appeal of the big town to adults is in the amenities that are available. To adolescents it is partly in the better amenities, partly in the wider range of activities and entertainment, and partly in the feeling of being freer to choose and select friends, gangs, clothes, and the like, and of having a measure of anonymity.

A sex-distinction is shown in most homes, largely by the mother. The boy is the favoured one, his meal is prepared and cleared away for him, and except for helping in the family garden or allotment he has no home duties. He goes out with a single friend, or with a gang, to stand at a street corner or to roam the lanes looking for things to investigate and meddle with. If there be a chance of earning money, he may help in a garage, or a bakehouse, or he may caddy at the local golf course. One parson complained that the golf course took away all his boys and youths on Sundays, leaving none for the choir, Sunday school, or young men's

class. Boys do not leave the village at night-time except for some special purpose—a class, a dance, or a parade. The misdemeanours they commit are inside the village boundaries, and the small number of probation orders which have been issued in the Survey area means that most of the offences which bring boys to the police courts are small things, punishable by binding-over or by fine. Another reason may be that each constable has more than one village in his charge and the chances are that he will not be in the one in which the crime is committed. The attitude of the Juvenile Court magistrates is also an important factor. If they be old and unsympathetic, they may tend to view offences against property—damage, trespass, and fruit-stealing—as premeditated crime and not as the result of lack of opportunities for the right use of leisure. An outbreak of gate-lifting in one of the villages was found to be the work of the members of a pre-service organization. It was annoying, but not a major crime. Hooliganism is noticed more in a village than in a town, but there is no evidence that it is more prevalent. The police order forbidding young people under the age of 18 to enter public houses has not made any great change in the drinking habits of the boys. They rarely haunted the pubs before, for the reason that in small communities it is difficult to get away from adults who know them, and public opinion holds that such places are more properly the refuge of the adult from the burden of family life.

The girl, on the other hand, who has finished her day's work, has still much to do to help her mother in the home; she washes up, looks after the children, cleans the kitchen. The lot of the girl in service is worse. Her free time comes in the afternoon, when only those in similar occupations are at liberty, so that her circle of friends is small. The domestic in a farm-house is considered on the lowest rung of the labour ladder, for she cannot specialize, and her help is often called for in the dairy, pigsty, &c.

Further Education

Although the public elementary schools in the Survey

area are, all of them, co-educational, boys tend to form gangs until the age of 16 or more; the girls live in feminine circles until they are about 15. The opportunities for these young people to undertake any courses of study for the benefit of their future lives are few. No public elementary schools in the area organize evening classes, although the Education Authority will give generous help to any group of not less than ten people who want to study one subject. The technical institute and the commercial schools of the market town are some miles away, and even if transport were available it takes an effort of will to travel a distance in the evening. One boy and two girls were found, who were preparing to cycle to attend a commercial school. Correspondence schools are too expensive and bursaries are not available for them from the Local Education Authority. This is an improvement that could be made, with one reservation. At present, all boys and girls who, at the age of 16, are not members of any voluntary organization approved by the Board of Education, have to be interviewed by representatives of the Local Education Authority and encouraged, if there be no reasonable impediments, to occupy some of their leisure time in some creative and educational pursuit. In an area such as that covered by the Survey, it taxes the ingenuity of the person interviewing to find any such organization or pursuit. There were two boys, however, who wanted to study, but were not able to set about it without adult help, and for them two voluntary tutors were found nearby to whom the boys go once a week, at times to suit all parties. If grants could be made by the Local Education Authority for correspondence courses, conditional upon the discovery of the necessary voluntary tutors, and if rooms in the schools could be set aside for those whose homes are not conducive to work, they might be of real advantage to many country boys and girls. It is noteworthy that the idea of the tutors and their discovery were due to an agency outside the village. Any realization by the village community of responsibility for its adolescents is still entirely lacking.

W.E.A. classes are technically open only to men and women of eighteen and over, unless there be a Youth Section. No such sections exist in the county of the Survey area. Even young people between 18 and 20 need encouragement to attend the adult classes. One of the parsons takes three boys to a W.E.A. class in another parish, and keeps one evening a week for them to drop in for discussion on the theme of the lecture. This is the sort of thing which could be more widely practised. There must be some people who could make their homes small centres for informal education, or the scenes of occasional meetings—as happens in a policeman's house in one of the smallest villages—ostensibly for a specific purpose, such as money-raising for the county hospital, but also to give wholesome entertainment for the young and old of the village in a pleasant family atmosphere.

Youth Organizations

The principal youth organizations in the Survey area, as elsewhere, are the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides and their ramifications; the Young Farmers' Clubs; and latterly, of course, the pre-service units, the Air Training Corps and the Army Cadet Force.

Membership of these organizations is set out in the accompanying tables, one for the larger and the other for the smaller parishes. The figures confirm, in the main, the impression of apathy towards all social institutions in most places in the area, upon which comment has been made already. There is a record of lapsed Scout troops and Guide companies, and here and there of boys' and girls' clubs. At the present time, only one of the ten smaller villages has any voluntary organizations at all. A few young people in most places are members of organizations in other towns or villages, but the largest contingent is no more than 8 out of an estimated possible total of 48. It is difficult to assign specific reasons. It is natural to suspect that those villages without resident leaders, in the persons of the parish priest and the school-teacher, would show lack of youth organization, and parishes Nos. 5 and 18 seem to bear this out. On

the other hand, the two little places 15 and 16, without this leadership and with only a junior school, make a better showing than most. The combined villages 1 and 2 are outstanding, where, under the leadership of the Society of Friends, social activities of all kinds are well developed.

The larger places are not numerous enough for comparison. They would be expected to show a higher degree of youth organization, but it may be pointed out, for what it is worth, that the numbers in these three places show a wide range both in organizations and in membership of them.

In the smaller villages the lack of anything to interest or to encourage girls who are going out to work for the first time is conspicuous. Girls of 16 repeat that they left the Girl Guides when they left school at the age of 14, except the few who were encouraged to become helpers responsible for sections of the younger Guides. Leaving school marks for them a dividing line between the child and the adult, and adults are responsible people who organize other people's lives. Yet the few Women's Institutes which meet in the evening to enable the working girl to join, do not attract many even when the programme is full of practical activities.

A boys' club or a girls' club will attract a large membership if properly and expertly run. Once the excitement of living in a lively community has been generated, it can lead the members into many educational activities informally organized; the special section of the County Library, the Physical Training class, the First Aid group, and even the Domestic Science group will flourish, but all these go down, especially in this area, before the impact of the pre-service organizations and the strictly practical Young Farmers' Clubs.

There are many reasons for the success of the pre-service unit for boys, some of which have been mentioned already—service of the country, the uniform, the attraction of machines and fire-arms, the lure of parades in the market town—but the most important is that boys are being called to do a man-sized job. Their officers hold the King's or the Lord Lieutenant's commission, they work under and practise

YOUTH SERVICES I. *The Smaller Parishes*

Parish No.	*Population (1931)*	*No. in age-class 7–20 (1943)*	*Voluntary organizations and membership*					*Remarks*
			Organization	*In village*	*Elsewhere*	*Total*	*% of age-class*	
11	168	44	Brownies	..	1	3	7	No resident parson.
			Pre-service units	..	2			No school.
18	173	36	Pre-service units	..	2	2	6	No resident parson.
								No school.
								No village hall.
5	194	42	None	..	..	..	..	No school.
4	209	44	Guides	..	3	6	14	Junior school only.
			Pre-service units	..	3			
7	224	46	Scouts	..	3	6	13	No resident school teacher.
			Pre-service units	..	3			Junior school only.
								No village hall.
10	229	48	Pre-service units	..	2	2	4	Girls' Club, Guides, and Scouts all lapsed.
								Junior school only.
15 and 16	239	48	Scouts	..	3	8	17	No resident parson.
			Young Farmers' Club	..	3			No resident school teacher.
			Pre-service units	..	2			Junior school only
8 and 9	297	62	Young Farmers' Club	..	3	3	5	Guides and scouts both lapsed.
								No village hall.
1 and 2	633	120	Guides	26	..	56	47	A village with large secondary school and much social activity.
			Scouts and Cubs	24	..			
			Young Farmers' Club	..	6		..	
12 and 13	439	100	Pre-service units	..	5	5	..	Guide company lapsed.

YOUTH SERVICES II. *The Larger Parishes*

Parish No.	*Population (1931)*	*No. in age-class 7–20 (1943)*	*Voluntary organizations and membership*					*Remarks*
			Organization	*In village*	*Elsewhere*	*Total*	*% of age-class*	
14	1080	224	Brownies	12	..	81	36	
			Guides	16	..			
			Rangers	11	..			
			Scouts	12	..			
			Young Farmers' Club	11	..			
			Pre-service units	19	..			
20	1234	254	Young Farmers' Club	25	..	37	15	
			Pre-service units	11	1			
3	1153	372	Scouts and Cubs	33	..	51	14	Girls' Club, Guides, and Boys' Club all died out.
			Pre-service units	18	..			

their own discipline, and they have no body of 'kids' imitating them on a lower scale. When the older organizations try to adapt themselves by creating special war-time activities, they are always defeated—and especially among the girls—by the presence of the 'junior tail', which makes it difficult for the working boy or girl ever to escape from recollections of childhood. The Junior Red Cross and Junior St. John Ambulance Brigade are not represented in the Survey area, but their success in other parts is to be attributed to the same causes as that of the pre-service units. One word of criticism must be said. The pre-service corps do an admirable practical job. They produce efficiency in the selected subjects, they develop discipline and healthy bodies. Apart, however, from any effects which these positive virtues may have on the general characters of the boys and girls, the pre-service units do nothing to stimulate either their intellects or their imagination, or to help them towards an understanding of the problems with which they will be confronted when the uniforms have been put off and they wait no longer for the word of command. The voluntary juvenile organizations, few of which are represented in this area, have, by tradition, this educative and humanizing influence; temporarily the demands of practical training have eclipsed them.

There are two Young Farmers' Clubs in the area. Each is led by a young man farming for a living. The officers of both clubs are drawn from boys or girls of secondary school education. It is said that this is always likely to happen in the early days, but that eventually the council school boy or girl will be ready to lead. The members range from 10 to 21 years of age, and they are drawn from several nearby villages as well as from the central ones. The social distribution of both clubs is about the same, each being divided equally among boys and girls who represent everything from the leisured classes to the farm workers. Not all the members are working on the land; it is a hobby that appeals to several industrial boys. Considerable interest is expressed by local farmers who may expect to benefit from the Clubs' activities,

but these are only the more progressive men. Here is an organization which has nothing to lose by the coming of peace; it unites the scientific and mechanical with the service of growing and living things.

The Youth Service was brought into being shortly after the outbreak of war:

> to extend the recreational training of young people by assisting the national voluntary organisations which have worked so long and so well in this sphere, and by enlisting the assistance of Local Education Authorities in increasing the opportunities open to young persons to use their leisure wisely to their own advantage and, in great measure, to the advantage of the war effort.

The Board of Education's White Paper, from which this is quoted, goes on to say that it was clear from the start that the Youth Service was not to be regarded simply as a war-time expedient, but that it should take its place as an integral part of the national system of education. The partnership which is now being established between the voluntary bodies and the Education authorities, through the Local Youth Committees, recognizes the principle of State assistance to private enterprise which is characteristic of many British institutions. Its testing time will come on the cessation of hostilities, when thousands of young people, in pre-military units or disbanded from other forms of national service, will stand in need of all the help that can be given them if they are to find a way of life which will make them both good citizens and good neighbours.

Moral Welfare

The Church attempts to play its part in youth service through the Diocesan Council of Moral Welfare. This is an organization which undertakes preventive and rescue work among children and young people in grave moral danger. In the diocese of the Survey area the work began about thirty years ago, and it has been expanding steadily until the whole diocese is now covered. There is a Diocesan Council and Secretary, with a number of affiliated associations and

case workers, each being responsible for varying numbers of rural deaneries. Cases are brought to their notice by doctors, clergy, teachers, health visitors, probation officers, and others, upon which they visit the home of the child or girl concerned, to find out the circumstances and to advise.

The Council's work is increasing as it becomes more widely known, and the County Health and Education authorities make frequent calls upon the services of the workers, both for individual cases and for the work of sex education. War conditions have aggravated moral problems in many ways.

CHAPTER IX

HEALTH SERVICES

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE: Ante-natal Care; Confinement; Infant Welfare Centres; Vaccination; School Medical Services. TUBERCULOSIS. INFECTIOUS DISEASES. VENEREAL DISEASE. THE BLIND. MENTAL DEFICIENCY. HEALTH EDUCATION. HEALTH VISITORS. NURSING AND NURSING ASSOCIATIONS. HOSPITALS: The Workpeople's Hospital Association.

PUBLIC health services available in the Survey area, as in the whole country, may be considered under the following general headings: Maternity and Child Welfare; Vaccination; School Medical Services; Tuberculosis; Infectious Diseases; Venereal Disease; the Blind; Mental Deficiency; and Health Education. These services are independent of National Health Insurance, and, with the exception of Infectious Diseases, which are the responsibility of the local Sanitary Authority, are all provided by the County Council. Patients are expected to contribute towards the cost of most of them according to their incomes, but a 'means test' is not rigorously applied and patients are never asked to prove that their incomes are as stated. No payment is asked for the diagnosis or treatment of venereal disease, and the health authorities are so anxious to combat tuberculosis that treatment is generally given free.

The County Infirmary, the local hospitals, and the District Nursing Association have contributory subscription schemes which are referred to later in this section.

MATERNITY AND CHILD WELFARE

Ante-natal Care. There are no ante-natal clinics in or available to the Survey area. An expectant mother, however, receives two examinations at her home from her own doctor. If he should have to prescribe hospital treatment, she will go to the Maternity Department of the County Infirmary, or the doctor attending can call in a consultant specialist for a domiciliary examination. Extra nourishment is provided in the form of milk, and malt and cod-liver oil.

Confinement. The confinement takes place either in hospital or at home. The woman goes to hospital when there are bad conditions in the home, when a difficult labour is expected, and frequently for a first confinement.

There are two hospitals available for women of the Survey area: the Maternity Department of the County Infirmary and the Public Assistance Institution in the nearby market town. There are also two Cottage Hospitals. Country people prefer to have their babies at home. In peace-time a Home Help is provided to take over the patient's domestic duties, when required, during the period of her confinement. These Home Helps are local women, known to and approved by the local Health Visitor. Since the war, however, this service seems to have died out in the Survey area. Local women cannot be found who have time to spare to help in homes other than their own.

In cases of complication a consultant doctor may be sent to a domiciliary confinement. Similarly, local medical help may supplement, in an emergency, the services of the all-important midwife.[1] At most country confinements the District Nurse, or midwife, is the only qualified person present. She has visited the patient now and then during the pre-natal period, and will do so again for fourteen days afterwards. How much attention she can give during the actual confinement will depend largely upon other calls of the same kind which she may have to make. The area of her activity, in terms of population, is, therefore, of great importance.

Parishes within the Survey area share midwives with each other, and with other parishes outside it. The table opposite shows how each midwife is occupied.

A domiciliary post-natal examination is provided by the patient's own doctor about four weeks after the confinement.

Infant Welfare Centres. There are four of these centres serving the villages of the Survey area, situated at Nos. 3,

[1] There is an Emergency Obstetrical Unit on duty day and night at the County Infirmary, a sort of flying squad of personnel and apparatus which may be sent for in cases of extreme emergency by the doctor attending the case; this unit appears never to have visited the Survey area.

4, 14, and 21. These are comparatively recent institutions, and they are well attended. In spite of the absence of transport, women in villages where there are no clinics are prepared to bring their children two or three miles to the nearest one. Numbers would not justify the setting up of a clinic in each parish, but one of the small local buses might be hired to pick up women and children from the various parishes and take them home again after attendance.[1]

Parishes in Survey area	*Joint population*	*Total population served*
1, 2, 4, 8, and 9	1,139	2,377
3 and 5	1,347	1,247
7, 10, 11, 15, and 16	860	1,000
12, 13, and 14	1,519	2,655
17 and 20	1,234	1,654
19 and 21	1,837	2,010

The figures are from the 1931 Census.

Children can have the benefit of medical advice at the Welfare Centres from birth until reaching the age of 5 years. They can also have food, in the form of dried milk, and preventive treatment in the form of diphtheria immunization. The diphtheria immunization campaign has been particularly successful in the county as a whole, roughly 80 per cent. of the child population having been immunized. In the Survey area itself an added impetus was given by the fact that in a neighbouring parish the only child who had not been immunized contracted the disease and died of it. Hospital treatment may be prescribed at the Infant Welfare Centres, and it is given at the general and specialist hospitals of the county.

Domiciliary health services take the form of visits from the Health Visitors, once a month for the first quarter, and thereafter quarterly if the child be normal; more frequently if abnormal. For children between the ages of 1 and 9, who are boarded out, Infant Life Protection Officers are appointed to make quarterly visits of inspection. In the Survey area these officers are the Health Visitors.

[1] Such a scheme is operating successfully in an adjacent county.

Vaccination. This service is carried out by local general practitioners, who are public vaccinators. It is performed at the surgery of the doctor, and it is also a domiciliary service. Parents in the Survey area appear to be indifferent to the possible dangers of small-pox. In a district considerably larger, which includes the Survey area, only 85 vaccinations have been carried out since 1932.

School Medical Services. Children attending elementary schools receive three general medical examinations. The first takes place on entrance, the second during their eighth year, and the third during their twelfth year. There is also an annual inspection of their teeth, and inspection of their eyes when defects of vision are suspected by the teacher and require attention. Dental treatment is provided on the spot; but for treatment of eye troubles and for the provision of spectacles the children of the Survey area are sent to the Eye Hospital in the county town.

Medical examinations of all kinds are held in the schools, unless more suitable accommodation is available, such as in a village hall. In the Survey area, as in many rural districts, a classroom in the school is generally the only place both for the examinations and, for dental cases, for subsequent treatment. This means turning out a class at best, or closing the school, if it be virtually a one-room school. In these places treatment proceeds with the maximum of difficulty for the practitioners. There are no facilities of any kind; even water is not always available, and the dental surgeon's assistant may have to fetch it in a bucket from the nearest well or standpipe. It is only fair to add that in peace-time a mobile dental clinic, carrying its own water-supply, is employed.

The practice is to serve notices upon the parents of children requiring treatment, who are asked to sign forms of consent. If they do not, treatment is withheld. Evidence of the appreciation by parents of services available to them was not collected in the Survey area, but it may be worth recording that a dental surgeon in an adjoining county reported that rather more than 50 per cent. of the parents refused to allow their children to be treated. It was satisfactory to learn, how-

ever, that this reluctance was less noticeable among the younger mothers. It may be taken for granted that the little patients themselves are non-co-operators, and they are inclined to produce the formula—'Mother doesn't want to have me done after all'.

In difficult or lengthy cases some school dentists will try to arrange for children to be brought on another day to a neighbouring school for completion of the treatment. Here again there are differences in the degree to which parents are willing to co-operate, some being ready to make even difficult cross-country journeys to get further attention for their children, while others will not be bothered.

Secondary school children, if they be holders of scholarships or 'necessitous cases', receive free inspection and treatment (where needed) of tonsils, teeth, and eyes.

The last, and perhaps the most important, of the school health services is that which prevents, or cures, nutritional defects—namely the provision of free meals at the school. There are canteens for this purpose only at six villages in the area.

Tuberculosis

The County Tuberculosis Officer is available as a consultant physician at the patient's home, or at the T.B. dispensary in the market town, where X-ray examinations are also carried out. He, or any qualified practitioner, can order an examination of specimens of suspected sputum.

The local health authorities provide extra nourishment in the form of milk, and also open-air shelters at the patients' homes, when these are required. For sanatorium treatment, patients living in the Survey area would go to the county town, and, under a very recent scheme, maintenance allowances are paid to patients of the sanatorium to compensate for loss of earnings. Surgical cases are sent to a specialist hospital.

'After-care' services are usually undertaken by voluntary organizations; they comprise the provision of work, and of the means to work, in the form of garden tools, seeds, &c.

Quite recently there has been appointed a Rehabilitation

Officer whose duty it is to consult with managers of works with the object of finding suitable employment for ex-patients.

Infectious Diseases

All cases of infectious diseases must be notified, by the doctor attending, to the Local Sanitary Authorities.

Small-pox cases are sent to the Isolation Hospital on the other side of the county.

Cases of scarlet-fever, diphtheria, typhoid and, occasionally, complicated measles, go to the local Isolation Hospital, where they are attended by a non-resident doctor.

Cerebrospinal fever, acute poliomyelitis, acute polioencephalitis, acute encephalitis lethargica, and typhus are sent to a hospital near the county town, where there is a resident doctor and up-to-date equipment for dealing with such cases.

Ophthalmia neonatorum and puerperal pyrexia are treated by the welfare authorities, under their Maternity and Child Welfare Schemes, at the Eye Hospital and at the County Infirmary respectively.

Venereal Disease

A free pathological examination may be obtained from qualified practitioners who may call in the consultant services of a specialist. Free treatment is provided at a clinic, the one nearest to the Survey area being in the county town, or it may be given by an approved doctor, of whom there is one in the area, either at his surgery or at the patient's home. An approved doctor is one who has taken a post-graduate course in V.D. treatment.

Venereal disease does not present a serious problem in the Survey area. Severe cases would go as in-patients to the County Infirmary, and expectant mothers, found to be infected, would be sent for their confinements to the Lock Hospital, London.

The Blind

Blindness in the country districts of the county occurs chiefly among the elderly and the aged.[1] There are not any

[1] In 1940, of the 198 blind persons in the county, 118 were above 65

Homes for the Blind in this county, but there are a number of schemes for blind home-workers, under which work is organized in the form of materials and supervision, the articles produced are sold, and financial assistance is provided to guarantee income. The incomes of the unemployable blind are made up to 22*s.* a week, in addition to rent. There is only one home-teacher of Braille for the county.

Mental Deficiency

Mental defectives in the Survey area are no more numerous than in other parts of the county. Country people are reluctant to hand over control of such children, and as a matter of policy the health authorities do not put pressure upon them if it can be avoided. The problem differs somewhat from that in the towns, where sub-normal children may be led into trouble, and segregation is necessary for their own protection. There is, however, a lack of accommodation for those defectives who are subjects for treatment under the Mental Deficiency Acts.

Health Education

This is the most recently organized service, and little comment can be made upon it as yet. One or two talks on health and hygiene have been given in the Survey area by an Assistant Medical Officer of Health of the county, appointed for this purpose. These talks appear to have been very well received.

The wireless has done more than anything else to bridge the gulf between town and country people in matters of general health education, and the villagers of the Survey area do not appear to be any less well informed as to the diagnosis or treatment of ailments than are their town neighbours. Nor, on the whole, are they unaware of the health services which are available to them. They are informed of these by the local doctors, district nurses, and health visitors, and the information passes from one to another.

years of age, and of these, 90 were above the age of 70. Hardly any were under 21. (Cf. *Annual Report on County Health Service*, Pt. 2, p. 17.)

