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LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE

AN INTERNATIONAL SURVEY

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LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE

AN INTERNATIONAL SURVEY

BY

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A SOCIETY IS RICH WHEN MATERIAL GOODS . . . ARE CHEAP, AND HUMAN BEINGS DEAR.

Tawney, *The Acquisitive Society.*

PREFACE

THIS book is based principally on work done by the Agricultural Service of the International Labour Office, namely, on information dealing with agricultural labour prepared by members of the Service and set forth in the official publications of the Office. Since the first issue of these publications over one hundred longer articles and studies and many shorter notes on this subject have appeared, the greater number having been contributed by the Service, the remainder by authorities outside the Office.

It appeared to the author that the best way of summing up this work would be to make an international survey of agricultural labour problems as they present themselves to-day. In this way the principles which underlie the situation could be adequately brought out. In doing this it seemed important to discuss and interpret the facts throughout. These discussions and interpretations are the author's own, and she is solely responsible for the general tenor of the book and for the opinions expressed in it.

Apart from an early effort made in 1921, under the Chief of the Agricultural Service at that date, Dr. W. A. Riddell, to publish a certain survey of information on the topics which were to come up for discussion before the International Labour Conference in that year, no international review of the agricultural labour situation has as yet appeared. The present volume is therefore a pioneer effort in so far as the attempt is made to draw general or universal conclusions from the data available; in particular, the chapters on the agricultural labour contract, on wages, on efficiency, and on the employment situation have no predecessor, and the author was obliged to draw on her own resources for the ideas set forth. Certain other chapters, in particular those on hours of work, housing, education, and collective action, are more closely based on published articles or published studies of the International Labour Office; for the writing of these the author, as member of the Agricultural Service, was also in some cases responsible or in part responsible.

It is hardly necessary to state that a book which is a first essay on any subject is bound to have serious gaps and defects. The present volume will be no exception. It may, however, be well to draw attention rather frankly to the great difficulty of collecting accurate information on agricultural labour. Agricultural labour, just because it is the oldest form of labour, is taken for granted. It is not analysed. It is particularly noticeable that some of the agricultural countries themselves assume the existence of agricultural labour without much

discussion. Such inquiries as are made are usually into the rural situation as a whole or into the economic or technical aspects of agriculture; labour comes in for a little notice, but not much. Even the formal economists, though invariably starting their systems on ideas concerning the use of the land, prefer to deal subsequently with the development of industry rather than of agriculture. This want of serious study on the spot and within each country is acutely felt when a world survey has to be made on any question connected with agricultural labour; information does not exist and cannot even be forwarded in response to special inquiries. On the whole, the information collected by the International Labour Office is probably as comprehensive as can at present be hoped for.

A few details to assist the reader may be set forth here.

The field covered has been *ex hypothesi* unlimited geographically, but the writer has naturally been compelled to draw on those sources of information of which she has the best knowledge. Consequently, while the problems of Oriental and tropical agricultural labour have constantly been in mind, direct illustration has been mostly from facts relating to the Western world. Similar considerations apply to South America. While fully aware of the great importance of the agricultural labour problems of this continent, the writer has preferred not to comment with precision on countries on which little information concerning agricultural labour can as yet be obtained. In the case of Russia the omission is deliberate. This may surprise many readers, but the writer has been influenced by the fact that a great deal of information now exists on the Russian social experiment.

The information on which the book is based must be taken to be concluded in 1933. Some of the legislation to which reference is made is likely to be superseded in Germany, Austria, and elsewhere. It is, however, too soon to say whether the principles on which that legislation was drawn up will continue to inspire agricultural labour policy in these countries, or whether an almost complete break will be made. In any case, the German and Austrian post-War agricultural labour legislation (and also some similar legislation in Estonia and Lithuania) has been so vital and was so logical a link in the historical development of these countries that no excuse is needed for the importance assigned to it.

Not much attention has been paid to a bibliography of agricultural labour literature. The compilation of such a bibliography would almost baffle even the most assiduous of library pedants. General works by agricultural economists include a limited reference to labour questions, but it is assumed that readers are fully aware of the

existence of such literature, which need not therefore be mentioned for the purpose of this book. Some mention of special sources is, however, attempted for the chapters on the agricultural labour contract.

Finally, it needs to be stated with some distinctness that the subject-matter of this book is *wage-paid* agricultural labour. From an ideal point of view it would have been greatly preferable if peasant agricultural labour, not hired for wages but working on its own account, could have been included as a subject. Such 'family' labour, as it is usually called (because the holding is always worked on the unit of the family and not of the individual), is the unexpressed background of what is said here; occasional specific reference is made to it. But while much in a general way is known of this world-wide form of human effort, it may be described as an even more obscure and baffling subject than agricultural labour working for wages. Its problems are land-tenure, indebtedness, and overwork, and on these the available information would with difficulty lend itself to any international analysis, though such an analysis will be extraordinarily illuminating if ever it is made.

The writer wishes to acknowledge much guidance received from her former Chief, Dr. Walter A. Riddell, now Representative Officer of the Dominion of Canada to the League of Nations and the International Labour Office, and much self-denying help from members of all sections of the staff of the International Labour Office, more especially from Mr. F. W. von Bulow, now in charge of the Agricultural Service, Dr. Olindo Gorni, and Miss K. M. Bunyard, also from Miss E. Hinton Smith, formerly a member of that Service; acknowledgment is further due to Mr. J. F. Duncan, President of the International Landworkers' Federation. On tropical agricultural problems she has had the advantage of consulting her husband, formerly Imperial Economic Botanist to the Government of India, Director of the Institute of Plant Industry, Indore, and Agricultural Adviser to States in Central India and Rajputana. The Appendix on 'Agricultural Labour Contract in Tropical and Sub-Tropical Countries' has been contributed by Mr. C. W. H. Weaver, Chief of the Special Problems Section, the International Labour Office, Geneva, to whom grateful acknowledgment is made.

The manuscript of this book was read by Sir Daniel Hall, K.C.B., F.R.S., LL.D., formerly Chief Scientific Adviser to the Ministry of Agriculture, whose advice and suggestions proved of the greatest value in the final revision. Finally, the author wishes to express her

sincere gratitude to the Royal Institute of International Affairs for arranging publication, at the same time stating that no responsibility for any views expressed attaches to the Institute.

Abbreviations are avoided *except* the following:

I.L.R. = *International Labour Review*,

I.L.I. = *Industrial and Labour Information*,

L.S. = *Legislative Series*; these are publications of the International Labour Office.

Articles in the *I.L.R.* written by the author before 1931 are referred to under her maiden name of Matthaei.

CONTENTS

PREFACE . . . . . p. vii

PART I. INTRODUCTORY

I. THE BASIC LAWS . . . . . p. 3

§ 1. Agriculture a modification of the process of Nature. § 2. The slowness of growth. § 3. The periodicity of operations. § 4. The uncertainty of output. § 5. Rigidity of consumption. § 6. Economic consequences of natural laws.

PART II. THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

II. THE KALEIDOSCOPE OF MODERN AGRICULTURE . p. 17

§ 1. The function of the agricultural industry. § 2. The ascending scale of agricultural production. § 3. The general evolution of agriculture. § 4. Types of agricultural civilization: subsistence agriculture. § 5. Surplus agriculture: the industrial crop and the money crop. § 6. The importance of transport. § 7. The confusion of systems and competition of crops: absence of an ordered world sequence.

III. THE AGRICULTURAL POPULATIONS . . . . p. 27

§ 1. The size of agricultural populations. § 2. The numbers of agricultural wage-paid workers. § 3. The general position of the agricultural wage-paid worker within his industry. § 4. The shrinkage in agricultural populations. § 5. The part played by the wage-paid worker: the rural exodus. § 6. Human conditions of the agricultural task.

TABLE I. Size and importance of agricultural working populations.

TABLE II. Numbers of paid workers known to exist among agricultural working populations.

Sources and Notes . . . . . p. 49

PART III. CONDITIONS OF WORK AND LIVING

IV. THE AGRICULTURAL LABOUR CONTRACT. I. THE UNITED STATES, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND p. 55

§ 1. The agricultural labour contract a part of all labour contract. § 2. General nature of the agricultural labour contract and classification of employed agricultural workers. § 3. Variety of labour relations in the agriculture of different regions of the world. § 4. The agricultural labour contract in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. § 5. The tendency to omit agricultural workers from the protective labour legislation of these four countries. § 6. Reasons for this tendency: the expansion of agriculture during the pioneer period. § 7. The position in Australia and New Zealand.

V. THE AGRICULTURAL LABOUR CONTRACT. II. EUROPE . p. 71

§ 1. The general situation of agricultural labour in Europe. § 2. Two trends of development in the European agricultural labour situation. § 3. The Latin countries. § 4. The northern and north-western countries of Europe. § 5. Countries of central Europe. § 6. The Baltic countries. § 7. The Balkan and other countries. § 8. General character of agricultural labour relations in central and eastern Europe.

VI. THE AGRICULTURAL LABOUR CODES. . . . . *p.* 87

§ 1. The importance of the agricultural labour code or Ordinance. § 2. Such codes and Ordinances a part of Master and Servant legislation. § 3. Form of an agricultural labour contract under a code or Ordinance: the substitution of written for oral terms. § 4. Nature of the contract to be enforced. § 5. Groups of workers covered by agricultural labour codes or Ordinances. § 6. The length of the agricultural worker's contract: consequences of the long contract. § 7. The termination of contracts: penal clauses. § 8. Positive contents of codes and Ordinances. § 9. The enforcement of wages payments. § 10. The agricultural labour codes and Ordinances in Europe define and illustrate usages still common in other parts of the world.

VII. HOURS OF WORK. . . . . *p.* 110

§ 1. Working hours in agriculture: the natural tendency to excessive effort in summer and relaxation in winter. § 2. The difficulties of regulation need not prove insuperable. § 3. The question raised internationally in 1921. § 4. Opinion in 1921 unprepared: the difficulties of the eight-hour day in agriculture: the forty-hour week. § 5. National legislation: some practical considerations. § 6. Abortive early post-War legislation. § 7. Legislation in Czechoslovakia. § 8. Legislation in Italy. § 9. Arrangements in Germany. § 10. Indirect methods of restricting working hours: night rest and day rest periods: Hungary, Austria, England and Wales. § 11. Regulation by means of collective bargaining: Denmark, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden. § 12. The new legislation in Spain. § 13. Hours in Australasian sheep-shearing. § 14. Possibilities and results of existing systems. § 15. Advantage to the worker of some regulation.

VIII. HOUSING . . . . . *p.* 134

§ 1. The social importance of agricultural workers' housing. § 2. Regard to be paid to local requirements. § 3. The causes of bad housing in rural districts. § 4. The problem of finance. § 5. The raising of standards. § 6. The question of ownership. § 7. Accommodation supplied by employers: the responsibility thereby created. § 8. Legislation v. collective bargaining. § 9. The housing of married workers. § 10. Accommodation for unmarried workers. § 11. Accommodation for temporary workers. § 12. Conclusions.

IX. EDUCATION . . . . . *p.* 154

§ 1. The distinction between general and vocational or technical education. § 2. Normal educational career of a country child where a system of compulsory education prevails. § 3. Vocational education for country populations. § 4. Defects in the general education of country populations. § 5. The difficulties of vocational agricultural education. § 6. The small proportion of agricultural populations who are vocationally trained. § 7. The demand for a 'rural bias' in countryside education. § 8. The success of 'extension' education among agricultural populations. § 9. The influence of scientific research.

X. RIGHTS OF ASSOCIATION AND COMBINATION, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, AND THE AGRICULTURAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT . . . . . *p.* 171

§ 1. The importance of all forms of collective action for agricultural workers. § 2. The struggle to obtain the right of combination and strike for agricultural workers in various countries. § 3. The 1921 International Convention concerning the Rights of Association and Combination of Agricultural Workers. § 4. The spread of collective bargaining in European agriculture

after the War. § 5. Forms of collective bargaining in agriculture. § 6. The extent of government intervention. § 7. The results of collective bargaining in agriculture. § 8. The question of enforcement. § 9. The place of collective bargaining in the agricultural industry. § 10. The character of agricultural trade unionism. § 11. Origins and history of agricultural trade unionism. § 12. The international movement. § 13. The importance of stating the case for agricultural labour.

PART IV. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

XI. AGRICULTURAL WAGES . . . . . *p.* 189

§ 1. The importance of agricultural wages. § 2. Nature of the information about agricultural wages. § 3. Difficulties of an international comparison. § 4. Principles on which an international survey can be attempted. § 5. The period of payment. § 6. Local and seasonal variations of agricultural wages. § 7. Payment in kind. § 8. The low level of agricultural wages. § 9. Recent movements in agricultural wages. § 10. Fundamental influences on the agricultural wages situation.

TABLE of Agricultural Wages.
Notes and Explanations . . . . . *p.* 214

XII. THE EFFICIENCY OF AGRICULTURAL LABOUR . *p.* 222

§ 1. The importance of dealing with the problem of human efficiency in agriculture. § 2. The cultivator's contest with Nature. § 3. The use of tools and of power. § 4. The increased mastery over Nature thus secured. § 5. The preponderant part still played by human labour in agriculture. § 6. Efficiency of the individual in agriculture: physical performance, equipment, selection of the worker, fatigue, piece wages, &c. § 7. Planning of labour and management: effect on labour of the lay-out of buildings and fields. § 8. Mechanization in agriculture. § 9. The displacement of human labour caused by mechanization on the farm. § 10. The final outcome of technical advances in agriculture.

XIII. LABOUR DEMAND AND OPPORTUNITIES OF EMPLOYMENT . . . . . *p.* 250

§ 1. The permanent problem as to opportunities of employment in agriculture. § 2. The effects of the seasonal law in imposing want of occupation: success or failure of peasant societies in overcoming this problem. § 3. The rise of modern agriculture; increase of agricultural production and the rivalry with manufacturing industry; the two principles of diversification and intensification of cultivations. § 4. Effects of seasonal working of agriculture (*a*) on permanent workers engaged in diversified farming, (*b*) on temporary workers engaged in intensified summer operations. § 5. Impossibility of evading the seasonal law. § 6. Excessive number of persons who have to be absorbed into agriculture; contrast between agriculture and non-agricultural industry in this respect; consequent tendency of agriculture to remain unstimulated; the habit of estimating agriculture as secondary to industry.

PART V. CONCLUSIONS

XIV. FINAL REMARKS AND SUGGESTIONS . . . *p.* 273

§ 1. General result of all observed facts is to demonstrate the poor position of the agricultural wage-paid worker. § 2. Need for dealing with this situation as an immediate problem on the best terms possible. § 3. Recapitulation

of the nature of the agricultural industry. § 4. Practical measures to be suggested on behalf of agricultural workers. § 5. The problem of international competition: its effects on labour: the hope of abolishing needless waste of human capacity: the omission to formulate labour policies in connexion with tariffs. § 6. Impossibility of finally evading international competition whether on a tariff or a free-trade basis: the inter-State labour bargain or Convention as a remedy: work of the International Labour Organisation on behalf of agricultural workers: suggestions for carrying that work further.

APPENDIXES

No. 1. The 'agricultural ladder' . . . . . *p.* 297

No. 2. Supplementary notes on the agricultural labour contract . *p.* 299

No. 3. The agricultural labour contract in tropical and sub-tropical countries. . . . . *p.* 315

No. 4. Hours of work in agriculture: journey time, paid holidays, preparatory work, &c. . . . . *p.* 320

No. 5. The strike and other movements of protest by agricultural workers . . . . . *p.* 323

No. 6. The composite nature of the agricultural wage-paid worker's income . . . . . *p.* 326

No. 7. Conventions, Recommendations, and Resolutions of the International Labour Organisation . . . . . *p.* 329

INDEX . . . . . *p.* 333

PART I
INTRODUCTORY

I

THE BASIC LAWS

§ 1. *Agriculture a modification of the process of Nature.*

ALL agriculture means interference with Nature. Plants are natural food-forming factories, and carry on their operations by taking from the air and from the earth certain simple substances which they work up, by means of energy focused from the sun, into complex food materials for themselves. In the course of this process they form reserves, and these reserves are stored in leaf, root, and seed, pre-eminently in the form of seed. Harvesting is an interception by man of these food reserves for his own use: the natural cycle of the crop is interrupted for this purpose. This ingathering of the harvest is the earliest and crudest agricultural operation known, but it is still one of the most important.

The next step taken by man is logical; he cultivates the plant in order to increase his harvesting opportunities. Either he obtains more plants from which to harvest, or he obtains more reserves from each plant. The natural work of food storage is deliberately stimulated in order subsequently to be interrupted with richer results.

The production of animal crops is essentially similar, but is more elaborate. The natural cycle of animal life must be encouraged and stimulated in order that the results may be intercepted. But nothing can be gathered except what the animal can itself manufacture in the course of its life processes.

The first thing, then, to stress is the simple fact that agriculture differs from all other industries carried on by man in its ultimate dependence on processes of natural growth. Whoever undertakes to deal with the alternate operations of stimulation and ingathering must be prepared to conform to the laws of natural life as far as may be necessary. In fact, in becoming a cultivator man is not a creator: he does not make things grow. But neither is he a mere idler: he does not simply watch, but initiates, alters, and deflects. In other words, if Nature does the business, man is the manager.

It is in this combination of human skill with natural processes that the secrets of agriculture lie, and it is against this background of natural growth that our word 'interference' is justified. It follows that husbandry is bound to imply much labour, great skill, and abundant knowledge. If there were no processes of growth, agriculture would be mere manufacture; if these processes of growth entirely eluded control, there would be no science of agriculture at all.

Much depends on the extent to which man's control over Nature is exercised. This varies according to climate and other circumstances. An extraordinary degree of human dependence on natural conditions can, for example, be observed among populations living under a monsoon climate. In such countries all cultivation waits until the monsoon breaks: the ground cannot be ploughed, the seed cannot be sown; yet though millions may be starving, the monsoon can be neither hurried nor induced. Only those who have themselves seen this watching for the life-giving start of the rains can realize what it means; human dependence on Nature is here heightened to a dramatically tragic point. In other circumstances or places man's obedience to natural laws can be less slavish or at least more disguised. In general, man can start, stimulate, and encourage; he can eradicate, check, and prune; he can mate, feed, rear, or separate. In the long run, he is never able, nor is he in fact trying, positively to contradict or to evade natural processes. If he 'forces' crops they are eventually, even under glass, the result of laws of growth, just as is the tree in the forest or the wild flower on the moor. We invariably return to the truth that ultimate conformity with Nature is the agriculturist's salvation, as well he knows, member of an industry where nothing can be made or manufactured, where everything has to grow and to become.

§ 2. *The slowness of growth.*

But what are the laws which govern these processes of growth, on which everything depends, and to which the agriculturist must conform if he means to do anything at all? Their essence may be simply stated, though the understanding of the ways in which they work is still in many respects a mystery in spite of the great biological and chemical discoveries of the last two centuries. We will take a first fundamental point—the slowness of all plant and animal growth.

All natural life is built up on a sequence of birth, increase, maturity, decrease, and death. It may be taken as axiomatic that when man wishes to intercept the storage of reserves in plant or animal—his harvesting process, as we called it—he generally does so at the stage of maturity, or on approach to that stage. This means that he has to wait for the process of birth and for at least the partial completion of the stage of increase or young growth. He is usually able to eliminate the stage of decrease. Either his ingathering is itself the death of the natural factory, as in the reaping of grains and fruits, or else he induces death prematurely, as in the case of stock when their profitable period is reached. Agriculture here is not quite so slow as Nature, and it is as much this gain in time as any other, especially

with regard to stock, which enables the present populations of the world to be fed. But agriculture is nearly as slow. The extent to which she can hurry up the processes of birth and increase is not great, while forcing operations, if carried beyond a certain point, are costly, calling as they do for thoroughly artificial conditions. The fraction of all agricultural harvests produced thereby is small.

We are therefore safe in assuming that at least the period of time which runs from natural birth to the approach of natural maturity will have to be observed *before any profit whatever can be drawn from the particular process or operation undertaken.* Think what this implies. It implies long periods of effort and expense interrupted by short periods of 'takings'.

In the case of vegetable crops the most common period which has to elapse before the stage of maturity is reached is something less than a solar year. The spring, summer, and autumn, or the spring and summer only, must elapse before most crops ripen. Then follows an interval, for the winter is not a period of growth. It is very aptly named in agriculture the 'dead' season, or the 'off' season; in fact, the plant factory has shut down. One period of growth and maturity, followed by one harvesting, together with an off-season, account for a whole solar year; with the next spring sowing can begin again. Thus a yearly swing commands the industry of agriculture.

But other periods have also to be taken into account. Not all crops, even all vegetable crops, come to maturity within a single solar year. Some take much longer. Fruit trees are the commonly quoted example of slower vegetable growth, the extreme instance cited being olive trees (30 years); timber forests also require from 40 to 60 years of growth before reaching maturity. In the case of animal husbandry the year is altogether too short a period to reckon with. Anything from over a year to three years is required for ordinary maturity in the case of cattle, a year and a portion of a year in the case of swine, four or five years in the case of horses; that is, these are normal periods which must be allowed to pass before these 'products' come to profitability.

Important also is the rotation of crops. Rotation has arisen out of the need for preserving the fertility of the soil in cases where cultivation has been carried on for a long time, the principle being that a succession of different crops replaces in the soil elements lost in supplying the growth of the preceding crops. This now world-wide practice has prolonged the operating period of the farm as a producing unit first to three, and now usually to four or five, or even seven years.

It follows that on this account also the farmer has to wait for a longer period before he can reap the final reward of his efforts.

§ 3. *The periodicity of operations.*

This need to wait for the maturing of crops cannot be evaded. But there is more to conform to than this. The cultivator must not only wait for his reward; he must, in order to contemplate a reward at all, be sure that he can plant when the right period of spring is at the door and reap when autumn is at hand; he cannot start his business when he likes, or end it when he pleases, but only at specified points in the year. This timed and unalterable periodicity of Nature is almost more embarrassing than her general slowness. Its effects are principally felt in the simultaneous arrival of fruition for all cultivators together. The occurrence of the whole harvest of a crop at one time is a most awkward phenomenon. True, the same crop ripens at different times in different parts of the world; more especially does the interchange of seasons between the northern and the southern hemispheres afford relief. But within his own country a farmer must reap when other farmers reap, he has to take his harvest when he gets it, and when all his neighbours get theirs; except to the most limited extent he can neither rush on to the market nor manufacture for storage.

The mass of cultivators are, indeed, in no position to evade the marked regularity of the natural seasons. They are compelled to produce at a natural rate. Their crops ripen when ripening time comes and not before. The failure of a particular crop the previous season has no effect on the timing of this year's harvest of that same crop; Nature knows of no such compensatory arrangements. Neither will she delay matters. If growth cannot be hurried, harvests cannot be deferred.

The pace, therefore, of the accumulation of finished products in agriculture is as disastrously rapid as the pace of production is painfully slow. Crops are slow to grow but quick to ripen, and against this natural unevenness of timing in the two succeeding processes the cultivator has no real remedy.

§ 4. *The uncertainty of output.*

The inherent difficulties of the cultivator's task arising out of the despotic timing which Nature imposes on him are greatly increased by his forced submission to yet another principle which can only be described as of an exactly opposite character. If Nature is tyrannously regular as to when she will give her products, she is superbly

irregular as to how much she will give. Very different quantities of a particular crop are harvested in different years from the same piece of ground. No doubt, taking all producing areas throughout the world, and the mean of a series of years, there would be found to be a general average constancy of Nature's effort; without such constancy it would be difficult to feed the populations of the world. The causes which make harvests vary from one season to another appear to be predominantly local, principally weather and precipitation; also, to some extent, plant and animal disease. But such 'local' effects spread a good long way, and a bad harvest may be reaped throughout the area of a whole continent. It can even quite easily happen that different local causes operating in different parts of the world result in having similar effects. When countries which are principal sources of supply in the export trade of some agricultural product are simultaneously affected, there can be a world shortage in that commodity that year; when local causes operate, there can be a local or a national shortage. Contrariwise, there can be a glut, and this may be a glut on a world market or, on a smaller scale, a glut on a home market.

Variation in the amount of agricultural production from season to season and from area to area may be considered as a commonplace of agricultural economy and practice. Every farmer will lay stress on it, and will illustrate it by drawing attention to variations in the harvests he has reaped this year, or last year, or two years ago, or on some occasion. The real trouble, however, is that this irregularity in output is to a large extent incalculable. It is rare that a farmer knows all the year round how he stands. True, the manufacturer also may be much hampered by being unable to forecast economic and financial conditions. But he at least knows, when he sends a ton of metal to his shops, how many bolts, screws, or nails that ton will produce; whereas the farmer, when he puts his seed into the ground, has no certain idea how many bushels he will reap. The difference in position is really very great.

This means that there is a large element of unpredictable risk in agriculture, and this element of risk is added to the original difficulties of having to wait for the maturity of the crop and of having to sow and reap at specified times.

§ 5. *Rigidity of consumption.*

Bound to conform to the periodic, but slow, character of natural processes, and helpless in predicting their results, the cultivator has one further basic condition to face: he must satisfy a consumption which tends to be inelastic.

This important condition arises out of the fact that what the cultivator supplies is largely food, and that human beings consume an even amount of food at all times. People expect to be fed at the same rate all the year round and on the same staple things. Savage peoples, indeed, suffer cruelly under uncertainty of supplies; civilization, however elementary, eliminates that. It is characteristic of modern industrial nations, as contrasted with ancient or with more primitive peoples, that they simply do not expect, in regard to their food, to be conscious of the passing of the seasons, perhaps with the sole exception of being or not being able to buy certain favourite fruits and vegetables.

The amount of food eaten by the modern civilized world in the aggregate must be extraordinarily constant all the year round. It is basic to human nature to require food evenly. Unexpected food supplies cannot be absorbed. True, total demand can rise very slowly, whether by an increasing birth-rate, whether on account of a rising standard of living—the proper function of agriculture is to follow this rising demand and to satisfy it. In point of fact, slow alterations in demand, whether in quantity or quality, can be catered for: even a fall in demand ought not to create an impossible situation. But the temporary surplus is a continual problem. The difficulties of agricultural marketing lie in the impossibility of a rapid and smooth disposal of perishable commodities, arriving at intervals in irregular and unforeseen quantities.

§ 6. *Economic consequences of natural laws.*

We may pause to sum up, in an exceedingly general way, the consequences which are bound to arise out of these primary natural laws.

Most of the economic and social problems peculiar to agriculture *can eventually be traced back to the conditions which we have noted*, which are: the unabbreviable interval lying between the effort of sowing and the reward of harvest; the rigid necessity for carrying out operations at the right times; the simultaneous arrival of the harvest for all cultivators together; the irregularity of the amounts reaped contrasted with the insistent demands of living human beings for perfect smoothness of supplies.