The Health Visitors

In connexion with some of the foregoing services, valuable advisory and supervisory work is done by Health Visitors. There are twenty of them in the county (population 129,000) of the Survey area, in which two of them operate. Health Visitors are concerned with children only up to the time at which they leave school, with tuberculosis cases, and with the blind. They conduct hygiene inspections, and attend the medical inspections at schools. They follow up defects, and see that the children are receiving the treatment prescribed. In cases of tuberculosis, it is for them to see that proper nourishment is being obtained and the treatment followed; they also advise on home conditions.

The qualifications required of Health Visitors in the Survey area are threefold. In the first place, they must be either State Registered Nurses or they must hold a certificate of three years' training in a General Hospital. Secondly, they must hold at least Part I of the Certificate of the Central Midwives' Board. Thirdly, they must hold the Health Visitors' Certificate.

Nursing and Nursing Associations

Home nursing is looked after by a County Federation of Nursing Associations, and by the District Nursing Associations, most of which are federated to it and receive grants from it. It would seem that the interest of people of leisure may be needed in running country Nursing Associations. Difficulties are apt to arise in co-operation between villages to share the services of a nurse, though the Survey area provided an exception to this generalization, where its most progressive and best administered village seemed to be in favour of a larger area, as they then could have two nurses who covered midwifery and general nursing separately. At present, it was said, old people and ordinary patients are apt to be neglected when a midwifery case is on hand. There may be some basis for the objection to collaboration between villages to maintain a nurse, for she can live only in one of them, and the other, or others, 'see little use in a nurse who is not at hand'.

One group of three small villages, lying closely together, has an association which is not affiliated to the County Federation. They refused to share a nurse with a larger place, although this meant losing the grant from the County Federation, because she would be living there and they felt that she would be so occupied with its cases—practically on her doorstep—that she would have little time to attend to them. These three villages have an extremely popular District Nurse, and the present arrangement was built around her—in fact, all the District Nurses in the Survey area are very popular, and the quality of their nursing is spoken of with great appreciation.

Hospitals

The parishes in the Survey area are served by the General Hospital in the market town, and there are also two Cottage Hospitals. Cases of exceptional difficulty may be sent to the County Infirmary, and there are specialist hospitals and sanatoria available as required—orthopaedic, ophthalmic, infectious diseases, and tuberculosis. There is a contributory scheme in operation in the area.

The Workpeople's Hospital Association. This is a contributory scheme organized in connexion with the local General Hospital. The Association has a unit in each village, or group of small villages, with a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and a Committee, the officers being elected by the Committee; each unit decides, to a large extent, how it will run itself, how it will raise funds, &c. In some of the villages of the Survey area, the committees do very little, leaving the work to the officers—one of them was said not to have been summoned since its first meeting—but others are fairly active, meeting regularly and making their own rules.

The Association was founded in 1909, and it claims to have been the first hospital contributory scheme in the country. It produces the greater proportion of the funds of the hospital and is strongly represented on its committees, which gives it a considerable measure of control. Before the war, the

Association ran a big annual procession and fair, to which large numbers came from the outlying villages.

There is another organization, the General Hospital Village Representatives. These are responsible for Pound days, egg weeks, rose days, and so on. They may be associated with the Workpeople's Hospital Association, but generally they are not. The Hospital Village Representatives are more likely to be drawn from the leisured people of the villages, or those interested in charities, whereas the representatives of the Workpeople's Hospital Association are themselves nearly always working people. The Hospital Village Representatives and the Workpeople's Hospital Association both get up social events, such as dances and whist drives, to help the hospital.

A reciprocal arrangement has been in force for some years between the local General Hospital and the County Infirmary. If a subscriber to the local hospital be sent to the County Infirmary for treatment, the appropriate payment is remitted; similarly, if a subscriber to the County Infirmary scheme should chance to need treatment in the local General Hospital, payment will be made the other way. More recently, this reciprocity has been extended to cover treatment at the specialist hospitals.

The contributory schemes are very popular; membership in rural districts of the county of the Survey area is about 80 per cent. of the people, a proportion somewhat higher than that for the whole county. Local patriotism can be exploited to raise funds for the hospitals, and country people in remote places will make every kind of arrangement to facilitate the payment of subscriptions for hospital benefits. After all, 'Nobody will mind if they never need them!'

The main criticisms of hospital services are of the delays in admission and of the difficulties of transport from the remoter places. As to the former, the plain truth is that the hospitals have not been able to keep pace with the abnormal increase of population in the locality, particularly since the war, but there is a strong feeling amongst the people of the Survey area that townspeople gain admission more readily, being nearer at hand and able, therefore, to bring more pressure to

bear upon the authorities. It is a general complaint, too, that the out-patients' departments of the hospitals are congested, and long periods of waiting are entailed. This presses particularly upon the country folk, who are controlled by the transport position. The hospitals do what they can by making appointments for out-patients, which are adjusted, so far as possible, to the transport services available to them.

Transport to the hospital town to-day may be a serious problem. The health services available to dwellers in the rural areas differ little in character from those available in towns, but the distances which may have to be covered for diagnosis or treatment are generally very much greater for the country folk. It is true that more domiciliary health services are provided for country people than for those living in towns, but for many ailments, and those the more serious ones, journeys have to be made to the market or the county towns. Even before the war, public transport services to and from the Survey area were inadequate, but patients could often have the use of private cars. In war-time most of these are laid up, and the reduced public services lead to so much crowding that it is often impossible to board the buses. The inhabitants of parish No. 5 have no bus service at all. On the other hand, the war-time voluntary Car Pool scheme will supply cars for 'urgent medical purposes' upon the authorization of a medical officer.

There is no doubt that the difficulty of convenient and speedy transport of patients to the hospitals could be mitigated by a reform of the ambulance organization. At the present time there are no fewer than nine authorities in the county providing ambulances, some of them public, some voluntary, and all of them entirely unco-ordinated.

CHAPTER X

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH: Church Attendance; The Clergy; Parsonage Houses; The Parish Magazine; The Parochial Church Council; The Parochial System. THE FREE CHURCHES. THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS. THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

ANY consideration of social life in the villages must take account of the influence of religious organizations. The Church itself was for so long a vital force in national life in material as well as in spiritual things, and the other religious bodies that have grown up round it in more recent days have influenced men and affairs so much, that it is impossible to avoid the rather difficult task of making some assessment of the part which all denominations are playing in rural life to-day, and of the scope for further service by them.

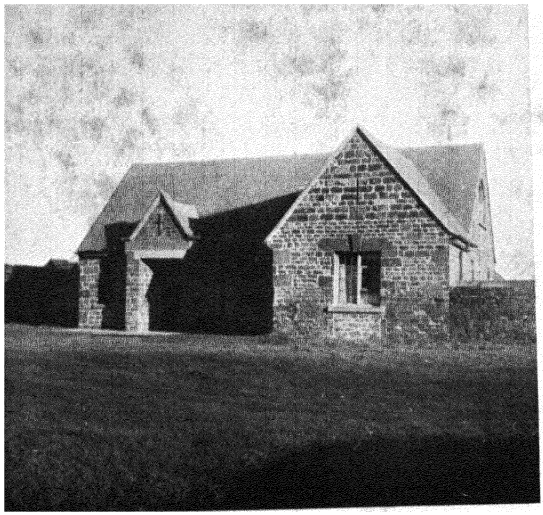
THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH

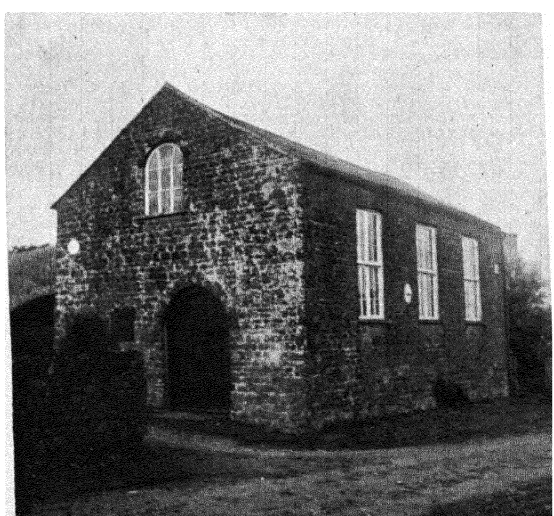
In almost every village in England the parish church is the architectural focus. So as far as there appears to have been any planning, the church is the centre of it. Its tower or spire dominates the scene, and in its architectural form and the mere solidity of its masonry it suggests a permanence, a continuity, which make it part and parcel of the land and of the life which the land supports. This explains, in some measure, the difference in attitude of the townsman and the countryman to his church. In the large towns, church life is congregational, it has ceased to be parochial, but while the townsman often will not know who is his vicar or which is his parish church, the villager cannot help knowing. Consequently, countrymen talk more naturally about the church and church affairs than the townsfolk—they are not embarrassed when talking of such things, and although they may not always like their parson, they accept him as being a part of village life. The men, for example, talk about him and the church as they do about the local doctor or the schoolmaster, and their work. Most of the people have been baptized in the church, they are





PARISH CHURCHES





CHAPELS

married in it, and they are laid to rest in its churchyard when they die. They are not, they cannot be, so indifferent to the church as townspeople can be and so often are. In the Survey area the churches are beautiful, and some of them of great architectural interest. Generally they appear to be well cared for.

Church Attendance. This is not to say that the churches are flourishing in the villages or that attendances at public worship are substantially higher than in the towns. Indeed, attendance at churches and chapels in the Survey area seems to tally more or less with the estimated average for the whole country, of 10 per cent. Attendances at chapels and non-Anglican services are normally a little lower than those at the parish church, but there is not a great deal of difference. The village in which religious observance was highest had approximately the following attendances at Sunday services for a population of just over 1,000:—Anglicans, morning, 70, evening, 100; Roman Catholics, 30 and 40; Methodists, 20 and 40; Baptists, 10 and 15—a total for all denominations of 130 and 195. This is well above the average for the area as a whole. The other two large parishes in the area have smaller church attendances, the average congregations for the various places of worship in each not totalling, probably, much more than a hundred, except on special occasions.

In the smaller parishes very few people are said to attend church or chapel. 'Very often in the morning there are only three in the choir and one other. The collection for the whole day amounts sometimes to only 2*s*.' An interesting case is that of a parish which comprises two villages, in one of which there is no parish church, so that the people in this village have to walk over a mile to church. Here the average attendance is about thirty out of a combined population of over 400. Another village, with a population of about 250, does well if the church attendance runs into double figures, and in two others in the area attendances seem to be about 10 per cent. At a third, where attendance at church and chapel is very low, there is a very active Meeting of the Society of Friends.

Congregations consist mainly of elderly people, the majority of whom are women, but the absence of many young people of both sexes on national service at the time of the Survey may account for this in some measure. The dearth of young people is particularly noticeable in the Free Churches. At first sight this is rather surprising, for, on the whole, the Free Church Sunday Schools are better attended than the Anglican. It appears that, where there is choice and the parents have no fixed convictions, the children go to the chapel Sunday School. But they leave the Sunday School at about the age of 14, and if they continue to go to a place of worship after that, it is usually to the parish church. The reason probably is psychological. Unless a young man or woman have strong nonconformist convictions, they attend the parish church because this gives them more standing in the village—it is still the thing to do, if you attend a service, to go to church rather than to chapel. The young people know that they will meet more young people at the parish church than, say, at the Methodist chapel, where the aged usually predominate. One man went so far as to say that he thought nonconformity would die out, because there were no young people in the chapels.

Apart from this difference in church and chapel congregations, both are much the same in status and sex, with a tendency for the more well-to-do to attend the parish church. Often the chapel is 'run' by one family, succeeding generations of which have probably run it ever since it was built. The critic of nonconformity concludes from this that the village chapel is theirs, and that they are apt to resent any intrusion on their preserves. There is a certain amount of truth in this, but remembering the financial difficulties which all nonconformist bodies have had to face, it is not easy to see how the village chapels could have been maintained without the support of at least one influential family.

The church-going habit is said to be nothing like so strong in the villages as it was fifty years ago. 'I can remember when farmers and farm labourers went regularly to church; now you'd be lucky to find one farm labourer.' But there is

this to be said for the attendances nowadays—a good proportion of those who go to church do so out of conviction, whereas formerly many people attended either because it was the custom or under compulsion. Nevertheless, attendances do vary according to the type of incumbent. As one old man said, 'A great deal depends on the vicar as to whether the congregation is large or small'.

The Clergy. There is no doubt that the task of the country clergy is often particularly trying. Even the most hard-working priest will have his work cut out to inculcate into the majority of his parishioners the church-going habit. Public opinion in country places is very strong, even if it be not often expressed, and if the majority decide not to go to church it is not easy for individuals to maintain their regularity of attendance. In a few of the parish churches of the Survey area the attendance has got to a very low ebb. The incumbent of one of them remarked sadly upon it himself. The congregations at the church do not often reach double figures, except on special occasions.

When criticism was forthcoming, it was generally on the grounds either that the form of the service was too extreme for the traditions of the parish or that the sermons were, in effect, dogmatic and philosophical rather than practical.

Much more is expected of the country parson than taking services and visiting his parishioners, although there is a lot of truth in the saying 'a house-going parson makes a church-going people'. Of course visiting can be overdone, or done in the wrong way, but the parson who does it properly, entering the homes of all his people impartially and being ready with help and advice wherever he is wanted, will soon become an indispensable part of village life. The vicar's influence in a village community can be immense; even those who never go to church will value and respect a man who has proved his worth.

A country parson should interest himself in everything in which his parishioners are concerned—though not necessarily to participate or even to approve—whether it be allotments, pigs, the dramatic society, the local rates, the collection of

salvage, pubs, or football pools. Such a one is to be found in what is perhaps the best organized community in the Survey area. Everyone pays tribute to his energy and to his active participation in the social life of the village, including the nonconformists, with whom he is good friends. His church is the only one in the area in which a fair proportion of the congregation is composed of men.

Parsonage Houses. It is only by mixing with the people that a parson can gain their confidence. One of the biggest obstacles, often, to mixing easily, is the size of the rectory and vicarage houses. Nearly all the clergy agree on this point, and would be thankful for any scheme that gave them each a small, modern house in place of the great inconvenient houses in which so many of them have to live. These give an impression of wealth which in most cases is false, and thus they tend to create barriers between priest and people—a point which was made very strongly by one of them. A few of these big houses are dignified old buildings with architectural merits, but many of them were built in the spacious mid-Victorian times when tithe was high and labour was cheap, which was not the best period of architecture either for style or planning for economic working. They tend to identify the clergy with the propertied classes and a social order which is rapidly breaking down, to say nothing of the grievous financial burden they impose, and the heavy domestic strain on the parson's wife.

The Parish Magazine. This is usually a very dreary affair. The magazine for the churches in the Survey area is the local *Rural Deanery Magazine*, which circulates among some twenty churches. The inset called 'Church and Home' is published by the S.P.C.K., and six to eight pages of local matter are inserted, to cover all the churches. Each parish supplies notes of its activities, and the present paper shortage is partly responsible, no doubt, for the dullness of the matter. Nevertheless, even under present conditions it ought to be possible to produce a more lively publication. The parish magazine furnishes an opportunity of getting a message across to people in the village who do not come to church—an

opportunity which seems rarely to be used. The church notes seem to be restricted to a births, marriages, and deaths column, and details of the weekly collections. A direct message from the pastor to his flock is rarely to be found.

The Parochial Church Council. If the livings which the Church provides for its servants are poor, the fact that the parson has a life tenure is some compensation; no one can dispossess him while he lives. Moreover, he reigns as an absolute monarch in his own domain; no one can interfere. It was to bring the parishioners more into touch with parochial affairs that the Parochial Church Councils were constituted.

An electoral roll of professed churchmen is compiled for each parish, from which the Council is elected annually. The name of any prospective incumbent must be submitted to the Parochial Church Council for its observations before the Bishop will institute him to the benefice. By this it is intended to give the parishioners, not a right of veto, but an opportunity to indicate their views upon the fitness of the patron's nomination for their particular parish. Otherwise the duties and privileges of the Council consist mainly in relieving the parson of some of the responsibilities which the laity might well assume—the care of the church and churchyard, the administration of ecclesiastical charities, and so on.

Inquiries in the Survey area suggested that the Parochial Church Councils have not affected church life very much. One incumbent said that when election to it was from the rank and file of the churchmen and women of the parish, the Council was more likely to be interested and active than when it was somewhat dominated by those of more social consideration. Another expressed a view exactly contrary. A third found it useful when he wanted support for some change or fresh activity. Still another said it was quite useful in taking the financial business of the church off his hands.

In the very small villages it is doubtful if the Parochial Church Councils function at all.

The Parochial System. This Survey provides further evidence of what has long been recognized in the Established

Church, namely, the virtual breakdown of the parochial system as the basis of organization. The Survey area is typical, more or less, of conditions as they exist all over England, that is to say, a system of staffing the Church and of paying the workers which is not based, even remotely, on the extent of the work to be done. In most of the country parishes of England, as in the Survey area, there is not enough work to employ the parish priest, probably, for even half his time, and while the stipend is often quite inadequate to maintain him in a position not overburdened with material cares, it may represent, nevertheless, a reward which is out of all proportion to the services rendered. Nor is there any parity between parish and parish, either in the work required of the priest or in the payment for it. In the Survey area one incumbent with a cure of less than 500 souls has an income twice as much as that of another with a parish of 1,200, and nearly twice as much as that of the vicar of a nearby market town with a parish of 11,000 souls.

Thus, the case for considering the reorganization of the parochial system is based on the assumption that the rural parish is too small a unit, in many places, to provide a full life and a sufficient opportunity for the incumbent, and that its endowment is often too small to provide him with a reasonable living. As a problem, it has received general recognition, and nothing, probably, has occupied more of the time of the Church Assembly in recent years than the consideration of proposals for its solution. Two measures have been adopted so far. The first is the institution, through Diocesan Boards of Finance, of general appeals to the laity for funds to augment poor livings. These can be accepted and supported by the laity only on the understanding that the Church is proceeding, as speedily as possible, to more fundamental reforms. It is obviously a misuse of the man-power of the Church to retain a large number of men in part-time offices; to pay them full-time stipends for part-time work can be justified only on the principle that while the grass is growing the horse may be starving.

The second is embodied in the Union of Benefices Measure

and in exercising the opportunities which exist, in certain circumstances, for holding livings in plurality. Considerable use has been made of these facilities, more, probably, than many people realize. In the Survey area, for example, there are fifteen parishes, but only four of them are complete in themselves for Church purposes. Each of the remaining eleven is linked to one or more of the others or to a parish outside the area, there being eleven incumbents, in all, for nineteen churches. The following table shows the position, the figures being based on those given in the *Diocesan Calendar*:

Single and United Benefices in the Survey Area

Parish	*Total population*	*Net income*
Single benefices		£
3	1,300	360
5	200	240
8 and 9*	280	280
10	230	250
Benefices united or held in plurality		
1, 1′ and 2	750	330
4 ,, 6	570	330
7, 15 ,, 16	440	600
11 ,, 14	1,420	470
12 ,, 13	460	260
17 ,, 20	1,240	340
18 ,, 21	1,440	350

*Nos. 8 and 9 are two parts of one parish.

This position is by no means exceptional. While it has been impossible, of course, to make a comparison with many other rural areas, an inspection of the *Diocesan Calendar* suggests that in country districts the tendency towards amalgamation has gone a long way, and it is still proceeding. In suburban deaneries the position is different, for the growth of populations in country parishes round the big towns gives full-time employment, and often more than that, to the parochial clergy.

A cursory examination of the table above suggests, at once,

that, notwithstanding the amalgamations, the man-power of the Church in this area is still being wasted, whilst, with one possible exception, none of the clergy can be regarded as having a reasonable living. Only two of the joint benefices are worth more than £350 a year, and in only three of them does the population reach four figures.

But these are not the only reflections suggested by an analysis of the position of the Established Church in the Survey area. It is argued not infrequently that many of these little country livings, affording part-time employment in return for part-time salaries, are eminently suitable for elderly clergy, who have given their best years in the service of the Church in busy places or in the Mission field, and who, while still able to do useful work, have earned the right to take life more easily. The cure of souls in a little country place, it is argued, is their opportunity, for it gives them full scope for the exercise of their lifelong experience of men and affairs, adjusted, at the same time, to that which can fairly be expected of men of their years. But what are the facts disclosed in the Survey area?

More than half the clergy came to these little villages when they were first beneficed, and they have remained in them ever since—two of them for twenty years. Five of them were less than 40 years old when they came to their parishes, and the average age of all the incumbents in the area, on institution to their benefices, was 41 years. There are no reasons for supposing that this district is in any way exceptional. On the contrary, it is likely to be fairly typical of any part of rural England.

The Union of Benefices, or the holding of livings in plurality, then, offers no general solution of the problem of the proper use of the man-power and endowments of the Church. Moreover, they are always unpopular in country districts. In urban areas, in which few people have any idea where one parish begins and another ends, the union of two or more benefices may result in giving the one incumbent an enlarged sphere of work at a fair remuneration, without detriment to the interests of the parishes involved. In the country, the

joining of two parishes may sometimes give the same opportunities and advantages to the incumbent, but it means, almost inevitably, the association of two entirely dissociated communities, and, as the people see it, depriving one parish of its priest. Where there is much inequality in the relative sizes of the two, there is little doubt that this is virtually what happens to the smaller one. Certainly the strongest opposition to the application of the Union of Benefices measure, or to livings in plurality, comes from the laity. People who never enter the church will attend the public inquiry of the Bishop's Commission set up to advise upon a proposed union of two parishes, to protest against it. It is on these occasions that the place of the parish priest as a leader in the secular affairs of the parish is brought home, and the opportunities of his position outside the Church are realized.

It is impossible not to feel that these methods of increasing the efficiency of the Church's man-power are merely palliatives, and that the time has passed, if indeed it ever were, when such attempts to reform both the spiritual and temporal affairs of the rural parish could be regarded as adequate. In civil administration, the changes in modern life led long ago to the abandonment of the parish as the unit of organization for most purposes, in favour of larger and more comprehensive units, in which wider views of local needs could be taken and the resources for meeting them could be pooled. In professional life the tendency of to-day is more and more to get away from the individual, all-round man, whether in medicine, for example, or in law, and to find instead the group of specialists, pooling their knowledge and their fees. Is it not time that the attempt should be made to substitute a larger unit of Church organization in the place of the parish? The suggestion is offered that this unit might be found in the Rural Deanery.

The central idea would be to provide a staff of clergy for the deanery, its number being dependent on the numbers and distribution of the population and the ease of communication. The most important town or village in the deanery would be

the focus, the incumbent of its church would be the Rural Dean, the co-ordinator of all spiritual and pastoral work within the deanery. The reorganization would then proceed to the division of the deanery into a few districts, by grouping the parishes as convenience suggested. The central parish of each would be the nucleus, and its incumbent would be responsible for the work of the Church within the district, assisted by the requisite staff of assistant clergy, placed about it in the most convenient centres. Thus, the clergy staff of each deanery would consist of the Rural Dean, the District Incumbents, and the Assistant Clergy. The motor-car, the motor bicycle, and the country motor bus services have revolutionized transport and have virtually removed the difficulty of going from village to village, both for the parson and the people.