Out of these conditions arise difficult situations which, in a thousand varying forms, can be observed in the agriculture of all countries and climates. In the first place, the cultivator and his family must be supported during the interval between sowing and harvest: arrangements have to be made to bridge this inevitable gap. Now

this is a matter of no small difficulty. Indeed, the organization of existence during this waiting period is the first fundamental achievement of society. As civilization advances, the problem becomes disguised and softened. Some early discoveries enable certain forms of food to be preserved—there is no longer the problem of keeping man and beast actually alive during the winter. But what has been solved as a physical puzzle is transferred to the economic field: there it remains latent, and in a peculiar way. As a larger and larger number of the population divorce themselves from agricultural tasks, the brunt of the disadvantages arising out of the pursuit of agriculture tends to fall not on society as a whole, but only on the agriculturist. He is maintained during the off-season because he must be maintained, because society cannot exist without him. But he is maintained at a lower level of existence, on disadvantageous conditions. He is so poor that only with difficulty can he find the wherewithal, when the sowing season once more comes along, to undertake the renewal of operations. This renewal of operations is his proper function, but one which it is often most difficult for him to carry out adequately.

The problem of maintenance during the 'dead' season—the times of inaction and no profits—goes very deep in agriculture. In primitive communities incredible suffering may be incurred. But as long as the whole community suffers together no question of injustice can arise. The real problem begins when, as society advances, conditions become differentiated between individuals or between groups. This differentiation takes a multitude of forms, but in one way or another always tends towards the disadvantage of the agriculturist, simply because he is the person who is nearest to the natural laws which we described above. A crude form of differentiation is recognizable when a village usurer tyrannizes over an indebted village: of the total village harvest (which he has owned months back) he allocates the smallest possible amount for the maintenance of his debtors and another portion for seeding; the remainder he annexes, though he has not put a spade to the ground nor lifted a sickle to his hand. His superior position, his differentiation, is simply due to the courage and wit with which he organizes supplies for others during those periods when no supplies are to be had. The state of affairs is therefore inevitable, and has a sort of rough justice. It is a harsh form of organization, but is a form, nevertheless; and it does perform the annual miracle of enabling the peasant to survive and once more to sow his ground as spring comes round.[1] In a more advanced community

[1] M. L. Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1925, pp. 115, 201, 221.

exactly the same function is performed by a bank; and sometimes the same outcry against harsh terms is heard.

The harshness or otherwise of the terms on which the agriculturist is enabled to maintain himself during the interval when his selling powers wholly cease depends on circumstances and the stage of society in which he finds himself. In general, however, it may be said that no community, even the most refined, has up to the present wholly solved the problem of maintaining its agriculture without some danger of the exploitation of the agriculturist, and, in particular, that the so-called Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century introduced a peculiarly violent differentiation between the agricultural and the non-agricultural sections of society, of which the effects have not yet been fully surmounted.

If this is the sort of social risk which accrues out of the law of the waiting period, difficulties at least equally great arise out of the law of periodicity. The simple fact that the harvest, over a certain area, comes at the same time for all cultivators has, and must always have, profound economic consequences. The simultaneous coming of the reward to all those expecting it can positively rob that reward of a portion, or of most, or sometimes of the whole, of its value. What all can offer no man will pay highly for. Each fresh bushel which comes on to the market destroys with fantastic rapidity the value of the supplies already there. Thus the harvest which is abundant is the low-priced harvest, the harvest which is superabundant is unsaleable, and the poor harvest alone is the valuable one.

If this last statement is thought somewhat exaggerated, yet the importance of the idea which it conveys cannot be denied. The point is that so instant and so severe a limit is set to profitability in agriculture by the immediate universalization of the factors which give a good bargaining position. Whatever the quantities offered, they are known to be available from all sellers at about the same time. Simultaneity of offer therefore governs the whole situation, and is quite impossible to discount; for Nature refuses to depart from her embarrassing punctuality, which is too well known to be denied. It is one of the curiosities of modern economic life that profits may be made in food production, not by superior quality of product, nor yet by producing in bulk a much needed popular article, but merely by the gain of a few days in hurrying on to limited markets products too often of a luxury nature. The early strawberry, which does not taste nearly so good as the later and riper one, is altogether a most inferior product, yet makes money where the bulk of the better strawberries rot on the ground three weeks later. This may be an

excellent illustration of the economic theory of scarcity value, but it is all wrong socially. The important industry of the feeding of populations is taught to look for its rewards not to sound production, but to chance opportunity and lucky accident, to manipulate the margin and not to sell the bulk.

This periodical rush of supplies meets a demand which, as we have already stated, is even in its character. This brings us to our third and final economic problem, and again this problem is found to be the result of fundamental natural causes. Man must have food every day, and should have about the same quantity daily. The evenness of demand, then, which it is so difficult for agriculture to satisfy, is not the result of caprice, but of necessity. How far this constancy of consumption must apply to agricultural products other than food is a more difficult question. There appears to have been created the same expectation of an even flow of non-eatable commodities without regard to seasonal intervals: in no case do cotton factories, for example, organize themselves to open and close according as the cotton crop is reaped or is only just sown. There is here, perhaps, less of a natural law involved. One can just imagine an industrial world which consented to supply itself at stated intervals only. The simple fact that machines can be run continuously, and even automatically, puts any such suggestion out of the field. The demand for continuation of supplies here arises not through physiological reasons, but out of the character of a mechanical appliance.

The problem therefore remains, and applies to the distribution of all agricultural products. Some one has to bear the great risk, the grave disadvantages, of fitting seasonal food supplies to a continuous human consumption, of feeding the ever greedy machine with the fibre, the silk, the rubber, the oil, which Nature, that unhurried force, only chooses to produce at intervals. These difficulties are really more than agriculture itself can be expected to cope with. Nor has agriculture, wisely, hitherto attempted to do so. So intricate is this business of smoothing out supply and demand between those who are subject to Nature's periodic swing and those who expect both to eat and to be at work evenly all the year round, that it requires a special set of persons to deal with the transactions required. The immediate and sometimes dramatic losses and gains by intermediaries between the two worlds of consumption and natural production are dealt with by persons who are often expressively grouped together as 'middlemen'.

The function of the middleman is a true and proper function, and should be recognized by society: he is the risk-bearer. Very violent

criticisms have been directed in recent years against the middleman. And yet, if he carries off on occasion heavy profits, it must also be admitted that he performs great services. If we somewhat enlarge the ordinary vulgar idea of the 'middleman' to include all the vast interests which, in one way or another, assist in conveying the products of the cultivator to the hands of the consumer, we arrive at a clearer notion of the function which has to be discharged.

Indeed, the agents of distribution have an onerous task. They have to face the fact that the world is vast, that its different regions are very disparate both in their agricultural production and consumption, that agricultural supplies are irregular, that the distances to be covered are immense, the volume to be handled stupendous, and that it consists of stuffs which are bulky, heavy, and perishable. More has been achieved of late years in overcoming this last difficulty than would at one time have been thought possible; indeed, most of the modern transport of food depends on storage and preservation, processes which have been carried to considerable perfection, and which should eventually solve the problem of putting supplies on the market as they are really needed. These arrangements are, however, by no means world wide, and they are costly. The original element of risk is almost everywhere apparent.

The bearing of risk in the world as we know it is, as a rule, heavily recompensed. Is it surprising that the large sections of society which perform the necessary functions sketched above should claim a great reward? They claim to take that share in the ultimate outcome of world prosperity which corresponds to the size of the risk from which they relieve the cultivator. Criticism is only justified if it can be proved that such interests have failed in their functions of insurance and distribution. When they cease to protect the cultivator from the untoward consequences of his seasonal industry, they cease to justify the taking of their reward. It will be observed that at these epochs (we have been living through one during the last few years) the outcry against the agents of distribution and insurance is very loud.

At other times there is only a vague idea that the cultivator could, or should, have a rather larger share in the general prosperity. It is difficult to deny some justice to this claim, but in a world which is bound to lay an inordinate stress on smooth and rapid functioning—simply because it is so large, and therefore extraordinarily dependent on principles of organization—the actual business of production does not appear so exclusively important as it might naturally assert itself to be in a more primitive civilization. The cultivator fails to grasp

this. He sees the prosperity of others increase to his own detriment, and dislikes to see absorbed, in the obscure processes of commerce and exchange, those profits which by hard work and skill he seems, initially, so competently to have earned.

He has, however, one great asset. He is concerned in an industry which produces primarily what is an absolute necessity to all—food. What he contributes is indispensable and must be bought. If the pinch of necessity comes it will be bought before any other product whatsoever; with a rise in prosperity more therefore will be bought, and before other things. This permanence and persistence of demand is an immense advantage to agriculture, and one on which perhaps too little stress has been laid; if it is difficult to expand an agricultural market rapidly, neither can it be finally destroyed. Moreover, the agricultural market is, in the long run, a potentially great one, for the world demand for food is far from having reached saturation point; there exist many underfed populations, many underfed individuals in well-fed populations. This being so, it is obvious that there are some weighty assets on which agriculture can lay her hand: in an inherently difficult position she is not without tools or weapons. That the relation of the cultivator to the community requires rather careful adjustment is, however, plain. The mistake perhaps has been to take things for granted, to suppose that history will put all groups of society in their proper place, and will bestow on each man, by some unconscious force, his right reward.

PART II
THE AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

II

THE KALEIDOSCOPE OF MODERN AGRICULTURE

§ 1. *The function of the agricultural industry.*

We have hitherto dealt essentially with the natural or physical basis of agricultural production. This book is, however, no treatise on scientific agriculture, and the facts noted have been recorded purely by way of the briefest of introductions. Our real topic is the social effects of man's application of these physical laws. In considering these, we shall have to note what can be, and what have been, the interactions of historical with scientific elements. It is only by realizing these interactions of history and science that we can gain a summary of the strange world in which we live, a world which is at one and the same time the outcome of natural forces and of long, obscure, and most uneven human developments.

We shall once more have to treat large subjects in a brief way, and will begin with a short definition of the agricultural industry, which will in some sort recall what was stated towards the end of our first Chapter.

What is the nature and function of the agricultural industry,[1] an industry which was the original, and which is still the most important, of all human industries? The agricultural industry may be defined as that series of efforts, continuously pursued, which provides man with a store of raw materials constituting (together with the mineral wealth extracted from the earth) the material basis of all that nourishes, clothes, warms, houses, educates, and amuses him.

The function of the agricultural industry is therefore immense. It is not only an indispensable, but the indispensable industry. It is not surprising that great attention has been paid to perfecting it.

§ 2. *The ascending scale of agricultural production.*

Within the vast area of world agriculture there is a sort of scale or ladder of agricultural development which is of great significance. There is, in the first place, a natural range of crops; a wide choice

[1] The question as to whether the words *industrial* in English and *industriel* in French should be taken to include agriculture was discussed before the Permanent Court of International Justice at the Hague in 1922, when the competence of the International Labour Organisation to deal with agriculture was being considered (International Labour Office, *Official Bulletin*, vol. vi, pp. 348–50). In the present book the phrase 'the agricultural industry' has been freely used, but the context will make clear to the reader when the words *industry* (i.e. manufacturing industry) and *agriculture* are used in opposition.

exists as to the nature of the 'harvest' which it is intended to get out of the earth. This range is in part conditioned by climate and soil, but it is also emphatically determined by human volition. In the second place, it is possible to get more or less of the same crop. We spoke in our first Chapter of 'stimulating' natural processes. It is a truth well known to all that Nature is stimulated if certain products, principally dung, are returned to the soil before cultivation; there is also the degree of stimulus to be got out of the mechanical subdivision, exposure, and working of the soil; finally, there is the varying amount of incentive arising out of the generosity or the reverse with which the seed is sown, and the quality of that seed. Choice in these things—they constitute the whole process of cultivation—depends on human decisions. According to how these decisions are made we get different results of cultivation.

It is obviously the aim of man to get the best crops, i.e. the most valuable to himself, and to get the most of them. Neither of these processes is easy. The best crops are not discovered at once, and it is only gradually that the more valuable cereals, roots, sugar, vine, vegetables, fruits replace the less valuable cultures, which have themselves replaced Nature's wild sequences, or 'weeds'. It is also only after a vast effort that the final possibilities of cultivation are reached.

'Intensive' is the word now usually applied to mark the ascending scale of production possibilities in agriculture. An 'intensive' agriculture is one in which more value is reaped from the soil, and where greater effort is expended to get this higher value: more is put in and more comes out. The processes of agriculture are carried on, so to say, more powerfully.

In this scaling up process a particularly abrupt step is taken in the change over to animal production. The use of animals as intermediate agents in the manufacture of living substances introduces a most complicated factor into agriculture. True, our original description of agriculture as a natural factory process still holds good. But it is duplicated. What the plant, the original food-forming factory, delivers up as a final product constitutes mere raw material for the second agent in the process. Animals also are living machines, and once more man, for his own gain, has learnt how to seize on the results of their natural capacities. The resulting product is startlingly more valuable than any vegetable growth; it is also produced at a much greater expenditure of labour, time, and knowledge. We therefore have the two elements of agricultural intensity in a high degree.

There is, however, a special consideration to be taken into account. Valuable as animal products are, the losses in creating them are

prodigious. It has to be realized that an animal will consume 5–8 lb. of cereals in order to produce 1 lb. of meat, yet quantitatively a pound of meat goes no further in keeping man alive and working than a pound of cereals. If men therefore decide that they must add meat, animal fat, and milk to their diet, they must be prepared to sow and harvest a much increased bulk of field crops to give to their domesticated animals, from whom they will nevertheless eventually recover a portion only of the original energy contained therein (it is calculated about one-sixth of what was eaten by the pig or cow in the case of pig-meat or milk, and actually only one-eighteenth in the case of beef[1]). All animal products are, therefore, in a sense, luxury products in agriculture. However, in a general way it can be said that the number of human beings who can be maintained off a given area of land is in direct relation to the intensity of the cultivation found within it.

§ 3. *The general evolution of agriculture.*

Cultivation intensity is, in truth, the determining element in the carrying on of agricultural and rural life. This life astonishes us by its variety; the number of different ways in which use is made of the earth's fertility is almost bewildering. At the extremes contrasts can be very acute. The actual numbers of human beings who make up a rural community can differ enormously. A primitive settlement which scratches up a few inches of earth will never number more than a handful of souls; where the experience of centuries has got the last blade out of the soil there may be hundreds of inhabitants to the square mile. Even more widely apart are the standards of comfort attained. While some human populations are still living on millet cakes, others may be said to require the proverbial nightingales' tongues.

The problem of agriculture is not grasped unless the problem of its disparity is grasped. We have named this Chapter 'The Kaleidoscope of Modern Agriculture', and no other phrase will sufficiently convey the intermingling of different stages and different systems which at present cover the various quarters of the world. These conditions have been gradually evolved. The history of agriculture has been a long history of discoveries which have been going on since the dawn of time. When Robinson Crusoe threw away a handful of barley and later found a field of rustling ears, he was repeating one of the oldest of such discoveries, namely, that where you sow you can expect to reap; in this simple story is restated the whole process of a very early

[1] A. D. Hall in *Proc. of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, 1926*, London, 1927, p. 256.

advance. Innumerable groups of human beings have had to take this step and analogous ones, in all likelihood more or less independently—we cannot tell how far communication could spread such knowledge in the ages of prehistory; indeed, the origins of the more important agricultural processes are wrapt in mystery; we can no longer recover them. We can only note the outcome—a conglomeration of systems or grades of development, sometimes geographically juxtaposed but contrasted, in other quarters tending to regional adjustments, which reflect at one and the same time the laws of Nature working by locality and climate and the variations of human effort.

The resulting impression is as of a sequence of slow but astonishing movements. In spite of the great stability of agriculture, of its conservatism, this progressive quality must never be forgotten. Agriculture is not merely subject to change; it changes all the time. There may be in some parts of the world vast areas of static agriculture—we shall have occasion to refer to these immediately below: elsewhere marvellous adaptations and alterations are taking place. It is this limitless capacity to go on which gives agriculture a quality which may in truth be called dynamic.

§ 4. *Types of agricultural civilization: subsistence agriculture.*

Yet, as has just been implied, agriculture is not continuously progressive everywhere. In some parts of the world it could almost be supposed that the populations had reached for the time being the limits of their capacity to advance. We have numerous survivals of very old types of agricultural civilization. Many of these can be grouped together under the general term 'subsistence agriculture'.

Subsistence agriculture implies certain conditions. It implies a state of cultivation in any region which produces such food as the inhabitants require, but no more: produce is neither brought into the area in question nor is it sent out. Such a definition can cover a wide variety of methods, but the most common forms of subsistence agriculture entail ordered sowing and reaping. This of itself marks a certain stage of progress: it implies settlement. It may therefore naturally succeed a wandering or nomadic existence on the basis of flocks and herds, which are cared for or 'cultivated', to use the proper agricultural term, though not the pastures off which they feed. This nomadic culture, again, may be a great advance on a jungle existence. It is less destructive, more conservant of the bounties of Nature, than the poverty of application and knowledge which impels many communities to burn a patch of jungle, sow it, reap it, and move on; yet this very unsatisfactory practice is still widespread, both in Africa

and elsewhere. Even this is an advance on the hunting existence practised by surviving bush tribes in the remote centres of Africa and Australia, where an area of, say, 40 square miles is needed to sustain a single human family.[1] These forms of existence need only be mentioned in order to make plain that subsistence agriculture, as long as it implies settled cultivation, represents in its way a really great step forward in the agricultural task of humanity.

Subsistence agriculture of this settled type has been historically of such great importance—it was perfectly exemplified in the manorial system—and is still to-day so widespread, that a great deal of attention needs to be paid to it. It is the foundation of all tropical village life; it is the basic form of existence of immense colonial tracts and dependencies. Almost all Asia, most of Africa, and a large part of South America depend on it, not to mention outlying and scattered portions of the inhabited world, such as the Pacific islands, the West Indies, or even Iceland. In fact, subsistence agriculture is still in many respects the prevailing form of world agriculture, though, as we shall see later, this statement is only true subject to important modifications.

As already stated, the food grown in a region of subsistence agriculture must suffice for the number of the population at any particular moment but need not exceed it. Reserves are, indeed, necessary in the form of seed, and may be useful against sudden shortages, but a permanent surplus is not required. This means that there is very little incentive to advance, and if we look a little deeper into this subsistence agriculture, we note one striking feature: its agricultural practices tend to be static. A sort of balance has been reached between the amount of soil capable of cultivation, the amount of fertilizing material which can be returned to that soil after cropping, and the amount of the crop itself. New land is not available, new fertilizing materials cannot be obtained, while existing methods of cultivation appear to have become thoroughly stabilized. No more, then, can be got off the ground.

It follows, as an iron necessity, that population must not increase. Should population tend to outstrip the resources of the district, the standard of living is lowered. Subsistence agriculture then becomes starvation agriculture. The world unhappily includes many districts where we can only speak of such starvation agriculture, where

[1] W. H. R. Rivers, *Psychology and Politics*, London, 1923, p. 49. Brentano, *Agrarpolitik*, 2nd ed., Stuttgart and Berlin, 1925, p. 72, mentions an estimate of six families per square mile as maximum in nomadic animal husbandry; this is already an enormous increase in density of human population.

permanent undernourishment leads to endemic disease and low vitality. The extreme example is a population which is so weak after the winter that it hardly has the strength to spade the soil for the coming spring sowing. Facts force us to the conclusion that the stabilization of the various elements—land, fertilizer, equipment, consumption—which is the characteristic feature of subsistence agriculture, may take place at a very low level. These low conditions may persist over centuries.

§ 5. *Surplus agriculture: the industrial crop and the money crop.*

In dramatic contrast is the agriculture which is progressive, which is specialized, which collects its crops at trade centres, sorts them or even treats them, transports them, and sells them. This is 'surplus' agriculture, where life is based on the profits and not on the produce. As is more or less implied in the term, surplus agriculture can be said to arise only when a certain bulk of crop is grown and sold at recognized trade centres, usually to foreign buyers; exchange of agricultural produce within an area, even through the medium of money, whether as against other agricultural commodities, whether as against craft or even manufactured goods, is not usually called surplus agriculture.

Agriculture, it appears then, can either nourish the population which engages in it and no other, or else its products can be transported thousands of miles to be eaten by strangers, while other products are in their turn sent from great distances to supply the agriculturist. Sometimes the greatest food-producing areas of the world directly supply only a fraction of the needs of their inhabitants. The wheat farmer of Alberta does not live mainly upon bread, nor the Argentine cattle rancher upon beef, but exchanges these products for something quite different. Even the English farm labourer's wife expends her husband's thirty shillings a week on tropical groceries and tinned fish at the nearest village store as a matter of course. With the picture of a simple self-sufficiency we must contrast that of an elaborate organization of agencies wholly directed towards competitive production for world markets. We are confronted with the phenomenon of an agricultural system which is as divorced from a primitive husbandry as is the modern factory from the earliest craft workshop.

The origins of such surplus agriculture are partly to be sought in the comprehensive nature of ordinary cultivation. Food is not man's sole need. Besides food man requires shelter and clothing, and he desires amenities, luxuries, and amusements. Agriculture is able to

supply the material for all these: she can give timber, cotton, hemp, flax, jute, rubber, and animal non-consumable products like silk and wool, hides and skins, hair, bristles, and horn. In the end a vast number of square miles of cultivation are covered by crops never destined to feed the bodies of men.

These products of agriculture are suitably termed 'industrial crops' because they usually require to be worked up by industrial processes before they can be turned to use. Surplus agriculture arises as soon as these industrial processes become thoroughly separated from agricultural life. As we have seen, this does not happen everywhere, nor in any case does it come about quickly. But when it has once started it may go to great lengths, and the separation between the conduct of the two sides of production may be rather distinct. There may be large lingering traces of subsistence agriculture, but the presupposition is that the agriculture in question is simultaneously able to supply abundant raw material for industrial processes and also adequate food for the industrial workers engaged on these, who, of course, have no leisure to produce their own crops. As both these forms of supply are invariably paid for in money, the term 'money crop' may conveniently be used to designate the larger surpluses of agricultural produce, whether food or non-consumable materials, sold for purposes other than the maintenance of the cultivators themselves, their families, or their animals.[1]

§ 6. *The importance of transport.*

The cultivation on an extensive scale of most of the industrial crops and of some important food crops as surpluses marketable for money is comparatively modern. The classic example is rubber. A rubber crop on a commercial basis scarcely existed until the seeds of the rubber tree had been smuggled over from Brazil to the Orient by Sir Henry Wickham in 1868.[2] The importance of many other crops is also a matter of recent history. The production of oil seeds is quite a new phase, with important secondary repercussions on animal industry, as animals are fed from oil-seed residues. The development of the cocoa industry is not much older. The characteristic feature in these new developments is that they link up the tropical and temperate-zone peoples, the latter requiring what the former can produce.

This linking up of the two halves of the world, and of distant areas

[1] Strictly speaking, the 'money crop' is also the crop sold for money by one agriculturist to another, but in a general way, when money crops are mentioned, sales of surpluses either to industry or to some consumers outside the immediate agricultural locality are implied.

[2] *The Times* (London), 28 September 1928.

generally, has been due to increased rapidity and perfection of transport, and with the improvement of transport in its modern forms, which include processes for the preservation of food in transit, we enter on the most recent phase of agricultural world production. Not but what transport and exchange have at all times profoundly modified the purpose of agriculture, which is thereby made capable of pursuing plans quite different from those which lay before it originally. The existence of huge modern cities is a fact of exceeding significance when viewed from the standpoint of the agriculturist. All such cities receive their food from outside, and it is the function of agriculture to see that they get it. The feeding of these cities has been an enormous initial success for agriculture; it is one of the triumphs of this industry. It is not even any longer necessary, as it was as late as the eighteenth century, that urban populations should be fed from their adjacent, or at any rate from their national, areas. The nineteenth century dispelled that restricted regional economy for ever; it matters nothing to London whether its plums come from Worcestershire or South Africa, as long as they come. The era of internationalism has once for all arrived in agriculture, and not even increased tariff restrictions or new economic policies can destroy the significance of its advent. Indeed, these desperate attempts to stem the tide are the most patent testimony to the changed conditions of agriculture; there would be no need to keep distant products off our markets were they incapable of flowing thither.

§ 7. *The confusion of systems and competition of crops: absence of an ordered world sequence.*

The newer conceptions of agriculture—the international conceptions—are the most interesting part of the present world agricultural system. The area of what they imply must not, however, be exaggerated. It would be as gross an error to depict all human populations fed from the railway wagon as to suppose them dependent on the fields within the range of their home windows.

The truth is that there exists a confusion of agricultural systems. Between the extremes of subsistence and surplus lie every gradation and every combination of the two principles. Putting aside the purely subsistence tracts to which reference has been made, most countries which count in the world economy are found to combine something of both aims; they grow partly what is meant to sustain their own populations and partly what is intended for trade purposes. We might cite France as an example, consuming, as she does, most of her cereals and animal products, but exporting a valuable surplus of

wine, vegetables, flowers, and fruit. Switzerland would be another example, but with an important distinction. The surplus here are dairy products, but there is a much lower degree of agricultural self-sufficiency, inasmuch as the bulk of cereals has to be imported; Switzerland, from this point of view, has less subsistence agriculture than France. There is even more specialization in the agriculture of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Argentine, and, taken region by region, of the United States. Wheat, wool or meat, and dairy products in the first three cases: wheat, meat, and meat products in the case of the Argentine: cotton, wheat, maize, and meat in the case of different parts of the United States, are the world-famous specialities of these countries and regions, which place them in the front rank of exporting agricultural States; yet we could not say that even in these countries there were no traces of subsistence agriculture. Perhaps we get farthest away from the subsistence idea when we come to the country which is really only an agricultural factory—Denmark. Denmark imports from abroad vegetable foodstuffs, feeds these to her animal population (pigs), and exports bacon; she is doing a sort of finishing process. This shows how widely agriculture can diverge from the original idea of local subsistence.