As to emoluments, the idea would be to pool all the endowments of the deanery, and to add to this sum any income derived from the sale of redundant parsonages and the investment of the proceeds. From this pool all the clergy would be paid according to a graded scale, with increments within the grades, thus removing an indefensible difference between the conditions of employment in clerical and in lay services. From attempts that have been made to work out what would be the effect of such a reconstruction, it is evident that some deaneries could be adequately staffed and the clergy properly remunerated, while leaving a surplus income. Others, again, could not. The operation of the scheme should provide, therefore, for the payment of all surpluses into a central fund, diocesan, provincial, or even national, upon which the 'deficiency' deaneries would draw. Should this fund be insufficient to meet the calls upon it, the Church would have then, and then only, an unanswerable case for an appeal to churchmen for fresh endowments.[1]

The advantages of such a reorganization, both to the clergy

[1] For a full consideration of this subject, with examples of the effects of proposals for such reorganization, see *Men, Money and the Ministry, a Plea for Economic Reform in the Church of England* (Longmans, 1937), and the sequel to it, *Putting our House in Order* (Longmans, 1941).

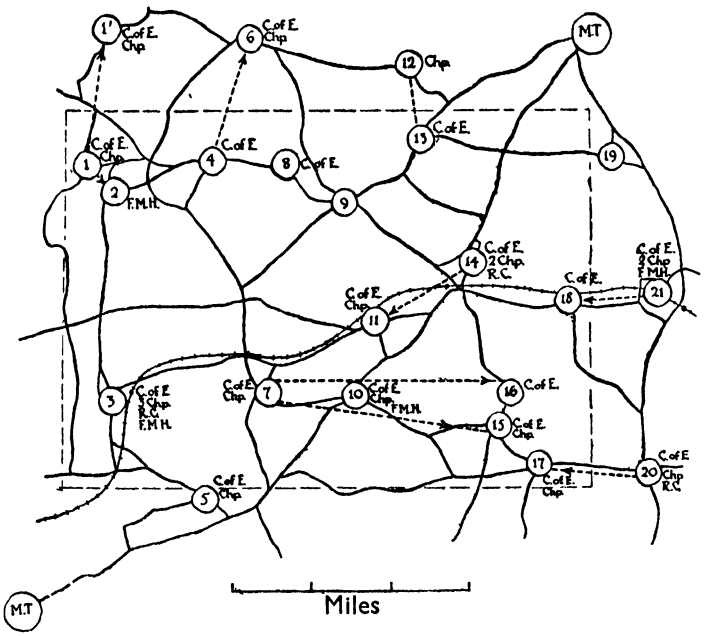
and to the laity, should be very great. With a team of clergy, fully employed, properly paid, moving about within a group of villages, the terrible loneliness of so many of the country parsons, cut off by economic disability and by the narrow confines of their small parishes from nearly all intellectual and social life, would be eliminated. The strain of preaching twice every Sunday to the same small group of people would be relieved, and the problem of what to do with the square peg in the round hole, one which has defied, hitherto, all attempts by the Church Assembly to find a solution, would rarely arise. The flexibility of the scheme and the mobility of the clergy should provide every necessary opportunity for finding openings, either in the services of the Church, or in pastoral, social, or educational work, suited to the capacities of every member of the clerical partnership.

An organization as active as this should provide opportunities, hitherto entirely lacking, for the training of deacons and young priests in rural church work. At present it would seem that nearly every country parish priest has received all his early training and experience as a curate in an urban community. As a result, it is uncommon to find a country parson who has any real knowledge of the peculiar needs of a rural community, or any particular affinities with the countryman and his way of life. If, at an earlier stage in his training, the Theological Colleges would give some instruction in such subjects, the young priest would be better equipped for his future vocation, while at the same time the Rural Deanery would provide all the scope needed as a training ground in which the deacon could begin his ministry.

Some of the advantages which reorganization on the larger basis should bring to the clergy would accrue, also, to the laity. With a team of clergy, the occasional incompatibility of parish and priest could be avoided, and the much more frequent case where the parson's influence is purely negative could also be met. Clergy and laity alike would be stimulated by the variety which would be made possible through the interchange of pulpits between members of the team.

However, the break-up of the parochial system and a

reorganization on some wider basis, designed to make better use of the man-power and the money of the Church, could not be accomplished without some sacrifices on the part of the laity. Not every parish could continue to have its resident



Places of Worship.
Villages joined by arrows have United Benefices or Livings in Plurality.

parson, but, as has been shown above, the union of benefices and the holding of livings in plurality have already had this result in a number of places, without any of the compensating advantages which reorganization on bolder lines would bring. There would be reductions, also, in the number of services which could be provided, but this again would be no new experience in many places, and the adoption of a larger unit of organization would reduce the handicap by sharing it over a larger number of churches. Whatever the reduction in the

numbers of the clergy which reorganization involved, it should be possible to provide one service, at least, in every church in the area each Sunday.

However, it would be undesirable to accept any reduction in the number of Sunday and even of week-day observances to which the people have been accustomed, without considering whether these services could not be provided by other means. This raises the whole question of the organization of laymen suitable for help in parochial work of all kinds, and even of the ordination of 'voluntary clergy'—Church laymen suitable for ordination and willing to accept it.[1] These, however, are large questions of Church policy, and it would be improper to pursue them here. The main purpose of this chapter is to call attention to the fact, exemplified by investigation in the Survey area, that the parochial system has broken down, both as an organization and as an influence, and that large measures of reform seem to be needed if the Church is to be an effective force in rural social life.

The Free Churches

In most of the parishes in the Survey area the Free Churches are represented. Three villages only have no place of worship other than the parish church. Four others have each a chapel, either Methodist or Baptist, there is one which has a Friends' Meeting House and a Methodist Chapel, while each of the three larger villages has a Roman Catholic Church and two or three chapels. While the Free Churches thus are well represented in the area, the outstanding difference between their organization and that of the Established Church is their lack of resident clergy; for they have only two in the whole area.

Perhaps the most encouraging fact that emerges from this survey of religious organizations is that the bitterness and intolerance between church and chapel, so prevalent in the last century, has entirely died out. No longer does a landlord inquire into the religious convictions of prospective tenants,

[1] See the Rev. Rowland R. Allen, *The Case for Voluntary Clergy* (Eyre and Spottiswood), 1930.

nor the vicar refuse to employ a nonconformist gardener. Church and chapel mix freely, and respect one another's opinions. It is the more regrettable to think of the divisions which separate Christians in their acts of worship, differences which are brought home with particular force in villages of two or three hundred inhabitants, where small handfuls of people may be seen on Sunday mornings straggling into each of two or even three places of worship.

The absence of a resident minister places the chapel at a disadvantage. Whereas a competent conscientious parish priest can make his church the centre of village social life, this is not possible for the chapel. Normally, nothing is arranged by the chapel apart from the Sunday services, no week-day activities or social events. The congregation needs a pastor to whom its members can turn in time of perplexity, and village chapel congregations are very much sheep without a shepherd. However, this is no argument for the multiplication of parochial clergy, and the remedy for the defects of the present system must be sought in a new conception of the spiritual, and of the pastoral, organization alike of the work of the Free Churches and of the Established Church.

At present most chapels have a secretary, whose office it is to welcome the preacher—usually a layman from a nearby town, and a different one each week—to arrange hospitality for him, to see to the care of the chapel, and so forth.

It was said sometimes that the presence of both church and chapel in a village acted as a stimulus. Certainly the presence of a chapel does not necessarily mean division in the community, any more than the existence of only one church always makes for solidarity. The overriding factor in the small village is unquestionably the man. With the right man as parish priest, church and chapel were found to exist happily side by side, and their congregations co-operated readily in village social activities. The remark was made more than once that there was more dissension between members of the same congregation than between those of different denominations, and the incumbent of the church in one of the larger villages thought some competition in church

life was good. Nowadays 'united services' between the various denominations for special occasions, held generally in the parish church, are becoming fairly common.

The Society of Friends

Special reference must be made to the Society of Friends, who exercise undoubtedly the strongest social influence in their part of the Survey area. The Friends take a great interest in village life, and are always seeking to promote its welfare. They are responsible for a very successful Workers' Educational Association group, and they have helped to make the people politically conscious in the best sense, by making the Parish Meetings real centres of parochial activity. It was due, largely, to their exertions that their village is one of the few in the Survey area to have a water-supply. As elsewhere, however, the Quakers for the most part are members of the middle classes. The poorer members of the community who attend places of worship go either to the parish church or to the Methodist Chapel. The Society is not increasing in the Survey area, and three of its four meeting-houses are closed.

The Roman Catholic Church

There are three Roman Catholic congregations in the Survey area, one in each of the larger villages. For the most part their members are not natives of the villages, but are fairly recent comers, many of them Irish, and most of them members of the working class. They keep very much to themselves, and do not join in any of the 'united' services organized by the other religious bodies on special occasions.

CHAPTER XI

ENDOWED CHARITIES

CHARITIES IN THE SURVEY AREA; THE FUTURE OF PAROCHIAL CHARITIES.

THERE can be hardly a parish in the country which is not endowed with one or more charitable trusts. Most of them appear to fall into one of two quite definite categories. First, there are those which were founded by benevolent people, who seem to have been inspired by the unrelieved poverty of many of their neighbours, in the three centuries following the dissolution of the monasteries, to endow various forms of assistance for them. The passing of the Poor Law Amendment Act, 1832, the Act which set up the Boards of Guardians and the Union workhouses, seems to have put an end to this form of private charity. Second, there are those, invariably charities for the distribution of coal, which were created by the Awards under many of the Inclosure Acts, by which the poor were deprived of the right to cut furze or turf on the commons and wastes which those Acts inclosed for cultivation. These, strictly, are not charities at all, but ancient rights transmuted, and no more have been formed since the inclosure of the country was completed.

Charities in either category are administered, to-day, by local trustees responsible to the Charity Commissioners, to whom they are expected to make annual returns of their income and expenditure.

The old endowed charities in the first category had many specific purposes, both the benefactions and the beneficiaries being sometimes defined in great detail. The largest group were for the relief of the poor of the parish, including the sick and the disabled—weekly money payments, or lump sums at Christmas or at other seasons, payments in kind, bread or clothing, and pensions or almshouses for the aged. Such bequests to help the poor in one way or another are the more general, but there are particular endowments also in considerable variety, such as those for the establishment and

maintenance of schools, for the apprenticeship of the young, for the upkeep of church and churchyard, for sermons on particular occasions, for the repair of specific highways or bridges, for the general purposes of the parish, and for other matters.

Charities in the Survey Area

The oldest charity in the Survey area is that endowed by a nobleman beheaded in 1554, a small sum, measured by to-day's values, for the relief of the poor. In all, there are ten parishes in the area in which there are money payments to the poor. Gifts of bread are made in three parishes, and sums have been bequeathed to provide money for apprenticing boys to trades in two others. The group of miscellaneous charities includes provision for church expenses, payments to schools and hospitals, the repair of a bridge leading to the parish church, 'town charges', and 'pious purposes'.

Most endowments are comparatively small, producing a few pounds annually. Here and there, however, considerable incomes have to be administered, arising sometimes from appreciation in the value of an original bequest of land. One of the charities in the Survey area has an income of some £200 a year, and there are two or three others of more than £100.

It is the general practice of the Charity Commissioners not to intervene to alter the purpose of an old endowed charity, nor to interfere with its administration by the trustees. Where, however, the original purposes of the trust can no longer be carried out, or if the income applicable has risen out of all proportion to the need, the Commissioners may require of the trustees the submission of a scheme to vary the purposes of the trust, so as to bring it more into consonance with the times. This course has been adopted with one or two of the larger endowments in the Survey area, though one of them, a charity producing an income of nearly £200 annually, is still administered under an award of the Court of Chancery made at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

The small parochial charities and the administration of them, to-day, are, too many of them, in a most unsatisfactory state. With some it seems impossible, and with others

undesirable, under modern conditions, to administer them exactly in accordance with the wishes of their founders. It is obvious, for example, that nobody to-day needs help in the form of loaves of bread, and yet in one village of the Survey area ten loaves are still placed in the church every Saturday for the needy, and often they are not taken away. Even when the purpose of the benefaction seems clear and straightforward enough, there may be abuses, and this happens particularly over the distribution of coal amongst the poor. In some villages there are no real poor—'so I just give the order to the coal merchant and have it delivered to practically all the houses. It saves a lot of trouble to give everybody some.' In another village, 'everybody except property owners gets some coal from the charity—they get about 3 cwt. each'. In a third, the parson, who with two others administers the charities, said: 'Under present social conditions it is so difficult to find out just who are the real poor, that in practice we give every villager 2 cwt. of coal. The Charity Commissioners', he added, 'ought to step in and take over these small charities and administer the money for useful purposes in keeping with present conditions. They are nothing more than white elephants and a source of much bickering.'

On the other hand, there are places in which real attempts are made to carry out the intentions of the benefactor. In one, the trustees interpret 'the poor' as being widows and old-age pensioners, and with this qualification the coal charity suffices to give each of them about half a ton. In another, the interpretation at the moment is old-age pensioners and the wives of soldiers on active service. In still another, a list of the more necessitous inhabitants is kept and revised from time to time.

Quite apart from the possibility of carrying out the original purposes of the various charities, is the whole question of the administrative system. There is often too much mystery about the management of small endowed charities. Nobody seems to know with any precision what they amount to or how the funds are applied. In one village of the Survey area,

trustees have died and new ones have not been appointed, which has left the charities in the hands of one man, and 'things will be in a dreadful muddle when anything happens to him'. Nor can the Charity Commissioners be acquitted of responsibility for the casualness of so much administration, for they seem to give too much latitude in the time allowed for submitting accounts. Unless or until some drastic reform be introduced, such as the amalgamation of village charities by districts on some plan resembling that which is suggested later, it might be well if the trustees of all parochial charities were required, by law and under penalty, to produce their accounts and to render an account of their stewardship at the annual Parish Meeting.

Many of the larger charities are administered under modern revised schemes. A few good examples of properly prepared schemes are provided in the Survey area. One such was drawn up by the Charity Commissioners in 1871, varied in 1885, and a further scheme adopted in 1897, for regulating the Town-lands charity, which consists of a number of cottages and investments of about £10,000. The annual income is now administered under five branches:

1. Church branch, to which is allocated 5/25ths of the income.
2. Educational branch, 5/25ths.
3. Medical branch, 6/25ths.
4. Provident branch, 6/25ths.
5. Eleemosynary branch, 3/25ths.

This is a useful scheme, capable of providing assistance where it is most needed under modern conditions, and easily adaptable to changing circumstances. Thus, the educational branch can defray the cost of the outfits of 'poor and meritorious scholars' upon their entering a trade or occupation, and it provides them with the appropriate technical training. The medical branch provides, among other things, for the services of a qualified medical practitioner for the poor. The eleemosynary branch issues clothes, fuel, food in cases of distress, and relief in money in particularly needy cases. The charity is administered by eleven trustees—the vicar of

the place, five persons elected by the Parish Council, and two by the Parish Meeting of an adjacent hamlet, together with three co-opted trustees.

Another charity, organized under a scheme, administers almshouses for four people and income from the Town-lands. The inmates of the almshouses are given 4*s*. a week each, and, after paying administration and other expenses, the residue is divided equally between the school and the purchase of coal for the poor; in most years there is about £25 for each purpose. A list of the poor is kept, and an endeavour made to see that the coal should go where it is most needed. The accounts of this charity are carefully kept and audited, and they are presented annually at the Parish Meeting—a procedure which, if followed in every village, would do much to lift the administration of the charities out of the obscurity in which many of them lie at present.

Less satisfactory is the position of an extensive charity in another of the larger villages, consisting mainly of an estate of about 150 acres, which produces an income of some £200 annually. The money is divided equally between the poor, the church and the bridge leading thereto, and town purposes. In recent years the greater part of the income has not been used. For example, on an average, about £25 is spent annually on the poor, some 90 old-age pensioners, widows, and other needy people getting 5*s*. each at Christmas. In addition £5 a year is reserved from the 'poor' money for the purpose of apprenticing boys in the village. The balance in the 'poor' section is mounting up, and recently £100 of it was invested during the 'Wings for Victory' week. There seems to be little use for the income apportioned for 'town purposes', now that things such as foot-paths and street lighting are the business of local authority, and there is something like £200 lying idle in this section. There is more justification for allowing the income allocated to Church purposes to accumulate, as heavy expenditure on repairs, etc. may be called for at any time. No annual report of this charity is issued, but there is a clerk who keeps the accounts.

Here is a case in which charitable funds cannot be fully

used, merely because conditions in the place to-day have changed. It seems that an attempt could usefully be made to devise a scheme, for example, to apply any residue from the 'poor' money in other ways, more in keeping with present-day conditions, to assist those in need. Provision might be made, too, for transferring the 'town purposes' portion to either of the other two sections, or for finding other useful employment for it.

In still another place, a small one, there is a large charity about which little information was forthcoming. By its terms one-third of its income is to be given to the 'poor', one-third to the school, and one-third for 'pious purposes'. Nobody in the village seemed to know much about it, and questions asked at the Annual Parish Meeting elicited little. An application to the Charity Commissioners produced a copy of the accounts for the previous year, showing a sum received and brought forward of more than £200, out of which the 'poor' received £17. 10*s*. in the form of coal given to 38 persons, the school got £11, while of the balance about £100 was spent on repairs to the property of the trust and in administrative expenses, and £61 on 'current expenses'. What these were is not specified, but the net result is that less than £30 of a total of more than £200 was applied in that year to the purposes of the Trust. Here, obviously, is a charity crying out for investigation to facilitate the preparation of a new scheme.

The Future of Parochial Charities

In dealing with the charities in the Survey area, two lines of action suggest themselves. First, in villages where fairly extensive charities exist, the Charity Commissioners should ask for the preparation of schemes to bring their usefulness up to date, and to introduce a certain amount of flexibility in the conditions so that they may be more readily adapted to changing times. Second, in the smaller villages, the multitude of little charities should be grouped together in one scheme, devised so as to make the best use of the money available according to present circumstances, and observing the wishes of the benefactors so far as possible.

Consider, for a moment, how to 'make the best use of the money according to present circumstances'. People no longer want doles of bread. There is a case for the distribution of coal to those really in need, as this seems to be an item which the Public Assistance authorities are liable to overlook. But perhaps two of the most effective uses to which charitable funds could be put would be the provision of better education for the young, and the provision of houses for poor people in their old age. An earlier section of this Survey of conditions in rural areas has shown the lower standard of the provisions for the proper education of village children by contrast with those available in the towns. Until the comprehensive changes contemplated by the new Education Bill are made, the best that can be hoped is that a small number of the brighter children should be able to get the benefits of secondary education in the nearest town. Scholarships are granted by the education authorities for this purpose, but the allowances made are often insufficient to cover all the expenses of clothing, books, &c. This is where the charities could offer valuable help, by making it possible for poor children to receive secondary education without imposing intolerable burdens upon their parents.

As to the provision of houses for the aged poor, one of the main preoccupations of old people is trying to ensure that they may have 'a roof over their heads'. Money now doled out in small amounts, or in groceries or coal, to a number of 'poor', a good many of whom are not really poor, might be used much better in the purchase or erection of cottages to be earmarked for the old-age pensioners of the village. In an adjoining county, a college landlord has built a few houses designed specially for old couples, with two bedrooms, kitchen-living room and scullery-bathroom, which are let at 1*s.* a week. They release larger houses for occupation by working men and their families, and there are always old couples waiting for them. Provision would thus be made for husband and wife to live together. Too often almshouses are for 'aged men' or for 'aged women', so that married couples cannot spend the last few years of this life together in them,

and often they prefer to go on living together, even on the verge of destitution, rather than live in comparative comfort and be separated.

It is estimated that approximately £400 is available every year from the various small charities in eight of the parishes in the Survey area. Would it not be better to amalgamate these with similar small charities from the neighbouring villages for the preparation of a scheme for assisting the young and housing the old? The 'poor' need not go without their extra bit of coal at Christmas, and a small sum, say £10, might be allocated to each village for this purpose. The area in which small charities might be grouped would need consideration. The Rural District Council area might be a useful administrative unit, large enough to bring in a substantial sum, yet not too large to lose sight of local needs. A grouping scheme would remove the fortuitous advantages now enjoyed by some villages over their neighbours. It is told of a parish a little outside the Survey area, where there is an exceptionally large charitable trust for the benefit of the aged, that there is special competition for houses in the village amongst people nearing the end of their active lives. The details of administration would need to be carefully worked out. Possibly a joint committeee of the education authority and the public assistance committee might work. Whatever the arrangement, it is clear from the investigation in the Survey area that some attempt should be made to ensure the better use of the incomes of the many small, endowed charities, found in many of the country districts. At present, they constitute a minor scandal; the money is too often doled out, or frittered away, without much obvious benefit to those members of the community whom pious benefactors intended to serve.

CHAPTER XII

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE SURVEY AREA. THE INERTIA OF THE VILLAGE. CONDITIONS OF SOCIAL ACTIVITY: Leadership and Organization; Types of Social Activity; Conditions in the Survey Area. ORGANIZATIONS FOR ENTERTAINMENT: Dances; Whist Drives; Socials; Cricket and Football Clubs; Other Sports Clubs; Men's Clubs. ORGANIZATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND BENEFIT: Women's Institutes; The Mothers' Union; Slate and Thrift Clubs; Friendly Societies; Trade Organizations; Village Produce Associations. THE PUBLIC HOUSE. VILLAGE HALLS. SOCIAL CENTRES.

THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE SURVEY AREA

THERE are certain basic characteristics common to all the villages of the Survey area, both the three larger ones and the several smaller ones.

1. They are all primarily agricultural in character.
2. They all, except one, look to the same market town.
3. The populations consist mostly of small, independent farmers and independent people with small businesses. Very little agricultural labour is employed. With possibly one exception, there are no villages in which a squire or a local landowner plays a dominating role. Everywhere in the area villagers have a strong feeling and tradition of independence.

This common background means that certain major contrasts will not arise—the contrasts, for example, between the suburban village, the village dependent on a particular industry, the agricultural village run by the squire, and the one with no such obvious leader. It follows, therefore, that the main question to be answered is: Given this group of villages, all economically and socially similar, what accounts for the great differences in the degrees of social activity which they manifest?

Socially, each village gives the impression of being a self-contained unit. The people have a deep sense of belonging to their own village, and a disinclination for any kind of

co-operation with others. This feeling is intensified when the neighbour is a bigger village, owing to the fear of absorption for all sorts of social and administrative purposes, and in the Survey area it was carried a stage farther, for one of the larger villages lives in the fear of becoming a suburb, merely, of the nearby market town.