Indeed, the principle of surpluses for sale (the money crop) can penetrate very far. Even the balance of subsistence cultivation can be disturbed. It is, after all, a somewhat precarious balance, easily liable to be altered by a special influence, such as the introduction of a new plant, the opening of a new port, the diversion of a trade route, an increased demand for a certain product. Sometimes subsistence agriculture responds well to such factors and they prove a stimulus. An interesting example is the response of Indian agriculture after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869; this terminated the agricultural isolation of India, and the Indian peasant now shows himself well able to swing over from subsistence to money crops or back again as needed; he adjusts his production to the state of the market with great ability, growing cotton when he can sell it, but reverting to cereals, &c., for his own use when the chances of a sale are less good.[1]

While the elements of change are everywhere latent, and while the prevailing claim of the modern industrial crop, which is somewhat

[1] A. and G. L. C. Howard, *The Development of Indian Agriculture*, Oxford University Press, 1927, p. 6. For the rapid and permanent substitution in the south of France of the vine, bringing great wealth, as soon as transport facilitated the import from elsewhere of the necessary wheat for food, which in the eighteenth century was grown in these regions by compulsory order to avert local famine, see M. Augé-Laribé, *Le problème agraire du socialisme; la viticulture du Midi de la France*, Paris, 1907, p. 29.

destructive of a peasant or tribal economy, puts the finishing touch to the confused picture of the world's agriculture, yet the areas of cultivation are so vast that these influences do not at present penetrate evenly; the force of a world demand, fierce as is the rivalry which it provokes on the central markets of international buying and selling, and far-reaching as its influence may be in unexpected quarters, may yet ebb away before, in another direction, it reaches the remoter holding. This is the real explanation of the absence of a recognizable world sequence in the advance of agricultural technique. Theoretically, every crop, wherever grown and whatever its nature, is grown in economic competition with every other crop. Theoretically, every sown field must justify its sowing. Could we arrange production on a basis of theoretical possibilities, the results would be surprising. Whatever the amount of cultivable land in the world, and whatever the size of human populations, things would be done in a certain order of importance which would give full play to all the influences concerned. Food would first be grown, i.e. sufficient food to feed all populations at a good standard, not at the miserable levels at which so many of them subsist to-day. After that would follow the raw materials for clothing and shelter; after that, those for other important necessities, while raw materials for luxury objects would come last of all. Thus even cotton could not displace cereals, and mulberry leaves for silk worms never. There would be 'orderly' agriculture, and a calculable numerical estimation could be made of the expanding possibilities of the world's populations at a given standard of comfort on the basis of what cultivable land is known to be available.

This, however, has never happened, and there are no signs that it ever will. There has never been so systematic a progression in developing the earth's cultivation capacities. On the contrary, there has been a significant unevenness in the standards of technical excellence attained. The present state of agricultural production and of rural civilization can only be described as one of the most challenging variety.

This variety, or disparity as we called it at the outset of this Chapter, is the greatest problem with which we have to deal in seeking the social advancement of agricultural populations. It is not lightly to be dismissed, but, on the contrary, must ultimately constitute the recognized precondition to our practical and constructive proposals.

III

THE AGRICULTURAL POPULATIONS

§ 1. *The size of agricultural populations.*

We have now some idea of the general circumstances in which the agriculturist carries on his task. After this, the first step must be to consider who are the people engaged in the work of cultivation. We want to know, roughly, not only their actual numbers, but also what proportion they constitute of all persons at work in the world in whatever occupation; in this way we shall have an idea of the size of the agricultural industry. In the second place, we want to know what groups go to make up a body of working cultivators; this will tell us something about the composition or structure of agricultural populations.

In the course of this discussion principal attention will be devoted to the situation of the cultivator when he is a paid worker in the employment of another; this constitutes the special topic of this book. It is often remarked that such paid workers are a minority of an agricultural working population. This is true, if the world mass of agricultural populations form the starting-point of the calculations. But as soon as these populations are examined separately, it will be seen that in many countries, and often in those where agricultural production is important and agricultural technique advanced, agricultural wage-paid workers and their families constitute a broad and distinct group; even in more primitive communities agricultural paid workers are always to be found, sometimes in quite large numbers. It is a misconception to suppose that such workers are anywhere unimportant. We shall presently see what an immense number of human beings are grouped under the term 'agricultural wage-paid workers', and what a large portion of the wage-paid working force of humanity they constitute. An international survey of the whole of their position has never been attempted, nor, indeed, is it easy where so many facts are still unknown.

There are, according to calculations made by the League of Nations, 2,013 million persons in the world. This is only a rough estimate. To find out the numbers of the population in some of the most thickly populated countries is a matter of pure guess-work; the estimates for the population of China, which has a larger population than any other country in the world, differ by over 100 millions on totals which vary from 3 to 4½ hundred millions. This is an extreme case, though it is an important one. The population of India is much

more accurately known; it now numbers just over 3½ hundred millions. But assuming a world population of about 2,000 millions, what proportion of it is devoted to agriculture?

This question cannot be answered with complete precision. In addition to the difficulty just mentioned as to the total numbers of the populations in some countries, there is the further crux that even where the total size of a population is known, yet the professions which engage the attention of the active members of such population are not always recorded. 'Occupational censuses', as they are called, are a fairly recent innovation in census-taking. However, about two out of every three countries now have this type of census, which, even where somewhat imperfectly carried out, can be taken as a valuable guide. In Table I, at the end of this Chapter, is printed a conspectus for thirty-seven countries showing the numbers of those recorded as engaged in agriculture, both men and women separately and the two sexes combined, as well as the percentages which such agricultural populations constitute of the total number of persons working in all industries taken together (including agriculture): the figures refer to persons actively at work without dependants, but include all persons thus at work, whether paid or unpaid.

The results are sufficiently striking. Twelve[1] countries fall into the group having over 60 per cent. of their working population engaged in agriculture, and of these twelve countries no less than six have over 75 per cent. so engaged, i.e. out of every four persons working three are working in agricultural pursuits; of the other six India also is quite preponderantly agricultural, and would probably exceed the 75 per cent. mark if some of her large class of persons working in 'unspecified' occupations could be assigned to their proper avocation, which is assuredly agriculture. A second group of seven countries have over 45, and mostly over 55, per cent. of their workers engaged in agriculture, which means that they are important agricultural countries in spite of the fact that a number of other industries have also developed. Of the remaining countries twelve have anything between a quarter and nearly a half of their working population engaged in agriculture, while five countries only have less than one-fourth of their people so occupied. These are the definitely industrialized countries, but even among this final group such countries as the United States of America, and especially Australia, have large agricultural interests. Indeed, the case of Australia brings out the fact that the figures for occupied population are not an absolutely

[1] A thirteenth country, the Union of South Africa, has 75 per cent. of her non-white population in agriculture.

perfect guide to the conditions of a country. Large peasant populations, producing only a moderate amount of the national wealth, may increase the actual numbers of persons engaged in agricultural pursuits; this may have the effect of rather disguising the otherwise industrialized character of a country. Such seems to be the case for Germany and Switzerland. The opposite situation is where the number of persons engaged in agriculture is not perhaps so large, but the agricultural output for each person thus engaged is very high, so that the total national wealth is preponderantly a wealth arising out of agriculture; such a country is certainly an 'agricultural' country. But, making allowance for this, we may be satisfied with the results of our glance at the censuses, which has been very illuminating. These censuses prove, once for all, that in the less advanced countries up to two-thirds, or even three-quarters, of all persons capable of work are at the present moment engaged in providing themselves and others with food and primary materials, while it is not unusual for over one-half, or for nearly one-half, of the populations in the more advanced countries to be devoted to these same agricultural pursuits.

In countries where no reliable occupational censuses are available, we are thrown back on estimates. There can be no reasonable doubt that in these countries agriculture is the principal occupation of the peoples. It is just because these countries are so undeveloped industrially, i.e. are still so agricultural, that their statistical services are apt to be inadequate. A generous estimation of agricultural population is, therefore, permissible in these cases, and it has recently been held legitimate to assume 75 per cent. of Asiatic, the same percentage of African, and 65 per cent. of South American populations as agricultural. Using these estimates where necessary to supplement the known figures in the more advanced countries, it has been calculated that 1,301 millions out of the 2,013 millions of persons at present living are agricultural population; this is nearly two-thirds of existing world population.[1]

Agriculture, then, is far and away the largest industry in the world. Its size is stupendous. It is clear that this question of the size of the industry is one which cannot be overlooked. Such large groups of persons, by their very existence, present problems of intrinsic importance. If agriculture were a small industry, the problems which

[1] Royal Institute of International Affairs, *World Agriculture: an International Survey*, London, 1932, p. 3. The figures are based on the League of Nations' annual *International Statistical Year Book*, the sources of which are the various national censuses. The estimate is for the year 1930.

beset her would be far easier to deal with, but if these problems involve the existence of millions of persons living at the present time, it is clear that any changes, however slight, in the conditions in which agriculture is carried on must have such vast effects as may influence, or indeed alter, the state of human society. If, on the one hand, this may tend to impose caution or even fear lest a mistake be committed and action undertaken in a wrong direction, on the other it makes any useful improvement exceedingly worth while.

§ 2. *The numbers of agricultural wage-paid workers.*

We have hitherto spoken in broad general terms of agricultural 'occupied'[1] or working populations. This phrase implies the whole number of those who in some way or other get their living by pursuing a form of agricultural activity. We will now examine the composition of these working populations more closely. In addition to recording the individual's occupation, an increasing number of censuses also attempt to record his place within such occupation, i.e. whether an employer, an employed person, or independent; this is termed 'the grade of employment'. It is from the figures for the grade of employment that a true picture of the structure of any industry can be built up, and such figures therefore merit intensive study.

From our point of view it is the figures for paid workers which matter. In Table II at the end of this Chapter will be found, for twenty-three countries, an analysis, as complete as is at present possible, of the numbers of such workers existing in agriculture. The analysis raised many difficulties, most of which could be only imperfectly solved.

There are, of course, very marked divergences between the different countries. There is one group of countries—Bulgaria, Estonia, India, the Irish Free State, Lithuania, Switzerland—where the wage-paid workers only constitute 10 to 20 per cent. of the total agricultural active population. All the same, it is striking that one person out of every five in the agriculture of a country like India can be put down as a wage-paid worker; in this country there are further wage-paid workers in forestry, in the group of over two million herdsmen, &c.; above all, the description 'insufficiently described occupations, labourers' must include a number of employed agricultural workers. In Japan also the number of those engaged in agriculture who are in the employment of another person appears to be about 10 per cent.

[1] The French term is 'active'—as distinguished from 'dependent'. This expressive word is also sometimes used in English statistical literature.

of the agricultural working population,[1] while the existence of considerable numbers of wage-paid workers on Chinese farms is undoubted. Here and there figures are quoted (though difficult to confirm) which give the wage-paid worker in Oriental agriculture a claim to constitute a much larger proportion of the general farming population. No doubt it would be unwise to pay too much attention to such figures, or to any figures at present to be ascertained either for Asia or for Africa, but there is quite enough general evidence to show that even in these countries the wage-earners form a small but substantial section of such populations; moreover, this statement may be made without taking into account the mass of wage-paid labour on plantations, the existence of which is after all extremely characteristic of Oriental agriculture, and more likely to extend than otherwise.

A large number of countries next fall into the group where the wage-paid labour force constitutes anything from 25 to about 45 per cent. of the agricultural working population. In this group are included Germany (at the moment only 22 per cent. of her agricultural population is wage-paid, but for this there are special reasons), Austria, the Scandinavian countries, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Italy, Hungary. There is then a big jump, and the Netherlands and Great Britain stand rather apart with 64 and 60 per cent., respectively, of their agricultural populations on the wage-paid basis.

This leaves out four big producing countries of white population. They fall into two small groups of two each. Canada and the United States have less than one-quarter of their agricultural population working for wages, whereas Australia and New Zealand have well over one-third. The fact is that Australia and New Zealand include a form of agricultural enterprise which does not exist in the other two countries, namely, large-scale sheep farms, or sheep stations, as they are called. These employ many paid workers, and definitely shift the balance, as is plain if the figures for 'agriculture'[2] and for the pastoral and dairy industries are examined separately; e.g. in Australia there were in 1921 between two and three times as many farmers, &c., as wage-paid workers in 'agriculture', but considerably more wage-paid workers than farmers, &c., in the pastoral and dairy industries; the resulting average reflects all branches of farming.[3]

[1] The International Labour Office, *The Representation and Organization of Agricultural Workers*, Geneva, 1928, pp. 169–70.

[2] The reader should familiarize himself with a specialized use of the word 'agriculture' = vegetable crop production only, in Australia and New Zealand, the terms 'pastoral pursuits' and 'dairy production' being used to designate the other branches of husbandry.

[3] *The Representation and Organization etc.*, p. 80; the figures must be compared for men only.

The general impression conveyed by the figures in the Table is that the wage-paid worker is an important member of the agricultural community. Once again detailed investigation has confirmed the broad statement with which we started our discussion. Such masses of wage-earners should constitute at least a recognizable section of the total wage-earning class in each country, and should have a distinct status within their own industry.

§ 3. *The general position of the agricultural wage-paid worker within his industry.*

To grasp this status, to understand the relations of the wage-earner in agriculture to other groups within the agricultural industry, it is essential even at this point in our discussions to carry our analysis somewhat beyond the question of numbers. It is not only in the relative size, important though this factor is, but also in the character of the different groups constituting the agricultural working population, that an explanation is to be found of the social structure of the agricultural industry. We will take the most straightforward point first—the relation of the agricultural wage-earner to his employer. It is necessary to have a correct idea of the relative positions of these two parties. This may be summed up by stating that in essentials the employer–employed relationship, when it exists in agriculture, is not different from that relationship in other industries. An influence is no doubt exercised by the different scale on which enterprises are run. The vast majority of agricultural enterprises which require paid labour employ a staff of anything from one to ten or twelve persons. It is rare, outside the plantation, to find an agricultural undertaking which employs up to a hundred, not to speak of several hundreds, still less of thousands of men, as in manufacturing industry, in transport, &c. This is bound to make a good deal of difference in the general status and position of the employed worker in agriculture. The fact that a large number of isolated workers exist on farms is especially important; these workers, often young unmarried men, if they are the sole employees of the farmers whom they serve, enter into rather special relations with their employers, with whom they have a natural and intimate contact. Yet even in these cases, and quite without question as soon as two or three workers are found on the same farm, the position of the agricultural wage-earner is substantially the same as that of employed persons in other industries.

Apart from this absolutely basic fact, the truth of which for our purpose must never be lost sight of, considerable departures are to

be observed from what is now the normal structure of industry. Or perhaps it would be more correct to say that there are in agriculture not so much departures from the normal as survivals of original conditions which have simply ceased to exist in other occupations. The many groups of persons who are neither employers nor employed must be taken into account; they form an integral portion of the agricultural community. On the one hand, we have the innumerable masses of small cultivators, tenants or proprietors, peasants or cash occupiers, who work their own farms without outside assistance; on the other, we have the very large class of relatives of farmers.

This last-named group is particularly important for our purpose. The farmer's son and daughter, his wife, sister, and perhaps brother, work along with him and supplement or more often replace paid workers. Whereas the relatives of the more well-to-do farmers naturally undertake duties of a managerial character or at least act as foremen or supervisors, on the smaller holdings the farmer's relatives take their full share in the manual operations even more regularly than the farmer, who himself always does a great deal with his hands. Indeed, in the field and about the yard there is often no distinction to be observed between the farmer's kin and his hired man, though in the house the claim of blood will of course be acknowledged at bed and board. It is even stated in some countries that the adult son of the small farmer is worse off than the ordinary wage-paid farm-labourer, seeing that he does exactly the same work as the labourer but without pay. However this may be, the fact remains that, while in a formal sense a son is in a very different relation to the farmer from that of the paid worker, yet in a practical sense his position is often for years on end almost identical.

It is true that such members of farmers' families very often return at a later date to the land-owning or land-occupying class, but many years may pass before this comes about, or it may never come about. The really small farm—and it is above all to the population of small farms that the present remarks apply—can normally provide a living for only one family; when such a farm is taken over on account of old age or death of an occupier, sons and daughters other than the principal successor must, if they wish to stay in agriculture, be absorbed into the ranks of the paid workers;[1] they then finally cease to have a claim to be reckoned among the occupying classes.

There is thus a sort of influx from above downwards, from the ranks of the owners or small employers into that of the workers or employed.

[1] Perhaps most frequently in slightly superior positions, as foremen, instructors, &c.

This movement is interesting. It differentiates the composition of agricultural working populations from that of industrial working populations, where such an influx is much rarer. Its indirect effects must be important, and there is a good deal of difference in the outlook of the agricultural population in a country such as France, where the process is frequent, and in one like England, where it is less common.

The reverse process is where the paid worker forces his way into the ranks of the farmers. This rise in the grade of employment has very aptly been called 'the agricultural ladder'. It can be a marked phenomenon in certain countries and at certain epochs. Indeed, it has attracted great attention in the United States and has been considerably commented upon. In this country a regular gradual ascent from wage-paid worker to share-tenant, thence to cash tenant, to owner on borrowed money, and finally to owner of an unencumbered property has been traced for hundreds of persons; hence the idea of the 'ladder'. Possibilities of this kind depend on an expanding agriculture, and it is not surprising to find them during the pioneer periods of farming also in New Zealand, Canada, &c. The situation in older countries seems rather different and to be closely connected with inheritance laws, which, if they favour a division of property in equal portions between all heirs, render easy an access of the working population to land.

Here again we have a movement not easily paralleled in another industry. It is altogether unusual to find, except perhaps in retailing and a few other occupations of a craft character, such chances given to the man who starts at the bottom. Much has been made of these opportunities of advancement in the cultivator's profession, and it is perhaps more necessary to guard against exaggerating their incidence at the present time than to call further attention to them as a feature in the agricultural situation.

Finally, there are movements of a more temporary character. Where the farm is too small to support in decent comfort the occupier and his wife and younger children, where, indeed, it justifies the expressive description of the 'dwarf' holding—and there are far too many of these, especially in certain European and in Oriental countries—the smallholder is greatly tempted, in truth, is impelled, to leave his holding for weeks at a time in order to share in the gains of the well-paid employment work of the rush season. Every spring, summer, and autumn sees a mass of candidates for work in the wheat harvest, the rice-planting, the sheep-shearing, the picking of cotton, on the beet-fields, on the potato crop, in the vineyards and olive

gardens, &c., whatever the particular crop may be which draws them. Well-defined streams of migration, which reoccur annually and sometimes cross international frontiers, have been set up; more especially does a rich plain agriculture almost invariably attract the poorer occupants of hill farms. This internal seasonal expansion and contraction is an integral part of the whole lay-out of the agricultural economy, and we shall have occasion in a future chapter to discuss it at length.

It will be seen from the facts stated that the organization of agriculture has not yet been reduced to that sort of flatness of industrial relations which prevails in the workshop and factory, where employer and employed face each other in two mutually exclusive groups. The structure of the agricultural population is much more intricate. At the one extreme is the large-scale employer, and next to him the peasant or farmer of a moderate-sized farm who probably has never had to contemplate working for another. These two groups together form the aristocracy or the plutocracy of agriculture, so to say. Below them begins the agricultural proletariat, if that expressive word be not disliked. It embraces at one and the same time the smallholder or small occupier, the relatives of farmers who, according to circumstances and at different periods in their lives, join the ranks either of the occupiers of land, or, alternatively, of the employed on the land, and finally, the man who seeks his livelihood in wage-paid work only. The upshot of all these relationships is that the dividing line between the wage-paid worker and the non-wage-paid classes of the agricultural community becomes not so much blurred—it is never really that—as elastic. There is, in truth, great fluidity of groups in agriculture, while the actual ownership of the means of production (the land) is much divided. The resulting functions of persons are often complicated; they change within the lifetime of the same individual; they may even change from season to season. There is a traditional stability of organization, combined with multiplied individual movements. All these points must be borne in mind, especially in discussing census figures, which only give a momentary sectional cross-cut and which therefore require some interpretation if they are not to be misjudged.

Yet, while the working of a democratic principle in agriculture is to be recognized, its influence must not be exaggerated. The less wealthy sections of such populations are not, simply because many among them are occupying a small piece of land, thereby necessarily able to challenge the position of, or to vaunt an economic or cultural superiority over, the mass of workers in other industries. The chance

of occupying a tiny portion of the earth's surface does not provide a status other than that of a working member of the agricultural community; it is not property in the accepted sense of that word and the results which flow from such occupation are not in the least like those which follow on the possession of property. It is a moot point whether the worker in agriculture draws a pronounced advantage from his affinity to, and his occasional chance of being absorbed into, the small landholding classes, while his opportunities of acquiring a really well-paid salaried post are certainly poorer than those of the worker in other occupations; this follows from the fact that the unit of production is mostly too small to allow of the creation of supervisory posts rewarded at higher rates. Finally, by no means all who constitute the working agricultural populations have any chance of occupying even the smallest fraction of a farm or have much direct connexion with those who do; the existence is undoubted of large numbers of persons who throughout their lives are wage-paid workers only.

§ 4. *The shrinkage in agricultural populations.*

Our analysis has shown us that the internal structure of agricultural populations is far from static; it is a structure which oscillates with the ebb and flow of periodic movements, sometimes from season to season, sometimes over much longer periods. As might be expected, the same principle holds good where agricultural population merges into non-agricultural population; there is a constant movement of individuals between agricultural and other groups, between agricultural and other occupations, and therefore perpetual changes in the size of agricultural as compared with industrial populations.

The final outcome is a steady loss to agriculture. This is so marked a phenomenon that we shall do well to devote to it some separate discussion. Viewed in this light, the figures which we gave above of the relative sizes of agricultural and industrial populations represent only a stage in a long process. Turning again to Table I, we shall be able for some countries to trace our figures backwards so as to arrive at an idea of the preceding evolution of their national populations. This cannot be done in all cases, in Europe owing to changes of territory supervening after the war and in general owing to some quite formidable difficulties which may arise in comparing successive censuses even in the same country; nor do previous figures invariably exist. But enough information is available amply to illustrate the shrinkage of agricultural as compared with non-agricultural populations. The losses sustained by agriculture are particularly well

established for Germany (1882–1925 from 42·2 to 30·5 per cent. of total population), France (1866–1926 from 52·2 to 39·8 per cent.), United States of America (1820–1920 from 83·1 to 26·3 per cent., and again 1910–30 from 33·2 to 22·0 per cent.), and Great Britain (1911–21 from 8·1 to 6·8 per cent.); in the last three countries, and in Belgium, there has been an absolute as well as a relative decline; this shows a very advanced stage of industrialization. The general process is at the present time continuing in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, which all show quite well-defined shrinkages since 1900; also in many other countries.

The explanation of this apparent decline of agricultural populations is on the whole straightforward and well recognized. It arises out of the fact that agriculture has been a sort of common reservoir out of which other industries, as they developed, drew their growing labour forces. The industrial task has grown and has done so at the expense of agriculture; the original all-embracing occupation of mankind has given up some portion of its working forces to satisfy the continually increasing demand for workers in other industries consequent on new inventions and new needs. We more or less assumed this when we spoke of preponderantly agricultural countries as 'less advanced' and of preponderantly industrial countries as 'more advanced' in the opening sections of this Chapter, and indeed it is common knowledge.

The process is one which takes place by a series of voluntary and personal actions of hundreds of thousands of individuals. It is the initial voluntary character of the transfer which is its distinguishing mark. But it is obvious that as the process continues over a series of years something a great deal more complicated than a simple series of completed acts of geographic removal of persons has been set up. If this were all, such movement could be measured with great accuracy. But these removed persons found families, and from these families in a natural continuous sequence population increases. The same factor has to be taken into account in the districts which the migrants have left; here too population, i.e. rural population, continues, and, owing to a rising birth-rate, as a rule also increases. The balance between agricultural and non-agricultural populations shifts in that these two types of population increase *at different rates*; it may be also that they decline in absolute numbers at different rates, but this at the present epoch of the world's history is rare, though there are many indications that the extreme rapidity of increase of populations is soon about to reach its apex in quite a number of countries.

What are the factors which account for this marked feature of the last hundred and fifty years of our human existence? There are two causes. These are the advancing efficiency of agriculture and the conditions under which the agricultural population works. These causes are quite distinct, but they reinforce each other in such a way as to produce a composite effect.

Agriculture responds, just as do other industries, to the influences which arise out of the gradual perfecting of methods of production. If we forget details, and fix our minds on the whole mass of figures referred to in this Chapter, it is not possible to doubt the fact that though there are more people born into the world each year and though this means that more food and primary materials will be required, yet relatively fewer among them are devoting themselves to the task of producing that food and those materials. If agriculture were an absolutely unprogressive industry, i.e. if during each century and decade the same amount of effort produced exactly the same amount of crops, obviously the same proportion of workers would be required; the influx into the industry would be absolutely constant. As every ten children were born into the world, seven, let us say, would always be predestined to till the soil. But agriculture, from the first moment when it began to be practised, has never been unprogressive. There has been a continuous economizing of effort. Every generation has found some better ways of carrying out agricultural processes. This has been very marked in the last hundred years. The technical advance in agriculture itself is therefore one of the major factors in the situation. It positively expels workers from the occupations connected with husbandry.

The expelled persons find their place in industrial occupations, and it is obvious that without the creation of innumerable new avocations the shrinkage recorded in agriculture could not have taken place. The advance of manufacturing industry has been a process parallel to the increasing efficiency of agriculture, so that those workers whom the one side of production no longer required were absorbed by the other side in its ever more rapid expansion. The transfer of large numbers of persons from agriculture to industry has in many countries shifted the centre of gravity of national life. Much has been said and thought about the effects of this. A special aspect of the whole process deeply interesting to agriculture will be discussed in a final Chapter of this book. For the moment we must leave general considerations and return to what immediately affects the wage-paid worker.

§ 5. *The part played by the wage-paid worker: the rural exodus.*

What are the consequences for the agricultural wage-earner of this state of affairs and what part does he play in these movements? Certain figures will be found in Table II,[1] which show that the wage-earner plays his full share in the movement for leaving the countryside. It is even to be observed that there is sometimes an absolute decline of the wage-earning classes in agriculture in spite of a slight increase, whether relative or both relative and absolute, of the total agricultural working population.[2] This goes beyond what a natural development would lead us to expect, so that it is scarcely surprising that the agricultural wage-earner is often accused of wilful perversity in his abandonment of agriculture.

This desertion by the rural wage-paid worker of his traditional occupation is the most notorious of all the group movements which together constitute the so-called 'rural exodus'. The rural exodus is, so to say, the deliberate part of that general retreat from rural avocations which we have been describing. In an article contributed some years ago to an international workers' journal[3] the present author drew attention to the need for avoiding sentimental judgements on this important question. Certainly the facts merit discussion, and where necessary action must be envisaged. Many agricultural employers have been seriously embarrassed by their inability to find the labour which they want. This has had very disadvantageous consequences. The general social effects are, however, what matter most. A pronounced thinning down of the potential labour supply of a country district means a general running down of social and economic rural life, a consequent difficulty in maintaining important rural social services, a lack of vitality in rural society, an absence of choice of careers for the remaining rural population, a decline of rural wealth amounting sometimes almost to rural pauperization. When this stage has been reached it usually means that the farming class itself has begun to decay; more and more of the sons and daughters of farmers leave for the towns, until even the occupying farmers themselves yield to the general impulse, and actual desertion and abandonment of cultivated areas takes place. This, of course, is unusual, but it does happen even in Europe, where land has usually been acquired at great monetary sacrifices.

[1] See in this Table the historical retrospects of paid working forces in agriculture for Austria, France, Germany, Switzerland, &c. The figures for farm-servants are particularly important, and some of these are cited separately.

[2] Austria and Germany are striking examples.

[3] *Bulletin* of the International Landworkers' Federation, No. 13, 10 July 1928.

What is the cause of this startling phenomenon? It would not be true to say that it arose out of the increasing efficiency of agriculture. On the contrary, the carrying on of agricultural operations, as we have just noted, can be seriously impaired in this way; indeed the distinguishing mark of a rural exodus—when these words are taken in a derogatory sense—is that the population migrates without any regard to the future carrying on of the functions which they are laying down. Some cause other than the needs of agriculture must therefore be influencing them and this cause will be found to be the conditions under which agricultural work is too often done.

§ 6. *Human conditions of the agricultural task.*

It cannot be doubted that in thousands of cases the unsatisfactory nature of working conditions has provided the direct occasion to agricultural workers of all classes to desert agriculture. Removal is traceable to psychological and moral motives, to conscious recognition of a state of affairs which a personal choice repudiates and a voluntary action can liquidate. Whereas in our previous argument we envisaged the rural worker as leaving the countryside because, owing to the advancing technique of farming, no agricultural job existed for him, in the second case we realize he is doing so because he does not want to stay, because, in other words, he thinks he will be better off elsewhere. This idea arises out of the contrast between his working conditions and those in the towns.

We may therefore, before we close this Chapter, ask ourselves what are the current conceptions entertained of agricultural life, as it determines the existence and happiness of the huge populations engaged on agricultural tasks. Under what human conditions is agriculture carried on?

There is a prima facie picture to be drawn, and one on which the imagination dwells with pleasure. Could it not be said of all classes engaged in agriculture that their work was carried out in the open air, that it was a healthy occupation, that it was full of variety and interest, that it called forth the most attractive qualities of patience and skill, that it gave great scope to independence of character, that it allowed ample leisure in the winter, that above all it knew nothing, absolutely nothing, of the dreary monotony of the factory or of the incredibly drab surroundings of factory centres? Could it not even be said from the economic point of view that the conditions of the occupation itself supply the materials of living in abundance, that agriculture, moreover, is the one occupation where the effects of personal effort are above all cumulative, where values increase

with the mere passage of time instead of stepping backwards, the improved field, the richly laden tree, the mature stock, making beautiful return for not such inordinately difficult efforts made some time previously, so that the phrase 'Nature's increase' can, in fact, be translated into terms of solid prosperity and financial advance, so that on the one hand the farmer can contemplate leaving an enhanced measure of wealth to his descendants, while on the other the agricultural worker can look forward to accession to a modest holding and to independence? In what other industry can anything like the same conditions be quoted?

The question may be put, and it may be as well never entirely to forget that the conditions of agriculture should be such as we have indicated. But are they? Or is not the picture in its sober reality at least as drab—actually as sordid—as those of many of the worst phases of industrial life?

What is the real truth about human conditions in agriculture, at any rate as they apply to the working farmer, the smallholder and the wage-paid workers on the land who make up the great bulk of the agricultural populations? Do we not frequently find among peasant proletariats, instead of cumulative degrees of prosperity and sound transmission of wealth from father to son, systems of inheritance which make property-holding a mockery and render the pursuit of scientific methods of cultivation impossible; instead of independence and economic freedom, oppressive systems of land tenure, crushing burdens of debt, every possible form of usury, and the most hopelessly inadequate capital resources; instead of abundant living, a poor and monotonous diet of indifferent nutritive value and a meanness in material things which has become an evil tradition; instead of winter and evening leisure, the longest hours of work of almost any known modern occupation? Among agricultural wage-paid workers, do we not commonly find wretched payment, backward education, miserable housing, inadequate social protection, and a continuous loss to urban centres of the youngest, cleverest, and most progressive elements? In a thousand ways the facts belie the picture of what should be, so that the best of all occupations becomes the 'Cinderella of the industries' and those engaged in it feel themselves ranked as 'second-class citizens'.

The conception of the agricultural life as the ideal life is a very old and influential conception, backed by the authority of the most famous literature, which has deeply influenced the human imagination. In the course of the nineteenth century, owing to the hard birth of industrial life, everyday facts reinforced this conception

positively by the force of contrast between what still existed of an ancient grace in rural districts and the nascent horrors of the industrial towns; wherever this stage of evolution is being repeated, e.g. in some of the unregulated industrialism of Asiatic countries, the same contrast holds good: whatever shadows there may be on human existence in the country, the shadows on that existence in the towns are darker still. But once this phase is passed and industrial life begins to be at all possible, it is unnecessary any longer to relegate rural existence to the role of a fancy picture, a mere foil. Where it is still so treated, no true vision is possible. It will be wise for a time to hold the idea of the contrast between agriculture and urban industry rather at arms' length, and to discuss human conditions in agriculture soberly, perhaps even with a certain coldness, at any rate scientifically rather than sentimentally.

Table I. *Size and Importance of Agricultural Working Populations*

Country and date of census	*Actual numbers of agricultural occupied population* (*in 1,000s*)			*Percentage of agric. occupied to total occupied population*	*Remarks*
	Men	*Women*	*Both sexes*		
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
(*a*) *Countries with over 60 per cent. of their occupied populations engaged in agriculture.*					
U.S.S.R. 1926 . .	36,077·4	35,488·3	71,565·7	86·7	Including Asiatic territory except 279,000 inhabitants of Jacoutsk.
Bulgaria 1910 . .	929·0	891 9	1,820 9	81 9	Change of territory between dates given.
1920 . .	1,035 3	1,107·7	2,143 0	82 4	
Turkey 1927 . .	?	?	4,368 0	81·6	
Roumania 1913 . .	1,584·1	1,574 8	3,158·9	79 5	
Lithuania 1923 .	512 6	576 2	1,088 8	79 4	
Poland 1921 . .	5,148·3	5,121 6	10,269 9	75 9	Excluding Upper Silesia and part of Wilno.
Union of South Africa:					
(*a*) 1921 . .	164·5	4·2	168·7	31·2	(*a*) White population.
1926 . .	173·7	4·1	177·8	29·8	(*b*) Non-white population.
(*b*) 1921 . .	1,431·6	1,417·3	2,848 9	75·0	
India 1911 . . .	69,693 7	33,342·4	103,036·1	71·7	
1921 . . .	69,170·8	32,522·7	101,693·5	72·3	

TABLE I (*cont.*)

Country and date of census	*Actual numbers of agricultural occupied population*			*Percentage of agric. occupied to total occupied population*	*Remarks*
	Men	*Women*	*Both sexes*		
	(*in 1,000s*)				
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Finland 1910	567·7	329 0	896·7	69 2	
1920	603 0	429·3	1,032 3	68 9	
Dominican Republic 1920	?	?	138 2	68·0	Excluding persons under 7 years.
Latvia 1925	364 8	402·4	767·2	68 0	
Estonia 1922	197·3	212 9	410·2	65 6	
Mexico 1921	3,459·3	30 7	3,490 0	63 0	
(b) Countries with over 45 but less than 60 per cent. of their occupied populations engaged in agriculture.					
Hungary 1910	?	?	1,681 4	53 6	1910 census corrected to cover post-war territory.
1920	1,494 4	632·3	2,126 7	58 2	
Portugal 1911	1,127 0	334 8	1,461 8	57 5	
Italy 1901	6,268 2	3,120 2	9,388·4	59 0*	1921 (*a*) = figures for pre-war territory; 1921 (*b*) = figures for post-war territory. All figures exclude persons under 10 years.
1911	6,053·2	2,972 9	9,026 1	55·1*	
1921 (*a*)	6,806 1	2,976 6	9,782 7	66 8*	
1921 (*b*)	7,085·1	3,116 9	10,202 0	55·3*	
Spain 1920	4,216 5	321 3	4,537·8	56·1	
Greece 1920	817·5	108 8	926 3	49 6	Figures exclude persons under 10 years.
1928	1,008 0	467 7	1,475 7	53 7	
Irish Free State 1926	555 9	122 0	677 9	52 1	
Cuba 1919	453·5	7 6	461 1	48 6	
(c) Countries with over 25 but less than 45 per cent. of their occupied populations engaged in agriculture.					
Luxembourg 1907	31·0	22 2	53·2	44·5	
Sweden 1910	757·7	258·1	1,015·8	46 3	
1920	807·7	250 7	1,058·4	40·7	
Czechoslovakia 1921	1,665 6	759·4	2,425·0	40 3	
France 1921	4,928·0	3,953·0	8,881·0	40 9	
1926	4,681·0	3,385·0	8,066·0	37·7	
Chile 1920	442·1	50 3	492·4	36·6	
1930	481 0	25 3	506·3	37 8	
Norway 1910	320·6	53 1	373·7	39 5	Figures exclude persons under 15 years.
1920	336 3	57·5	393·8	36 8	
Canada 1911	995·3	16 2	1,011·5	37 1	Figures exclude persons under 10 years.
1921	1,092·7	18·0	1,110·7	35·0	

TABLE I (*cont.*)

Country and date of census	*Actual numbers of agricultural occupied population*			*Percentage of agric. occupied to total occupied population*	*Remarks*
	Men	*Women*	*Both sexes*		
	(*in 1,000s*)				
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Denmark 1911	390 3	109·8	500·1	46·5*	1921 (*a*) = figures as for national territory in 1911; (*b*) = figures for present national territory.
1921 (*a*)	365·2	63·4	428·6	33·2*	
1921 (*b*)	391·8	69 1	460 9	33·8*	
Austria 1920	637·6	346 4	984 0	31·9	
Germany 1882	..	..	7,133 6	42 2	All figures for national territory as in 1925, without the Saar.
1895	..	..	7,182·3	36 4	
1907	..	..	8,556 2	34 0	
1925	..		9,762·4	30·5	
N. Zealand 1901	89·2	3 9	93·1	27 9*	Maoris excluded.
1906	97·8	3 5	101 3	25·1*	
1911	107·0	7 5	114 5	25·8*	
1916	110·4	9·7	120 1	27·2*	
1921	128 2	9·1	137 3	26·8*	
Switzerland 1910	375 7	101 4	477·1	26·8	
1920	385 6	97 2	482·8	25 9	

(d) Countries with under 25 per cent. of their occupied populations engaged in agriculture.

Netherlands 1909	529 5	112 4	641·9	28·4	
1920	552·0	90 1	642·1	23 6	
Australia 1911	464·5	15 8	480·3	24·2	
1921	521·8	10·1	531 9	22 9	
U.S.A. 1910 (Apr.)	10,851·6	1,807·5	12,659 1	33·2	Seasonal change between the first two censuses has exaggerated the decline in agriculture.
1920 (Dec.)	9,869 0	1,084·1	10,953 1	26 3	
1930	9,835 7	917·2	10,752 4	22·0	
Belgium 1910	568 0	215·4	783 4	22·5	Slight change of territory between the two censuses.
1920	484 0	129 6	613·6	19·1	
Great Britain:					England and Wales 1911 (*a*) and Scotland 1911: figures exclude persons under 10 years. Scotland 1921: figures exclude persons under 12 years. (*a*) = occupational; (*b*) = industrial census.
i. England and Wales					
1911 (*a*)	1,284 4	38·1	1,322 5	8·1	
1911 (*b*)	1,164 0	95·0	1,259 0	7·7	
1921 (*b*)	1,077 0	87·0	1,164 0	6·8	
ii. Scotland:					
1911	204·3	22 8	227·1	11 0	
1921	192·5	24·4	216·9	10·1	

* Figures calculated by the author.

Table II. *Numbers of Paid Workers known to exist among Agricultural Working Populations*

Country and date of census	Numbers of— agric. workers (a) salaried or foremen	Numbers of— agric. workers (b) wage-paid	Numbers of— total agric. occupied population	Percent. of agr. wage-paid workers to agr. occupied population (a) salaried or foremen	Percent. of agr. wage-paid workers to agr. occupied population (b) wage-paid	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
AUSTRALIA						
1921 Men .	9,426	164,830	469,718			Agric., hortic , pastoral pursuits; without forestry or hunting.
Women .	108	1,732	9,870			
Together .	9,534	166,562	479,588	2 0	34·7	
AUSTRIA						1902 census in Jan., 1930 census in June
i 1902. Both sexes	11,607	366,357	1,391,651	0 8	26 3	Agric., hortic.; without forestry.
i 1930. „	6,286	267,431	1,418,793	0 4	18·9	i. Territory as in 1930, without Burgenland; permanent workers only.
i 1902. Farm servants	..	324,752	..			ii. Present territory with Burgenland; all workers, permanent and temporary.
i 1930. „	..	242,708	..			
ii 1930 Men .	6,252	263,285	880,374			
ii Women .	595	186,713	837,703			
ii Together	6,847	449,998	1,718,077	0 4	26·2	
ii Farm servants— Men .		130,339	..			
ii Women .		118,649				
ii Together		248,988	.			
BELGIUM						Agric , hortic , forestry. Figures for 1920 are corrected for pre-war territory; the additional figures for post-war new territory (Eupen-Malmédy) are insignificant.
1910 Men . .	1,071	223,995	565,174			
Women .	93	46,701	215,349			
Together .	1,164	270,696	780,523	0 1	34 7	
1920 Men . .	647	189,873	481,078			
Women .	122	34,565	129,495			
Together .	769	224,438	610,573	0·1	36 8	
BULGARIA						Agric., hortic., without forestry. Salaried employees are classed with farmers' relatives and their numbers cannot be given.
1910 Men . .		107,695	930,888			
Women .	?	54,933	891,857			
Together .		162,628	1,822,745	..	8·9	
1920 Men . .		123,859	1,040,812			
Women .	?	105,005	1,107,742			
Together		228,864	2,148,554	.	10 7	
CANADA						Agric., hortic., without forestry or hunting. Persons under 10 years excluded throughout.
1901 Men . .		85,054	707,924			
Women .		254	8,936			
Together .		85,308	716,860	..	11·9	
1911 Men . .		144,632	917,848			
Women .	?	66	15,887			
Together .		144,698	933,735	..	15·5	
1921 Men . .	45	169,569	1,023,706			
Women .	29	759	17,912			
Together .	74	170,328	1,041,618	..	16·4	

TABLE II (*cont.*)

Country and date of census	Numbers of— agric. workers (a) salaried or foremen	(b) wage-paid	total agric. occupied population	Percent. of agr. wage-paid workers to agr. occupied population (a) salaried or foremen	(b) wage-paid	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
CZECHOSLOVAKIA						
i. Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia:						Agric., hortic., without forestry. Figures rounded off to the nearest 100. The figures for 1910 are reconstructed by the Czechoslovak statistical authorities from pre-war Austrian, German, and Hungarian censuses.
1910 Men	5,200	333,300	957,900			
Women	100	409,300	1,145,500			
Together	5,300	742,600	2,103,400	0·3	35·3	
1921 Men	6,900	296,700	917,400			
Women	800	303,100	556,600			
Together	7,700	599,800	1,474,000	0·5	40·7	
ii. Whole country:						
1921 Men	9,400	505,000	1,589,500			
Women	1,100	380,300	756,500			
Together	10,500	885,300	2,346,000	0·4	37·7	
DENMARK						
1921 (*a*) Men	15,222	133,925	365,224			Agric., hortic., forestry, hunting. (*a*) = territory as in 1911; (*b*) = present territory.
Women	140	5,241	63,433			
Together	15,362	139,166	428,657	3·6	32·5	
1921 (*b*) Men	16,018	145,029	391,755			
Women	144	5,996	69,123			
Together	16,162	151,025	460,878	3·5	32·8	
ESTONIA						
1922 Men	1,378	38,693	191,456			Agric., forestry; without horticulture.
Women	79	38,157	210,966			
Together	1,457	76,850	402,422	0·4	19·1	
FINLAND						
1920 Men	3,666	198,457	593,141			Agric.; without hortic., forestry, reindeer raising, or dairy work.
Women	471	164,129	424,788			
Together	4,137	362,586	1,017,929	0·4	35 6	
FRANCE						
1921 Men	4,534	2,147,417	4,992,622			Agric., hortic., forestry.
Women	711	1,256,404	3,958,477			
Together	5,245	3,403,821	8,951,099	0·1	38 0	
1926 Men	4,262	1,988,153	4,741,661			
Women	820	858,730	3,388,163			
Together	5,082	2,846,883	8,129,824	0·1	35 0	
GERMANY (without the Saar)						
1907 Men	53,848	1,978,449	5,828,733			Agric., hortic.; without purely forestry enterprises. Figures for 1907 corrected for national territory as in 1925.
Women	11,190	1,825,078	7,064,415			
Together	65,038	3,803,527	12,893,148	0·5	29·5	
1925 Men	74,867	1,752,985	7,189,803			
Women	17,833	1,447,052	7,148,630			
Together	92,700	3,200,037	14,338,433	0·6	22·3	

TABLE II (*cont.*)

Country and date of census	Numbers of — agric. workers (a) salaried or foremen	Numbers of — agric. workers (b) wage-paid	Numbers of — total agric. occupied population	Percent. of agr. wage-paid workers to agr. occupied population (a) salaried or foremen	Percent. of agr. wage-paid workers to agr. occupied population (b) wage-paid	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
GERMANY (*cont.*)						
1907 Farm servants						
Men .		710,083				
Women .		658,699				
Together		1,368,782				
1925 Farm servants						
Men .		675,489				
Women		630,592				
Together		1,306,081				
GREAT BRITAIN						
I. *England and Wales*						
1901 Men .	22,623	609,105	923,644			Agric.; without hortic or forestry.
Women .	39	11,963	52,168			
Together .	22,662	621,068	975,812	2·3	63·6	
1911 Men . .	22,141	643,117	971,708			
Women .	25	13,220	90,128			
Together .	22,166	656,337	1,061,836	2·1	61 8	
1921 Men . .	22,426	560,569	907,941			
Women .	217	32,307	67,348			
Together .	22,643	592,876	975,289	2·3	60 8	
II. *Scotland*						
1901 Men . .	4,650	83,441	151,214			The same.
Women .	5	19,805	40,034			
Together .	4,655	103,246	191,248	2 4	53 9	
1911 Men . .	7,250	80,582	148,425			
Women .	29	15,008	32,423			
Together .	7,279	95,590	180,848	4 0	52 9	
1921 Men .	5,230	82,442	140,248			
Women .	10	14,898	22,238			
Together .	5,240	97,340	162,486	3·2	59 9	
HUNGARY						
1910 Both sexes .	5,079	762,583	1,677,054	0 3	45·5	Agric., hortic., forestry; 1910 figures corrected to cover post-war territory only.
1920 Men .	?	722,635	1,486,045			
Women .	?	259,691	632,100			
Together .	5,331	982,326	2,118,145	0·3	46·4	
1910 Farm servants, both sexes .		246,286				
1920 Farm servants, Men . .		222,545				
Women .		6,143				
Together .		228,688				
INDIA						
1921 Men . .	2,927	134,482	550,172			Agric., hortic., forestry.
Women .	163	1,532	121,957			
Together .	3,090	136,014	672,129	0 3	20 5	
IRISH FREE STATE						
1926 Men . .	2,927	134,482	550,172			Agric., hortic., forestry.
Women .	163	1,532	121,957			
Together .	3,090	136,014	672,129	0·5	20·2	

TABLE II (*cont.*)

Country and date of census	Numbers of— agric. workers (a) salaried or foremen	Numbers of— agric. workers (b) wage-paid	Numbers of— total agric. occupied population	Percent. of agr. wage-paid workers to agr. occupied population (a) salaried or foremen	Percent. of agr. wage-paid workers to agr. occupied population (b) wage-paid	Remarks
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
ITALY						
1921 (*a*) Men .	20,079	3,031,064	7,085,124			Agric., hortic., forestry, hunting.
Women .	2,589	1,260,813	3,116,885			
Together .	22,668	4,291,877	10,202,009	0 2	42 1	(*a*) = present territory; (*b*) = pre-war territory.
1921 (*b*) Men .	18,989	2,979,139	6,806,084			
Women .	2,288	1,237,323	2,976,590			
Together .	21,277	4,216,462	9,782,674	0 2	43·1	
LITHUANIA						
1923 Men . .	529	116,004	511,757			Agric., forestry; without hortic.
Women .	9	114,745	576,046			
Together .	538	230,749	1,087,803	0 05	21·2	
NETHERLANDS						
1920 Men . .	6,088	339,986	531,957			Agric., hortic, forestry; without hunting.
Women .	78	59,669	89,543			
Together .	6,166	399,655	621,500	1·0	64·3	
NEW ZEALAND						
1921 Men . .	60,846		132,872			Agric, hortic, forestry; without trapping. Salaried workers are included with wage-paid workers.
Women .	3,214		9,149			
Together .	64,060		142,021	45 1		
NORWAY						
1920 Men . .	3,585	79,875	278,699			Agric, hortic., forestry, hunting.
Women .	77	23,840	57,330			
Together .	3,662	103,715	336,029	1·1	30·9	
SWEDEN						
1920 Men . .	11,063	193,262	715,803			Agric., hortic.; forestry excluded.
Women .	383	21,226	247,636			
Together .	11,446	214,488	963,439	1·2	22 3	
SWITZERLAND						
1900 Men . .	464	97,980	384,571			Agric.; without hortic. or forestry.
Women .	14	16,043	79,832			
Together .	478	114,023	464,403	0·1	24·6	
1910 Men . .	835	82,577	356,849			
Women .	18	12,088	100,547			
Together .	853	94,665	457,396	0·2	20·7	
1920 Men . .	1,296	85,518	363,405			
Women .	33	11,057	96,278			
Together .	1,329	96,575	459,683	0·3	21·0	
U.S.A.						
1910 (Apr.) Men .	56,383	2,727,502	10,783,782			Agric., hortic., forestry; excluding persons under 10 years.
Women	7,777	349,514	1,807,025			
Together	64,160	3,077,016	12,590,807	0·5	24·4	
1920 (June) Men .	92,883	2,321,814	9,816,573			
Women	14,347	227,175	1,083,749			
Together	107,230	2,548,989	10,900,322	1·0	23·5	

SOURCES AND NOTES

The figures in Table I for all except the seven countries mentioned in the next paragraph are taken from the League of Nations' *International Statistical Year Book*, 1931–2, Geneva; they include fishing with agriculture, but except in Norway and Scotland the figures for fishing scarcely affect the totals.

The figures in Table I for Chile, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Turkey, and the figures in Table II for all countries, are taken from sources as indicated below; they exclude fishing.

AUSTRALIA: *Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 3–4 April 1921*, vol. ii, Melbourne, n.d., pp. 1280–3 and 1312–15; the totals in Table II for *salaried workers* have been constituted by taking the groups 'farm-manager, overseer' from 'agricultural pursuits' and 'station-manager, overseer, clerk' from 'pastoral pursuits'; the totals for *wage-paid workers* have been constituted by taking 'farm-servant, agricultural labourer' from 'agricultural pursuits' and 'stock-driver, drover, &c.', 'dairy assistant, milker, labourer', 'wool-classer, sorter' from 'pastoral pursuits'. A useful table of agricultural populations 1901–21 will be found in the source indicated, p. 1212; an apparent slight relative decline of 1 per cent. in such population between 1911 and 1921 is due to vagaries in the recording of women occupied in agriculture (see below). The 'urban drift' is most marked; 50 per cent. of all population lives in the seven big cities; this urbanization causes concern (*Commonwealth Yearbook*, 1931, pp. 658–9).

AUSTRIA: *Landwirtschaftliche Betriebszahlung in der Republik Oesterreich vom 14. Juni 1930. Gesamtergebnisse fur Oesterreich*, Vienna, 1932. The decrease in wage-paid labour between 1902 and 1930 is marked in view of a distinct increase in the small farming classes; this does not indicate 'the agricultural ladder', but an influx, due to poverty, from industrial occupations back to the family farm, and simultaneously a desertion of the countryside by the ordinary agricultural workers, especially among farm-servants.

BELGIUM: *Statistique de la Belgique. Population. Recensement général du 31 déc. 1920*, vol. iii, Brussels, 1926, pp. 232, 566. A comparison between the agricultural populations of 1910 and 1920 is given in this source, vol. i, pp. 107–8, but omits the relatives of farmers assisting on farms.

BULGARIA: *Resultats généraux du recensement de la population au 31 déc. 1930*. Tome iii. *Statistique des professions*, Sofia, 1926, pp. 2–3.

CANADA: *Sixth Census of Canada 1921*. Vol. iv, *Occupations*, Ottawa, 1929, pp. 2–3, p. xvi; the employment classification of forestry employees for 1921 will be found on p. 10.

CHILE (figures for Table I): *Estadística Chilena*, vol. v, no. 12, pp. 413–16.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: The Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture, *Pracovní a mzdové poměry zemědělského dělnictva v republice Československé*, Prague, 1928; this is a special analysis of the agricultural working population with the necessary recalculations from a previous Austrian census (summary in *I.L.R.*, vol. xxi, no. 6, pp. 855–67).

DENMARK (figures for both Tables): *Statistisk Aarbog 1916*, pp. 30, 31, 35; ibid. for 1932, pp. 12, 13, 17; Copenhagen; the totals in Table II for *wage-paid workers* have been constituted from the figures for (*a*) farm-servants, (*b*) day-workers, (*c*) horticultural workers, (*d*) forestry workers; in the last two groups a few members of farmers' families assisting on farms may be included (the

Danish source groups all such family labour with wage-paid); the position of domestic servants on farms should also be taken into account—it is estimated that no less than 82,000 female domestic servants on farms should properly have been recorded as agricultural workers in 1921. The decreasing part played by the agricultural population as a whole in the national life can be particularly well traced in Denmark, where the percentages of such population to total population run as follows: 1834, 57·5 per cent.; 1840, 56·1; 1845, 55·2; 1855, 54·4; 1860, 53·3; 1880, 51·1; 1890, 45·9; 1901, 41·4 (Warming, *Handbog i Danmarks Statistik*, Copenhagen, 1913, p. 91—agriculture includes fishing).

ESTONIA: International Labour Office, *Studies and Reports*, Series K, No. 8, *The Representation and Organization of Agricultural Workers*, Geneva, 1928, p. 113 (figures taken from the Estonian census of 1922).

FINLAND: source as for Estonia, p. 117 (figures taken from the Finnish census of 1920).