This attitude is not surprising, perhaps, in view of the long tradition of village autonomy and self-government which persisted almost up to the end of last century, but there is evidence that this parochialism is breaking down in the face of modern conditions of life. The older people, probably, will retain their prejudices, but the younger members of the village are realizing what easy transport, the bike and the bus particularly, can do to open up life for them. Dances, socials, and fêtes in the larger villages, cinemas in the market towns, are brought within easy reach, and their attractions are being realized. The war seems to be operating in both directions. The difficulty of getting about keeps people at home and throws them back on their own resources. Village patriotism is deliberately exploited for 'Warship' and 'Wings for Victory' weeks, by fostering rivalry. On the other hand, a group of villages in the Survey area united to stage a very successful Red Cross Garden Produce Show.

It will be of interest to note the effect of the increasing demand made upon the villages of the Survey area for labour for the large factory outside one of the market towns, to which men and women go daily by works buses, train, and bicycle. The factory was equipped about eight years before the war, but only recently have the villagers been attracted to it in any numbers. The three-shift system is worked, and this must affect the organization of social activities in the villages; but apart from this there is no evidence that factory workers and others do not mix as freely as before.

The Inertia of the Village

Every village may be said to consist of a majority of socially inactive and more or less apathetic people, with a

small, active group. The inactive ones can roughly be divided into two classes: those who are not willing to accept responsibility, but willing to join organizations if they exist and to give some help in their activities, and those who are not willing to join any organization. As a result of this division, the different organizations in the village have more or less identical members; there are those who belong to a number of organizations, and those who belong to none. As one of the local clergy put it, 'It is like a stage army, now dressed as the Mothers' Union and now as the Women's Social Club.' To a large extent this is natural enough. Most people are extremely busy doing their work, looking after their families, tied to their homes and so forth, and strong reasons are wanted to make them undertake extra work or sacrifice some of their spare time. People, too, are naturally reluctant to 'push themselves forward', being afraid, often with justification, of what their neighbours may say about them.

Another limiting factor on social activity, it must be admitted, is the obstructive effect of quarrels. Quarrels are started in village life by all sorts of causes, and sometimes from nothing that is discernible. 'Quarrels more than anything else prevent the membership of our various social organizations from increasing', said one of the clergy. 'If this twenty were induced to join, that twenty would walk out.' Quarrels are not confined to any one class or age, and it must be remembered that although they are handicaps to the formation and the success of parochial organizations, they are themselves a form of social activity. They are a constant source of amusement, excitement, drama, conversation, and of group formation in the village; life would be much duller without them. Whether the many organizations, both voluntary and compulsory, which the war has brought into being for mutual protection and national defence, organizations which take no account of social distinctions nor of personal antipathies, will have any permanent effect upon village cliques and family feuds, remains to be seen.

CONDITIONS OF SOCIAL ACTIVITY

Three conditions are needed for social activity in village life. There must be leadership to stimulate the inactive into activity. There must be needs to be satisfied. There must be facilities for the activity—for example, a village hall or other centre.

Leadership and Organization in the villages may be supplied by the parson and his wife, the schoolmaster, where there is one, residents with leisure and means, and by villagers ready to take a leading part amongst their neighbours. Farmers, as a rule, are not prominent in the social activities of the villages.

In most places, it is the people of leisure and the schoolmaster who take the lead in originating and organizing, and it is a tradition that they are the people who should—that is, villagers expect and wait for a lead from them. Where this tradition is strong, as it is in the Survey area, especially in the smaller villages, the absence of one of these, able and willing to give a lead, may be the reason for the lack of social activities. As a woman in one small village said: 'We have got no gentry—there is no one to help us', and in some of the other villages the explanation for the absence of the commoner social institutions was lack of leadership from 'high up'.

The parson, the schoolmaster, and the leisured class play their own parts in the social activity of the village. The social province of the parson and his wife is, first, the Church societies, such as the Mothers' Union, and second, societies for boys and girls. None of the clergy in the Survey area took the leading part in any social organizations or activities outside these provinces, except one who used to organize socials, dances, and whist drives before the war.

The schoolmaster is usually the key man in the social activities of the village, as is amply demonstrated by the Survey. In one of the larger villages, he is Chairman of the Parish Council; Churchwarden; Trustee of the Ex-Service Men's Hall (which fulfils the function of the Village Hall); Secretary of the Tennis, Football, and Cricket Clubs;

Treasurer of the Workpeople's Hospital Association; Billeting Officer; Invasion Officer; Rest Centre Organizer, and Secretary of the Savings Association. In another place, a schoolmaster has been responsible for a number of organizations, particularly the W.E.A. lectures. These are attended by about sixty people, drawn from all classes of the village. In a third place, the schoolmaster, more than any other person, is the organizer of the social activity of the village. He described how he goes round 'bullying' people to do things when he is organizing some special event in the village. He seemed to have brought new social life to a place which had very little social activity. In still another place, the schoolmaster was described as 'the key man of the village', being secretary of the Village Hall, of the British Legion, and of the Cricket and Football Clubs, besides being the organizer of athletic festivals, dances, whist drives, and socials.

The want of a schoolmaster living in the village was given as one of the chief reasons for the lack of social activity in no fewer than five of the villages of the Survey area. The schoolmaster has an extremely important effect on the social life of the village through the social education which he gives in school to the children he teaches, and his daily contacts with them and their parents outside. While the recent reforms in the system of education, which have taken children at the age of 11 away from the village elementary school, and have substituted the schoolmistress for the schoolmaster, may be good for education, the consequences on village social life, in many places, can only be described as deplorable. The multitudinous subsidiary opportunities of the schoolmaster's office cannot be taken by a woman. Moreover, he is usually a married man, who can settle down happily in a village with his wife and family as members of the community.[1] For the schoolmistress, on the other hand, life alone in a village lodging has little to offer, and the practice of living elsewhere and going backwards and forwards to her work, examples of which are to be found in the Survey area, is extending.

[1] This matter has been discussed already; see pp. 164–6.

The extent to which responsibility for organizations and activities is in the hands of people of means and leisure depends upon how far they are the only people available, the strength of the tradition of dependence or independence in the village, and upon whether the 'upper classes' have the qualifications for leadership. These are that they should be 'real gentry', keen on social activities and knowing what kind of things are needed by the villagers, good mixers, and, lastly, that they should be able and willing to give a good deal of their time to the village. If there be persons with all these qualifications, they are certain to be playing leading parts in social activities.

Types of Social Activity. Organizations and activities can be divided into two classes—those run to provide entertainment, and those run for serious purposes, mutual improvement, and material advantage. Where the end is serious, the organization is likely to be led by people of leisure in the village. Thus, such things as fêtes for charity, bazaars, cooking-classes, sewing parties, and the Women's Institute are nearly always connected with this class. Another characteristic of things run by them is that they are concerned with the world outside the village. If, for example, something is organized to help a national charity, or if a lecturer is to be brought in from outside to speak on some general subject, as at a meeting of the Women's Institute, then the squire, the parson, the doctor, or some member of the upper classes—or his wife—is almost certain to be responsible. This applies generally to the Women's Institutes, partly for the reasons mentioned above and partly because of the middle-class character of these bodies, upon which a number of people in different villages commented.

Things run with amusement as their end are often run without help from the upper class of village society—things such as dances, socials, whist drives, and sports clubs. This is partly because participation in them is confined usually to the villagers themselves and their friends from the locality, and partly because they are run purely for entertainment. When, as may happen, they are run with some serious end

in view—a dance to collect money for a national charity; a concert to educate people musically rather than to entertain them; dramatics run as 'drama' rather than as amusement—the more likely are they to be organized from above. In fact, it might be said as a generalization, that in the Survey area it was found that social activities villager-run were always for amusement, but when they were 'gentry-run' there was always some kind of serious purpose involved.

Where the object of the organization is to secure the material advantage of its members, for example, Slate Clubs, Friendly Societies, and Contributory Schemes, it is usually run by villagers. The one exception is the Nursing Association, which is run or dominated, nearly always, by someone of good social position.

Conditions in the Survey Area. The smaller villages are very badly off for social activities and organizations. In some of them there are no persons of leisure, no schoolmaster, no resident parson, nor have they any public meeting-place such as a Village Hall. Except for very occasional whist drives and dances, held perhaps in the school, these villages are without social activity of any kind. In one village, a girls' sewing club, a Mothers' Union, occasional fêtes, children's parties, &c., are run by a lady who came to live there some years ago, and the villagers themselves run dances, whist drives, and socials. In the rest of the smaller places, special events are sometimes got up by private residents, but there are no organizations. In all of them the reason given for this lack was the absence of any lead, or of the right kind of lead, from the people who might be expected to give it. A number of the villagers told how much they felt the want of a lead. There had been organizations in the past, but these died out when the people who originated and ran them went away.

It is possible, of course, for well-to-do and well-disposed people to do too much. Either they set too high standards, or they pauperize their villages and destroy all sense of initiative and personal responsibility in the people themselves. An extreme example was found, a village on which a

rich man spent large sums of money. He started a Cricket Club for which he provided equipment, pavilion, clothes for the players, &c. He ran a flower-show at which he would offer large sums in prizes, and for which he would provide a famous military band. Everybody felt that all responsibility was his, he failed entirely to persuade people to take a share in the organization of these things with him, and when he died they languished, first, and then ceased to exist.

In the larger villages the situation is more complicated. There is a strong tradition of independence. The active work in nearly all the organizations is done by the villagers, and by the same half-dozen or so, but even when they do all the work, they like to have an official head who is in some leading position.

Organizations for Entertainment

Most activities of this type are run by villagers for villagers.

Dances. In every village in which there is a suitable room, frequent dances take place, often about once a week. Everywhere dances have become more popular since the war. They are thought of as a natural part of village life, not as special events, and although they are run generally for some special purpose, such as the Red Cross, the Hospital, and so on, this acts merely as an excuse for the dance. Generally, it is the same three or four villagers who get up the dance, whatever the purpose of it may be or whoever may nominally be connected with it.

Whist Drives. These have always been popular. They, also, are got up by villagers, and exist because of the strong demand there is for them. They, too, are often connected with special charitable or patriotic purposes. Whist drives are more popular among the older people; they constitute their chief organized social activity just as dances do that of the younger people. They are held either in the Village Hall or in private rooms.

Socials. Socials are got up, most commonly, entirely by villagers for villagers, being neither organized nor patronized by the upper strata of local society. At these socials games

are played, people sing, dance, perform music and sketches, &c. They are held in every village where there is a hall. Their purpose is to give everyone as much amusement as possible.

At the social any special talent which there may be in the village is disclosed. For instance, in three villages in the Survey area there are bands, run by and composed of villagers and used at dances and socials. Village bands depend on someone with special talents who will teach others how to play. One of those in the area is run by the village cobbler. It is used at dances and socials in the village, and goes to neighbouring villages to play for their dances. The money raised is given away; recently the cobbler and his band sent £1 to each service man from three villages—£36 altogether.

Similarly, choral and dramatic clubs which perform at socials exist in many villages, and again some villager with special talents is needed to organize them. In one place, for instance, a general shopkeeper has been organizing entertainments, sketches, dances, and music for twenty-eight years. She picks the artists, and any profits are given to various charities. She often has to dip deep in her own pocket for expenses. Sketches, dance displays, and musical items are performed in the Ex-Service Men's Club, about fourteen persons being concerned in each performance. Rehearsals take place in her small parlour. She herself is a musician, she sings, chooses the plays and songs, and teaches the children the dances. In another of the larger villages there is a Choral Society, started by a village woman about seventeen years ago as part of the Women's Institute, though functioning independently of it. She told how, at first, the women were shy and had to be 'prodded to sing', and how the husbands objected because they did not like seeing their wives on the stage. But gradually more and more women joined, until there were nearly forty, all busy working-class women. The plays were nearly always comedies, 'villagers like something to make them laugh'. There was one big performance each year on New Year's Eve, and two or three smaller ones during the year.

In one of the smaller villages, too, there are a large number of people who are interested in theatricals. This interest seems to date from the time when there was a professional actor and producer living in the place who produced several Shakespeare plays.

Cricket and Football Clubs. In the larger villages there is usually a strong demand for cricket and football; clubs are not difficult to keep going, and in most villages they have existed for a long time. In the smaller places, however, where there are not so many people and it is more difficult to raise teams, the sports club is less secure and more dependent on leadership; the Survey area provides several examples of failure. In one place a cricket club broke up when a golf club was opened, and nearly all the young men of the village went every Saturday and Sunday as caddies.

Cricket and football clubs generally play games with other villages once a week. After the match, the visiting team is treated to a tea or supper, usually at an inn. The clubs are nearly always run by villagers, the other classes not being playing members though often subscribers. In one place, however, the schoolmaster, the parson, and others play leading parts.

During the war, cricket and football clubs have ceased to exist in most places, as a result of calling up for national service, but it should be easy to start them again.

Other Sports Clubs. All the larger villages of the Survey area and two of the smaller ones have lawn tennis clubs, some with their own courts and some using private ones. If there are public courts in the village, tennis clubs are very easy to run.

Bowls is played at two places, in one of which are two clubs, each catering for a different social group.

Two women's sports clubs existed in the area. One of them, which was started by a former schoolmaster's wife, used to play stool-ball and net-ball. Later, it was turned into the 'Women's Social Club' which gradually ceased to play outdoor games as the younger members grew fewer, and it now plays cards and has social gatherings, meeting

every fortnight. This club is very popular and entirely 'village' in character. One woman, the most active in the club and in the village, said: 'It is to give the married women a night out, which they badly need.' Many things in the village, such as dances and socials, are run through this club. At another place, there were two hockey clubs, one mixed, and one a women's club; the latter was not so exclusive as the former, and was very popular.

Men's Clubs. These depend for their success not primarily upon how they are led, but on how far they meet a popular need; it is stimulus from below rather than from above which keeps them going. These clubs, or Reading Rooms as some of them are called, are used mostly for games—billiards, bagatelle, table-tennis, cards, dominoes, and so on. Not much reading is done. They are of particular value in the winter. Management is in the hands of committees elected at the Annual Meetings. As to buildings, a Reading Room may have been provided by a benefactor, as in one of the Survey villages, or the British Legion Club may be thrown open to all men, as in another, while in a third the Co-operative Hall is made available. One of them has a bar for the sale of drinks, cigarettes, &c., which is said to add very greatly to the success of the club, and it has been described as 'the best pub in the village'.

The history of men's clubs in the smaller villages of the Survey area is less satisfactory than in the bigger places. There is the difficulty not only of sufficient membership to make sure of cheerful company; there is also the greater danger of disintegrating dissensions amongst members.

Organizations for Improvement and Benefit

Under this head come schemes for adult education, the different types of insurance schemes, allotment and produce societies, and organizations such as the Mothers' Union and the Women's Institutes. The reason for organizations such as Friendly Societies, Slate and Thrift Clubs, Hospital Contributory Schemes, Nursing Associations, is the need of the people belonging to them to obtain the material

benefits which they offer. Connected with them is a greater or lesser amount of administrative work, such as organizing membership, collecting contributions and subscriptions, raising special funds, and keeping the accounts. The people who undertake it do so because they like doing it or because they feel they ought to do it, not because of anything they make out of it. It is usually easy to find collectors, for instance, because some people like the opportunity which collecting gives of going round chatting from house to house.

Women's Institutes. Amongst the newer social activities of the country-side none has made more remarkable headway than the Women's Institute movement. The Institutes exist mainly 'to provide for the fuller education of countrywomen in citizenship, in public questions, both national and international, in music, drama and other cultural subjects, also to secure instruction and training in all branches of agriculture, handicrafts, domestic science, health and social welfare'. Further, they provide centres for social intercourse and activities. The position is that whereas each individual Institute is autonomous, it shares the very material advantages of federation, which keeps the Institutes in touch with one another and also secures the distribution of the national magazine to members; speakers and lecturers for meetings; the supply on favourable terms of seeds, fruit-trees, &c., and the right to sell produce at Women's Institute market stalls. Also, the County Federation organizes county competitions for garden and home produce, handicrafts, needlework, music, drama, and other things.

The movement is non-sectarian and non-party; all countrywomen are eligible for membership. The constitution is entirely democratic, the President and Officers of each Institute being appointed annually at the annual meeting, and drawn from all classes. In practice, the President is usually someone of social importance in the village, someone accustomed to taking the lead and detached from the little cliques and cleavages which can spoil so easily the usefulness of village organizations.

While there is a common purpose in all the Women's Institutes, each one is free to develop along its own special lines. There are some half-dozen of them in the Survey area; one has specialized on produce, having a most successful annual show and running its own market stall; another goes in more for music and drama, producing its own plays; a third, and the youngest, runs a Welfare Centre, at which fuller advantage is taken of the health services now available for children than is possible in most small villages. In a fourth place, an Institute doing useful work has been dissolved owing to differences with the County Executive on questions of their mutual relationship, and it has reconstituted itself as a Women's Social Club.

There seems to be no doubt that the Women's Institutes have done much in the last twenty-five years to bring fresh interests and a greater realization of citizenship into the lives of many countrywomen. Within the quarter-century of their existence they have become a recognized channel for voicing to the Government the considered opinions of country-women on questions that concern them. The National Federation, for example, was invited by the Committee on Public Schools to collect evidence of parents' views on the question of boarding-school education. What their future is in the post-war world remains to be seen. To-day, there are war-time organizations which seem, sometimes, to compete in their activities with the work which has been done for so long and so successfully by the Women's Institutes. Some of these may not persist, and if a way of collaboration can be found with the others, where interests are similar, they should strengthen rather than weaken the Women's Institute move-ment. It must be remembered that, as its name implies, it is exclusively a women's movement, and to that extent it leaves gaps in the field of social activity for complementary organiza-tions to fill.

The Mothers' Union. Another organization for women which is found in the Survey area is the Mothers' Union. It is a Church of England organization, founded at the end of last century, broadly for the purpose of promoting and

maintaining the sanctity of marriage and the responsibilities of parenthood.

The Union is organized on a diocesan basis, with a central office in London, and a secretary and office in each diocese. The parish branches are presided over by an Enrolling Member, who is often, but by no means always, the wife of the incumbent. While the Mothers' Union is thus an institution of the Church of England, no religious test is applied, and it has a number of nonconformist members, and a few Roman Catholics.

Branches usually meet about once a month, for a short service, and then a talk or discussion, followed by tea. On Lady Day there is always a special service. Latterly, membership has fallen off a good deal and it appears that the younger mothers are not joining. Great efforts are being made to get hold of young wives through Welfare Centres, &c., and to form them into groups for instruction and discussion on Christian marriage and its responsibilities, though not necessarily enrolling them as members.

The union does not compete in any way with the Women's Institutes. Its aims are definitely moral and spiritual, and the two organizations should supplement each other's work. But in some places, particularly the small ones, there may appear to be competition, because there are so few people to take the lead and organize anything at all.

There are branches in most of the villages of the Survey area, with memberships ranging from about twenty to sixty.

Slate Clubs and Thrift Clubs. There are Slate Clubs or Thrift Clubs run in connexion with almost every village inn in the area. Members contribute not only for themselves but also for their families. The people who belong to a particular club are not necessarily customers at the public house which runs it; many will be customers at others, or they may be teetotallers, and will just come in, pay, and then go out again. Slate Clubs pay out money when a member is ill, generally up to six weeks' illness. They have a dinner each year at the inn, after which any balance for the year is distributed amongst the members. In the Thrift Clubs the member buys

shares. At the end of the year he gets a dividend on the shares, and as the money is generally invested in the brewery owning the pub, he gets a good rate of interest. He can borrow from the club, without security, at 5 per cent. interest. In one of the larger villages, the Slate and Thrift Clubs ran dances and whist drives to augment their funds; indeed, it was said that 75 per cent. of all the dances held in the place were run by these clubs, and that the money obtained in this way made them very profitable to their members. In no other village did Slate and Thrift Clubs run dances as a regular thing.

Friendly Societies. Friendly Societies, such as the Ancient Order of Foresters and the Independent Order of Oddfellows, were once the leading social and benefit bodies in country districts, but they fill this place no longer in the Survey area. They function now as insurance societies, and as nothing more. The history of most of them is long and honourable. Many a village inn had a 'Club Room', in which regular meetings of the local Lodge were held for the payment of contributions and other business, followed by a social evening. A Club Day was held each year, when there was a procession with banners and band, a church service, a business meeting, and a big dinner in the public house.

One society which still functioned, until recently, in a village of the area as a social body, had refused to amalgamate with others when National Health Insurance was introduced. It had a Club Day until 1936, with a procession, band, church parade, fête, business meeting, and a dinner. But it recruits no new members, and the dwindling list of old ones now numbers only about twenty. Up and down the country there are still several thousand Lodges which continue to function as little Approved Societies for the payment of State and voluntary benefits. But to-day the younger men are leaving the land in greater and greater numbers, and as the average age of their members rises, the position of the societies on the voluntary side becomes actuarially progressively worse, and for most of them there can be no satisfactory alternative to amalgamation with larger societies, whose membership is better distributed throughout the age-classes.

Trade Organizations. Associations for mutual protection are represented by the National Farmers' Union and the National Union of Agricultural Workers. The former is organized in County branches, each with an Organizing Secretary, the counties in their turn being divided into District branches, with local secretaries drawn usually from the members. The Farmers' Union is an employers' association to advance the interests of its members, partly by political action, and the County branch is fully representative.

The Agricultural Workers' Union is a revival of Joseph Arch's organization of farm labourers. It became established on a surer foundation after the Agricultural Wages Board had been set up, in 1917, and the need for a strong workers' union became apparent if collective bargaining were to be effective.

Each of these unions has branches in the Survey area.

Village Produce Associations. Before the war there were no allotment societies or similar organizations in the Survey area, but since 1939 nearly all its villages have formed associations of some sort connected with food production. Five of them have joined the County scheme promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture and have started Village Produce Associations. These are comprehensive organizations, concerned not only with gardening but also with small-livestock keeping, pigs, poultry, rabbits, &c. Four others are connected with Produce Associations in neighbour villages. In yet another, the Friends' scheme for supplying tools and seeds cheaply to those in need is in operation. Only in one of the larger villages was it reported that nobody wanted allotments and there were always some to let.

The rapid popularity of Village Produce Associations is noteworthy. One has a membership of 150, and another in the same neighbourhood has more than 100 members. No doubt one explanation of their vigorous life is the financial advantage that membership brings. Members get substantial reductions on their purchases of seeds, seed potatoes, fertilizers, and so on, and if the association organizes a Pig Club or a Rabbit Club, its members can draw extra rations of

feeding-stuffs. Some of the associations have organized Village Market Stalls, which are set up once a week during the summer months for the sale of members' surplus produce. Others have working arrangements for the sale of members' produce through market stalls already organized by the Women's Institutes. Thus, a small cash income is secured from produce which might otherwise have been wasted.

These are by no means the only activities of the Village Produce Associations. Many of them hold regular meetings for discussions on a variety of topics, and they receive practical demonstrations in horticulture and livestock keeping from the County Advisory Staff. Social gatherings such as whist drives are also held. There is already keen competition between neighbouring villages, and on one occasion two of them participated with two others outside the Survey area in an Inter-village Produce Show in aid of the Red Cross fund.