FRANCE (figures for both Tables): *Résultats statistiques du recensement général de la population effectué le 7 mars 1926*. Tome i. *Troisième partie: population active, établissements*, Paris, 1931, p. 16; column (3) in Table II is a composite column made up of (*a*) permanent paid workers (including sons and daughters of farmers when receiving wages), (*b*) unemployed wage-paid and unemployed salaried workers (the latter cannot be deducted, but their number is unimportant), (*c*) those of the 'independent' workers (*isolés*) who are recorded as working for another, i.e. for different employers at different times; the last-named include all day workers, the numbers of these being, for 1921, 570,720 (305,598 men and 264,822 women), for 1926, 478,568 (289,443 men and 189,125 women); see the source indicated, pp. 57 and 62, for their classification in 1926, and p. 59 of the corresponding volume of the preceding census for their classification in 1921. There is a voluminous literature on the decline of the French rural and agricultural population; M. Augé-Laribé, *L'Evolution de la France agricole*, Paris, 1912, 304 pp. (Ch. IV, pp. 123–64, *La Population rurale*), offers a particularly good discussion.

GERMANY (figures for both Tables): *Wirtschaft u. Statistik*, vol. vii, no. 19, pp. 804–5, Berlin. The loss of wage-paid labour is most marked on the smaller farms and has been steady since the pre-war period.

GREAT BRITAIN. I. ENGLAND AND WALES: *The Agricultural Output of England and Wales 1925*, London, 1927, p. 98. II. SCOTLAND: *The Agricultural Output of Scotland 1925*, Edinburgh, 1928, p. 52; the figures in both cases are from the occupational tables of the population censuses.

HUNGARY: *Recensement de la population en 1920. Deuxième partie. Professions de la population, &c.*, p. 8*; *Sixième partie*, p. 54*, pp. 70–1, Budapest, 1925 and 1929.

INDIA: *The Census of India 1921*, vol. i, part ii, Tables, pp. 200, 208, Calcutta, 1923. In Table II the total agricultural population includes over 3½ million persons who derive their income from land but are not necessarily themselves cultivators; these could be omitted. On the other hand, the full number of wage-paid workers is scarcely represented. There are additional wage-paid workers in forestry, in the group of over 2 million herdsmen, &c., and on plantations; above all, the census description 'insufficiently described occupations, labourers' must include many agricultural workers. No conclusions can therefore be drawn from the apparent shrinkage in the numbers

of wage-paid agricultural workers between 1911 and 1921, as this seems to be due to a transference at the latter date to this class.

IRISH FREE STATE: *Census of Population 1926.* Vol. II. *Occupations,* Dublin, 1928, p. 3.

ITALY (figures for both Tables): *Censimento della popolazione del regno d'Italia al 1 dicembre 1921.* XIX. *Relazione generale,* pp. 256–7, pp. 144*–5*, Rome, 1928. Between 1911 and 1921 the numbers of salaried employees and wage-paid workers both decreased, in contrast to an increase in the numbers of owners and tenants of land—the same phenomenon as in Austria and Germany.

LITHUANIA: source as for Estonia, p. 177.

NETHERLANDS: *Uitkomsten der Beroepstelling 31 December 1920. Bedrijsindeeling,* pp. 532–3, The Hague, 1924.

NEW ZEALAND (figures for both Tables): *Results of a Census of the Dominion of New Zealand 17 April 1921.* Part VIII. *Industries, Occupations, and Unemployment,* pp. 16, 123, Wellington, 1925.

NORWAY: *Recensement du 1er décembre 1920.* X. *Population repartie par profession, par âge et par état civil,* pp. 2–6, pp. 148–50, Kristiania, 1924; the totals in Table II for *wage-paid workers* have been obtained by deducting the number of members of farmers' families assisting on farms from all workers.

SWEDEN: *Arsbok for Sverige 1933,* pp. 20–1, Stockholm, 1933; the totals in Table II for *salaried employees* have been constituted of the figures for 'inspectors, book-keepers, &c.', 'bailiffs', and 'dairy foremen, &c.'; those for *wage-paid workers* of the figures for 'horticultural workers' (two groups), 'dairy workers', 'cattle-shed staff', 'artisans in agriculture' (three groups), '*deputatists*' (*statare*), 'farm-servants boarded by employers', and 'other agricultural workers'; all sons and daughters over 15 years of age living on their fathers' farms are included in total occupied agricultural population.

SWITZERLAND: *Recensement fédéral de la population du 1er déc. 1920. Statistique des professions,* p. 21*, Berne, 1925.

TURKEY (figures for Table I): *Annuaire statistique,* vol. iv, p. 59, Ankara, 1931; the classification by sex is not stated.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: *Abstract of the Fourteenth Census of the United States 1920,* Washington, 1923, p. 483; the decline in the number of wage-paid workers between 1910 and 1920 is partly to be attributed to the different months (1910, April; 1920, June) in which these two censuses were taken.

The reader should realize that each series of figures in either Table could be accompanied by a number of comments, explanations, and criticisms; these should be sought in the national literature on the subject, especially in the relevant census volumes. A few of the briefest indications only can be given here. In the first place, the agricultural must not be confused with the *rural population.* The recording of rural populations is becoming more complicated, owing to the fact that the definition of a rural commune is apt to be altered from census to census, nor, of course, can it be assumed that the definition is at all the same in all countries. Further, owing to the increased mobility of populations arising out of better local transport, the residence habits of town and country populations are becoming intertangled; this makes it all the more essential to deal with agricultural population solely on the basis of a recorded occupation. In the second place, the great *seasonal alterations* which may take

place in the size of an agricultural population should be noted; such seasonal alteration especially affects the number of wage-paid workers; there may be more than twice as many such workers on farms in the summer than in the winter (cf. an old table established by the Swiss census authorities in 1905 and repeated by them in their 1920 census volume; *Recensement fédéral de la population de 1er déc. 1920. Statistique des professions*, Berne, 1925, p. 20). In the third place, it should be noted that the description 'general labourers', 'general workers' in a census often conceals a number of agricultural workers (India, Irish Free State); in some countries, therefore, the size of the agricultural wage-paid population is certainly larger than is indicated by the figures in Table II. In the fourth place, *the recording of women* as occupied on farms is subject to the most extraordinary vagaries; in successive censuses the married women on farms will appear, first, as 'occupied', but in the next census as 'dependent', while women working for wages partly in the house and partly in the dairy or other farmyard occupation will sometimes be recorded as engaged in agriculture, sometimes in domestic work. In actual fact, also, women move in and out of agriculture rather freely according to the temporary prosperity or the reverse of the farming situation; it is difficult to disentangle these movements from a permanent increase or decrease of agricultural population (a few facts for three European countries in *I.L.R.*, vol. x, no. 1, pp. 84–95, *Number of Women in Agriculture in Germany, France, and Czechoslovakia*).

These and other difficulties make comparisons between the agricultural populations of the different countries very uncertain. A reform of this unsatisfactory state of affairs, which may be presumed to have an eventual adverse influence on the representation of agricultural interests on international bodies, was called for in 1930 by the International Commission of Agriculture (letter addressed to the International Labour Office and the International Institute of Agriculture, Rome, in *Annales* of the Commission, No. II, Paris, 1930, pp. 71–4; cf. also International Labour Office, *Industrial and Labour Information*, vol. xxxiii, no. 6, pp. 197–9).

PART III
CONDITIONS OF WORK AND LIVING

IV

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOUR CONTRACT: I. THE UNITED STATES, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND

§ 1. *The agricultural labour contract a part of all labour contract.*

THE agricultural labour contract can only be understood by some reference to the history and course of industrial relations in general. The degree in which these relations have developed differs widely in the different countries of the world. Where the cultivation of land comes into question the idea of a special contract for labour, i.e. for the giving and receiving of a man's services apart from all extraneous considerations, has in many countries not yet emerged in a definite way; the rendering of services is mixed up with land occupation or other rights, and the idea of the separate labour contract is too unformulated to lend itself to discussion; the position of the dependent worker in agriculture can only be deduced in a fragmentary way from the rights of the whole agricultural population.

These are mostly a matter of custom. Indeed, we frequently find the idea of the free contract but faintly recognized, conditions of status still being prevalent. Even when these conditions have been left behind, the force of custom and tradition is immense. It is a factor which must never be neglected in any appraisal of the life of the cultivator. Custom governs an untold number of daily acts and usages in agriculture and everywhere constitutes an indispensable guide in the relations between different groups of the agricultural populations. Custom creates and preserves from generation to generation a characteristic stability in the structure of agricultural society. In regard to the employment contract, it may be noted that 'the custom of the country' may be cited as positively binding in a court of law on points arising out of such contracts, and that this can happen in countries of advanced industrial development.

However, it does not need to be pointed out that in a large number of countries custom alone is far from sufficient for the regulation of industrial relations. There have been centuries of development of legal systems. Status has long since been forgotten and the law of contract is clear-cut and definite. This definiteness applies to labour contracts in agriculture as well as to all other forms of labour contract.

There have, of course, been many stages in their evolution. The stage when law founded on customary right becomes written law is well known (the XII Tables at Rome, &c.). This process has taken place at many times and in many places. From such written formulations

usually starts the whole subsequent process of legal history. One of the most famous written formulations of law in Europe has been the Edicts of Justinian (sixth century A.D.). These Edicts were re-studied in the sixteenth century, with the result that the principles which they embodied were taken over into the law of most European countries, including Scotland, but not, however, into that of England, where an unbroken tradition of 'common' law (i.e. *unwritten* inherited law) continued to survive and develop. This conception of unwritten common law as basic was subsequently transferred to all the lands colonized from England, including the United States, and has remained the foundation of their legal systems.[1] The Scandinavian countries also remained somewhat apart from the sixteenth-century Reception of Roman law, as it is called.

Thus by the end of the eighteenth century there were at least three general systems of law in existence from all of which modern labour relations had subsequently to be deduced. The situation was now very much influenced by another great codification of law which took place at the turn of the century. This was the famous Code Napoleon, to which Napoleon, indeed, gave his name, but which was, in fact the re-formulation of the principles of Roman law resulting from the French Revolution and which embodied the ideas of free contract to which that Revolution gave actuality. The code was immensely influential. The adoption and development by France and countries outside France of the principles which it laid down kept Europe busy for another hundred years; during this period the last remnants of status, especially serfdom, disappeared in Europe.

Although it did so much to further the conception of the right of contract, the Code Napoleon was scanty in regard to labour relations proper; the number of precepts referring to the actual labour contract is small. This is important, because the agricultural labour contract in east and south European countries, and even in France, Belgium, and Portugal, is still very dependent on what the Code Napoleon says. Whereas in regard to other workers subsequent statutes have fully covered the ground left untilled by the Code Napoleon, agricultural workers have to be content with the few basic principles there laid down. In 1900 the German lawyers formulated an improved civil code for their country, which being a hundred years later in date than the Code Napoleon was naturally more complete and more scientific; especially was it much richer in its treatment of employment relations. This code also must be taken into account, but it has not had

[1] The legal system of the Union of South Africa is based on Romano-Dutch law.

the same period of time as the Code Napoleon in which to influence opinion.

In one way or another many European countries in the course of the nineteenth century arrived at a certain modification of their civil law, and less completely of that part of their civil law which governed labour relations; in a few cases separate labour codes were recognized. Similarly, the countries which depended on common law built up a great body of judicial precedents and practices, which of course also had reference to labour relations. The formulation of labour codes, the interpretation and application of the labour parts of general codes or of the principles of common law touching on labour relations were greatly stimulated and assisted by the frequent enactment of separate statute laws dealing with labour. This process went on at a great rate during the latter half of the nineteenth and the beginning of this century. Precisely on account of the gaps in the labour articles of the Code Napoleon and the codes derived therefrom, precisely because of the difficulty of deriving satisfactory solutions simply from the basic principles of common law, it has come to be more and more taken for granted that separate statutory enactments are necessary to define the labour contract and above all to protect the worker; for these modern statutory enactments are mostly conceived to the advantage of the worker. In discussing any type of labour contract, modern statute laws must therefore increasingly be taken into account.

It follows from the above brief sketch that the agricultural labour contract may be subject to various types of decision or governed by various kinds of right in the different countries. But this is not to state the whole problem in regard to agriculture. One of the principal facts to bear in mind is precisely that the labour or civil codes and the separate labour statutes often *fail* to apply to agricultural labour relations: they are imperfect generally, but they can be positively deficient when it comes to labour contracts in this industry. Agricultural workers are by definition expressly excluded from the scope of many labour protection Acts; even whole civil or labour codes can deliberately exclude agriculture and have notoriously done so. When this happens, agricultural workers have to fall back on whatever law existed before the promulgation of the statute or code in question. According to circumstances this may be a previous statute or a previous unrevised code or common law rights or some local Ordinance; where all these proved inadequate there would only be the custom of the country.

As a rule, all over the Anglo-Saxon world reference is usually made to common law rights; in Latin countries to the principles of the

Code Napoleon. In some parts of Europe, however, there still exist, side by side with any general articles in a civil or labour code governing the agricultural labour contract, or even in place of such articles, a number of Ordinances, Orders, &c., whose first beginnings must be traced back to original manorial or feudal systems. This type of law still survives, not indeed in its local or primitive form, but as confirmed or recognized by various Diets or legislatures in the course of the late seventeenth, the eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries in the form of Peasants' Ordinances, Master and Servant Orders, &c. By reason of the failure of other forms of law to take in agricultural workers or to deal with their situation adequately, these older enactments still govern many agricultural labour contracts; in certain countries they have been modernized and re-adapted as agricultural labour codes. They constitute the last form of law which we have to bear in mind as controlling the agricultural labour contract.

§ 2. *General nature of the agricultural labour contract and classification of employed agricultural workers.*

Owing to the number of different types of legal decision which govern labour relations in agriculture, it is impossible to discuss the agricultural labour contract as a unified phenomenon throughout the world. But the following short definition will hold good everywhere where social conditions are sufficiently advanced to allow us to speak of a true contract and not merely of status. An agricultural employed worker is a person whose time not being occupied, or not wholly occupied, in cultivating land of his own, is willing to work on the land of another for some form of remuneration. The last five words mark the nature of the modern agricultural labour contract, and it should be remarked that the worker is assumed to be landless or in occupation of only a small parcel of land.

Within this definition are included many groups of paid agricultural workers. The variety of designations found in different parts of the world may at first sight seem confusing, and it may appear a hopeless task to attempt any general classification of such workers throughout the world. It is true neither function nor skill will be much guide. Similar types of work are assigned in a very different way in the various countries; in some types of agriculture a given set of functions will be subdivided in an elaborate manner and allotted to carefully distinguished grades of workers; in others all duties will be handled by the farm-servant or farm-servants; on some farms the shepherd takes precedence, on others the ploughman, on others the stockman; on Danish farms there exists a special worker to look after

the feeding of stock; on Australian sheep-stations the shearer does not fetch in his own sheep; some workers work wholly on beet; some on rice; some on vines; some on wheat, or cotton, or tobacco; on Argentine farms a machinist will be found, on Hungarian farms a horse overseer; and so on. It is not even possible to group agricultural workers as skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled. The work itself varies too much for this, and at times a very skilled worker will be doing a very routine job, while even the most unskilled work, which does exist in agriculture, tends to demand great knack and aptitude.

It is necessary to abandon any pretence of a classification on these lines. We have come down to something much more general, namely, the requirements of the farmer for assistance of whatever kind.

In the first place the farmer will require some permanent help, always at hand, to assist in the thousand and one operations which are continually going on. He will require that this help should be on the spot and constantly available, especially where animals have to be looked after. In the second place, he will require more help during the crop-preparing and growing season (spring and summer). In the third place, he will require any and every form of assistance when his crops are ready to be harvested (summer and autumn); he will then look round eagerly for extra workers and be inclined to accept all who offer.

These requirements determine the principal classes of agricultural labour in all countries. Such workers are permanent, part-time or seasonal, and purely temporary or casual. The exigencies of the work to be done have shaped the nature of the labour contract.

Permanent help available at all times is procured by the engagement of workers whose contract of employment runs for a long period of time, whose presence near at hand is ensured by the assignation of lodging or accommodation, and whose goodwill is, as a rule, secured by the maintenance of many customary and traditional arrangements for their own benefit and that of their dependants. It is interesting to observe how closely similar, on the whole, are the fundamental conditions of service for permanent workers in countries of the most widely different agriculture. There are, of course, gradations, more especially in respect of the methods of remuneration; we can trace every degree from a complete sharing out in kind of the produce of the farm to the fixed wage paid entirely in cash. But certain features reoccur with extraordinary persistence. There is the world-wide practice of assigning accommodation under the employer's own roof to all the younger workers of this type and of installing the older workers together with their families in cottages or other build-

ings on the employer's estate. There is the exceedingly important habit of permitting or encouraging such permanent workers to pursue agricultural operations on a certain scale on their own account; this may vary from allowing them to have a small garden and to keep a few chickens to the giving of regular and substantial assistance (plough animals, manure, seed) for running what is, in fact, a miniature farm; the most usual practice is perhaps something rather less than this, and takes the form of 'allowances' of wood, milk, potatoes, or other products of the estate sufficient to provide for some of the domestic needs of the worker's family. There is, above all, the engagement on a yearly basis, which so closely corresponds to the yearly swing of Nature and which has had so definite an effect in the history of agricultural labour relations.

These permanent workers are the key-men of the ordinary farm. They are often in charge of stock and usually perform the more important operations like ploughing; indeed, they sometimes have almost the position of foremen and direct the work of others, but this is not by any means always so and they are also frequently engaged as ordinary workers and nothing else. Even so, however, they are presumed to command a considerable degree of knowledge and to be experienced men. In many respects they form the élite of the agricultural proletariat, and the handing down of the vast traditional manual skill of farming lies mainly in their hands.[1]

We now come to the farmer's second requirement—his increased need for assistance during the season of active operations. There are two ways of dealing with this situation. Either workers are engaged on regular summer contracts, for six months or less (sometimes on a monthly basis), or recourse is had to those who constitute the general local labour supply of the district; these work on a weekly or more usually on a daily basis. Thus arises the great mass of 'day workers', as they are called. A good name exists for them in Germany; they are known as the 'free workers' (*Freiarbeiter*), because their contract is a 'free' cash contract which lapses at the end of each day or week, leaving the worker at liberty to seek any employment he pleases; by contrast, the farm-servants and *deputatists* are 'bound' for a year and to a particular farm. Moreover, the free workers live where they like, whereas an integral part of the contract of farm-servants and *deputatists* is that accommodation is found for them and assigned

[1] It may be convenient here to note that in many countries of the European continent the permanent workers fall into two main classes, the younger unmarried 'farm-servant' resident at the farm-house and the older married man, sometimes called the *deputatist* (*deputat* is the German word describing the whole of the allowances off the estate assigned to such workers).

to them. The theoretical distinction between the free workers and the resident permanent workers is, therefore, considerable, but applies mostly in Europe, where it derives from historical origins. In other parts of the world the distinction is much blurred or has never existed. In England, contracts are weekly, but are continued on that basis with the same employer sometimes over years; farms are run on the principles described above, with a core of permanent men and extra temporary assistance when required, but this practice is not reflected in different types of labour contract. In Scotland, on the other hand, and to some extent in Ireland, the yearly and half-yearly farm-servant's contract persists, but in Scotland, at any rate, the class of daily labourers is not known. In North America, again, contracts are simply offered for different periods, for the whole year, half-year, or only month by month. In spite of this absence in some countries of formal distinction, a broad general difference in the position of permanent and of non-permanent workers in agriculture is to be traced in practically all regions and climates.

Free workers and all other non-permanent workers are commonly paid in cash.[1] As they are (in theory) continually re-engaged, the idea of maintenance allowances would be illogical; owing to the very nature of their contract they have no claim on continuous employment. Thus they are apt to suffer in the winter, but in some respects their position is more advantageous than that of the married *deputatists*, with whom in Europe they may best be compared. They are a recognized class of employed persons, working for wages in their own neighbourhood, though not always for the same employer.

When the supply even of free workers runs out, in times of stress, the farmer is ready to engage labour which may be described as temporary or casual. This labour is of various types. It may be domiciled in the neighbourhood; more especially are the wives and children of the ordinary agricultural workers engaged on seasonal tasks; or it is organized non-resident labour brought in from elsewhere; or, finally, it is truly nomadic or vagrant. It may consist of travelling companies of highly skilled adult male workers, the pick of the physical strength of the country; of groups of women impelled by the poverty of their tiny hill holdings to come year after year to the rich plain districts to seek a few weeks' wages; of gangs of alien workers recruited under government auspices and at great expense for heavy harvest operations; of highly skilled smallholders, who, by tradition,

[1] Allowances in kind are given in some European countries (Germany, Czechoslovakia); of course, in primitive countries cash payments are comparatively rare and payment in produce normal.

do vintage work for the big vineyards but insist on not working over the six hours a day in order to have time to deal with their own grapes; or such labour may tail down to the casual pea-gatherer who sleeps under a hedge, to the gipsy or tramp, to the individual who only gets a few days' work in the year and whose very engagement is a sign of the farmers' dire need of help. Such labour may even mean the withdrawal of town-dwellers from their urban homes to the countryside for the time being—as in the well-known instance of the London hop-pickers; in fact, it may take any and every form, from the most carefully thought out arrangements to the most haphazard.

On broad lines agricultural workers can always be assigned to one or other of the three main classes indicated above. Either they are permanent workers attached to a particular farm for a specified or at least a prolonged period; or they are domiciled in the countryside, free to offer their services wherever they can find any sort of employment; or they are true temporary workers. The essential nature of this threefold grouping may perhaps be put thus. In the first case, that of the resident permanent workers, both parties—employers and employed—are desirous of entering on a long-term contract: the advantage to the employer is that he obtains a core of permanent labour, to the worker, that he is sure of his living throughout the year. In the third case, again, that of the temporary workers, both parties are desirous of entering on the short-term contract; the employer has rush work to get done, the worker has some sufficient motive to urge him or her to abandon his ordinary vocation or way of life for a short period and seek extra money. It is in the second case, that of the day workers (to use a designation which covers a variety of short-term contracts, but preponderantly those entered into day by day), that difficulty arises; the employers do not desire to offer permanent work; they are trying to cater for those seasonal needs which are inherent in agriculture. On the contrary, the workers —they are usually principal breadwinners with dependants—have every motive to be at work all the time. There is here a conflict of interest, of which the solution is decidedly difficult.[1]

The general impression left by all types of contract is that the worker is in rather a weak bargaining position; this is partly corrected by the farmer's general inability to alter the character of his enterprise, making the engagement of a certain number of workers an essential. Thus labour relations become rather stable in agriculture; even seasonal workers return again and again to the same employer, an arrangement which works rather well. Finally, while residence

[1] See further Chapter XI, § 5 and Chapter XIII, § 4.

during part of the worker's career, or throughout his life, either in his employer's house or on his estate, makes the worker rather dependent on his employer and tends to isolate him from his fellow workers, it also makes the relations between master and man curiously intimate; there is nothing like this in urban industry.

§ 3. *Variety of labour relations in the agriculture of different regions of the world.*

Such is, broadly speaking, the general nature of agricultural employment. Nevertheless, innumerable practices, customs, and arrangements add varying content to the outline sketched. The balance of the sexes and the age-incidences in the different groups of workers vary from one country to another and even from one district to another. One group preponderates in one place, another elsewhere. The continual engagement of workers for shorter spells of work under different circumstances, the widely divergent types of farming carried on side by side, make the picture of agricultural employment a most varied one, and rather baffling until closely examined.

If we realize that these varying types of employment are superimposed on systems of law, which, as we saw above, were themselves the result of divergent adaptations and applications of legal principles, we need not be surprised at the alterations in the picture which passes before our eyes. In effect, agricultural labour relations range from the best to the worst, from the most precisely formulated legal texts to the vagueness of mere custom, from the most modern practices to the most ancient. If we are to seek a common element in all this, it must be because we are convinced that a common element exists, the occurrence of which is significant and impressive in this social kaleidoscope, a kaleidoscope even more startling than that physical variety of conditions noted in our second Chapter. That some stable facts about agricultural employment relationships can be sought throughout the world is, indeed, a hopeful sign. In examining the agricultural labour contract more nearly, it will, however, be necessary to make a selection. Not all countries can be looked at, nor can every fact be reviewed. We must, in any case, confine our attention to the employment relationship in the modern sense of that term. Many countries have not reached this; their agriculture can scarcely be said to know the enforceable individual labour contract, clearly understood and constitutionally protected on however narrow a basis; in such cases the worker is still dependent on his status, and his life and working conditions are at best governed by custom and at worst dictated to him.

§ 4. *The agricultural labour contract in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.*

It will be best to begin with the four great overseas countries of white colonization, the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Not only do these four countries take pride of place by reason of their great exports of agricultural produce, especially of food, not only are the technical conditions under which their production is carried on comparable, but the general circumstances which form the background to their labour relations are decidedly alike; their populations are still limited though growing, there is therefore a scarcity of labour, such labour is skilled, independent, and virile, and the social conditions under which it works are throughout those of a new country.

The universally recognized form of labour contract in the farming of all four countries is easily described. An engagement is made for a month, six months, or a year; the rate of wages, which may be fixed to include or not include board, board and lodging, and a few allowances in kind, is a matter for free bargaining between the two parties, without intervention from any quarter, although certain local rates are usually adhered to—but these may alter very rapidly with the rise and fall in the supply of labour. The worker is expected to assist in all the general work of the farm. He is usually young, unmarried, and as a rule well able to handle machinery; he is not expected to, nor does he often, stay for a period of years on the same farm. He belongs to no labour organization—his remedy for any dissatisfaction is to leave his job and find another. This description applies essentially to the United States of America and to Canada; in Australia and New Zealand it must be amended in respect of membership of labour organizations and in some other respects, as will be seen below.

The principal note of such a contract is its initial simplicity. The reasons are historical. The white settlers who proceeded to these continents in comparatively recent times were so far advanced in their ideas and so quickly attained a level of prosperity that they were able to discard a great deal of old legal lumber. The complicated service and employment relationships obtaining in their home countries were either not transferred or did not survive. In Australia the regulations on convict labour soon disappeared when free immigrant labour flooded in. Slavery, of course, remained in the southern part of North America, but perhaps its very existence favoured a certain simplification of employment in the major industries, all

domestic tasks being provided for by slave labour. But, above all, the complicated land tenure systems of Europe were not transferred. On the new 'homestead' or family farm simplified employment relationships were found sufficient. In these countries, therefore, there is no specialized form of labour contract applying to agriculture to look for. There are no 'servants in husbandry', no 'farm-servants', no '*deputatists*', and no 'tenant labourers'; there are simply 'farm-workers', 'farm-helps', or 'hired men'.

§ 5. *The tendency to omit agricultural workers from the protective labour legislation of these four countries.*

It must not, however, be thought that the general straightforwardness of the employment contract in these countries, whether in agriculture or in other industries, implies an absence of progress in labour legislation generally. On the contrary, some of the most advanced labour legislation in the world is to be found here. The general principles governing labour contracts, which, as was indicated above, rest on the conception of the common law, have been added to and interpreted, in the interests of the workers, by much protective legislation, which has been adopted step by step in the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The course of this legislation has been interesting. The emphasis has always been on practical points—inspection of factories, the fixing of wages and hours and all the consequences arising therefrom (industrial arbitration legislation of Australia and New Zealand), prevention of the sweating of women in home trades (minimum wages legislation of Canada), and accident compensation (in all these countries an enormous amount of machinery is used).

Where has agriculture stood in all this? It is just this that is the interesting question. In all these countries agriculture is a principal industry. Export wealth, on which these countries hope to build up their future,[1] is based predominantly or even exclusively on the export of agricultural products; agricultural resources are vast and capable of illimitable expansion; agricultural technique is advanced, and the agricultural communities highly organized, progressive, and able to exert great political influence. The whole course of the uprise of these countries has been based on the past commercial success of the farming industries—only gradually have they built up manufactures, and New Zealand and Australia still only to a small extent. These countries are among the great agricultural countries of the world, if the boldness and efficiency of their marketing

[1] Less true now of the United States of America.

have not, indeed, given them premier place. It is therefore interesting, astonishing, and depressing to find that the advances which their legislatures have made in social legislation have markedly tended to leave agriculture behind or even to omit it altogether. In the United States of America scarcely any social legislation applies to agricultural workers. The child labour protection Acts, the minimum wage Acts, the accident compensation Acts nearly all exclude agriculture. The conditions of employment of children in United States agriculture, for example, have been investigated in detail by the Children's Bureau—in most States no protection whatever is given by the law, rarely even the partial protection of a school attendance enforcement Act, for children may be 'exempted' from school attendance under such Acts if employed on agricultural tasks. In Canada, again, the well-known series of minimum wage Acts (for women), the machinery inspection Acts, the accident compensation Acts, all omit agriculture; the school attendance Acts are much as in the United States. On the other hand, there are some old threshers' wages lien Acts, which protect the wages of the small groups on threshing machines, and also some lumbermen's camp accommodation Acts (but no general agricultural workers' housing Acts).

In Australia and New Zealand the position is rather different. In these two countries the labour situation is dominated by the great series of industrial arbitration Acts and by the system of organized industrial unions both of employers and of workers on which those Acts rest; in the place of the complete individualism of the United States (with Canada a good runner-up) we have conditions which some might characterize as a sort of state socialism. From this system agriculture is almost wholly, though not quite, excluded.

§ 6. *Reasons for this tendency: the expansion of agriculture during the pioneer period.*

This situation is seldom commented on adequately. It is seldom thought remarkable that the outstanding industry of these countries should always have given worse terms to the wage-earners employed therein than do the manufactures which are only now beginning to bring in their contribution to the national wealth. Yet it is a fact of great significance. Why is agriculture even here, in these new agricultural countries, in an inferior position? While it is true that there is a basic identity between the labour contract in agriculture and the labour contract in all other industries, there appears to have grown up even in these countries an effective differentiation between

the position of the agricultural worker and the position of other workers.

The fundamental reason for this differentiation appears to have lain in the fact that the beginnings of social legislation fell within the period of pioneer farming and in the extraordinarily rapid expansion of that pioneer farming. Almost from the outset agriculture was seeking ever more distant fields; as the new legislatures got active, the farmers got farther and farther away. To pursue these distant settlers with attempts at social legislation would not have been within the range of parliamentary possibilities or of common sense. Even now the factor of distance cannot be left out of count. It affects the organization of the farming world and consequently the position of the worker on the farm.

But it was not only the factor of distance which mattered. The paid farm-worker on the immense North American prairies, on the confines of the Australian bush, was certainly isolated. But this hardly mattered to him in the face of the possibilities before him. Land was cheap, 'homestead' legislation encouraging, and a very little initiative enabled the 'hired man' to become first the tenant[1] and then the owner of a farm. This is the famous 'agricultural ladder', to which United States opinion has devoted so much attention, and, indeed, it is a phenomenon well worthy of attention; reference was made to it in our third Chapter.[2] The technical conditions under which farming developed made the entry of new candidates simplicity itself; not much capital was required, methods of production were learnt in a season or two, and were identical throughout a district. Young and vigorous workers were not likely to quarrel with a life which held out so much to them and which showed them the stage of employee quickly leading on to that of independent farmer.

This, then, has been the principal reason why the agricultural labour contract has developed so little in these newer countries. In the United States and Canada, at any rate, it is much where it was fifty years ago. Fifty years ago it was no doubt satisfactory, for it implied the fundamental advantage of allowing the agricultural employed worker to enjoy the same position as the industrial employed worker. Now, by contrast, by comparison with the improved labour conditions given in industry, it is no longer satisfactory.

[1] In Australia and New Zealand a system of share-farming corresponds to the period of tenancy in the United States and Canada.

[2] See § 3; also Appendix No. 1.

This is especially so since even in social stratification changes have taken place. The great period for expanison is at an end. The farmer and his hired man are no longer indistinguishable socially, and though the same gulf has never opened between them as is so evident in European life, yet a separation is more and more felt. In both these countries the farm wage-employee now exists as a recognized occupational group. It is really curious that no occupational organization of any kind has developed. There are no farm-workers' unions, not even local ones, in North America, in spite of the fact that there were already in 1920 over 2½ million wage-paid farm-workers in the United States and in 1921 quite a fair number, namely, over 170,000 or one in six of the total population occupied in agriculture in Canada. The accepted point of view is still what it has always been; the 'hired man' is the farmer in embryo, although facts do not any longer bear out this contention too clearly.

§ 7. *The position in Australia and New Zealand.*

The course of events has not been quite the same in Australia and New Zealand. In these two countries fifty years of class struggle have created a workers' mentality which is not satisfied with the promise of future independence as a set-off against present limitations. Neither the United States nor Canada can show anything parallel to one of the most interesting developments in the social history of these two countries. Between 1880 and 1890 the sheep-shearers became protagonists in the trade union movement of Australasia. Their action was bold and confident, and the result was that they came to enjoy the full protection of the industrial arbitration system, which, as was noted above, is the basis of employment relations. They finally carried along with them the 'musterers', 'packers', 'drovers', 'shed hands', 'cooks' and 'cooks' assistants', in fact all the carefully graded groups in what is known as the pastoral industry. The victory was not won without a severe struggle and many accounts exist of the desperate strikes with which the movement was initiated. But it has been a complete victory, and in spite of the fact that the workers concerned are migratory workers, and in spite of the vagaries of the weather,[1] hours of work down to the last quarter of an hour, complicated wages rates, accommodation down to the nature of the vessels in which food is served, rations down to the last quarter of a pound of butter, are made the subject of

[1] Wet sheep cannot be shorn. Detailed arrangements are laid down to determine under what conditions sheep can be dealt with, and to regulate the wages questions arising.

rulings of arbitration courts and are matters of daily comment in the public life of either country.

A very different state of affairs obtains among the ordinary farm-workers. In spite of many requests, these workers have not yet persuaded the arbitration courts to take cognizance of their working conditions; a few partial victories only have been won, and there has even been a retrogressive movement in the last few years.[1] Wages, hours, and other conditions are uncontrolled, and are a matter for individual bargaining only. The ordinary agricultural workers in Australia and New Zealand are therefore in a position like that of the mass of farm-workers in the United States and Canada. They are perhaps a step farther advanced inasmuch as they are covered by workmen's compensation legislation, but, with this exception, their contract is essentially comparable in its fundamental soundness but actual want of detail with that of the 'hired man' in North American agriculture.

Three arguments have been brought before the courts to dissuade them from including the ordinary farm-workers in their awards. The first is the formal argument that not enough of these workers were behind the claims from time to time put forward; in fact, we have the old difficulty of absence of organization, which is directly the result, in these huge countries, alike of the distance between farm and farm and of the social and historical circumstances out of which farming has emerged: the 'agricultural ladder' does not conduce to a strong trade union movement. The second argument has been the practical plea that ordinary farm operations are far too varied to admit of regularized hours and conditions; experience in the pastoral industry is stated to be no guide, as the operations of a sheep-station are totally distinct from what is done on an ordinary farm.[2] This argument is hotly combated by workers' representatives and is, in truth, one on which much can be said on either side. The third argument is an economic one, and has proved very influential during the present period of economic stress; whether it will always hold the field is a moot point. It is pointed out that agriculture is an export industry, indeed, that it is the principal export industry of either

[1] See Appendix No. 2, *s.v.* Australia and New Zealand.

[2] The process of shearing is organized on a vast scale and control is therefore easy. In any case, in Australia it was held by a judgement of the Federal Arbitration Court of 1926 that only the 'sheep-stations' proper were subject to the shearing awards. Other farmers, even those holding as many as 5,000 sheep, were to be free of the awards, though an undertaking was given that, in so far as regular shearers and shed hands were employed on these farms, they should be paid at award rates.

country. The cost of labour is part of the price of the produce exported, but this price must be such as will secure a sale in competition with produce from other countries on international markets. It is useless therefore for the arbitration courts to fix wages or conditions in defiance of wages or conditions prevailing elsewhere. There is no analogy with arbitration proceedings in Australasian manufacturing industry, for these industries are heavily protected and confine their sales to the Australasian home market.

The recent breakdown of the industrial arbitration system in New Zealand—on 27 April 1932, after fierce controversy, an Act was adopted substituting conciliation for compulsory arbitration—shows that control of labour conditions in an *export* industry does, indeed, raise the problem of international competition in all its nakedness. In agriculture this problem faces all four countries whose agricultural labour relations have been under discussion in the present Chapter. A study of these relations shows, perhaps more clearly than anywhere else in the world, that the agricultural worker's legal and contractual rights are deeply involved in the economic condition of the agriculture which he serves. We shall have occasion to repeat this observation in our analysis of the agricultural labour problem in Europe.

V

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOUR CONTRACT: II. EUROPE

§ 1. *The general situation of agricultural labour in Europe.*

In the four great producing countries with which we have dealt agricultural employment is regulated on the same general basis as employment in all other industries, though without the benefit of much protective labour legislation. We have seen in the course of our very summary examination that this process of ignoring the agricultural worker when introducing new labour laws has in the end amounted to something considerable, with the result that there is a real distinction between the position of the agricultural worker and that of the industrial worker in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The differences noted have not, however, arisen otherwise than by simple omission; while the agricultural workers have not got so far as the industrial workers in these four countries, they are on the same road.

The exclusion of agricultural workers from protective legislation is a problem in Europe also, just as it is in the newer continents. It may be that legislative omissions and exclusions have been a trifle less sweeping in Europe, but indeed it is very difficult to draw the balance in this respect. Half the workmen's compensation Acts of Europe, more than half the child labour Acts, and most unemployment insurance Acts, leave out agriculture. But in the fields of housing, sickness, and old-age insurance, maternity protection, family allowances, and in numerous other directions, it is becoming more common to consider the claims of agriculture, if indeed such Acts are not general Acts applying to the whole population, in which case persons engaged in agriculture are *ipso facto* covered. Education Acts throughout the world have from the outset applied to the agricultural population—an important benefit, which must in justice be noted. Nevertheless, the position in law and in fact of the European agricultural worker is still immensely behind that of all other groups of workers except domestic workers. Agricultural workers form a huge reserve of unprivileged potential candidates for urban jobs, and it needs but little to induce them to desert the farm in order to transfer themselves to a town in the hope of other employment, which, however speculative or casual, always counts as better in their eyes.

In this connexion it must be borne in mind that the actual material conditions under which agricultural labour worked in Europe during the nineteenth and first decade of the twentieth centuries have been

notoriously bad. The marked agricultural prosperity of the New World was, it must quite plainly be stated, obtained at the expense of European countries, and throughout the agricultural wage-paid worker obtained the greatest share in misery. This is the other side of that expansion which has played so great a part in the building up of modern world agriculture. The very improvements so eagerly adopted in the great overseas continents, and their immense unexploited natural fertility, provoked a richness of production which tended to depress the European agricultural market, to limit the opportunities of the European farmer, and to slow down the general upward swing of European agriculture.

Indeed, it is no easy matter to distinguish the European agricultural worker's legal from his economic position; they are inextricably intertangled. As the remainder of this Chapter will show, a consideration of the legal situation almost always entails some discussion of economic factors at the same time.

§ 2. *Two trends of development in the European agricultural labour situation.*

It is easiest to follow agricultural labour relations in Europe by roughly dividing that continent into two halves, the western, northern, and north-western group of countries, and the central and eastern countries. In countries of the first group the agricultural wage-paid worker is, as he is in the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, on a par with the industrial worker as regards his *general* rights. Agricultural labour contracts are here, equally with all other labour contracts, subject to one set of fundamental principles, labour code or civil code or common law, as the case may be. This is important, for when any general right is to be exercised, the agricultural workers are not at the outset in an inferior position. Thus rights under dismissal or discharge, rights to sue for breach of contract, rights of release from contract, rights to sue for wages, &c., bring the agricultural worker into line with his urban comrade. Above all, he has the same rights of association and combination, including the right of trade union organization.

Were this all, one would be inclined to ask in what way, then, his position was really so different from that of the agricultural worker in the New World. The difference lies in the longer history of European labour relationships, in their ancient origins, and in the effects of economic pressure on employment in Europe. Situations which have never existed in the newer countries, situations which are only in embryo there but have become admitted evils in an older country,

have profoundly affected the standing and welfare of the agricultural wage-paid worker even in the north and west of Europe. It has been the continuance of these conditions which has shaped agricultural labour relations in this continent. But this is not all. Remedies have been sought, and these remedies have taken the form of special legislation. Such special legislation amounts sometimes merely to a rather belated effort to catch up on behalf of agricultural workers with industrial conditions; thus a number of accident compensation Acts have been widened in order subsequently to cover agricultural workers, though sometimes only after the lapse of a good many years. More often such legislation betrays its origin at the first glance, having been enacted in order to put a stop to some glaring evil special to the employment of agricultural labour. Of this type were the Gangs Acts passed in England between 1867 and 1873, and adopted for the purpose of ending the exploitation of child labour in agriculture; in Italy a similar situation was controlled by Acts dealing with work in the rice fields. More modern efforts—always with a view to dealing with a situation too notorious to be ignored—have been a Wages Act of 1924 in England and a Housing Act of 1929 in France; also timber workers' housing Acts in Sweden and Finland, housing clauses or Decrees in Denmark and the Netherlands, and so on.

Thus in one way or another quite a respectable corpus of legislation has grown up on behalf of European agricultural workers, spasmodically and irregularly, indeed, and never the same in any two countries. While, on the one hand, such legislation may restore the agricultural worker to a certain equality with his industrial comrade, on the other it tends to send him along a different path, so that the very existence of these Acts creates an altered situation. It becomes more complicated and more varied, and undoubtedly induces in the European agricultural worker himself of these regions a more self-conscious attitude than is found, for instance, in North America.

What of the rest of Europe? Here we meet a situation fundamentally distinct. In the central and eastern countries of this continent the agricultural labour contract is not to be reviewed except in the light of the circumstances which have surrounded it almost since medieval times. As was briefly indicated in the last Chapter, the contracts of agricultural workers, as also of domestic workers, have here been governed by separate agricultural, or agricultural and domestic labour, codes, survivals of an old type of law and of right, admittedly altogether out of date. While the mass of other workers have gradually progressed to enjoy contracts regulated under modern labour law, the agricultural and domestic workers have been left in

a truly inferior position, and deprived of any pretence at equality with the rest of the working population. The effects of this have been very great. Agricultural labour relations in this part of Europe have a distinctive complexion, and require to be discussed as a separate issue.

It will by now be clear that agricultural labour conditions differ a good deal between Europe and other continents, between one part of Europe and another, and even between adjacent countries of Europe. The remainder of the present Chapter will be devoted to descriptions of the situation in a number of European countries.[1]

§ 3. *The Latin countries.*

We may first take the group of the Latin countries. There is a general similarity in the agricultural contract as known in these countries. The rights of the agricultural worker are broadly and satisfactorily based on the principles of the Code Napoleon; no injurious distinction has been drawn between agriculture and industry and a deep interest has been felt in the general organization of agriculture, to which much attention has been devoted. The agricultural worker has profited; he is admitted to be engaged in a national industry of first-class importance, and his activities are recognized as an integral part of the national life. There are other resemblances. There is a general marked tendency for the agricultural proletariat to have access to the land; the occupation, on very varied forms of tenancy, of small, sometimes tiny, parcels of land by many persons who combine with these tenant rights some effort at wage-earning, or who pass from wage-earning to tenancy in the course of their lives or perhaps alternate between being occupiers of land and being wage-earners, is very characteristic. This has important consequences. It breeds a certain acquiescence in the continued vagueness of the agricultural labour contract, which develops but slowly.

This slowness of development is particularly to be noted in France. The French agricultural worker is under no special disabilities of any kind, but he enjoys a minimum of protective legislation. Only since 1922[2] has he been secured against the consequences of industrial accidents, while not until 1929 was there any legal means of improving his very bad housing conditions, nor can the Act then passed on his behalf even now be said to have reached the effective stage. His hours and his wages have never at any point been dealt with by law, nor is there the slightest prospect that they will be. He has attempted collective bargaining, but with very uncertain results, and here again

[1] See also Appendix No. 2.

[2] Forestry workers since 1914.

the law has been rather in default.[1] It might therefore be thought that his position was a poor one. This, however, can scarcely be said to be the case at the present time. The agricultural labour contract in France, whatever it may be in law, that is to say, rather ill defined and lacking in specific advantages, is in fact moulded and determined mostly by economic influences. The truth is that the French agricultural worker of either sex has attained a scarcity value. The difficulty of finding permanent agricultural workers was the nightmare of French agriculturalists until steps were taken to invite alien labour to fill the gap. But the need for good foremen or good special workers continues and perhaps is even accentuated by the habit of employing foreign workers for the routine jobs, nor has the insistence of foreign governments for definite conditions for their nationals when accepting jobs on French estates been without effect. Thus for one reason or another since the War wages have risen, hours have notably shortened, and other treatment improved.

The alteration within the last twenty years in the general conditions under which the French wage-paid agricultural worker now pursues his calling is illuminating. It illustrates the importance of allowing for the general circumstances in the national life of a country in describing the agricultural labour contract. When we come to look at that contract in the other Latin countries we shall find the same principle hold good. In Belgium, for instance, the smallness of the national territory and the proximity of great industrial centres have a special effect; the whole country is covered with a system of light railways, and there is no remote countryside. We find therefore that the agricultural and the industrial population is intermingled; in the same family some members will be factory, and others farm, workers, or the same worker will change over from factory to farm-work or vice versa. Moreover, agriculture itself is commercialized and intensified; there is much horticulture, and the conditions lend themselves to rather regularized work. We find the usual classes of agricultural workers, the young servant, man or woman, who sleeps at the farm-house, the married worker, who in Belgium enjoys considerable allowances in kind and usually keeps pigs or poultry, and the day worker. Wages are very fair, but conditions in general vary enormously for so small a country from province to province; the legal side of the agricultural labour contract is, as in France, somewhat vague, but on the whole satisfactory; two provinces only have legislation to enforce a higher standard in accommodation supplied by employers, legislation which is careful and detailed.

[1] See Appendix No. 5.

In Spain we come on a very different state of affairs. Here the existence of enormous tracts of remote country, wanting in irrigation and wanting in cultivation, has a permanent and unfortunate influence on the labour situation; there is an impoverished population seeking work, and not enough work. The question which dominates is the number of days' work in the course of the year which the ordinary day worker can hope for. This is the one vital problem, but appears to await solution until some very difficult questions of land tenure, which affect rural development, shall have been settled. No doubt from the formal point of view the agricultural worker in Spain is not badly off. His contract is once again based on the Code Napoleon (though local customary right is what matters); the civil code of 1888 retained certain disabilities for agricultural workers, but these to some extent disappeared in the modernized labour code promulgated by Primo de Riveira in 1926; in 1927 an attempt at a corporative system on Fascist lines gave great prominence to agriculture, while the Socialist Government enacted a good deal of decisive labour legislation, including wages legislation, on behalf of agricultural wage-paid workers as well as the agrarian reform Acts on which it was subsequently wrecked. The political convulsions which have since taken place have left everything in a state of suspension, and it is hardly to be expected that much attention will be paid for some time to the agricultural wage-paid worker.

Before passing on to Italy we may briefly note that in Portugal a progressive civil code was adopted in 1867, the labour articles in which were specially devoted to regulating the contracts of farm-servants and also of day workers; this was unusual at this date, but no additions have been made to this initial effort on behalf of agricultural workers. In Switzerland, which we may class with the Latin countries on the ground that her Federal civil code of 1911 was based on Code Napoleon principles, there is an absence of protective legislation on behalf of agricultural workers; there are, however, no special disabilities attaching even to the resident worker's contract. Large-scale farming with an urgent call on labour does not exist, so that the Swiss agricultural worker, unlike the French agricultural worker, has not succeeded since the War in acquiring a scarcity value; the usual position is that of a farm-servant, often the only paid force on the farm, and the whole number of agricultural paid workers is not great.

It is in Italy that we find the most important developments of the agricultural labour contract to be met in the Latin countries, and once more we realize that this is the effect of the circumstances which have shaped the national agriculture. That agriculture is the most

varied in the world, ranging from the most intensive and highly developed cultivation, which has turned the soil into a veritable garden, to vast tracts of arid and almost desert country held by absentee owners and left under almost medieval conditions. The range of climate from north to south has to be taken into account, while the complexity of the legal relationships between landlords and the different groups of tenants or sub-tenants and workers is very great; the size and character of farms is important and affects labour relations; as in France, it is common for the working population to own or occupy small parcels of land or small farms, and to combine this in some way or other with wage-earning. What is interesting is the way in which the family remains a unit and works as a unit, either devoting itself to the cultivation of the 'family' farm or entering on some form of contract with the bigger estate which amounts to selling their combined labour in return for a specified reward or a specified share of products. There are recognized arrangements for this purpose, yet in law the Italian labour contract developed early as an absolutely free individual contract, shedding all disabilities and all trace of Master and Servant right many generations ago.

As might be expected, there are many different kinds of employment in agriculture. In the north there is much specialization and on the big dairy farms highly skilled branches of cheese-making; a number of permanent specialized workers are engaged, but there are also general permanent workers, some married and corresponding to the *deputatist* of the Germanic countries, as well as younger unmarried farm-servants. All permanent workers receive handsome allowances and rights in kind, which enable them to carry on some smaller agricultural operations on their own account, while share-produce arrangements are normal; indeed, it is by no means uncommon for the employer to enter on two contracts with a worker, one for general duties paid in wages and allowances, and the other a share-produce arrangement for the cultivation of a special crop; silk-worm production is largely carried on in the latter way. In every way the share-farming contract shades into the labour contract, so that it is often difficult to distinguish between them, and, indeed, there has been for years a dispute among Italian lawyers as to whether the share-farmer is a worker to be ranked with wage-paid labour generally. He is now reckoned as a worker and not as an independent person, and this is undoubtedly in accordance with the facts.

The mass of routine jobs is carried out by the day workers or by temporary workers engaged for the season, among whom special mention may be made of the women who come from the hill districts

of the north to the Lombardy plains for the rice cultivation. As already indicated, their conditions have for some time been strictly regulated by law and are subject to inspection. For the mass of adult male labour the problem is that of quantity of work to be had rather than of conditions or pay. There is a situation slightly resembling that in Spain, but without the disorganization which characterizes the Spanish labour market. On the contrary, efforts to arrange and control the giving of employment go a long way back, and have taken varied forms. Experiments, some of which have been the subject of heated controversy, have been tried, including even at one time the experiment of seeking to impose on employers a minimum number of workers per area farmed—the so-called 'minimum labour load'. More useful has been the idea of allowing workers to contract in organized groups for soil-improvement work during the winter, for which there are still many opportunities in this country. Fundamentally, the rural labour problem is a climatic one; the intense cultivation of the north calls for a large number of workers in the busy season, who, however, are not required during the rest of the year; this causes difficulties. Legally the Italian agricultural wage-paid worker has been the subject of a good deal of legislation, which, however, has had some vicissitudes.

§ 4. *The northern and north-western countries of Europe.*

The position of the agricultural wage-paid worker is somewhat different in the countries of the north and north-west of Europe. The agricultural contract itself may be described as very fair; no formal disabilities are imposed and there has even been some special legislation, perhaps more than in the Latin countries. But agriculture itself is not an important industry; far less attention is paid to it, and the consequence is that far less attention is paid to the agricultural worker. The degree of this neglect, however, differs, and spasmodic attempts are made, now in one country, now in another, to set things right. The result is a rather varied picture. Only brief indications can be given here. In England and Wales one can go a long way back in tracing the history of the agricultural labourer. A modern phase may be said to have started when English law discarded the appellation 'master' and 'servant' and in 1875 replaced Master and Servant legislation with the first Employer and Workman Act; it was of first importance to British agriculture that in the 1875 Act the 'servant in husbandry', as he was then called, was included (in contradistinction to the domestic servant, who was left under Master and Servant legislation). From that very important decision dates the general

equality of the agricultural worker's right with the right of other workers in this country. He is well covered by protective legislation, and an effort is now being made even to bring him under unemployment insurance; in addition, the Agricultural Wages (Regulation) Act of 1924 ensures to him collective bargaining rights about his wages. In Scotland, despite the sweeping away of the statute law on Master and Servant, the courts have retained out of common law the original Master and Servant conception in dealing with agricultural labour relations. Actions for 'desertion' and for 'harbouring'[1] a deserting farm-servant are still occasionally brought in the Scottish courts. Once again, however, we must note that the legal position is not a final guide. Although the Scottish farm-worker is at law subject to disabilities which have more completely disappeared from English legal practice, the general position is usually held to be rather the other way round. The Scottish worker himself claims that he is better paid[2] and, on the whole, better treated than the English worker and undoubtedly Scottish agricultural workers are among the leading agricultural workers of the world.

In the Irish Free State rural problems have been political and agrarian; they are pretty well summed up as landlordism, absenteeism, and pressure of population on the land. A class of agricultural wage-paid workers now exists; the poorer cultivators are scarcely distinguishable from these, and hire themselves out as seasonal workers, well-defined streams crossing to Scotland and England for the potato-harvest work. A good deal of attention has been given to workers' housing, but this is not as a rule supplied by an employer, although lodged and boarded farm-servants do exist.

In the Scandinavian countries the agricultural workers were rather slower than they were in the United Kingdom in shaking themselves free of restrictive principles; in law there is still a mixture of the old and of the new. While there are no agricultural labour codes, there are systems of collective agreements which give agricultural workers a rather distinct position, not by any means a bad one. In Denmark there is no general law on labour contract; an old Act of 1854 regulated the contracts of both household and farm servants; this was replaced by a much more modern Act in 1921, which substituted the

[1] See next Chapter, § 7.