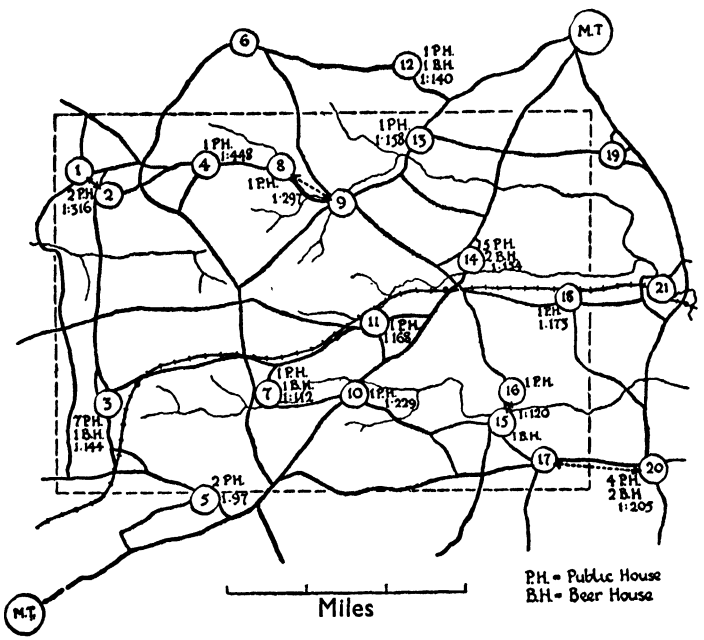
It seems likely that there may be a permanent place for these Produce Associations in village life. Just as the Women's Institute caters for the women, so the Village Produce Association, although its membership is not restricted to men, is fulfilling a need for them. It is not dependent upon leadership from above, and although in some places it has had help from the squire, the parson, or the schoolmaster, it is controlled in the main by its working members.

The Public House

It is generally agreed that the pub is the chief centre of social activity in every village, whatever others there may be. Here people meet together every night, to drink a little beer, to gossip, and to play games. It is the working man's club, satisfying a large part of his desire for company and entertainment; without it there would be a far greater need for organized social activity.

Every village in the Survey area has at least one fully licensed house, and one of them has seven. On the other hand, there is only one grocer's licence and only one licensed club in the area. None of the houses are 'free'; all of them belong to one or other of five breweries, four of them local.

The accompanying map shows the distribution of houses and their ratios to the local inhabitants. It appears that there are thirty-six licensed houses in all, an average of one to every 197 persons, including men, women, and children.[1] Five or



Licensed Houses and their Proportion to Population.

six of them undertake to supply full entertainment, but light refreshments only are obtainable at the rest; hardly more than one-third of them are open full-time for business.

Obviously, there are far too many houses to give reasonable livelihoods to their landlords by their trade alone. In the larger villages it would seem that some of the houses might be closed with advantage, but this remedy is not available in the smaller ones, and publicans in this and in similar districts

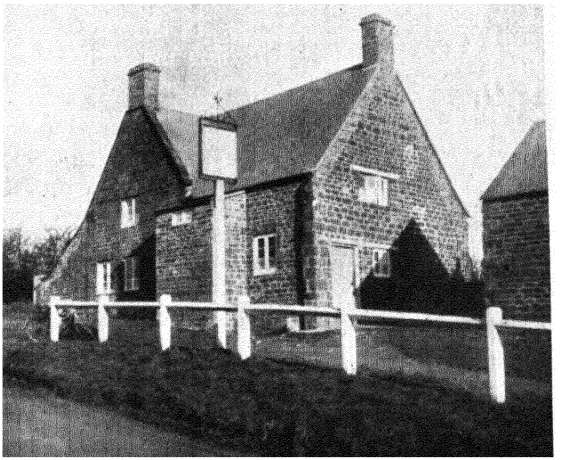
[1] In the larger industrial towns this ratio is commonly about 1 to 450.

must have subsidiary occupations. In the Survey area most of the men go to work at one thing or another. One, for example, is a builder, another is a carpenter and joiner, a third is the local carrier, while a fourth is engaged full-time in agriculture for a local farmer. Some of them occupy land attached to their houses, but it is not often farmed to capacity, being used to run a few head of stock and some poultry, while sometimes it is sublet to a neighbour.

Most licensees in the smaller villages use their premises primarily as their homes. The characteristic house of the area is small and old, with little accommodation for its guests other than the public bar, and this, not infrequently, is also the household kitchen in which the family lives and takes its meals during closed hours. Notwithstanding the primitive accommodation, however, the village pub is the centre round which much of the life of the place revolves, and given a good landlord, it can exert a strong influence for neighbourliness and good relations in the community.

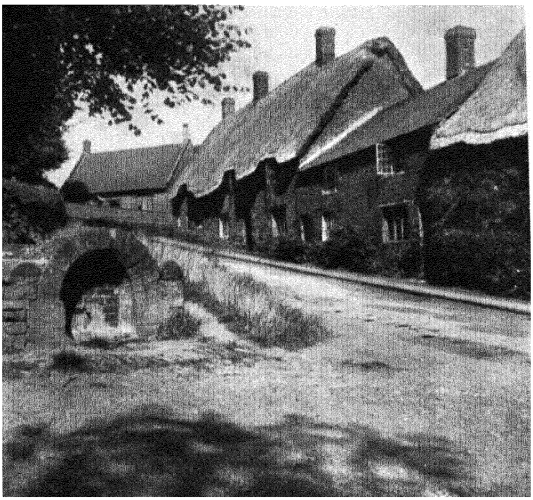
Games and conversation occupy the evening—dominoes (3's and 5's), darts, cribbage, a form of solo whist in which no money passes, and, in the few larger houses, bagatelle and bar billiards. The pin-table type of game is not popular. Conversation is simple and honest, concerned with each other's gardens, allotments, and daily work, while the quality of the local farming is always a sure bait to draw discussion. Politics and religion are rarely raised in conversation, and the men are never heard to discuss the cinema. The wireless is not often turned on, but all life in the pub may stop for 'the nine o'clock', or when racing or football results are being announced. Women-folk have been seen but seldom in the licensed houses of the Survey area, but they are beginning to come in greater numbers with the spread of factory work since the war, which has given them more money to spend. On the whole, the rural community is not yet used to seeing its women in the pubs.

The importance of Slate and Thrift Clubs to the village has already been mentioned. Most licensed houses run either one or other, and it was the only way in which many of the





PUBLIC HOUSES





IN THE SURVEY AREA

Above: A village street. *Below*: A derelict water-mill

poorer people could save money for the children's clothes and boots.

The licensed houses in the Survey area are generally old-fashioned and primitive. In character many of them resemble the old houses in which their customers live, and while this may promote the 'home-from-home' feeling, it seems to fall a long way short of what is desirable in what is virtually the village club. Nor are some of the more modern houses any great improvement, resembling, as they tend to do, small Victorian villa residences, their front rooms uncomfortably adapted to the purposes of 'Tap Room' and 'Saloon Bar'. Any reconstruction policy, however, needs most careful consideration. To turn the village pub into a road-house, catering for the passing motorist or for convivial spirits from the nearest town, would be disastrous. If there be a demand for such places, they should be provided in addition to, not in substitution for, the village pub. It is possible that with the growth of Village Social Centres a licensed bar room might meet the need for better accommodation and entertainment for the village folk. Whatever be attempted, however, to secure improved conditions of refreshment and entertainment, the keynote must be the sodality of the villagers themselves.

Village Halls

A necessary condition for social organizations and activities in a village is that there should be a hall or other suitable meeting-place. If there be no village hall, nor any room which can be used as a hall, such things as dances, socials, concerts, &c., are almost impossible. In one of the villages of the Survey area, the only available hall is an old schoolhouse, which is so unsuitable that it is seldom used—it is dark, unattractive, and extremely inconvenient. In two other places, the village schools are used. These are available only on Friday nights and during holidays, or else they involve the inconvenience of cleaning up before the next morning's school; and they are structurally unsuitable for the kind of activities for which the people want to use them.

Another village demonstrates the truth of the saying that 'the good is the enemy of the better'. No one has been concerned to procure the erection of a Village Hall, because a building suitable in every way already exists. But its use has to be paid for on every occasion, and this imposes restrictions on its usefulness. In still another of the villages, the hall, also very suitable, is private property, though it is lent freely and unconditionally by a generous and public-spirited owner. Failing any dedication by him, however, no one can tell what may happen to it in the future.[1] Three of the villages are equipped with Village Halls, designed and built as such, and vested in committees of the people.

Village Halls are provided in various ways. Money is raised by subscription, by organizing fêtes and other special events in the village, and substantial help is got, sometimes, from a well-to-do benefactor interested in the place, or from outside bodies, such as the National Council of Social Service and the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, interested in the promotion of rural social life. Still another scheme is described later (p. 234 sq.) which is original and has proved successful. Often it will take some time, after the decision to build a hall has been reached, to raise enough money to go ahead with the work, but this is said to be no real disadvantage, for the village is much more interested in the hall which it has paid for than in one which has been handed out to it.

Social Centres

It should be the object of every village community, not thus equipped already, to secure an adequate meeting-place and centre for its social activities, and generally it has been assumed that a Village Hall meets this need. In the foregoing paragraphs its usefulness has been emphasized. At the same time, essential though it be, the Village Hall is often a very

[1] In another part of the country a truly magnificent Village Hall, built by a wealthy man as a memorial to his tenants and servants who served in the last war, was put up to auction at his death for conversion into a week-end cottage.

lifeless thing. It stands out prominently in the village, a building too rarely of any architectural merit, and with every suggestion about it of 'shut-upness'. All day long and day after day it is unused, and in many places it is open only occasionally in the evenings during the summer. Sometimes it may become a Village Club in the winter evenings; otherwise the Village Hall is a mere accommodation for whist drives, dances, and occasional meetings.

This is no disparagement of the Village Hall. The circumstances of any rural community call for accommodation such as the hall provides, quite apart from the question of the community being large enough and varied enough to put it to any fuller use. In the replanning of the country-side, however, the time has surely come to consider whether something more than this is not now desirable, or even necessary, in the larger villages—whether Community or Social Centres rather than Village Halls are not called for.

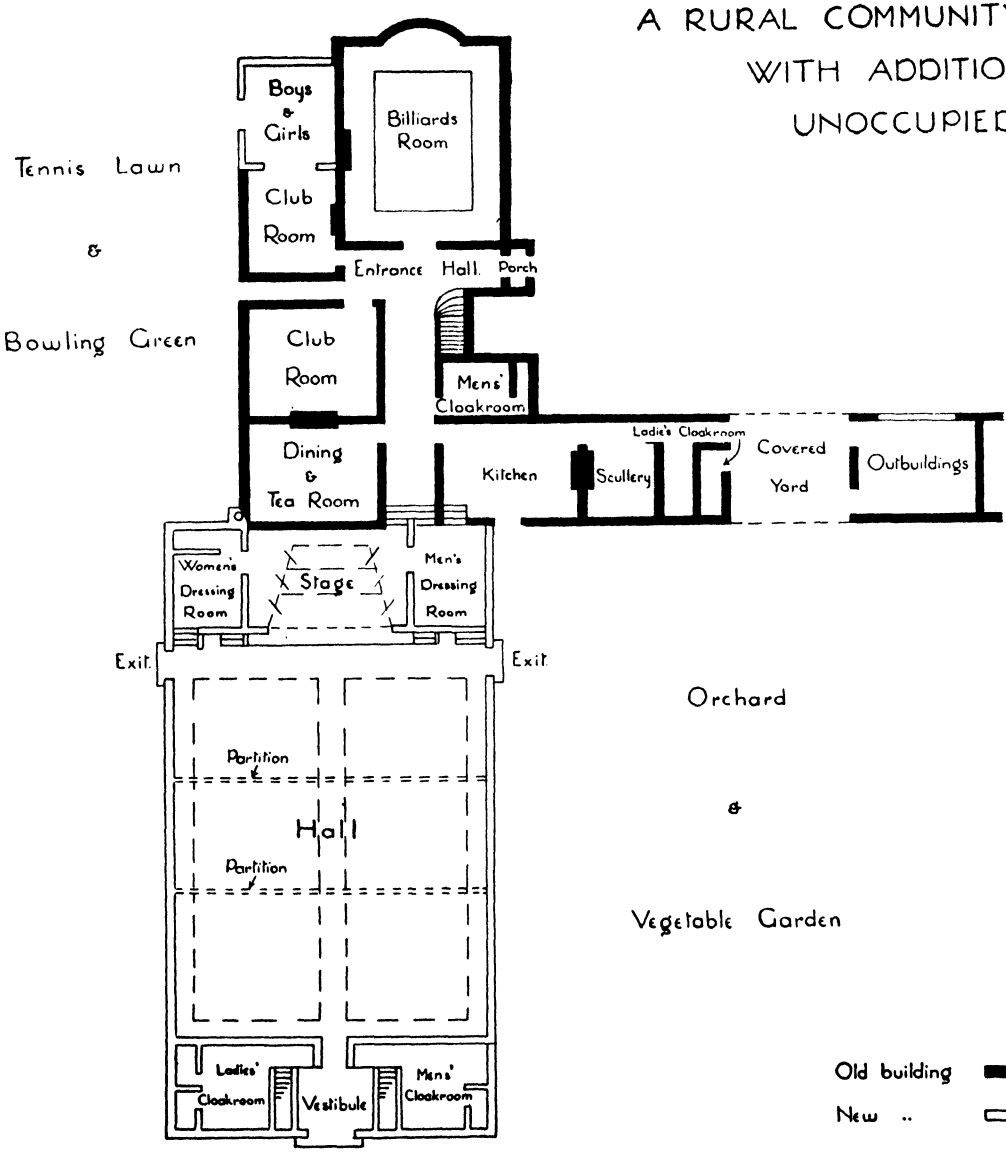
A Social Centre would include a large room, with platform and all the other equipment of any well-found Village Hall, where concerts, theatricals, dances, whist drives, &c., would be accommodated, but it should provide much more than this. How many villages have got a reading room and library? How many young mothers are cut off entirely from the social intercourse of the Women's Institute and other organizations because there is no room attached to the meeting-place where their babies or young children might be left in somebody's charge, but within easy reach of their mothers? What accommodation is there for clinics of all kinds, for the medical and dental inspections of the schoolchildren, for Parliamentary and County elections, for W.E.A. classes and discussion societies? More important still as a problem of the immediate future—indeed of the present in not a few places—is that of proper accommodation for schoolchildren's meals, with the further possibility of a community restaurant which might combine catering for the children and for adults. Not to labour the needs of many of the larger villages for a communal centre, one more example may suffice. How many villages have anything to offer in the way of rest and refreshment for

the visitor? The hiker walking through on a hot afternoon finds that the village inn is closed until 6 o'clock, or later on Sundays. The motorist who has stopped to look at the church and have a walk round the village cannot get a cup of tea before he goes on. There is no place where any of them, men or women, can have a wash and brush up.

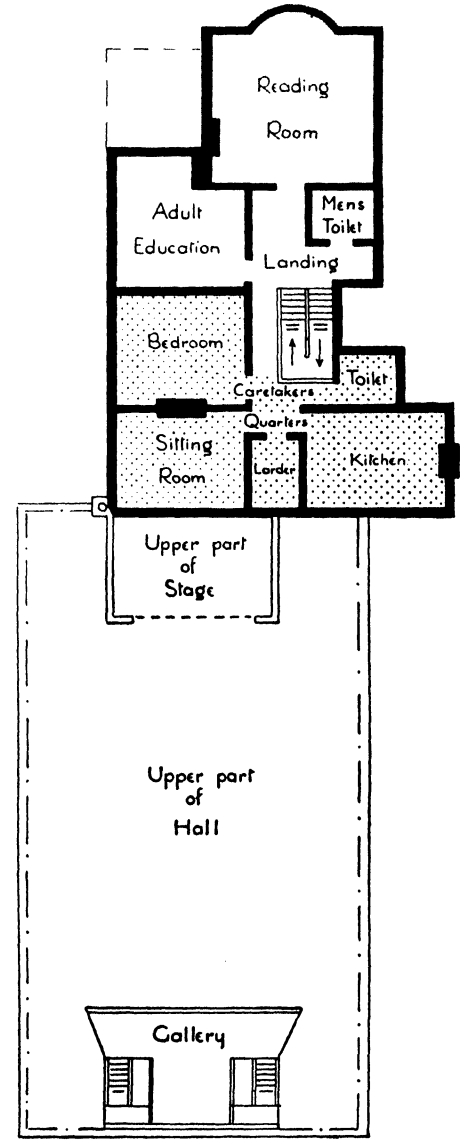
The suggestion is that all these wants might be satisfied by the provision of a Village Social Centre rather than a Village Hall. The hall would be included, of course, but there would be, also, subsidiary rooms to serve the other purposes mentioned above. There would be a kitchen, scullery, &c., where school meals, communal lunches, refreshments for socials, teas for casual visitors, could be prepared. There would be dressing rooms and lavatories for men and women. An essential feature of the centre would be accommodation for a married couple as resident caretakers, whose business it would be, besides cleaning and caretaking, to undertake the refreshments for casual visitors, and generally to arrange for and assist at the functions for which the hall was used. The opportunity of occupying modern well-equipped accommodation and of earning a steady income for services rendered to gatherings of all kinds, should make the appointment of caretaker good enough to attract a competent couple.

The problem of finance, of course, presents itself. A village centre of this kind would cost a considerable sum. In some places it is more than likely that a large house might be available for adaptation, and the Vicarage or Rectory House, where benefices have been amalgamated, suggests itself at once. Even where there has been no union of benefices, the parson is often over-housed, as has been pointed out already. In one of the smaller villages of the Survey area, where there is a small stipend and a big house, the parson has let the Vicarage, reserving two rooms for his own use, and making the condition that his tenants will board him. For him and for many others, life would be more tolerable in a smaller house, and the big Parsonage, always centrally placed, should be easily and economically adapted to the purposes of the Village Centre. (See Plan.)

A RURAL COMMUNITY CENTRE ADAPTED WITH ADDITIONS FROM AN UNOCCUPIED RECTORY



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



UPPER FLOOR PLAN

A novel and interesting method of financing a Social Centre was described by the rector of a small parish in a neighbouring county, a country parish with a population of 600 people, and nothing to differentiate it from hundreds of others. Here is the rector's own account of what he did.

Here I found no semblance of community life when I came, beyond occasional whist drives in a simply appallingly decrepit and desolate Army Hut. I was told that it was no good trying to do anything—I was definitely warned by my predecessor not to try—that this place was beyond salvation, and that if I did start anything it would not last more than twelve months. I waited a little while, then called a Village Meeting. I put before them a scheme for a Social Centre for the village and asked for £400 to be subscribed in 5*s*. shares. I only asked for £200 at first, but increased it afterwards to £400. I got all the money I wanted, and there were not six houses in the village which did not take up some shares. With that I redecorated and relined the large Army Hut, put in central heating and electric light, a first-class billiard table, and every other kind of game, a really good radiogram, card tables, chairs, and we fixed up a good kitchen, with gas-cooker, &c. The hut was large enough to divide into a good billiard room, and a reasonable-sized dance hall with stage, as well as a further room for committees and a library. The village looked sceptical, and many said—'I give it twelve months, no more!' It has been going three and a half years now; we have paid for everything and we have £150 in war savings; we have paid about 25*s*. a week in wages, and raised literally hundreds of pounds for various war charities. It is open every night, Sundays included, and our weekly takings from games amount to about £2. Except for one good Quaker who is our Treasurer, the 'Gentry' have nothing to do with it. They are not unsympathetic, but I run it through a Council of the villagers. Everybody admits now that it is a roaring success. All through last winter I ran a Cinema show (16 mm.) which was well patronized, and we have had lectures of various kinds, a few plays, and other entertainments.

I encourage membership from neighbouring villages. . . .

That describes how one successful Social Centre has been established, and there may be other places in which the same means might succeed. A Village Hall already built could be the nucleus of the larger organization in many villages; in

others a cottage which could be adapted for the caretakers' quarters might be the beginning. But in places in which there was no accommodation which could be adapted and extended at moderate cost, and the Social Centre had to be constructed entire, the parish desirous of proceeding would be able to use its powers under the Local Government Acts to raise a loan to meet the capital cost, and to levy a rate, if there were any deficit to be met on the year's income-and-expenditure account.

In the Village Colleges of Cambridgeshire, described briefly in an earlier chapter, nearly everything provided or contemplated by Village Social Centres is already in being. The fundamental differences are in the area of organization, which is regional for the colleges rather than parochial, and in the idea that social activities should be built up round educational institutions. Thus, the Village College is the senior school for a region of about ten parishes, it is the centre of adult education and, at the same time, the social and recreational focus for them. For the smaller parishes, unlikely to be affected by the decentralization of industry and incapable of independent organization, the Village College offers many advantages over any other kind of community centre.

CHAPTER XIII

SUMMARY AND DIGEST

THE EXPERIMENTAL PLOT; FARMS AND FARMING; RURAL INDUSTRIES; RURAL ADMINISTRATION; HOUSING AND THE PUBLIC SERVICES; EDUCATION; THE YOUTH SERVICE; HEALTH SERVICES; RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS; ENDOWED CHARITIES; SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS.

IT will be recalled that, so far as possible, this economic and social survey was to be objective. It was planned to establish the facts of the countryman's life, to point out their consequences, to compare them with conditions, as established, in the lives of other sections of the community. Criticism might sometimes be implied; the form of reconstruction might be suggested. In the main, however, the Survey was to be no more than a 'pilot' survey, an experiment in the investigation of conditions of life and living as they are, which might provide a basis for reshaping them more as they should be.

In the foregoing chapters the life of the countryman, as exemplified by conditions in the Survey area, has been followed from the prenatal clinic to the old-age pension—his education, his adolescence and employment, his housing, health, citizenship, social life, and recreations. All these and some other things, it has been suggested, are one complex making up the countryman's life and they should be considered together, not in isolation, in any attempt to give him better physical conditions and more opportunities for social and economic advancement. Nor is it only the country worker who is involved, for it is impossible to solve his problems in many of the villages and smaller towns without considering how to reintroduce some form of industrial life to supplement the agricultural, and to re-create that more varied society, with its wider opportunities and interests, which has been lost to them since the rural industries decayed and the village tradesmen disappeared.

THE EXPERIMENTAL PLOT

No special significance attaches to the Survey area. It was

chosen only for reasons of expediency, and any other country district would have served as well. It follows, of course, that no reflections upon the people living in it are implied in the descriptions of matters calling for reform which the Survey has brought to light, whether in the social or in the economic order. They serve merely as illustrations of the unfavourable conditions under which too many people have to live and work, with local differences of course, throughout the length and breadth of rural England.