[2] At the request of the Scottish agricultural workers themselves Scotland was exempted from the operation of the 1924 Act on the regulation of agricultural wages, on the ground that they could obtain better wages by their own efforts than any which the Act would be likely to give them; for the arguments see J. F. Duncan in the *Scottish Journal of Agriculture*, July 1933, pp. 275–82, and October 1924, pp. 374–80.

word 'assistant' for the word 'servant'; various special Acts affect the position of the agricultural day workers, who are to some extent, though not entirely, treated on a par in agriculture and in industry. In Norway very old labour law exists as well as a number of modern Acts; no essential difference is to be observed in the position of agricultural and of other day workers, but most agricultural wage-paid workers fall under a special Cottar's Act of 1851; Norway is predominantly a country of very small holdings. In Sweden there was a codification of national law in 1734 of which some sections regulated labour contracts; the stipulations laid down were confirmed in 1833 but abrogated in 1926. However, various protective Acts give a very good standing to labour; from these protective Acts agricultural workers are partly excluded. On the other hand, the Master and Servant Act which applied to them was at length rescinded in 1926. There is some special housing legislation for forestry and timber workers. On the whole, the position of the agricultural workers in Sweden is not a bad one. It is less good in the Netherlands owing to the absence of a strong system of collective agreements in agriculture. In this country, which may to some extent be grouped with Scandinavian countries on general and geographical grounds, a new civil code of 1907 included a radical re-formulation of the worker's rights in part replacing principles founded on Romano-Dutch law with principles borrowed from the new German civil code of 1900. No special agricultural worker's right exists. Protective legislation is very well developed, but much of it fails to apply to agricultural workers. An important draft code for protecting women and children employed in agriculture was considered in a preliminary way in 1928, but has not progressed since.

§ 5. *Countries of central Europe.*

We now come to countries where until the War a fundamental distinction was observed between the position of agricultural and of other workers, as was explained above. Agricultural workers' contracts were left under Master and Servant Acts or Orders frequently quite local in their scope. In general, it may be said that the resident farm-servants and the resident married workers came under one of of these Acts or Orders and that their contracts were regulated with great strictness and in considerable detail; day workers, on the other hand, worked on customary terms, but sometimes came under certain fundamental principles contained in the legislation or Orders governing the contracts of the resident workers; at other times their contracts, if lasting not less than a month, came altogether under such

enactments. The actual stipulations included in these Orders or analogous texts bear a striking resemblance in whatever country they occur. A detailed analysis will be found in the next Chapter, and the present remarks will be confined to a very brief statement of the historical position in the more important countries.

We may first take Germany, Austria, and Hungary. These may be grouped together, as their agriculture is roughly of the same type and exhibits a rather striking combination of large-scale and small-scale farming; a well-defined agricultural wage-paid class has existed for many years in all three countries; these workers have been particularly conscious of the legal distinctions drawn between their contract and that of the general mass of workers. Some of the German Master and Servant Orders were, it is true, partly revised between 1880 and 1890, but some extremely old-fashioned texts were also current and were a constant source of irritation. All these were swept away by a Revolutionary Programme issued on 12 November 1918, and on 24 January 1919 the so-called Provisional Agricultural Labour Code was drawn up by the combined efforts of employers' and workers' representatives. This was meant to be a temporary agreement only, but it remained the only enactment governing agricultural labour until the National Socialist Act on Labour Contract of January 1934. During the fifteen years of its unchallenged currency the Provisional Code exercised a great influence on the agricultural labour situation, and though it is an incomplete document—for instance, it hardly touches on women's work and does not mention the employment of children—it constituted a sort of charter of rights for the agricultural worker, all the more welcome in view of the long period of stagnation which had preceded. Events in Austria took a not dissimilar course. There was not quite such a sweeping formal abolition of the old legislation, but in the course of half a dozen years the twenty-four Orders which before the War had governed agricultural labour contracts in the territory of the present Republic were replaced by modernized agricultural labour codes, separately enacted by each of the eight Provincial Diets, the contents of which are largely identical; in addition, an important Federal Estate Employees Act of 26 September 1926 replaced a similar Act of 1914, the application of which had been prevented by the outbreak of the War.

In both Germany and Austria what may be called the range of labour relations in agriculture is considerable. The quite small farm employing a single farm-servant exists side by side with the huge estate asking for regular gangs of workers for urgent crop work, the getting in of which is the most important operation of the year. Trade union

activity, which was impossible during the nineteenth century, took a sudden start at the beginning of the twentieth and had made some progress even before the War; after the War it became important and the condition of the agricultural worker undoubtedly improved, though in Germany the particular grievance of the *Hofgänger's* contract[1] had not been removed. To these conditions Hungary offers a considerable and interesting contrast. The large estate is even more important, and employs not only a number of highly specialized permanent workers but a mass of day workers or seasonal workers, often of an illiterate type and recruited from a distance; this form of engagement plays a great part in the labour economy of the country and much attention is devoted to it. On its proper organization depends the great wheat harvest of the country, and on the wheat harvest depend the national finances. It is, perhaps, not surprising to find quite a different history of legislation from that in Germany or Austria. Old local Master and Servant Orders were replaced by a single well-drafted national Act as far back as 1876, and from that date until 1907 continued progress was made in legislation to control the agricultural labour contract. The legislation was not definitely social in intent and was always bitterly criticized by the workers, principally on the point that it precludes almost all active trade union action and subjects the worker to severe penalties for breach of his engagement.[2] The War made no difference in this respect, so that there is now a great contrast between the constitutional position of the Hungarian agricultural worker and that of the same worker in neighbouring European countries. From the economic point of view the situation is made difficult by the general absence of alternative employment in the vast stretches of countryside; this especially affects the day workers, the permanent workers being usually better off inasmuch as they are in receipt of large allowances in kind. On the other hand, this means that they receive a very restricted cash wage, while the wages of day workers are particularly low.

§ 6. *The Baltic countries.*

All the Baltic countries are newly constituted States; they have inherited various Russian, Austrian, Hungarian, and German labour enactments, and quantities of local Ordinances and usages. Out of this welter they have had to hammer out what they could, but, as many of them have had constitutions to draw up and have been subject to violent political and economic movements, it is not surprising that progress has been most irregular. Where social energy

[1] See Appendix No. 5, *s.v.* Germany. [2] See p. 104.

was available, it has been absorbed in the convulsions of agrarian reform, and little attention has been left over to consider the position of the comparatively small groups of agricultural wage-paid workers.

Finland succeeded rather early, before the post-War wave of social enthusiasm was spent, in modernizing her position. A general Act of 1922 on the labour contract replaced all previous legislation, including the Servants' Ordinance of 1865, and abolished all distinctions between agricultural and industrial workers, assigning uniform rights to all workers. The agricultural workers' position in Finland therefore is promising, perhaps unusually so in a country of so much smallholding. Like Finland, the other Baltic States formerly constituted a portion of the Russian Empire. Just before the War old Baltic right, including several Peasants' Ordinances dating from 1819 to about 1860, and Russian statute law, in particular the well-known 1906 Act on the Engagement of Agricultural Workers, were in force, though not uniformly throughout these countries. Some of the old Baltic legislation, however, was even then considered to be out of date and was not strictly enforced. Since the War no special measures have yet been undertaken in Latvia; agrarian reform, which incidentally has materially altered the position of the wage-paid worker in rural districts, has absorbed all interest. Estonia, on the other hand, was like Finland, caught by the early post-War wave of enthusiasm for passing labour legislation. A comprehensive Estonian Act of 1921—a revision of an earlier Act adopted in 1919—attempts to place the whole agricultural labour contract on a modern footing. Unfortunately, this legislation, though not formally abrogated, has quite ceased to be applied and the workers have not been able to insist on enforcement. The situation in these two countries would therefore appear to be very uncertain; old customary usages continue, the workers being unable to acquire new rights.

The situation in Lithuania has developed differently. Before the War the Russian Act of 1906 already mentioned was in force. In regard to some workers this Act was for a long time not abrogated and was still current up to 1929. Moreover, agrarian reform has not been so completely carried out as elsewhere; there are therefore still a number of workers living and working on large estates. Between 1919 and 1924 no fewer than eight Acts attempted to deal with the position of these workers. In 1929 a single Act dealt with all agricultural workers' contracts; this Act was amended in 1933. In general, the high-water mark for workers' rights was the year 1924, when the most progressive of the Acts was adopted; much of this ground has since had to be ceded by the workers.

§ 7. *The Balkan and other countries.*

Finally, there is the situation in the Balkan lands and in east Europe generally. In these countries the principles of the original Code Napoleon, of subsequent formulations like the Austrian, Italian, and Russian civil codes, or even of the newer German civil code had been adopted at various dates up to the outbreak of the War; but very imperfectly, so that a great deal of older right and custom was still applied, especially in agriculture. Indeed, agricultural workers did not benefit much by these legal borrowings. They were largely accustomed to work without well-defined contracts on conditions laid down by traditional usage.

There was not, in any case, a very definite class of agricultural day workers.[1] Most of the heavy crop work was carried out by the small cultivators, who were half occupiers, half employees; their position can be traced back sometimes to various forms of serfdom, sometimes in an almost direct line to classes like the Roman *coloni*. The emergence of a completely landless class of day workers is not indeed at all characteristic of these regions; such a group scarcely appears until we come as far west as Hungary. For centuries the struggle was to obtain occupation rights, not labour rights. In so far as these occupation rights had to be paid for by inordinately heavy labour services rendered to the noble lord and landowner, a real labour problem arose. The story is one of long-continued oppression, interrupted by desperate movements of resistance. The most typical history is that of Roumania, where, after centuries of struggle, a terrible uprising of cultivators against the exactions of noble landlords in 1905–6 brought, in 1907, a revision of the Acts of 1882 and 1893 regulating the rendering of services for the right to cultivate land. The 1907 Act remained formally in force in old Roumania until 1929, when it was completely revised by a newer and much more modern enactment.

The remaining countries in Europe show considerable differences in the way in which they have dealt with their agricultural workers. Bulgaria and Yugoslavia have undertaken no legislation; the agricultural labour contract is still dealt with on customary lines, the workers only profiting in so far as they can benefit by some advance in general rural conditions. Czechoslovakia and Poland, on the other hand, have done a good deal for their agricultural workers. At an early stage Czechoslovakia swept her agricultural workers under an 8-hour

[1] Some account must be taken of the fact that emigration continually drew off large numbers of those who might have formed the nucleus of such a class.

day Act, and although the original intention of that Act has not been fully carried out in agriculture,[1] yet the principle then applied has been influential; a child employment Act of 1919 and a paid holidays Act of 1925 have both been made to cover agriculture, while agricultural workers have not been entirely omitted from other social legislation. The principal means of regulating agricultural labour conditions has, however, been a system of collective agreements, voluntary in the eye of the law but encouraged and regularized under government influence; this has worked well, and in Slovakia, where there is a large class of illiterate labour, has been enforced on the employer in a compulsory way by a special Act. In Poland the rural situation is characterized by great pressure of population on the land. There was at the outset much confusion. The first of a series of violent strikes on the big grain and beet estates broke out in October 1918, to be followed by another in 1922, caused by loss of value in wages due to inflation, and by further agitations in 1924 and again in 1925; throughout there was a tendency to have recourse to the 'black strike', when even the feeding of animals is abandoned.

The government intervened with energy. In 1918 conciliators were sent to the disturbed districts and the outcome was an Act of 1919, revised in 1921, which set up a system of compulsory collective bargaining proving, as in Czechoslovakia, eminently useful. In Poland some years elapsed before the system was finally accepted; not until 1928 were the annual wages agreements signed by all parties in good time. But fairly rapidly, in the course of the first ten years after the War, the position of the agricultural worker altered materially. Various forms of social insurance were made to apply to him and he came under the general conciliation and arbitration legislation of the country; the sub-contract or *Hofgänger* system was abolished. All these arrangements and enactments together have created a sort of labour code for agricultural wage-paid workers, without, however, the adoption of a single comprehensive text as in Germany or the Austrian provinces.

§ 8. *General character of agricultural labour relations in central and eastern Europe.*

Agricultural labour relations in central and eastern Europe have a distinctive character. The large estate, which tends to predominate (though peasant farming is not without importance and has gained greatly through recent agrarian reform schemes, which have been quite ruthlessly applied in certain parts), constitutes in itself a nucleus

[1] See Chapter VII, § 7.

of labour organization. On such big estates the work to be done is varied and has to be both subdivided and supervised; its volume alters with the time of year. As has already been indicated in the case of Hungary, the heavy crop work calls for the recruiting of a number of extra adult workers, sometimes men but also women, whose contracts have become very regularized and are in certain areas and for certain purposes amenable to quite a strict legal control. The seasonal engagement from six to eight months is very usual and attracts large numbers of young workers and large numbers of the poorer smallholders from a distance. Such work is supplemented by the day-to-day work of the domiciled population in the neighbourhood of the estate, principally the wives or relatives of the permanent workers, to retain whose services for special operations is an admitted preoccupation of these estates. In general, the estate is apt to complain of lack of sufficient labour, but the worker of lack of sufficient work—a contradiction which is quite possible when we realize that the employer is referring to the height of the season when every hand is needed and the worker to the other months of the year when jobs are few and candidates many; both sides are suffering from lack of development of the countryside and therefore, in the one case, from lack of available population and, in the other, from lack of alternative employment. These conditions also to some extent explain the way in which the more permanent labour needs of such estates are met. The allocation of land and accommodation, of equipment and allowances, is designed to secure the presence throughout the year of a corps of experienced workers, capable of acting as foremen or of undertaking the necessary specialized jobs and above all capable of dealing with stock; without such inducements, the arranging of which amounts to a small land-settlement policy for each large estate, it might be difficult to ensure the presence of such workers. Considerable sacrifices are, therefore, made to retain them, and the *deputatists*, as we have already called them,[1] are reckoned to be the most necessary, but also the most expensive, type of labour on these large estates. The peasant farms cannot, as a rule, afford to offer contracts of this kind and content themselves with engaging the cheaper unmarried farm-servant, the peasant himself or his son being the foreman; temporary help is secured when possible during the summer, but there are complaints that the large estates take most of what is available.

[1] See Chapter IV, § 2.

VI

THE AGRICULTURAL LABOUR CODES

§ 1. *The importance of the agricultural labour code or Ordinance.*

We must now at length tackle this question of the agricultural labour code or Ordinance. In doing so we shall confine ourselves exclusively to Europe, indeed, almost entirely to central and east Europe; in large part we shall be describing not a present but a past situation or at least one that is rapidly passing away. Nevertheless, this description is essential. Not only is a knowledge of the peculiar terms under which the agricultural labour force of so many of the older civilized countries worked for generations necessary to an understanding of the labour position in agriculture, but, as we shall see, certain modernized forms of these codes or Ordinances were established after the War—in this way the agricultural labour code took on a new lease of life; in a few cases the original old-fashioned texts still have legal validity, though they are rapidly being modified or discarded. In all cases the influence of this type of legislation has been vital, and cannot be omitted from among the factors shaping the agricultural labour situation on the oldest continent of western civilization.

§ 2. *Such codes and Ordinances a part of Master and Servant legislation.*

Agricultural labour codes and Ordinances constitute a part of what is usually termed Master and Servant legislation, to which brief reference has already been made in our last Chapter. Such Master and Servant legislation is of great interest, as it was the first attempt (of modern civilization) to define precisely the relations which should obtain in contracts of employment or service. Its close similarity in a number of countries is striking. It underwent a long and continuous development, constituting at each epoch a rather faithful reflection of the spirit of the age on the matters handled. We cannot, of course, here trace it back beyond a certain point, and in any case the following remarks must be taken as the most summary of indications in a field which has evoked discussion of acknowledged importance.

The characteristic of Master and Servant legislation is the *personal* authority exercised by the receiver over the giver of services. The truly inferior legal position of the 'servant' even towards the end of the nineteenth century may be illustrated by noting that, as late

as 1882, a great Scottish lawyer professed to find a difficulty in drawing a clear distinction between a 'modern' servant and a slave.[1] It is striking that such an opinion could be penned. No doubt to the ordinary person it seems a lawyer's quibble; the distinction appears clear enough. A servant, however inferior his position may become, voluntarily enters upon it; a slave does not. Nevertheless the power of the master over the servant during the centuries over which the Scottish lawyer was casting his mind was of a very pronounced character. It was an authority both arbitrary and harsh, including the power of corporal punishment and pretty well excluding any chance of redress for the servant even on account of illegal acts performed by the master. The history of so-called Master and Servant legislation is the history of the gradual deterioration of this personal authority.

The terms on which a man entered on a servant's contract were roughly as follows. An obligation to work wherever and however the master directed was exchanged against the right to shelter, food, and a small cash wage; the service owed was owed to all members of the master's family as well as to the master himself. On the other hand the shelter and food allowances were sufficient to support the worker's dependants (*deputatist's* contract). These obligations and rights were fixed; once entered upon they could not be set aside until the contract ran out.

From the opposite point of view, what were the servant's rights to enforce on his master performance of the conditions laid down? These presumably at least included: the right to be maintained in the enjoyment of the contract until it expired, i.e. the right not to be discharged; the right to limit his performance to the tasks agreed upon and in any case to such amount and such quality of services as should not endanger life, strength, or health; the right to receive the remuneration mentioned; to receive it punctually; in good quality; without unfair deductions; to receive back his papers properly endorsed with a record of discharge at the end of the term; to be permitted to look for new work and to have reasonable time to do so; to have reasonable care in sickness or after accident. In other words, the worker could claim that he had sold his labour for the time agreed upon only; that he had sold it only on such conditions as should not diminish his power of future performance or his chances

[1] Fraser, *Master and Servant*, &c., 3rd ed., Edinburgh, 1882, p. 1: 'The distinction between the modern servant and the slave is one which cannot easily be specifically defined, and the discordant opinions on the question proclaim the difficulty that exists.'

of obtaining future work; he had not foregone, in fact, his capacity to bargain, which revived *ab integro* the moment the contract expired. This is all-important. The capacity to bargain distinguishes the worker from the serf, and nothing can be read into a labour contract proper which constitutes an injury to this capacity.

There is nothing in this very special. All contracts of employment arose along these or very similar lines. But the parting of the ways between this sort of contract and some other forms of labour contract came on some quite outstanding points. Gradually, as freer forms of labour contract developed, the 'servants' were left quite definitely behind, and among those thus left behind were often a large part of the agricultural working population.

We will now take one by one the points which arise out of this summary description of a servant's contract, and see how farm servants' Ordinances and agricultural labour codes deal with them.

§ 3. *Form of an agricultural labour contract under a code or Ordinance: the substitution of written for oral terms.*

Practically all Ordinances or codes start with or include a statement as to form. The interesting thing is here to note the efforts rather recently made to introduce the written contract in a sphere where for centuries the verbal contract has been considered sufficient. That the substitution was and still is considered difficult in agriculture is obvious from the diffidence with which the written contract is thus brought in; the verbal contract still, by historical right, reigns, so to say, supreme, not even the most modern agricultural labour codes wholly abolishing it. But the written contract is frequently permitted and under certain circumstances tends more and more insistently to be enforced even in the farming industry. It is obvious that the motive dictating this process is that of protection of the worker. In each case in which we find enforcement of written terms laid down it is because long experience had proved grave abuses to have arisen. These possibilities of abuse may be reduced to three general situations: where contracts cover a long period; where wages in kind are to be paid; where workers are in a specially unprotected position or specially liable to misunderstand the terms of their contract.

In the case of the long contract written terms are advisable because, as time goes on, the original bargain is apt to be forgotten or unfairly encroached on by one party or the other. More especially is it the case that where a yearly contract is silently renewed at twelve-monthly

intervals the utmost insecurity may arise as to the original bargain. Then, even with the best intentions, the most serious disputes may originate. It is therefore to the interest of both parties to have written terms. The system of the annual contract in agriculture, silently renewed perhaps over a lifetime, but resting merely on an oral agreement, put terrible powers into the hands of an unjust master in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and even in the nineteenth centuries. The growing insistence on written terms culminates in their categorical enforcement in the most modern codes even for six-monthly contracts (German Provisional Agricultural Labour Code) or actually for three-monthly contracts (Burgenland). In other cases, however, the legislator has felt himself unable to insist on the written contract as such—the age-old custom of the verbal agreement, made binding by the acceptance of hand-money, must not be too violently disturbed. In these cases the device is adopted of allowing one or both of the parties to the contract to demand a written 'statement of rights and duties', or a written 'statement of remuneration owed' (the various texts differ), and the fact that this right is sometimes given to the worker alone betrays that it was in his interest that this privilege was allowed; various examples will be found in the Austrian Provincial Codes, Austrian Estate Employees' Act, Hungarian Farm Servants' Act of 1907, to mention only a few.

While a long contract may give rise to many uncertainties even with the best intentions, payments in kind almost invariably do so unless the utmost accuracy is laid down. Here again written contracts or written terms are now frequently enforced, sometimes if the long contract is also in question (Vorarlberg Code). This has the practical effect of bringing the majority of farm-servants under written terms.

Finally, there is the problem of the unprotected worker. The unprotected worker usually means the alien worker or the migrant worker brought from a distance who is peculiarly liable to injustice at the hands of an unscrupulous employment agent or unprincipled employer. A very striking instance of the enforcement of written terms in their case is the Hungarian Act of 1898, which may be said almost to constitute a sort of forerunner of the modern collective agreement system in agriculture. The conditions are laid down with exceptional severity and are designed to protect the numerous often illiterate Slovak migrant workers engaged in gangs for the reaping of the wheat harvest on the immense Hungarian wheat farms. Contracts have to be concluded in the presence of local authorities and with the assistance of the communal notary; the text of the contract

must include a signed statement that it has been read aloud to the parties by the notary and explained to them in their native tongue before the signatures were affixed. Various other detailed provisions are laid down. The stipulations may to some extent be dictated by an ordinary desire of public authorities to avoid disastrous and inconvenient industrial disputes, but they do also protect the worker in a very definite way. It is provisions such as these which make it possible to describe Hungarian legislation as modern.

It is to be observed that in these advances towards written forms of engagement agricultural workers are often more privileged than the ordinary worker in industry, who may continue to work for years on the basis of oral arrangements. The conditions of work in agriculture are, however, far more likely to give causes for dispute, involving as they do, apart from payments in kind, variation of duties, variable hours, and often residence on the employer's estate or in his house. Where wages are on a purely cash basis, where no residence is involved, above all where the contract is a short one, the oral contract still holds—the written contract is never contemplated, for instance, for the ordinary day worker in farming or even for the weekly worker; it is quite exceptional that the Salzburg Agricultural Labour Code allows the worker to call for a written statement of terms as soon as his engagement exceeds six days. It is, however, to be noted that as soon as such day or weekly workers come under a collective agreement, they are automatically protected by written terms, though such terms are not individual.

It is interesting to observe that as the written contract becomes more common, the old careful stipulations which govern the exact consequences of acceptance of the hand-money—the clinching point in making the oral bargain—become less necessary.

§ 4. *Nature of the contract to be enforced.*

Apart from the form of the contract, written or verbal, the nature itself of the contract has to be determined. Here the force of an agricultural labour code is more or less unmistakable: when working under such codes, &c., agricultural workers enter on contracts which are *distinct in kind* from those entered on by workers in other industries. The text of the code is assumed to determine, either directly or indirectly, the nature of the contract itself and not merely the working conditions arising out of it. It is thus a final instrument and only in so far as its own terms allow is there any appeal away from it. This is perhaps the cardinal point in the arrangements envisaged.

But at first the process was casual rather than deliberate. Early texts assume a great deal and often do not trouble to state what is taken for granted on all hands; nor were all texts drawn up systematically; some were compromises arrived at after fierce political controversy and designed to deal primarily with a current situation. It was not until the great revisions of general labour law were undertaken in the course of the nineteenth century that the legislator was faced by the dilemma of having to make up his mind whether or no such revised law was henceforward to govern the agricultural labour contract in common with all other labour contracts. The brevity and the rather elementary dispositions of the Napoleonic Code on the whole permitted this. Later, however, the very advances which it was proposed to write into an improved labour law were held to be obstacles in the way of admitting once for all that such law did indeed apply to agriculture as well as to other industries. The fiercest opposition disclosed itself in some countries to the idea of admitting agricultural workers to the privileges and definitions of right enjoyed by the mass of the working-class population; the 'exceptional' position was still therefore maintained or was even for the first time rather clearly laid down. Thus agricultural workers were totally excluded from the benefits of the revised Civil Code of Prussia in 1854 by a special Act; subsequently Article 95 of the revised Federal Civil Code of 1900 left all existing farm-servants' Ordinances in force throughout Germany. In Austria agricultural workers were excluded from the revision of the Austrian civil code in 1859, and again even during the War in 1916 by Article 153 of the of the third amending Act to that code.

Nevertheless, the advance of general labour legislation did not entirely fail to influence agricultural labour law. With a better understanding of the problem, more care was taken to define the nature of the agricultural labour contract in the special agricultural labour texts themselves. The Hungarian Acts of 1878–1923 offer some good examples. There is an increasing effort made to give a perfectly precise meaning to the agricultural labour contract and incidentally to show exactly where and how far the powers of the ordinary civil authorities and courts can come into play.