The topography of the Survey area raises no particular problems, and the constitution of the population has already been described. The striking things about it are the large numbers of non-agricultural workers it discloses in a district which, to the eye, is entirely rural and somewhat of a back-water at that; the high proportion of old-age pensioners and retired persons; and the heavy and continuous decline in the total population of the area during the last two generations.

On the first of these points, the tendency of the farming industry for the last twenty years of the nineteenth century was, all the time, towards the less intensive use of the land and, consequently, a smaller demand for labour. The changes in the farming practices of this century, while tending, probably, towards higher standards of production, have been associated with the mechanization of manual-labour processes, and this has done nothing to arrest the fall in the demand. While the effects of these conditions are illustrated in the unbroken decline in the total population of the area, it is a fair assumption that if an occupational census could have been presented, covering the last thirty years, it would show that this decline was confined to employment in agriculture and its allied industries, and that the tendency of non-agricultural employment had been to increase, especially during the last ten years. Most of the industrial workers living in the Survey area are country-bred, agricultural stock whom changing circumstances—the decline of employment in farming, the demand for labour in a factory industry a few miles outside the area, and the organization of transport—have driven or attracted into other work.

As for the old people, the agricultural labourer past work stays naturally enough amongst his friends. There is also a class of persons, not inconsiderable, pensioners from the police, the Post Office, the railway, and others, or persons who have saved something in small businesses, who are glad to retire into the country, where living is cheap and life is quiet, to spend their declining years.

This question of the decline in the agricultural population is important in country planning, and it calls for consideration more careful than it has had. It is commonly assumed that a larger agricultural population is desirable. Phrases such as 'the rural exodus', 'the drift to the towns', 'getting people back to the land', and 'the need for a better balance between town and country' are common, and the implications are obvious—the dwindling number of those who follow the plough is to be deplored, the growing disparity between town and country workers is dangerous, and something ought to be done about it. It is not always remembered, perhaps, that the extent of farming in this country has long reached its limits. Britain is an island, and for all practical purposes there is no more farming land available. On the contrary, the needs of an increasing industrial population are constantly withdrawing land from agricultural use. Between 1881 and the outbreak of the present war, the extent of farming land in the county of the Survey area—one not highly industrialized—has fallen from 417,000 to 386,000 acres, a fall of 8 per cent., which has been further accentuated during the war years by the withdrawal of land for military purposes. It is obvious, therefore, that agriculture, as practised, could have no additional employment to offer, and when it is remembered that the whole tendency of farming practice in recent years has been to use machines for the performance of many of the old manual- and horse-labour operations, it is still further apparent that the demand for labour on the land could only have fallen. Nor is it an answer to say that the use of more intensive methods of production, such as market gardening and dairying, would keep up or increase the demand. Cases can be cited where this has occurred, but it is not always so.

On a big farm of some 1,200 acres, in Worcestershire, the area of 'market crops' was increased from 65 to some 250 acres between the years 1920 and 1935, but the labour staff on the whole farm actually declined from 35 to 30 men during that time, and the horses from 50 to 6, notwithstanding the great increase in the intensity of production. This was the result, of course, of the introduction of machinery of all kinds. Intensive farming, therefore, offers no easy opening for additional agricultural labour.

The mechanization of farming processes, which was going on apace before the war and which the war has speeded up, makes it possible, sometimes, for a farmer to strike out in new directions calling for the employment of more men. More often it enables him to carry out his customary operations at speed and with fewer men, and it enables the farm worker to increase the output of his labour and thus to qualify for higher wages. It follows, speaking generally, that an increase in the agricultural population, whether by 'stopping the drift to the towns' or by 'bringing people back to the land', could be achieved, in the long run, only at the expense of the standard of living of farmers and farm workers. Country planners must consider whether it be more desirable to have an industry numerically small by contrast with the employment which it afforded in times past, but one which, though still tending to decline rather than to increase, affords nevertheless a good standard of living to those who follow it—or whether there be social or other reasons for making an exception of agriculture amongst the nation's larger industries and organizing so as to increase employment in it at the cost of the standard of living. By a subdivision of the larger farms into smallholdings, operated more by family labour than by hired workers, employment could be increased to an intensity corresponding to that of many of the European peasant countries, but this could be achieved only by a fall in the standard of living to the continental level. The tendency of industrial organization in Britain has been all in the other direction, that is, to improve the workers' economic status, and in a stabilized industry, such as farming, this

tendency towards smaller numbers is the inevitable consequence.

It is claimed, not uncommonly, for farming, that it is something more than a living—it is said to be also a way of life. The implication is, of course, that farmers and farm workers are actuated not only by the desire for profits and wages, but that they find a peculiar satisfaction in farming which is not afforded by other activities, and this must be taken into account in considering the economic and social opportunities of the rural worker. It may be doubted whether those who follow husbandry for a living have ever regarded it from this angle. In the olden days, when most men were farming for their own subsistence, life was often a grim business, and famine and starvation were never very far away. In recent times, when farming in this country has been entirely commercialized, it is safe to assume that nobody inside the industry thinks of it otherwise than as a means to a living, and it is judged accordingly. To quote a young countryman, 'Farming's no good! You earn the same at 60 as you do at 20, and once the war's over, I'm away!'

It is no use to say that this is sheer materialism, and that there are other values. It will be a long time before the mass of rural workers are likely to be corrupted by prosperity, but the controversy over the merits of large farms and smallholdings is likely to continue. The issue is partly political and partly sentimental. As an economic proposition there is no question of the advantages of the large farm, both for the employment of capital and for the remuneration of labour. Yet in the English counties taken together, and omitting all holdings not exceeding 5 acres, more than 71 per cent. of the farms do not exceed 100 acres; in the county of the Survey area farms are larger, the proportion not exceeding this figure being 55 per cent., and it is the same in the area itself.

The problem presented by the smallness of the unit occurs also in the village communities. The average population of the three larger parishes in the Survey area was 1,156 at the last census; of the thirteen smaller ones it was 216—say, some fifty to sixty families—and still falling. In every phase of

their existence, economic, social, and administrative, the difficulty of providing satisfactorily for the little communities seems insuperable. It suggests, at once, the importance of public transport and communications. The little villages are deficient in so many of the services which the dweller in the larger places finds at his door—shops for the purchase of food, clothing, and household requisites; medical and hospital services; recreation and entertainment—that they depend, very largely, upon quick and easy transport to bring some of these services to them, or to enable their inhabitants to go away for them. But the smallness of the traffic makes the organization of frequent and regular services very difficult, and once again the problem of how to provide a comparable life for the dwellers in these little places presents itself.

Farms and Farming

The basic occupation of the Survey area is farming, and one purpose of the Survey has been to find out the strength and the weakness of the conditions, both economic and social, under which farming is followed.

The results disclose a position which does not differ, probably, from that which might be expected in almost any other part of the country, but it is one which differentiates agriculture from all the other big national industries. Briefly, this is the rigidity of the unit of production, the farm unit and its equipment, and the absence, hitherto, except in rare instances, of attempts to adapt either of them to the changing circumstances of food production and of modern industrial organization. In the Survey area, one or two large farms are known to have been split up to make several smaller ones, and here and there a new building has been erected, but with these negligible exceptions the farms are disclosed as being still as they were laid out, following inclosure, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

To consider, first, the sizes of the holdings, nearly half of the Survey area is given up to farms not exceeding 150 acres, and there are only six farmers who occupy more than 300 acres apiece. Thus, it resembles most districts of England in

that it is an area mainly of small farms. As to their layout, the Survey has shown that very few of these farms, even the smaller ones, have been planned with any obvious regard for convenience of management. More than 25 per cent. of them lie not compact in ring fences but in two, three, and even up to six detached blocks. Others suffer from various defects and awkward features. Some have poor access; others are badly shaped, necessitating long journeys to the remoter parts; others are intersected by roads or railway; others, again, have their farm-houses and buildings badly sited for convenience of working, and with very few exceptions the buildings are obsolete, dilapidated, or inadequate.

There are other considerations, too, which cannot be ignored in connexion with the efficiency of the farming unit. The relation of the farm to the different kinds of soil is shown to be entirely haphazard, and while this may be difficult to avoid in any district where soils change rapidly, another handicap to good farming, the awkward sizes and shapes of many of the fields, is less easily justified. Fields are mostly small, half of them being less than 10 acres, and while it is obvious that the most convenient shape for farm operations would be the rectangle, more than three-quarters of the fields in the Survey area have irregular boundaries.

In short, to repeat what has been said already, the farm layout follows no recognizable plan, and it incorporates a large measure of inconvenience.

Turning, now, to the farm buildings of the Survey area, these have been designed for a system of farming now obsolete. Historical and statistical data show that this area, like so many parts of England, was given up for long years mainly to corn and meat production, and it was during this era that the present-day building equipment was planned and erected—barns for storing and threshing corn, straw-yards and shelter-sheds for feeding cattle and making manure.

Consider, for a moment, the implications of this position. It is apparent that the farms of the Survey area have been assembled, laid out, and equipped for the practice of farming as it was carried on more than two generations ago, and that

since that time there have been very few material changes made in them. Is it to be assumed, therefore, that the far-reaching changes which have occurred during that time in farming systems, in technical inventions, in the use and the reward of labour, have not called for any reorganization of the unit of production or of its equipment? Dairy farming has displaced much of the corn and meat production. Horses have given place to machines with an output of work four or five times as great. Scientific research, harnessed to commercial enterprise, has enormously increased the production and variety of fertilizers and feeding-stuffs, which have revolutionized methods of feeding crops and live stock. Labour on the land, then underpaid and overworked, is now as highly regulated as that in any other organized industry. Certain is it that large numbers of farms throughout the country would confirm the evidence of those in the Survey area, namely that ancient bullock-sheds do not make good modern cowhouses; that corn barns are unsuitable for use and expensive to maintain as food stores and implement sheds; that small and irregular fields are ill adapted to the tractor and the combine-harvester; that a new conception of labour organization and of the scale of the farmer's business are needed, if agriculture is to compete in the world market and to offer a life and a living to the young men of to-day. In short, farming is putting new wine into very old bottles.

The tale can be continued almost indefinitely. New methods call for new equipment. In pre-depression days, when so much of the land was producing corn, there was no need to water it for live stock, but under systems of permanent grassland for milk or meat production, which took the place of ploughland, and of the temporary pastures of alternate husbandry which are now displacing permanent pastures, every field demands its watering-place. In the Survey area, the swing-over to milk production, which economic reorganization demanded, has been checked on several farms by the want of water-supplies in the fields for the stock, and at the homestead for the milk cooler and the cowshed. Overriding all is the handicap of the smallness of the farms them-

selves, which prevents men able and willing to invest capital in modern equipment to organize their farming on a scale approximating even remotely to that of modern industry, and drives them to make shift as best they may on collections of small farms, frequently not even adjacent one to another.

Then there is the question of the farm worker. There is no need to appeal for justice for him, for his right to a square deal; in the present-day world of industry things have passed that stage. The position is that unless he can be offered employment which will ensure him the opportunity to work and to live under conditions which compare with those offered to skilled workers in other trades, he will not stay on the land. This means, first, that farming must be organized so that the product of his labour may entitle him to a comparable wage and the chance of improving his position; second, that he must enjoy amenities of life such as are available to other workers. In particular, the standard of his housing must be improved in many places, and the public services, water, electricity, and sewerage, must no longer be denied him; above all, he must be called upon no more to live in a service cottage. There is nothing new to be said in defence of the 'tied' cottage. The evidence of the Survey is that modern methods of communication have destroyed the arguments put forward for so long in its favour.

Speaking at the Farmers' Club, in London, the President of the National Union of Agricultural Workers quoted figures from Oxfordshire to show that the number of farm workers not exceeding 21 years of age fell, in that county, from 1,931 to under 1,000 between the years 1923 and 1935.[1] This was the measure of their assessment of the comparative attractions of work on the land and work in other local industries, and it is the situation which employers of agricultural labour have got to face.

Farms in the Survey area provide examples of all these handicaps on the efficient practice of modern farming. The Report has shown, however, how they might be reassembled

[1] 'The Worker and Post-war Agriculture', E. G. Gooch, C.B.E., J.P., *Journal of the Farmers' Club*, Part 3, 1944.

and re-equipped. Examples of the suggested reconstruction have been given, by reference to groups of holdings in the area, to show how farm boundaries could be rearranged so as to improve the compactness of the layout, how fields could be enlarged and their boundaries rectified so as to give scope for modern farm machinery, how farms could be extended to give more opportunity for the application of the science of management and for the use and advancement of skilled labour. It was stated that the proposals for the necessary regrouping assumed that no difficulty would arise over the problems of finance and of the great diversity of ownership; for the purposes of the example, the co-operation of landowners and their willingness to give and take were taken for granted. In practice, of course, this is assuming far too much on both counts. No direct evidence was available of the ability or the readiness of landowners to shoulder the heavy financial burden which would be laid upon them by the readjustment of their farms to take advantage of all that modern science and invention and organization can offer. An example was given, however, of the extraordinary diversity of ownership—a straight line running for six miles diagonally across the area was shown to cut twenty-seven farm boundaries and to pass over no fewer than twenty-three different ownerships—which suggested that the regrouping of fields and farms according to the dictates of industrial efficiency, rigidly applied, would be a matter of extreme difficulty.

It is at this point that country planning comes against a political issue which the nation has surely got to face in the near future. Over large parts of the country, generalizing from the evidence of the Survey area and from the personal experience of the investigators in other parts of England, the land is crying out for reassembly and for re-equipment in units to fit it for the practice of modern farming, if operating costs are to be reduced to the minimum and if the conditions of employment on the land are to be improved. How is it to be done? It is work which will call for a great capital outlay and for complicated and difficult agreements and exchanges amongst property owners. On the other hand, only by such

reconstruction will it be possible to raise the efficiency of food production in this country to a higher standard, and to show in what commodities and to what extent the home farmer can compete, without State assistance, in the world market.

This is the political issue which the State must face, and it is perfectly clear. Is the nation to remain content with the present organization, which involves and will continue to involve the subsidy of landowners and farmers at a heavy cost if the agricultural industry is not to be allowed slowly to decline, once more, in the face of the competition of countries more efficiently organized or content with lower standards of living? Alternatively, is the nation prepared to face the task of the reconstruction of the farming unit on a wide scale—a new inclosure movement—so as to allow the industry to function with a greater degree of efficiency, involving, as it would, the further decision whether it were better to assist the present owners of property to undertake the work, by means of subsidies, remissions of taxation, and cheap credit, or whether the State should take over the landowners' responsibilities and carry through the reorganization itself?

Any of these alternatives, other than that of consenting to stagnation and decline, will involve the State in expenditure of public money. The question whether it should be used to stereotype or to develop farms and farming is outside the scope of this Survey, which can do no more than elucidate the facts of the present position and indicate the alternative lines of policy. Whatever method be adopted, should the new inclosure movement be the policy, the change could only be made slowly, as the interests of sitting tenants would have to be respected. Only as farms came on offer could plans made for their reassembly for more economic use be carried through.

Smallholdings, attractive to some land reformers, have been provided in the model reconstructions only incidentally, where small areas, particularly near villages, were found to fit badly into larger units. Although the experience of the Survey is that larger, not smaller, farms are wanted in the brave

new world, there are good grounds for providing, also, for a small number of family-farmers. There is the problem just mentioned, of how to make the best use of the land adjacent to the villages, where small producer-retailers may perform special services for the community by selling milk, eggs, and poultry, market-garden produce, and so on. Here and there, too, are men who must be the controllers of their own destinies if they are to be happy, who are prepared to pay a price for it in the long hours of toil for a poor reward, which is the experience of the majority of smallholders.

Economically, there is a strong case for the large farm, well equipped and managed, and a limited case for the smallholder. The former has all the advantages of large-scale production, bulk purchase, and scientific management; the latter, being self-sufficient in many things and independent of the labour market, with its statutory wages and hours, has an economic strength of an entirely different order. The food-producer on a scale between the two, his farm too large to be worked entirely by family labour, too small for the use of labour-saving machinery and paid management, who represents, nevertheless, by far the largest number of farmers in this country to-day, is in the weakest economic position. The form of reconstruction proposed in this Report, which disregards any political considerations and considers only the efficiency of food-production, would absorb his farm in a large-scale capitalist enterprise rather than divide it into still smaller units.

The Minister of Agriculture, Mr. R. S. Hudson, has stated publicly that farming in this country is not so efficient as it should be, and that the agricultural community cannot expect to have public support for their industry while it remains inefficient.[1] The inclosure and redistribution of the land, which was carried out so widely during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and which gave the country its farms as they are, was undertaken for profit. To-day, another redistribution and re-equipment of the land is necessary, for survival.

[1] See *The Times*, 16 March 1944.

RURAL INDUSTRIES

The Survey shows that industrial life in the area covered by it is almost non-existent. The little water-mills, ingeniously contrived on the small streams rising in the area, are most of them derelict. The twenty-two smiths, wheelwrights, and saddlers of forty years ago are reduced to half a dozen. The smiths may be able to persist, and even to flourish, if they can adapt themselves to the requirements of modern agricultural machinery, and develop the same skill in the repair of the tractor and its attendant implements that they have shown for centuries past in shoeing and in the repair of horse-drawn implements, but it is difficult to see any clear future for the other trades.

As to the non-agricultural industries, ironstone is the most important to-day, but it is subject to severe depressions, and its post-war future is uncertain. The picturesque plush-making industry, once occupying some thirty weavers on the production of rich-coloured cloths, which was spread amongst a few of the villages on the north-west border of the Survey area, must be regarded, probably, as finished.

Reference is made elsewhere to the impoverishment of rural society by the disappearance of practically all of the local industries which abounded even in living memory. In all but the merest hamlets, they provided employment alternative to agriculture, and they contributed a diversity of interest which is lacking to-day. On these grounds their disappearance is to be regretted, but it is difficult to see any hope of revival for most of them under modern conditions of industrial organization. At the same time, the desirability of a restoration of a better balance between agricultural and industrial life is suggested by all the evidence of the Survey. How this is being achieved by the migration of factory industry into rural areas, and how this new manifestation in rural life should be directed, are matters which are discussed in a later section.

RURAL ADMINISTRATION

The country-side has now had fifty years' experience of

rural administration under the Local Government Act which set up the Parish Meetings, the Parish Councils, and the District Councils. On all sides it is agreed that amendments and reforms are needed, but the Government has announced that legislation cannot be initiated until after the war. This waiting period should provide the opportunity for a full consideration of the matter, and for the preparation of plans. In this connexion, the Survey has provided useful evidence, which is typical, almost certainly, of large areas of rural England.

Reconstruction of rural administration on a wide and comprehensive scale seems to be indicated, for there are signs that the whole structure of local government, as organized under County, District, and Parish Councils, is breaking down.

For some time past, the tendency has been to centralize control more and more, and the indications are that still more is to be expected. Parish Councils have never had much effective authority in the smaller villages, partly from the difficulty of getting adequate representation of the people upon them, and partly because they are stultified in the exercise of their fairly extensive powers by the impossibility of financing them. Rural District Councils, which had various executive functions, and which, in their alternative capacity of Boards of Guardians, administered the Poor Law, have ceded most of these functions to the County Council; to-day, their main business is to administer the Housing and Public Health Acts, and to act as the assessment and rating authority. In their turn, the County Councils are being shorn of some of their powers by the central Government, and other losses are in prospect.

Some purely local and even voluntary organizations, such as main roads and fire services, have already been nationalized. The provisions of the Education Bill and the White Paper on the Health Services suggest that transference of control or the assumption of greater powers of direction by the central Government may be expected in many matters. Farmers, for example, must have been interested to learn that it is the intention of the Minister of Agriculture to take agricultural

education and advisory work out of the hands of the County Councils, handing over the responsibility for technical education at Farm Institutes to the Board of Education and putting the farmers' advisory service into the hands of his own Ministry. The changes made and contemplated have arisen, doubtless, out of the very considerable experience which has been accumulated of the working of local administration during the past fifty years. To the extent, however, that every further move towards centralization of authority must weaken the feeling of personal responsibility in the individual for the circumstances of his own life, they are to be regretted.

Undoubtedly, the Parish Council could and should be a body really representative of the inhabitants. The area which it administers is small enough for everyone to understand its needs, and the characters and suitability of candidates for the Council are known to all the electors. If election by ballot were substituted for that by show of hands, the Parish Council could be the most truly democratic and representative administrative body in the country.

The Rural District Councils and the County Councils are not in any real sense representative bodies. They tend to be entirely self-constituted, and they are drawn almost exclusively from the employer class, for attendances at their meetings during the normal working hours of the day, which membership requires, make it impossible for any of the largest section of the community to seek election.

These are matters which seem to call for consideration and reform, but what is of even greater importance than the personnel and representative character of local government are the principles upon which local administration of all kinds is financed. At the present time, specific matters may be financed by the National Exchequer, or by County, District, or Parish rates, or even by a rate upon a special part of a parish, and extraordinary anomalies and injustices are the result. When the City of Oxford decided to provide a public water-supply, or a public sewerage system, or to take over the electricity supply, it was dealing with a population densely packed together on a narrow strip of land between two rivers.

Distribution costs were low because the houses to be served were close together; overheads were low by reason of the size of the population. If a country parish, comprising fifty or sixty families in a village, half a dozen farm houses scattered about it, and a dozen or two isolated farm-workers' cottages, is to be supplied with any of these services, distribution costs and overheads per household are immensely higher, but they must be borne entirely by the parish, and sometimes by a special area of the parish, in cases in which the remoter inhabitants are excluded from the services.

Nor does this tell the whole story of the countryman's disadvantage. It may be feasible to dam a river valley in the Welsh mountains, or to harness a lake in Cumberland, to give a water-supply for some great industrial town, and to give it at a very cheap rate. On the other hand, even a simple bore-hole, a small reservoir, and a little oil-engine and pump to fill it, may be a considerable burden on a village community, whose only alternatives are inadequate or contaminated supplies. Whatever the form which local administration in rural areas may take in the future, is it not time that the nation ceased to treat the countryman as someone whose needs are different from those of the urban community? Recent reforms in the administration of the Poor Law have led to the abandonment of the treatment of old or unfortunate people, of mental defectives and orphaned children, on the basis that they are paupers. They are cases for Public Assistance, for the Public Health service, or for the Education Authority. Is it not time that the countryman ceased to be put in a class apart, and that his rights to equal treatment, as a citizen and taxpayer, were recognized? As things are, he has to forgo many of the comforts and even the decencies of life, so that dwellers in the towns and industrial districts may enjoy them at a fractionally lower cost. These conditions must continue while local government and local finance go hand in hand. In some things, of which the main roads are perhaps a good example, the principle of national responsibility for financing a national service, while localizing administrative responsibility for it, has been conceded, and

large Exchequer grants are made to County Councils for the maintenance of through roads. While, however, there are sound reasons for making all possible use of the local knowledge of conditions and needs which resides in County and even in Parish Councils, and of the voluntary service which their members are prepared to give, there can be no possible justification for depriving anyone of essential public services or of penalizing him in their cost because he is a countryman. Every worker to-day, black-coated or horny-handed, contributes according to his means to the national Exchequer. It is for the nation to distribute its income equitably amongst all classes.

Housing and the Public Services

The survey of the housing conditions in the area raises far-reaching issues. Conforming to a very definite building tradition, characteristic of the area and of the country immediately surrounding it, the villages surveyed call for special consideration if this tradition is to be preserved. The evidence of derelict houses in every one of them suggests that the treatment of disrepair has been the demolition order rather than reconditioning. Here is a further example, it would seem, of the need for a higher control, with larger powers, and particularly with a wider vision, than can be expected of local Sanitary authorities. These villages, like so many others in all parts of the country, are part of the nation's heritage of beauty; is it too much to suggest that the nation should assume responsibility both for the maintenance of this inheritance and for its augmentation? The local Sanitary authorities are concerned, and rightly, to see that people are housed in weather-proof buildings which conform to minimum standards for health. It is their duty, also, to supervise the erection of new dwellings by private enterprise, and to inaugurate and to carry out housing schemes themselves. In all these matters their criterion is conformity with these same standards for minimum health requirements, and, for their own housing schemes, minimum expenditure. Questions of aesthetics are considered only rarely, and, where

public expenditure on housing schemes is involved, it may be taken for granted that economy of construction is the main consideration.

The suggestion is that the time has come for the exercise of much more discrimination and control in rural housing. As to old housing, there should be an alternative course, other than the demolition order, to the refusal by a private owner to carry out essential repairs to a dwelling-house; and it has been suggested that this might be the acquisition of the property by the local authority at its site value, so that it could be reconditioned by this body and then relet as the property of the authority. Had this practice been possible in the Survey area during the past quarter of a century, it is obvious that many old buildings now completely derelict, or altogether gone, might have been contributing to-day both to the beauty of the villages and to reducing the housing shortage. The condition of many of those that remain is precarious, and action on the lines suggested will be needed in the near future, if many more of the cottages so characteristic of this district of England are to be saved from destruction.

As to new housing, not much has been done during the past thirty years, and it is certain that several hundreds of houses must be built as soon as possible after the war if the needs are to be met. In this connexion, it is suggested that it is not fair to the small local authorities to demand of them a knowledge of up-to-date opinion on village planning, and still less of the successful introduction of modern buildings into old settings—particularly if any considerations are involved which would raise the cost of building beyond that which is needed for the provision of minimum sanitary requirements. The planning and siting, the choice of materials and the elevations of new buildings, are matters which call for the exercise of professional skill of a high order if the amenities of the villages are to be preserved, while, at the same time, the well-being and the comfort of the dwellers in them are to be secured. The local Sanitary authorities are well equipped technically to ensure good building, and given the assistance of an authority operating over a far larger

area, able to command the highest professional services for planning and design, and empowered to secure at fair values the sites most desirable for their purposes, some of the apprehensions about the future of rural housing might be removed. If its operations should involve capital expenditure more than that which could earn a commercial rate of interest in the form of rent, in order that the best might be provided rather than the good, this might properly be a charge upon the national Exchequer, incurred for the maintenance of local amenities for national enjoyment.

As to the public services, water particularly, and electricity and sewerage, it has been suggested already that the time has come when the countryman's right to have them should be recognized, and that he should be penalized no longer merely for being a countryman. The difficulty of serving him, at the present time, is once more the association of local administration with local finance, and it is suggested that this alliance should be dissolved. A letter is carried from Land's End to John o' Groats, or from Westminster to Chelsea, for the same charge; a railway journey through the flat Midland plain costs the traveller as much per mile as one over Shap, with two engines to pull the train. As the principles of average costs and the flat rate have been conceded in so many of the public services, it would seem that this discrimination against a section of the community in matters of such importance to its health and comfort as the ordinary household services can be justified no longer.

At the same time, everything possible must be done to keep the flat rate chargeable for these services as low as possible. As to water, it has been pointed out that a common practice is to provide for the needs of each small community under its own scheme, administered by the local Sanitary authority, and these are units which have no necessary association with the water-bearing strata from which the supplies are derived. Water-supply, like transport and some other services, cannot be planned economically on a parochial basis in the great majority of cases, if the evidence of the Survey area is any criterion. Water lends itself to transport

over long distances fairly cheaply, and thus a national Water Board, or regional Water Boards, seem to be called for, able to consider area demands in relation to area supplies and to inaugurate services on a scale which, though impossible, often, to the Rural District Council, would be necessary in the interests of economy and efficiency.

One further point must be made in connexion with rural water-supplies. The Minister of Health stated recently that 95 per cent. of the population were supplied with piped water. But what is meant by a 'piped' supply? The description would apply to the few villages in the Survey area which have public water services, but very few of the householders in these villages can draw water when they want it by turning taps inside their houses. In one of the villages, justly proud of its piped water supply, only two houses in five are connected to it. A public supply to stand-pipes about the village may ensure pure water and a constant service, but it has no other advantages for the housewife over the well to which she used to resort, for drawing water involves a journey down the street, bucket in hand. It should be compulsory on landlords to connect the houses they own to the water-mains; until that is done the countryman will not enjoy the full benefit of the piped supply, so called, nor will the dependent necessaries of modern life, sinks, baths, and water-closets, be possible for him.[1]

The problems presented by sewerage and electric supply are in a different category. The grouping of small communities by regions for sewage disposal could not often be a feasible proposition, and while electricity, like water, can be brought fairly cheaply over long distances, the transformation of current from the high voltage necessary for this purpose to the low voltage required by the consumer is expensive. It follows that, for both these services, the cost is related directly to the concentration of the population to be served.

The need for treating the countryman as someone entitled

[1] These observations were made before the publication of the Government's White Paper, *A National Water Policy* (Cmd. 6515).

to the enjoyment of the services and amenities of life such as are enjoyed by other people has been urged very strongly as being no more than his due. 'There is no reason why a man should live under worse conditions than the *Milk and Dairies Order, 1926*, prescribes for cows.'[1] At the same time, if something could be done to increase the density of the rural population, the cost of supplying him might not affect the general level of costs to other consumers so much. One of the larger villages of the Survey area has suffered a decline of some 800 people, or more than 40 per cent., in the last half-century, and this is the experience of most of them. If something could be done in the post-war period to repopulate the villages, one of the main obstacles to the extension of services to rural areas would be removed. The problem is a general one; it arises in nearly every consideration of the circumstances of country planning, and there will be a return to it later.

EDUCATION

The smaller villages of England present a problem in education of some difficulty, and those of the Survey area are no exceptions. In two of the villages the fall in numbers has led to the closing of the schools altogether, and the children are taken daily to other places, some to one and some to another, according to their ages, for their education. All of the schools except one are voluntary or non-provided schools —Church schools—and the recent White Paper of the Board of Education has dealt faithfully with them. Their buildings are all of them antiquated, most are inadequate, and some are insanitary. The numbers attending them are often too few to justify the staffing which a primary school needs if sufficient individual attention is to be given to the different age-groups, so that from the very start of his training for life the country child is at a disadvantage.

From the evidence of the Survey area, the non-provided school seems to gain little, in most places, from its local managers, and if some acceptable solution could be found of

[1] A. G. Street, *Country Magazine* (broadcast), 23 April 1944.

the problem of denominational teaching, it might be thought better to bring them all under the sole control of the Local Education Authority. But while this would solve the difficulty of financing the improvements in accommodation and equipment of which the schools stand in need, the transfer would be no remedy for the difficulties of staffing and organization. How can the instruction given to twenty-four children of all ages from 5 to 11, by one teacher, or even by two, be efficient? How can there be any standard of achievement or the stimulus of healthy rivalry in classes of three or four children? On the other hand, it is suggested that it is no solution to close the smaller schools and to concentrate the children of several villages in one. While it may make for a better standard of education, and even though school meals, where provided, may be adequate nutritional substitutes for the family dinner, there are obvious objections to the removal of little children for long periods from parental control and home discipline, and to the bus journey in all weathers unescorted by any responsible person. The smaller schools of the Survey area have no canteens, notwithstanding that some of them are 'reception' schools for the children from other villages.

A good deal may be hoped from the new Education Bill, now before Parliament, for the improvement of education in the larger centres of population, but as regards elementary education, both junior and senior, in rural areas, it can do little to remove the weaknesses inherent in the smaller schools. The worst of the school buildings will be reconstructed, no doubt, either by the managers or by the Local Education Authority in default, but the staffing difficulty will remain, with the added drawback, probably, that the little village schools will come off worse than ever in the post-war competition for teachers. The only alternative apparent is to close more schools, a remedy as disastrous, in some ways, as the disease itself.

However, the handicap on the organization of infant and primary education, which seems inevitable in the smaller villages, may be mitigated, in some measure, when the provisions of the new Education Bill have been translated into

action. At present, the examination at 11 years of age, which determines whether the child shall proceed to a secondary or merely to a senior school, operates against the chances of those who have been educated in some of these little places. The Bill provides secondary education for all, of various types, to suit children of different aptitudes, and it will be possible to change from one type of school to another. Perhaps a further development could secure, one day, that every child should spend its last year of full-time education as a boarder, with all the advantages that should derive from community life and the growth of personal responsibility, which are not available, at present, except to the children of a very small section of the nation.

This better prospect for the country child is developed again in the Bill, under its proposals for providing further part-time education at the new County Colleges. Everything depends, of course, upon the form of the provision made, which may be for attendance one day a week, or for two half-days, or for continuous attendance for eight weeks, or for two periods of four weeks each, in the year. In other words, the colleges may be residential or non-residential. There may be two opinions about the advantages of the non-residential arrangement for urban areas; there can be no question about the need for residential colleges in rural districts, if the further education is to be of any real value. Transport difficulties alone would make it impossible for most boys and girls in the Survey area to attend the County Colleges on two half-days weekly, and it would be the same for a number of the children if the arrangement were for one full day. Apart from this, the cost of equipping and staffing the number of colleges required for day pupils, estimated at twenty-seven in the county of the Survey area as against four residential colleges, would be heavy. Overriding all these considerations, there are the obvious advantages, educational and social, which should accrue from periods of continuous study and community life in the residential colleges. A scheme for the creation of four of them, each to accommodate about 140 students, has been

outlined in the Report. Each college would give the same general cultural education and opportunities for physical and social activities, whilst having its own special practical bias. With this choice open to them, the children should be able to develop, each of them, along the particular lines which interested them most.

If there is likely to be any general development in other counties of the Village Colleges which have been so successful in Cambridgeshire, the natural and most advantageous scheme, it is suggested, would be to incorporate the County Colleges in them.

The Youth Service

Permissive legislation to promote the organization of out-of-school activities for boys and girls has been on the Statute-book for more than twenty years. Nothing had been done in the county of the Survey area, however, under the Acts which permitted expenditure on clubs, halls, playing-fields, &c., and it was not until after the outbreak of the present war that the Board of Education stimulated Local Education Authorities to make plans to meet the problems of youth—the social, physical, and recreative welfare of those between the ages of 14 and 20 years. Before that time, whatever had been done for young people had been due to voluntary organization; people with time, a sense of obligation, and able, some of them, to help with finances, organized and led the various youth movements.

Investigation in the Survey area has shown that these organizations, of which the Scouts and Guides are the most prominent, have had chequered careers. Only in one village, in which there is a flourishing co-educational secondary school and the Society of Friends have developed a strong feeling for social life of all kinds, had youth associations showed any real vigour and persistence, before the formation in two other villages of Young Farmers' Clubs and, in the last year or two, of the pre-service organizations for Army and Air Force.

In the main, the explanation of the failures disclosed is the

difficulty of finding leadership. Youth organizations must be started by someone and they must be led, and in the little villages of the Survey area leadership of the kind required is quite fortuitous; it may be forthcoming or it may not. In this connexion, strong comment has been made in this Report on the effects on rural social life of the disappearance of the village schoolmaster from several places. *The Consultative Committee on the Education of the Adolescent*, the Hadow Committee, whose Report to the Board of Education in 1926 was responsible for the grouping of children over 11 years of age in separate Senior Schools, had been concerned only with education. Neither in its terms of reference nor in its Report was there any suggestion that account should be taken of the social consequences of the educational reforms which might be proposed. Indeed, it may be doubted whether the Committee itself, or anyone else at that time, would have believed that such reforms could have injurious repercussions in other directions in many places, yet that is what has happened.[1] No one, probably, would be prepared to-day to question the desirability of grouping juniors and seniors in separate schools providing different types of education, and there seems to be general agreement amongst Education Authorities that the dividing line should be drawn at 11 years of age. In the smaller communities, the effect of this segregation in practice was that in many villages the older age-groups were too small to justify the erection of separate school buildings or even to support separate teaching staffs; that in the smallest villages there were not enough children in either age-group for the continued maintenance of any kind of school. The removal of senior age-groups to other places has necessitated the reduction of the teaching staffs, and where there was a headmaster he has gone. The removal alike of senior and junior age-groups to other centres has, of course, closed the school altogether and withdrawn both schoolmaster and schoolmistress from the village.

The consequences, in either case, on social life and leadership

[1] One of the clergy in the Survey area remarked that 'the Hadow Committee has been the ruin of half the villages of England'.

have been disclosed very plainly in the course of the Survey; they are one more nail driven in the coffin of the small community. The dispersal of estates and the departure of the squire, the union of benefices and the loss of the resident parson, the removal of the older children and the withdrawal of the schoolmaster—these circumstances are combining in many places, to-day, to produce headless communities. Leadership had been accorded to these three, indeed it had been looked for from them, and one or other of them was not likely to fail. It may well be that, in a democracy, responsibility should be more widely spread, and that the Parish Meeting or the Parish Council should take the place of the benevolent autocrat, whether squire, parson, or schoolmaster. To be successful, however, representative institutions themselves must have leaders, and in the smaller villages it is chance and nothing more whether he or she be forthcoming.

Evidence from the Survey area confirms this. With three exceptions, all the villages are small, but taking large and small together, voluntary youth organizations are to be found only in four of them, and the few young people who belong to Guides, Scouts, Young Farmers' Clubs, or pre-service units have to go to one of the larger centres. The Youth Organizer has drawn attention to the relative success of the pre-service units, which suggests that every effort should be made to divert them into peaceful channels after the war, if, at the same time, the appeal which they now make can be maintained.

The provisions of the Education Bill for the further education and training of the adolescent, if generously interpreted and carried into effect, should make their contribution to the problems of how to develop in young people of both sexes the sense of personal responsibility and citizenship.

Health Services

The health services available to country dwellers are the same, in the main, as in urban areas, and differences, where they exist, are those inseparable from the greater diffusion of the rural population.

The Survey area is reasonably provided with the services of doctors on the panel, although only one is actually resident within it. He, and several of those in neighbouring places, have surgeries in various of the villages of the area at which they attend at stated times. If a patient wants to be visited at short notice, it is public knowledge in which parish the doctor is likely to be at a given hour, and, not infrequently, whom he will be visiting. Thus, there is little difficulty in reaching him with a message to ask for a call outside his pre-arranged round.

The proposals of the Government for the improvement of the Health Services, as expressed in the White Paper, lay stress on the importance of grouped practices.[1] Partnership groups have developed sporadically about the country already, though not conspicuously in the Survey area, and the Ministry of Health contemplates the application of the principle generally, if further experience of its working should justify it. Collaboration amongst practitioners is to be organized in specially designed and equipped premises—'Health Centres'—though the idea of group practice without special premises will also be encouraged, and would be applicable, probably, in districts such as the Survey area.

The White Paper comments on the need for larger administrative areas for the hospital service. That a full reconsideration of local administrative boundaries is needed in connexion with some of the health services has been demonstrated in the Survey area. Indeed, it is a general problem, which arises in many other matters of local administration, and the suggestion was made in the course of the Survey that there should be a complete overhaul of local government before the reform of the health services and of other public services is carried out. Otherwise, the country would be involved in the difficult task of trying to fit the

[1] *A National Health Service*, Cmd. 6502, 1944. The White Paper issued by the Ministry of Health had not appeared before the field-work of the Survey had been finished. Its proposals have not been discussed, therefore, with the medical practitioners and others in the Survey area who might have been interested in them.

obsolescent machinery of local government to public services reorganized regardless of it.

A service, not specifically mentioned in the White Paper, which seems to call for extensive development, is that of the social worker. There is a consensus of opinion on the need for a great increase in the number of trained Hospital Almoners and of Health Visitors. The work of the former, in providing the doctor with the hospital patient's background, is said to be of first-rate importance both in diagnosis and treatment. The latter undertake valuable advisory and supervisory work in the home, particularly in connexion with schoolchildren. Their work in rural areas is especially valuable, as attendance as out-patients at the hospitals is difficult for the country people. The limitations which are imposed on hospital visits by the infrequency of rail and bus services were mentioned more than once in the Survey area. It was suggested, too, that more might be done at the hospitals to allocate times to patients, and to make appointments for them which were related to transport time-tables. It might be mentioned that an almoner at the county infirmary was said to know the time of departure of the last bus to every village in the county, and that it was a point of honour with her to get her patients duly attended and sped on their homeward ways.

From the omissions in the White Paper, it might be inferred that the ultimate object of the Ministry of Health is to get all health services, both practitioner and hospital, under the State. There is no support for the Hospital Contributory Schemes which have done so much for the Voluntary Hospitals, in the Survey area as elsewhere, in recent years; and although tributes are paid to the help which the Voluntary Hospitals can give in building up the new system of hospital services, it is pointed out that their position may be fundamentally affected by the acceptance by the community of responsibility for a service for all.

Religious Organizations

It cannot be said that the various religious organizations

represented in the Survey area are playing a highly important part in its social life, with the exception of the Society of Friends. The Free Churches, served as they are almost everywhere by non-resident ministers, can undertake little beyond the provision of Sunday duty. The Roman Catholic Church is hardly represented in the area, but in one village a young priest from a Jesuit College outside it provides leadership for a troop of Boy Scouts.

As for the Established Church, the Survey has brought out two points. The first is that the idea of the parish as the unit of Church organization has gone. Of twenty parishes in or touching the area, only four have the full-time services of an incumbent; the rest are united in pairs, with one case in which three parishes share a parson. The second is that there is no foundation for the belief that these small country parishes are staffed by elderly pastors, who can apply the experience of years of active service in busy town parishes to what is no more than part-time work in the country, content to regard their small stipends as being more in the nature of pensions. The majority of the clergy in the Survey area were instituted in youth or in early middle age, and they have remained where they began.

The experience of the Survey suggests that the time has come when the Church should consider the reorganization of the parochial system on a scale more comprehensive and flexible than is achieved merely by the union of two contiguous benefices. Circumstances can be imagined, and places might even be found, where sudden industrial expansion in one or both of the parishes has stultified the whole object of the union. On the other hand, a reconstruction scheme based on the Rural Deanery, as suggested in the Report, would be adaptable to any subsequent changes in the balance of population. It is not suggested that this is the best or the only alternative. It must be conceded, however, that an organization which has survived virtually unchanged for a thousand years may be in need of some reconstruction more far-reaching than that which is possible under the Union of Benefices Measure.

ENDOWED CHARITIES

The extent and variety of the endowed charities of the country, as exemplified by those in the Survey area, may be a surprise to many, amounting as they do, in the aggregate, to the value of several hundred pounds in these few parishes. It is hardly too much to say that many of them can only be described, picturesque survivals though they may be, as among the minor abuses of the country-side. A dozen loaves placed on a shelf in the parish church every Saturday, to be taken by those who need them, may serve as a wholesome reminder that someone in the past had a thought for his poorer neighbours, but it cannot be claimed that the spirit of his intentions is being fulfilled to-day by the literal observance of his bequest. Such benefactions serve no useful purpose in the community as it is now constituted, and their continued observance, so far from carrying out the purposes of the trusts, is, in effect, a breach of faith with the dead. The larger and more valuable charities seem for the most part to have come under review, and schemes for their reallocation have been, and are, approved from time to time by the Charity Commissioners. It is suggested that the time is long overdue for a national survey of the minor charitable trusts, for the purpose of bringing them into line with the conditions of modern life.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Once again, the importance of leadership, and the difficulty of finding it in the smaller communities, is emphasized, this time in the organization of social life. An analysis of the various activities encountered has been made, to distinguish those which spring from the desires of the people mainly for entertainment and recreation, and those for benefit and improvement. In the former category are the dances, whist drives, and sports clubs; in the latter, the thrift clubs, allotment and garden societies, Women's Institutes, and tutorial classes.

Apart from leadership, the limiting factors in the provision

of social organizations are the size of the community and a suitable meeting place. The difficulties of organizing anything in a community of a couple of hundred or so are obvious, and the handicap in any village unprovided with a hall of some kind is also apparent. The schoolroom, which is often the only place, is a very poor substitute for a hall properly equipped with stage, kitchen, dressing-rooms, &c.

One of the main problems of social activity in the villages is how to provide for the younger members. There is a sorry tale in the Survey area of lapsed troops of Guides and Scouts, of vanished Girls' Clubs, and of abortive attempts at informal gatherings for various purposes. It is reported that the younger women are inclined to fight shy of the Women's Institute and the Mothers' Union. In fact, apart from dances, all the most successful institutions derive their support from the middle aged and elderly of both sexes.[1] Again the problem confronting the country planner comes back to this—what can be done to give the small community all the opportunities and amenities of modern life?

For the men, and the older ones particularly, the garden and allotment for pleasure and profit, and the village inn for relaxation and entertainment, are the most important activities in the villages. Organizations such as Allotment Societies and Village Produce Associations bring neighbours together, foster the idea of co-operation through their bulk purchases of seeds and manures, spread a knowledge of horticulture through the advisory services of the county staffs which organized growers can command, and raise the general standard of performance by means of the shows and competitions which they organize.

As for the village inns, they are the working-men's clubs. Opinion in the Survey area was unanimous upon the useful part which most of them play. In fact, one parson declared that now that the schoolmasters had been taken away from so

[1] This generalization seems sharply contradicted by one of the villages, occupying a middle position in size, in which every kind of social activity for young and old is manifest in vigorous life. The circumstances, however, are exceptional, as there is here a flourishing Meeting of the Society of Friends, who provide leadership.

many places, the village publican, if he were the right man, played the most important part in village life. Licensed premises often leave much to be desired, and a picturesque exterior is no substitute for proper accommodation inside. It was pointed out, however, that the villager who meets his friends to chat, to play darts, and to drink his pint, in what is no more than the inn kitchen, feels more at home than he would amongst the smarter fittings of many of the more modern houses of call. There is room for improvement, but the character of the old inn should not be lost.

Whether the atmosphere of the village inn and all that it represents could be combined with a general social centre in the larger villages, is a possibility which country planners might consider. A centre of this kind, combining the Village Hall, a canteen for school children and adults, rooms for a library, for meetings of all kinds, health clinics, adult education, and many other purposes, has been discussed, and an example from a neighbouring county is quoted. Such a centre might include a bar, and this, indeed, is to be found in one Village Hall in the Survey area, which some people think is 'the best pub in the village'.

On the other hand, the enterprise of the Cambridgeshire Education Committee in the organization of its regional Village Colleges has been quoted as an example of what can be done to organize the community life in rural areas on a regional rather than on a parochial basis, the assumption being that the village unit is too small, generally, to have a full community life. These colleges have been described briefly in an earlier section of this Report, and their achievement is very impressive. There are conspicuous advantages for the villagers from participation in such an institution, which provides a meeting-place for clubs and societies of all kinds, as well as initiating social and cultural activities which are dependent, in the smaller places, upon the chance of finding leaders.

A final comment which suggests itself, as arising out of this Survey of social activities in a rural area, is the absence, apparently complete, of any attempt at co-ordinated effort by

the various bodies and organizations, all of them working for the improvement of the social life of the people. The Churches, the British Legion, the Women's Institutes, the Mothers' Union, social clubs of various kinds, and, amongst the younger people, the Young Farmers' Clubs, the Guides, Scouts, and the youth organizations—all of them are striving for better conditions of life for various sections of society without any consultation one with another, pooling of experience, or the planning of team-work, to prevent overlapping in some places and to supply gaps in others.

Some body such as a Social Council, or a Council of Social Service, planned on a county or on an area basis, seems to be needed, consisting of representatives or delegates from all local social organizations for old and young, which could substitute concerted action in all matters of mutual concern, in place of the isolation in which much of the work is carried on at present. There was evidence in the county of the Survey area that the Rural Community Council might shortly give a lead in some development of this kind.

CHAPTER XIV

'WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?'

THE purposes of country planning, as they emerge from this Survey, are twofold: to secure the greater efficiency of agriculture and land utilization; to provide conditions of living and opportunities in life for the countryman as good as those available to other sections of the community.

As to the first of these, the efficiency of farming and the proper use of the land, there is little evidence of land hunger in this country, such as characterizes some of the peasant countries of Europe. Nor is there any parallel here for the conditions which led Arthur Young to say, during his travels in France, that 'the magic of property turns sand into gold'. In the Survey area, owner-occupiers are not exceptionally numerous, nor is their performance exceptional; in the country at large there are few landowners, small or large, who are not ready to part with their land to their advantage—a fact to which the uncontrolled expansion of the great cities and towns of the country is due. Indeed, is it not the hope of almost any landowner that his property may be wanted one day for development, and is not land often bought, or held, not so much for its agricultural value nor for reasons of sentiment as in the expectation of appreciation?

It follows that the proposal to establish 'good' agricultural land as something inviolable, something which must not be diverted to other uses,[1] is not likely to find much favour amongst the owners of real property. The proposal involves, also, the definition of what is 'good' land. Agricultural land may be good in the sense either that it is fertile or that it is profitable. Land inherently fertile occurs, for the most part, in the Fens and in the marshes round the coast, districts in which any considerable expansion of non-agricultural development seems unlikely. Over the greater part of the country, the difference in the annual agricultural value of one

[1] See the *Report of the Committee on Land Utilisation in Rural Areas*, Cmd. 6378, 1942. (The Scott Report.)

field or another is a matter at the most of a few shillings an acre. Land which is good because it is profitable is that to which easy access to markets gives a special value. Often enough it is land of very ordinary quality, and any industrial development which absorbs it creates automatically similar values in the adjoining land. Perhaps the readiest example is provided by the market gardens and the producer-retailer dairy farms which are found round most towns of any size.

Country planners, therefore, need not be too much concerned, it would seem, about the selection of land for non-agricultural uses, granted, of course, that where there are alternatives the site having the lower agricultural value, whether due to its inherent quality or to its position, would be preferred. The redistribution of farms and fields, and the re-equipment of the land with buildings suitable for the practice of modern agriculture, the need for which has been demonstrated by this Survey, stand outside this issue, of course, and would remain unaffected by it.

It appears, therefore, that agriculture is suffering not so much from the withdrawal of land from farming, a process which must be inevitable in a community 90 per cent. of whom are interested in food production only as consumers, as from an archaic arrangement of farming units, and an equipment also often out of date and in bad condition. But while it must be conceded that the non-agricultural majority of the people must have access to the land it needs, this is not to say that the uncontrolled application of this principle, which has been responsible for the over-expansion of many towns and the suburban sprawl, can be allowed to continue. On the other hand, it is clear that some degree of concentration is needed if the people are to enjoy all the public services and material opportunities which the evolution of knowledge and of a sense of social responsibility has put at their disposal.

Planning, so far as there has been any, seems to have been almost entirely on the regional basis, without regard to the broader issues which it may involve, each town-planning scheme being complete in itself and having no necessary relationship to its neighbours. If the growth of towns is to

be controlled by the deliberate decentralization of industry, as has been recommended,[1] something more flexible will be needed than the system of regional planning. Is it not possible that, with a larger conception of the planning problem, a combined solution might be found, to include both the relief of the congestion of industrial areas and the improvement of conditions of life and labour in many country districts, the need for which has been disclosed in the area covered by this Survey?

Its evidence illuminates the difficulties of all the little villages, each of a few hundred people, which are dotted over the country-side at intervals of a few miles, most of them living in complete economic and social isolation one from another, for the great growth of the population in the last hundred years has affected rural England only here and there. Or it would be more correct, perhaps, to say that it has affected the greater part of rural England adversely, by drawing from it not only the normal increase in population which could not be absorbed in agriculture, but also all the tradesmen and workers in rural industry, who served the farming community before the days of mechanization of manual processes and mass production of goods. The populations of the villages in the Survey area have dropped by 25 per cent. in the last two generations, and in some of the remoter parts of the country the decline has been twice as much.

The problem of the declining country-side is no new one, and it is generally recognized. Most of the discussions of it centre round agriculture—the neglect of agriculture by the nation has caused a drift from the land; the revival of village life depends upon the revival of agriculture. So runs the argument, but this cannot be the whole story, and there is evidence from the Survey that neither the cause nor the remedy suggested will stand close examination. In this country, for better or worse, a standard of living has been established for the great bulk of the people, which agriculture, organized as at present, cannot offer; the value of the farm-

[1] See *Report of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population*, Cmd. 6153, 1940. (The Barlow Report.)

worker's product in the past has not been sufficient to earn him a standard comparable to that of the industrial worker. There are only two ways in which the difference can be adjusted: the first, by changes in labour organization on the farm which will increase the worker's output; the second, by State subsidies to farm labour, direct or indirect. The former would reduce, rather than increase, the number of workers needed on the land;[1] the latter could do no more than stabilize it at its present figure.

Even if some means could be devised for putting men on the land in greater numbers, it must not be supposed that country society would thereby be satisfactorily reconstituted. Any village to-day, not affected by the pull of industrialism, is proportionately more agricultural, probably, than it has ever been in modern times. What is needed is not so much an increase in the number of land-workers in the villages as the restoration to them of the industrial element in their populations, of which they have been deprived by the march of progress.

Clearly, this better balance in the rural population cannot be achieved by attempting to restore the old country industries, either agricultural or general, of last century. Such blacksmiths as have survived, who are prepared to convert their shoeing businesses into machinery repair shops, have got great opportunities, but most of the agricultural industries have been absorbed into larger organizations, able to offer higher standards of living to the workers and cheaper goods and services to the farmers. Changes in farming practice, too—wire-netting and stakes instead of hurdles, or the electric fence instead of either; enamelled iron for all the wooden dairy utensils—have put certain craftsmen out of business altogether. Nor are the non-agricultural industries once scattered about the country capable of revival. It is inconceivable, for example, that the picturesque plush

[1] Much of the decline in the number of agricultural workers in the last twenty years, which has attracted so much comment, is due to the steady increase in manual efficiency by the general spread of the use of farm machinery.

industry in the Survey area, now practically dead, can ever be revived on the hand-loom basis; and the other industries, such as milling, malting, tanning, and so on, now centralized, are likely to remain so. What, then, can be done to increase the size of many of the village communities and to make them more representative of the nation's many interests?

There is evidence of a certain reluctance on the part of many country lovers to contemplate any serious change in the rural scene. But it is sufficient to look at any village street to realize that there has been a continuous evolution and change through the centuries, not only in the village but in the face of the country-side too. A static village is dead, and the 'preservation of rural England' must not be interpreted in the museum sense.

The village of a few hundred people cannot survive as a healthy organism. All the evidence of the Survey points in this direction. It cannot maintain any of the social services; it must send its senior, and sometimes all, its children away for their schooling; it must share the services of a district nurse; it cannot bear the overhead costs of water-supplies, sewerage, or electric light; it has few shopping facilities; it cannot support the usual recreational organizations, cricket and football clubs, Women's Institutes, Young Farmers' Clubs, Guides and Scouts, and so on, solely because there are not enough men, women, and children of the various age-groups to run them; it cannot give a living or a life to a resident parson or Free Church minister.

The question at once arises, What is the minimum size for a healthy rural community? An ingenious proposal recently put forward would regard the school as the most important social unit, and, treating education as the primary communal service, would take the population needed to maintain it in efficient operation as being the minimum. Taking 25 to 30 children as a reasonable number to form a class, and calculating that one-sixtieth of the population is in each one-year age-group (on an average), the school with 25 to 30 children in each class represents a total population of from 1,500 to 1,800 people. With a range of from 20 to 40 in a class, the

corresponding range of population is from 1,200 to 2,400.[1] It is of interest to note that the three larger villages of the Survey area approximate to the lower of these figures, and they confirm in many ways that this population can support a vigorous community life. The question of an upper limit is not likely to arise in rural areas, except in the planning of brand-new towns. How will it be possible to build up the little villages to anything like these figures?

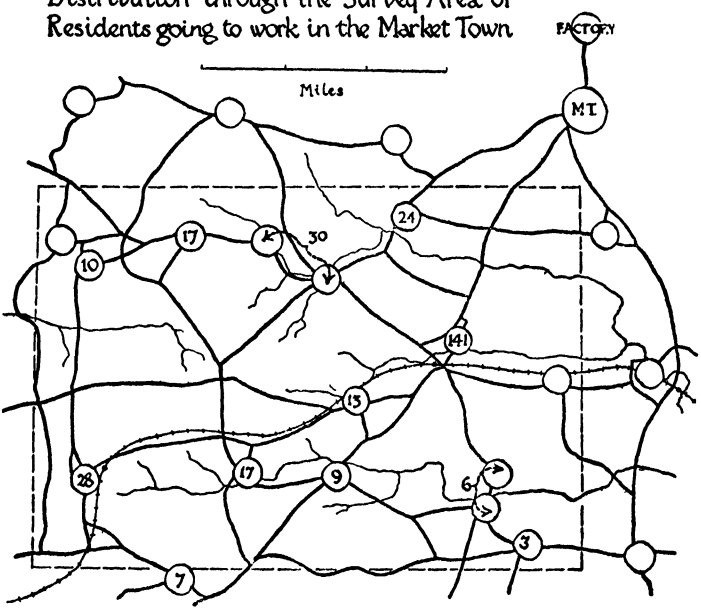
The answer is, of course, that it will not be possible for all of them, but much has been going on for some years in an uncontrolled way in many of them, which, with proper regulation and deliberate planning, might raise their populations to this better social level. The Royal Commission quoted above was emphatic on the need for the decentralization of industry. Factories and workpeople, removed from the towns, were to be rebuilt and rehoused either in some of the smaller country towns or in new towns built specially to accommodate them.[2] By a slight modification of this principle, town and country might be even more successfully wedded, and recent developments in the Survey area suggest the method.

Outside the market town serving the area, about one mile to the north of it, a factory was built about twelve years ago, equipped for one of the light industries. No provision was made for importing and housing labour, the management relying, apparently, on being able to attract the men and

[1] See C. B. Fawcett, *A Residential Unit for Town and Country Planning*, University of London Press, 1944.

[2] The proposal to build new towns is the less acceptable part of this recommendation of the Barlow Report. Industrially and socially, it seems open to the objection that no community can be well found which is dependent upon one industry. Trade depressions, of course, would affect everybody temporarily, but these would pass, and what is more serious would be the artificiality of the town made suddenly and all in one piece, with no roots in the past and no traditions, instead of having grown up like a living thing. This is no mere sentiment, for the growth of the community sense and civic consciousness would be stunted by the utter dependence upon one activity for all, without the stimulus of the great variety of life to be found in any old community. All trades, occupations, interests, and periods have contributed to make up the corporate life of English towns and villages.

women it needed from local sources. Events seem to have justified the expectation, and most villages in the Survey area, for example, send a labour quota daily to the town and factory. The accompanying map shows how each has been



affected; one of the nearest and largest, under the stimulus of a war-time expansion in the factory, is now sending more than a hundred. Transport and housing facilities have been the factors determining the response to the demand, the former being helped by works buses, but nothing has been done, so far, to meet the demand for housing.

Many examples of unregulated industrial development on similar lines can be found in other country districts. A factory industry is planted down on the outskirts of a small country town, wages better than those of agriculture are offered, and often work for women as well as for men. The management

relies upon these attractions to divert labour into the factory, and if the volume needed should increase beyond the capacity of the locality to house it, they know that private enterprise or the local authority will step in and build. What usually happens is industrial development in its most undesirable forms. The town in which the factory is located hastens to take advantage of the opportunity to expand, and industrial housing estates are developed. The efforts of private enterprise, manifested generally in the country villages within transport distance of the factory, provide some of the worst examples of uncontrolled, unplanned, speculative building—bungalows and ribbon development—and neither the houses nor their occupiers are assimilated in any way to the communities which they adjoin. They are the justification of those who would seek to preserve the country-side inviolate from the encroachments of industry.

The evidence of the Survey is that every activity, economic and social, within its area, every condition of living, is less effective than it might be, owing to the smallness of the communities in it, while some activities essential to a full and healthy life are entirely absent; further, that the decline of rural industries and of the village tradesmen has left an impoverished and ill-balanced society in most places. It is suggested that if the siting of new or of decentralized industries were to be planned deliberately, by a public department in close collaboration with those responsible for the respective industries, it should be possible to place many of them in rural districts under conditions which would give them all that they could have in towns already over-congested and more, while avoiding, at the same time, the more obvious mistakes of unplanned commercial enterprise. For many of the lighter industries proximity to the sources of raw materials is unnecessary, given adequate transport and communications. These conditions satisfied, the only other essential is a reasonable prospect of securing the necessary labour.

It is here, it is suggested, that so much might be done by conscious and deliberate planning, not only to remove the reproach of so many of the dormitory towns and villages

which have come into being between the two wars, but to revitalize many of the decaying villages and to bring a new spirit into the English country-side. Just as the siting of industries would follow upon consultation between public authority and private enterprise, so the siting of housing for the workers in the industries would follow upon consultation between the management and the local housing authority. Dismissing the idea of new industrial towns built round the factories as being anti-social and artificial, the alternative would be to repopulate all the little villages within a certain radius of the factory—first, by reconditioning the old houses capable of being brought up to modern standards; then, by the occupation of vacant sites within the villages such as could be built upon without crowding; and lastly, by planning the land immediately round the village in a way such that the village might remain a village rather than become a minor edition of an old town and its modern suburbs. In this way, there would be the maximum of economy and of convenience —economy in linking up the new buildings to existing public services or in the provision of these services alike for old and new; convenience of access to shops, schools, places of worship, and so on, for the new-comers. Above all, there would be no segregation of the factory workers in a housing estate. The villages, though larger, would remain mixed communities of many interests and of all classes, for housing must make provision not only for the workers but also for the management. There should be a reasonable hope that there would be some fusion, in due course, between old and new for the ordering of social life and matters of mutual concern, a process which would be facilitated by the recruitment, which would certainly follow, of some part of the factory labour from amongst the original inhabitants.[1] Moreover, the new opportunity for employment which the factory would offer in the locality, would keep the young people in the

[1] Many of the new housing estates, whether for slum clearance or for industrial development, fail deplorably in these matters. They are characterized by complete class segregation, and, while they are not real villages or towns in themselves, they are remote from the facilities of the one to which they have to look.

villages and would arrest the exodus of good country folk which has been so generally deplored.

The belief expressed by the *Committee on Land Utilization in Rural Areas* that the location of factories in rural areas would withdraw essential labour from the land seems to be untenable, for though it has been the common complaint of farmers that industrial enterprises deprive them of farm workers, the reason is purely economic, and farming will suffer in this way wherever factory industries are located, unless it can offer wages and conditions of employment which are equally attractive. This is one of the reasons for suggesting the reassembly of farms in the Survey area in larger units, better arranged and equipped for economic working. Once more, too, it must be stressed that farming alone cannot absorb the natural increase of the agricultural population. Three out of every four boys born on the land must seek other employment, and would it not be better if it could be found in their own neighbourhood and amongst their own friends?

Attention should be drawn to the good which would be likely to result to farming and to agricultural employment from the decentralization of industry and the repopulation of the villages after the manner suggested here. It is the fresh and perishable farm products of which the population of this country stand most in need if its dietary is to be improved. It is these products—dairy products of all kinds, fresh meat, eggs and poultry, fresh vegetables and fruit—that this country is fitted by soil and climate to produce in great abundance and in highest quality. It is these same products, again, which give the greatest volume of employment and the highest returns on the labour employed. It is on the dairy farms, the market-gardens, the poultry farms, and the fruit plantations that production is at its intensest and that employment and wages are at their highest, and the times are ripe for a great expansion in these types of farming. The most important limiting factor, hitherto, has been access to markets. Transport of perishable produce over long distances is expensive; it must be rapid, and special containers must be

provided for certain products. Notwithstanding all that has been done, perishables cannot now be marketed beyond certain distances without loss of condition, nor at costs which will put them within the reach of those who need them most.

It is hardly necessary to point out the immediate opportunities for a general expansion in these types of production which the resiting of industry and the diffusion of the industrial population would offer. Farmers and farm workers in many districts, who are restricted, now, to extensive systems of husbandry, based on corn production in competition with the cheap producers of all the world, would find themselves on the threshold of a new era of opportunity and advancement as the market in more profitable products, protected naturally, many of them, by their perishability, opened up around them.

Planning of the villages within the radius prescribed around the factory would take account of their respective sizes, the object being to bring each up to the minimum necessary for a full social life. This would not mean filling the country-side with villages all of the same size—a drab prospect. The smaller ones, though enlarged, would remain the smaller ones, while the larger ones, even though socially big enough already, could be enlarged to any desirable extent, always provided that their corporate character were not lost. The top and bottom limits suggested by Professor Fawcett range from about 2,500 downwards to about 1,200.

Lovers of the beauty of the English village need have no apprehensions from these proposals. The charm of most villages is derived from the variety of building which succeeding generations have contributed, and this is true even in districts such as the Survey area, which has a very characteristic style of its own. On the other hand, the model villages built by the improving landlords of the nineteenth century, however good the houses may be in themselves, fail in that they lack any suggestion of continuous growth and old-established community life. Unless the confessed object of country planners be to stop further growth and to preserve the English village as a memorial of the past, it is not only desi-

rable, it is necessary, also, that this generation should make its contribution of new buildings. Why should any particular period in village history be chosen for mummification?

Nor need this detract in any way from the amenity of the village. A pair of farm-workers' cottages just completed in one of the villages of the Survey area (No. 7) introduces design and materials each entirely new to the district. At the same time both are good, they harmonize well with their surroundings, and when weathering has toned down their first newness there is no doubt that they will add a fresh interest to the village.

Villages thus enlarged by the influx of industry should find themselves emancipated from most of the disabilities from which small rural communities, such as those of the Survey area, are suffering to-day. On the other hand, the remedy suggested cannot be universally applied, and in regions in which village communities must remain too small to provide a full social and cultural life under any likely circumstances, the Cambridgeshire Village Colleges suggest the way out. Indeed, it is possible that the decentralization of industry, and the repopulating of villages in connexion with it, should go hand in hand, also, with the regional development of Village Colleges, if those now living restricted and isolated lives are to be able to take their part in a fuller community life.

The foregoing observations and suggestions have arisen from a study of the conditions of country life disclosed in this pilot Survey. To the extent that similar conditions prevail in other parts of the country, these observations may have a more general application, but in districts in which the conditions differ some modifications would be necessary. Whatever qualifications might be called for, however, there seems to be one factor common to all districts, which is likely to be of overriding importance in every attempt at planning or reconstruction. This is the factor of finance.

The reassembly of farms in larger and better planned units, and their re-equipment with buildings suited to modern farm practice, is a financial problem of the first

magnitude. It has been argued at some length in the last chapter, with the suggestion that the solution must be sought on a national basis.

For the provision of many of the public services the State makes a distinction between town and country. The diffusion of a small population over a wide area raises, inevitably, the cost of supply in such areas, and until the whole nation is made the unit of demand, the countryman will always be penalized. It is immaterial whether a particular service be in the hands of a corporation trading for profit, of a public utility company, or of the local government authority; the service may be lacking altogether, or, if offered, it is on terms which are relatively disadvantageous to the country dweller.

Certain public services supplied by local authorities are subsidized by the State, but this only aggravates the distinction between town and country, for the Exchequer contributions for many purposes are proportionate to the expenditure of the local authorities, and this, of course, is determined by the rateable values upon which their incomes depend. It follows that the wealthier administrative districts, the industrial centres, get the largest grants, and the places that need most help, the rural districts, get least.

It will never be possible to remove the handicaps under which country people live and work, so long as the supply of many of the essential services, from education to sewerage, is dependent upon the present methods of finance. It is suggested that the time has come when this principle, which segregates communities into those which can have these services and can have them good and cheap, from those who must go without them or have them less efficient and expensive, should be reconsidered. The occasion is opportune, for great social changes are implicit in the widening of the basis of income-tax payment. Farmers are now assessed to income tax, surtax, and excess profits tax, for the first time, on the principles applied to other business men; rural and industrial wage-earners alike are now income-tax payers. This great change, which makes everyone a direct contributor to the national Exchequer according to his ability to pay,

regardless of his way of life or place of residence, would seem to impose the obligation on the State of securing a similar equality in the supply of services and amenities available to him. The principle of the flat rate, applied without question in assessing the cost to the individual of some of the more important of the public services, the postal service for example, might now be extended to cover all the main services.

Important changes in the present relations of national and local finance would be involved. More services might follow the local Fire Services and come under central administration; private undertakings might have to be converted into public utilities; and there might have to be large federations of enterprises—regionally, for example, for water-supply, and nationally, for example, for light and power. At the same time, the advantages which are claimed for the local administration of some if not all of the public services need not be lost, for when the future of local government has been settled, there should be no reason, it may be suggested, why the County Councils, District Councils, and Parish Councils should not continue to play their parts, even more effectively than at present, in the administration of education, the control and supply of housing, and in many other matters in which local knowledge and voluntary public service could be mobilized in association with national finance.

These questions, however, are outside the scope of this Survey, the object of which has been to find out the conditions under which the countryman lives and labours to-day in one small district of rural England, in order to provide some indication of the problems which country planning, everywhere, has got to face and to solve. The emphasis in this Report may seem to be rather on the material things, but it has been recognized that there are other values. In most parts of rural England, as typified by the Survey area, however, planning and reconstruction have a long way to go before the life of the countryman, either on its material or on its cultural sides, is likely to approach the fullness of contentment.

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