This did not prevent the situation from being inherently an unsatisfactory one for the agricultural worker. The discrimination exercised against him, the distinction made between his rights and those of all other workers, very deeply affected him. Loud and bitter were the complaints against decisions which reduced the agricultural workers to the position of 'second-class citizens'. The fact that they

were excluded from the benefits of the general labour law entailed as a further consequence their exclusion from all subsequent social legislation; indeed, it is one of the most serious aspects of the specialized agricultural labour code that it automatically prevents the agricultural worker from benefiting by improvements in general social legislation, unless special steps are taken to ensure that he shall do so; this may be particularly noticeable when advances are made in such fields as trade union law, collective bargaining, and social insurance. It is therefore scarcely surprising, though it is noteworthy, that the sweeping away of the exceptional legislation for agricultural workers ranked as one of the points enforced in the first proclamation on 12 November 1918 of the new German Republic, taking its place with such first-class reforms as abolition of the censorship, the proclamation of religious freedom, &c.[1]

The subsequent situation was a compromise. The idea of special legislation for agriculture was retained in most of the countries which had known such legislation before the War, but on the important matter of the definition and nature of the contract much closer connexion was sought with general labour law—the gulf of discrimination and exclusion was no longer to be unbridged. Thus the German Provisional Agricultural Labour Code opens with the statement that the provisions of the civil code governing labour contracts shall apply to agricultural labour contracts 'supplemented by' the stipulations now laid down; this ensures, among other things, that all advances in general labour law fall to the benefit of agricultural as well as of other workers, and thus gets over the difficulty mentioned above; one result was seen in the development of a system of agricultural collective agreements in Germany based on the general law of collective bargaining for German workers. The Austrian provincial agricultural labour codes were perhaps not quite so categorical as the German code. They inclined to treat the special conditions which they laid down as principal conditions, which in their turn could be supplemented, but only in so far as the codes themselves prove deficient, by the labour clauses of the Austrian Federal Civil Code; it is consonant with this that the texts of the Austrian codes should themselves include a careful definition both of 'agriculture' and of 'the agricultural worker', the latter to include members of the employer's family working for regular remuneration, a definition of importance in peasant farming. Another way of dealing with the situation is to attack it by means of a restatement of general labour law. Such reformulations have been solemnly promised in the new

[1] See above, p. 81.

or revised constitutions of many of the east and central European countries. They entail a fundamental decision on the inclusion or exclusion of the agricultural labour contract under the laws to govern labour contracts in general. Will these revised or new labour codes repeat the mistake made by some of the western or northern European countries in the nineteenth century and omit agriculture? The action so far taken is various and can scarcely be assumed to be final in all cases. The new draft Czechoslovak labour code (ch. 27 of the draft civil code) seems inclined (Article 1110 (2)) to include agriculture only in so far as agricultural labour legislation itself makes default; this gives the agricultural worker the usual unsound position. The Polish Presidential Order of 1928 which deals with the contract of the ordinary worker categorically excludes agriculture, but the analogous Order of even date which deals with the contract of higher employees expressly mentions agricultural and forestry personnel. The German draft Labour Protection Act of 1927 originally included agriculture, but proposed subsequent amendments omitted agricultural workers; they have, however, been finally included in the National Socialist Labour Protection Act of 20 January 1934. On the other hand, the new Roumanian Act of 1929 on labour contracts definitely includes agricultural labour contracts—indeed, several clauses are formulated evidently with an eye to agriculture—so also does the new Spanish Act on contracts of 1931.

To sum up. The existence of special legislation to determine the nature of the agricultural labour contract is not now necessarily a factor which silently forbids appeal to all other legislation in connexion with such contracts. The applicability of general labour law depends in each country on the statements incorporated in the various texts. The more modernized texts, at any rate, may be described, so to say, as knowing their own limitations; except over the ground which forms the special subject-matter of the agricultural labour code, ordinary civil or labour law governs the agricultural labour contract. The best surety is given where the code itself draws attention to this and, as in the German Provisional Code, describes itself as 'supplementary' to general law. Common law rights and customary interpretations also survive side by side with the stipulations of an agricultural labour code, and again the text of the code may make reference to this state of affairs, recognizing the custom of the country, for instance, on minor matters (but even on such important points as wages rates), or making only very slight attempts to define such common law rights as pertain to the worker in sickness or after an accident (this frequently in the older Ordinances).

§ 5. *Groups of workers covered by agricultural labour codes or Ordinances.*

To what classes or groups of agricultural workers do the agricultural labour codes apply? As has already been stated, the farm labour Ordinance was a part of Master and Servant right, i.e. of the intimate but regulated relations between the head of a household and all who were members of this household. But what was a 'household'? How many persons did it cover? The position of the domestic servant was obvious; the master's natural stronghold was his own home, and those who lived in that home in attendance on him were inevitably subject to his personal authority. The position of the agricultural worker was a less predetermined question. The age-long history of the manor gave the landholding and employing classes a sort of initial claim to regard all who worked on their estates as members of an enlarged 'household', but in fact and in law there had been every degree of status for workers on the land; many independent forms of labour relationship had grown up, which were in no connexion with the working of the manor or household. The final tendency was towards simplification and the innumerable legal distinctions between different groups of the rural population tended to become obliterated. As this came about, the choice lay between bringing certain groups of agricultural workers definitely within the surviving power of the master or allowing them finally to enjoy the rights of the 'free' labour outside.

The actual decisions depended both on dates and on circumstances. In England, as we have seen, in 1875 no agricultural workers at all were left within the master's power.[1] But the line was frequently drawn in a very different way. Not only the young man or maid living at the farm-house, but even the married worker resident in a separate cottage were often rather artificially reckoned to belong to the 'household'. Thus the famous Prussian Servants' Ordinance of 1810 transferred the Prussian estate worker straight from a state of serfdom not to the condition of a free labourer, but to that of a household dependant, a position which was to hamper him for the next hundred years. The nineteenth century saw throughout central and in parts of eastern, southern, and northern Europe the adoption of a number of farm-servants' Ordinances based on the double principle of residence on the estate and the long-service contract; where those two elements were established, the worker was reckoned of the household (*Gesinde*). Indeed, there was a tendency for the master's

[1] See above, p. 78.

power to encroach still further, and contracts on a monthly basis, or even casual agricultural labour contracts, could be brought under such servants' law. This is rather an important point in agriculture; it made it possible to bring almost all agricultural labour contracts under Master and Servant right. The Estonian Peasants' Ordinance of 1856 is rather exceptional in excluding any except yearly contracts. The Courland 1819 Ordinance, and other texts, above all the Hungarian Act of 1907, admit contracts of one month's and more than one month's (sometimes three months') duration as governed by their stipulations. The effect is to bring large numbers of temporary workers under this legislation.

The situation varies a great deal. On the whole, it may be said that before the War the casual worker and even the quite regular day worker were usually left to shift for themselves: their contracts were simply on a customary basis. To this the Hungarian 1898 and the Russian 1906 Acts are the great exceptions; they regulate the contracts even of these workers, though not, of course, on identical lines of those of the longer contracts. After the War there is a renewed tendency towards comprehensiveness, this time because it is hoped that such action will not so much control as benefit the largest number of workers. Thus the German Provisional Code applies to all agricultural workers without distinction, the Austrian codes nearly so, with the exception of that of Vorarlberg; in Lower Austria even a week's contract and in other Austrian Provinces a contract for a 'certain' period bring workers within the codes.[1]

§ 6. *The length of the agricultural worker's contract: consequences of the long contract.*

It will be seen that in all this the worker's position is determined by the length of his contract. If we assume the twelve-monthly contract as the normal or standard contract which brings an agricultural

[1] To complete the discussion on the definition of an agricultural labour contract it is necessary to mention the question of the distinction between the farm-servant proper and the household or domestic servant employed at the farm. This distinction did not matter to the older legislation, as both workers were subject to the same conditions. When legislation progressively sought to assimilate the farm-servant to workers outside the farm, it became necessary to distinguish the farm-worker from the domestic worker. This was not found easy, as many workers, especially women workers, fulfil both farm and household duties. The definition usually ended by stating that a farm-servant was a person who 'predominantly' did farm-work. Austrian post-War legislation also made a distinction between persons working in small urban centres and those working in rural districts; this distinction was made in the interests of the domestic servants and in order to give a settled rule, but it has largely been abandoned.

worker under this type of special legislation, whether pre-War or post-War, namely, a farm-servant's Ordinance or an agricultural labour code, we shall not be wrong. This at once brings us up against the problem of the long contract itself and its justification. This we must consider in greater detail as it is one of the fundamental questions of agricultural labour law, or, indeed, of all labour law.

The case of agriculture is a somewhat special one. As was explained in an opening Chapter, the yearly period is the basic period in agricultural operations, and the yearly labour contract is its natural corollary and is, as a matter of fact, known to the agriculture of every country in the world. By a breach of such a yearly contract, or even in some circumstances of a shorter contract, the agricultural employer's rights are injured, his property damaged or endangered, and his profits risked, in a way not known in other industries. It is disastrous to interrupt the continuity of crop operations, while the keeping of live stock implies duties which it is even more impossible to neglect: harvests may be ruined and animals may die if the workers are not there to deal with them. On these fundamental facts, which cannot be denied, agriculture was justified in retaining a rather more conservative attitude to the labour contract than did other industries.

Granting all this, there is nevertheless a point beyond which retention of a worker's services becomes merely abusive; there are also means of enforcing such retention which can only be described as tyrannous. In the long run the counterpart to the worker's voluntary action in engaging to work is his freedom to abandon work: this, too, distinguishes him from the serf and the slave. Only this freedom requires to be regularized and justified, otherwise the notion of a contract vanishes altogether. The longer the period for which the worker contracts to work, the more urgent is the question of his eventual right at a given moment to break through his bond for some justifiable cause.

Here is a veritable crux in labour relations. Volumes have been written and prisons have been filled because of the assertion or the denial of this freedom to leave work. Time has brought experience, and gradually in all countries the law, while concerned always to maintain the notion of the inviolability of contract, has nevertheless abandoned the effort to secure that inviolability by enforcing on the unwilling worker a positive execution (or, to use the English law term, 'specific performance') of his contracted duties until the last day when the contract shall have fulfilled itself by the effluxion of time; that is to say, while the worker is not permitted to abandon his work wilfully and must pay the penalties of a breach of contract

if such breach is really established, nevertheless he is not compelled to carry out his duties to the bitter end under all circumstances.

This is now the generally accepted principle. But it was not easily evolved, and earlier systems knew no other way of protecting the worker than that of limiting the actual period of his 'bond', thus giving him, at stated intervals, opportunity of escaping from its harshest consequences. It was a subsequent and more refined idea to contemplate that under certain circumstances the bond itself was dissoluble. The further idea of softening and limiting the penalties imposable when breach of contract was in fact established came last of all.

Agriculture in the past has been guilty of the gravest sins on all these counts. Not only did the agricultural employer try to bind the worker for long periods at a time, but he also sought to render illusory the worker's natural desire to resume his bargaining freedom at the contracted intervals; still more did he object to the idea of arrangements to terminate contracts under certain circumstances during currency, and above all strove to retain in his armoury a whole outfit of the harshest penalties for any infractions of the letter of engagements.

Needless to say, these abuses are principally to be found at earlier epochs, during those periods when the agricultural labour contract was first emerging as a recognized legal relationship distinct from slavery, serfdom, or mere customary status. The most obvious form of oppression was the overlong contract (e.g. the contract for life) or the indefinite contract; the most obvious remedies were (*a*) initial definition or specification of period, and (*b*) prohibition of renewal by abusive methods or on ill-defined terms. Accordingly we find that in course of time almost every text came to lay down a year as the longest period for which a servant could be expected to bind himself; if nothing was stated, then a year was to be assumed (Polish Servants' Act of 1860 and others); more important still was the stipulation that tacit renewal by failure to give notice could be for a year at a time only. Doubtless these reforms were only gradually brought about. The Courland Peasants' Ordinance of 1819 recognizes contracts 'for several years', though renewal may only be for a year at a time. The Livonian Peasants' Ordinance of 1860, though considerably later in actual date, is much nearer to a state of serfdom. It admits as labour contracts engagements which run for twelve years, or such as imply services which in the aggregate will total 460 working days (this must refer to services rendered regularly for so many days per week or month) i.e. considerably over a year. But even this Ordinance insists that each contract must specify the

duration of its validity and also that silent renewal can only be for a year at a time. Again, the servant's position was still weak perhaps when, as in the Silesian Order of 1867 and the Bohemian Order of 1866, he was 'permitted' to agree to some term of engagement other than one year. As late as 1892, indeed, the Roumanian Servants' Act of that year frankly recognizes contracts exceeding a year.

A further abuse stopped when it was laid down that contracts could not be entered on too far ahead. Thus contracts for the ensuing January cannot be entered into before the previous 1 October, according to an amendment introduced by an Act of 1899 into the Silesian Servants' Order of 1867; the same proviso had been included in the Moravian Servants' Order of 1886. This prevents an unfair system of future pledging of services.

More widespread and insidious was, and still is in many countries in different parts of the world, the following evil. Formal completion of the worker's task, it was arranged, should not restore him to bargaining freedom, for care was taken to let him slip, or to push, him, into a position of permanent indebtedness to his employer; this indebtedness could only be worked off by entering into a fresh term of labour. This device was used to reduce even the free peasant to the position of a servant bonded for life. Where the right to occupy land was normally paid for by the rendering of labour services on the lord's demesne, it was easy to force on an oppressed population such an exaggerated statement of labour dues as could never in practice be finally worked off. Extensive use was made of this principle during the nineteenth century in Roumania.

These systems of chicanery are world-wide and have by no means been confined to eastern or central Europe. They have inflicted up till quite recently in this part of the world, and are still inflicting in innumerable other parts of the world, irreparable damage on millions of sufferers. Nevertheless, their explanation is not absolutely to be sought in mere lust of oppression; they are in part due to the real difficulties which the large holding so frequently experiences in providing itself with an adequate labour force. This is particularly apt to be the case when new social movements begin to pull the population away from remoter rural districts. Oppression is then desperately resorted to in order to bolster up the employer's position.

§ 7. *The termination of contracts: penal clauses.*

Arrangements for terminating contracts during currency under certain conditions also require to be dealt with and give rise to many difficulties. Unforeseen circumstances arise, such as the death of

the employer, sale of the estate, or sickness of or accident to the worker. These are definite facts, and on the whole their solutions may be said to present themselves. Such events terminate the bond, as is freely recognized even in the older Ordinances; the various texts only differ from each other in the liberality with which they attempt to prevent the process from being too abrupt by securing some period of further maintenance for the worker and his family or some arrangements for nursing him in illness or after accident; not much is attempted in the latter direction, but for the epoch from which the Ordinances date the arrangements laid down are not insignificant and are to be attributed to the recognition of the worker's position as a member of the household—they are the fruits of the old paternalistic view of the employment relation and as such by no means to be despised. Later, of course, one expects them to be replaced by sickness insurance and accident compensation legislation, and this is actually now taking place in a good many countries.

Some other events also relieve the servant from his bond; the female servant's marriage, for instance, is universally held to do so—but not always her pregnancy. Even more interesting is the fact that the servant's accession to property should set him free. This is best understood if it is realized that these 'labour' contracts have been part of an interlocked cultivation system, the first object of which is to get the fields sown and reaped rather than to sort out intricate human relationships. Indeed, older agricultural labour law still bears traces of the defensive organization of the community in contending with the forces of Nature. Later legislation sometimes includes a curiously wide clause which directs that changes in the worker's family affairs which make it impossible for him to continue his engagement without serious inconvenience to himself or circumstances which make his services at home necessary for the maintenance of his family shall release him from his contract. Here again we must envisage such situations, e.g. as that of the death or illness of a small cultivator necessitating the recall of an adult son from paid employment in order to enable the little family farm to be carried through the season's operations. This, it is more or less assumed, is a social necessity which overrides any employer's right.

Far more controversial is the claim to dissolve a bond on account of unsatisfactory conduct on either side. The great personal authority given to the master, including originally the power of corporal punishment, and his authoritative position in society generally placed the servant very much at his mercy; but on his side the master himself might well wish for relief from the burden of maintaining

over months, or giving house-room to, a dishonest, lazy, or inefficient servant. Consequently, all legislation attempts to define the causes which will justify denunciation of the contract. The lists of causes enumerated are of themselves of great interest. They include, on the employer's side, causes such as the following:[1] acts of violence, gross insults, or immoral proposals by the worker; unjustified refusal to work; gross neglect, intentional cruelty to animals, theft, fraud, &c.; contravention of police regulations or of master's orders for the prevention of fire; infectious or loathsome diseases contracted by the worker's own fault; admission of strangers to the house; malevolent damaging of property. On the worker's side: acts of violence, gross insults, or immoral proposals by the employer; outbreaks of infectious disease in the household dangerous to health; incapacity to continue work without danger to life or health; serious failure of the employer to observe the provisions of the contract. The great difficulty was to be precise enough, and significant additions are made from time to time on behalf of the worker, e.g. persistent non-payment or delay in the payment of wages on the part of the employer. Even so such definitions can scarcely prove satisfactory, and the German Provisional Code, while adding 'continual bad food'[2] and also 'unhealthy dwelling'[2] to the list of causes permitting the worker to break his contract, resumes the whole situation in a clause of much wider bearing which runs: 'Every circumstance in consideration of which one of the contracting parties could not be expected to continue the agreement shall be held to be an important reason justifying an immediate dissolution thereof.'

It is obvious that this, while very clearly recognizing the right of either party to dissolve, gives up the attempt to formulate a precise list of causes; its very liberality, however, deals a final blow at the idea of the indissoluble bond. The application of words so wide requires good judgement and sound administrative practice, built up on the necessary rulings from responsible courts. This is not too much to assume in a modern and progressive country. But the question has not always been so straightforward, nor is it even now so straightforward everywhere. Even without any such wide phrasing it was sufficiently disadvantageous to the worker that the causes justifying dissolution of contract should, however carefully drawn up, be of such a nature as necessarily to invite the most varying and the most personal interpretations. A crushing inequality was only

[1] The reader will remember that some of the legislation applies also to domestic servants, who appear to be specially envisaged at certain points.

[2] So also some of the Austrian codes.

oo often introduced by the further proviso that he must seek the irection of a court when wishing to be released. Even if the employer vere (as he by no means always was) under the same liability, the ituation was not thereby rendered level. Seldom could the worker ither know how, or dare, or afford, thus to address himself to the ocal magistrate, and seldom indeed could he expect to have the local udicial power on his side, allied as it most frequently was by every ie of birth, interest, and community of outlook with the employer. That the neighbouring magistrate sat in the employer's pocket is a act too notorious to be denied. Advances in standards of general dministration, in public integrity, in social impartiality, have been nd can be the only cure, and it is to these factors that the worker ias had to look for the confirmation of his formal rights.

Failing confirmation of his right to abandon his contract, the worker vho chose, or was driven, to leave his work was guilty of 'desertion'; ny new employer who took him was stated to be 'harbouring' iim and was guilty of an offence. To the master whose interests are hus injured a series of penalties are, in theory, open as follows; we ist them in the order of their importance. The mildest is an action n a civil court against the defaulting employee and, if occasion irise, against any person harbouring or assisting him. This remedy s formally always available and must continue to be so if contract s to mean anything at all. The courts only differ in practice as to iow far the master has to prove a specific damage to his interests. Where such an action for civil damages is the master's only remedy, the servant's risk in leaving his employment is not great, for it is seldom worth the employer's while to institute such proceedings. Common sense usually trusts to the fact that a defaulting servant will have difficulty in obtaining fresh employment without some testimonial or backing from his previous employer. This risk becomes very great indeed for the servant where a system of personal work licences is in force, it being a legal misdemeanour to seek work without the proper licence carrying a proper record of discharge. Such a licence system effectively reinforces the employer's power, and agriculture has made large use of it. Next in order of penalties is the master's power to bring an action in a civil court against his defaulting or recalcitrant worker which will entail not damages but a fine, and this fine may eventually bring imprisonment; or the court may have the power to inflict imprisonment without the option of a fine. Then comes an action before a civil court or more usually before the police authorities which ends in an order to the worker to return to work; this order again may be enforced by fine or by

imprisonment. After this we pass to a different and more violent type of remedy, namely, application for the assistance of the authorities in restoring, by physical force, the person of the servant to his master with a view to compelling him to perform his duties for the remaining term of his contract; or the same, but carried out by the master in person on order from the authorities (the 'right of pursuit');[1] the same, carried out by the master on his own responsibility without the need for applying to the authorities at all. Perhaps with the last-named we may say with justice that slavery and the slave-hunt do not loom so very far away after all.

All these penalties have been, and some even of the severer type still are, here and there, known to agriculture. Details will be found in almost any text constituting a part of Master and Servant law. It is here sufficient to mention a few scattered examples. Restoration by police force of the person of the 'deserting' servant to his master has been common, indeed almost universal. It is laid down in such texts as the Courland Peasants' Ordinance of 1819, the Estonian Peasants' Ordinance of 1856, the Galician Servants' Ordinance of 1857, the Polish Act of 1860 on Rural Communal Courts, the Bohemian Servants' Ordinance of 1866, the Silesian Servants' Ordinance of 1867, the Moravian Servants' Act of 1886, and numerous old Austrian and German Orders. In Roumania the 1864 Act on Agricultural Contracts established the *boyar*'s right to apply to the administrative authorities in cases of breach of contract; in 1872 resort was allowed to *military* force; these arrangements applied to the services of peasant tenants; in 1893, however, these rights of the employer were abandoned, and still more definitely in 1907; even the Roumanian Servants' Act of 1892 does not permit physical restoration of the servant's person; a system of debts in the case of tenants and of fines and licences in the case of servants was used instead. Fines and imprisonment are frequently resorted to. In Russia the criminal code made deliberately impudent behaviour or open disobedience combined with impudence punishable with one month's imprisonment or fine, while the 1906 Act on the Engagement of Agricultural Workers included many possibilities of severe punishment for day workers.

All these penal systems are now either formally or in practice abolished. In Czechoslovakia, for instance, an early post-War Act of 17 October 1919 soon put an end to the penal clauses of the Silesian, Bohemian, and Moravian texts; in Roumania the new 1929 Act replaces both that of 1907 for day workers and that of 1892 for servants; in Poland the new constitution is held to override any

[1] This may be studied in some South American legislation.

penal clauses not yet formally abrogated; in Germany, as we have seen, the first proclamation of the new Republic made short work of the penal system in rural districts; there is no trace of penal punishments in the post-War Austrian codes.[1]

One country only, Hungary, still insists on retaining her penal clauses. In the course of legislating on agricultural labour towards the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, while great progress was made in Hungary in protecting the worker's wages, right to employment, accommodation, &c., only very minor alleviations were introduced into the penal provisions of the two Acts of 1898 (day workers) and 1907 (farm-servants), which replaced the earlier Act of 1876 (on all groups of farm-workers) and are still in daily application. Under the 1907 Act the master's own personal powers over his farm-servant do not go beyond giving a reprimand. He may of course proceed to claim damages from his servant in a civil court—it was pointed out above that without such a provision no enforceable contract can be said to exist; the servant only acquired a parallel right under the 1907 Act, having previously (1876) merely had a vague right of complaint against 'unjust treatment'. But this is unimportant. The true enforcement of the 1907 Act depends not on any civil proceedings but on the heavy powers of coercion still left in the hands of the employer in conjunction with the local authorities. By application to these he can have his servant fined, arrested, imprisoned, or brought back by physical force to fulfil his duties. Among other things a fine is imposable for disobedience, while force may be used to make the servant perform *any* duties 'for a short time and so as not to exceed his strength and capacity' (though not an illegal or immoral act); fines, if not paid, are turned into terms of imprisonment, particularly oppressive being the possibility of a term of imprisonment after the contract has run out when the servant has been brought back and made to fulfil its terms to the end. Analogous powers, more briefly described, are given under the 1898 Act in dealing with day workers and gangs of seasonal workers; these again include the 'restoration' of the worker or workers to their tasks by physical compulsion. Some attempt to prevent the worst abuse of the powers given is implied in the master's obligation (first inserted in the 1907 Act) to make his application to the local authorities within a week of the alleged offence, and also in some clauses, not lacking in severity, which give the local authorities power to fine a master—especially for ill treatment

[1] These codes even admit the principle of permitting terminations of a longer contract by simply giving a period of notice.

of a worker—to force him to find accommodation for a worker, and even in rare circumstances to imprison him. The local authorities, for their part, provide themselves with the privilege of arresting as a criminal vagrant a day labourer repeatedly guilty of 'desertion'; under the 1898 Act, as contrasted with that of 1876, it was laid down that such repetition of offence could not be sought further than two years back. The general effect of all the clauses taken together is to place the worker who has once entered into a bond or even a shorter contract completely at the mercy of his employer as regards performance of his duties, obedience to orders, &c. On the other hand, he is effectively protected against any system of debt peonage, which has played such ravages in other countries, and even on such questions as accommodation and food he is not left without help; finally, he is exposed neither to fraud nor negligence.

§ 8. *Positive contents of codes and Ordinances.*

We must now consider briefly the substantial or positive contents of a servants' Ordinance or agricultural labour code. An important part of all earlier texts is devoted to describing the general rights and obligations of the two parties towards each other. Perhaps at first most stress is laid on the duties of the servant; it was a considerable step forward when the obligations of the master came to be noted with equal care. Gradually less and less importance is attached to these general rights and obligations until in the German Provisional Code they disappear altogether. The reasons for this are not difficult to realize. In the first place, the general phrases used opened, or could open, the way to great abuse. It was a protection to the worker, at any rate, to have his duties described in ever more precise terms; there is therefore a tendency to drop out the old vague clauses, although no doubt in their day these had done good service. In the second place, certain departments of the contract came to be developed in greater detail, e.g. the care to be given to the worker in sickness or after accident. Separate longer clauses and eventually even separate sickness or accident insurance legislation rendered superfluous the original vague definition of the employer's duty on these heads. Finally, the patriarchal and benevolent side of the relationship between master and man, which found expression in the description of general rights and duties, vanished. Thus the older texts enjoin the master to encourage the servant to be thrifty and sober and invariably insist that he shall allow the servant time in which to observe his religious duties; the servant for his part is to be faithful and of moral behaviour. These clauses tend to disappear.

Nevertheless, certain general statements of rights and obligations persist—the German code mentioned above is the only text which wholly omits them; even such modern texts as the Austrian Provincial Codes retain a great deal of them. They include directions like the following. The worker must present himself at the time agreed upon for his service, he must perform the work incumbent upon him diligently and conscientiously, he must be obedient, he must take instructions from any member of the employer's family (this is an important part of the definition of the contract), or from the employer's agent, he must be respectful to the employer and his family and of good conduct, he must take care of dwelling and of tools, must be kind to animals, be careful of lights (unkindness to beast and carelessness in handling lights are often laid down as justifying the master to break the contract), must keep the peace with other servants, must avoid all evil talk against his master. The master, on his side, must treat the worker justly and properly (the word 'kindly' is very occasionally used), he must not allot to the worker work beyond his skill or strength, he must maintain the worker in his household, give him proper accommodation, food, &c.

Gradually the obligations, especially those of the master, are, as we have stated, developed with more precision. They cease to be expressed as general obligations and constitute the subject-matter of special clauses, which come to be laid down with greater and greater insistence. More especially is this the case in regard to the payment of wages. The payment of wages forms the most important item among those 'particulars' of the contract which the oldest texts take care to state must be settled beforehand, and, what is more, as the result of free agreement. This mention of free agreement marks a stage of the utmost significance in agricultural labour law, namely, the birth of the voluntary contract, but in view of the remarks previously made on the passage from serfdom or status to contract it is not necessary to enlarge further on this subject here. We can deal immediately with the matter of wages.

§ 9. *The enforcement of wages payments.*

As regards wages, the first point to establish is that remuneration is, in fact, due. Without remuneration the worker is without enforceable rights.[1] Interesting is the opening clause of the Hungarian Act of 1923 respecting the Prevention of the Unjustifiable Exploitation of the Labour of Agricultural Workers, which declares null and

[1] However, not all legislations in theory subscribe to the giving of 'valuable consideration' as a necessary ingredient in a labour contract.

void any agreement requiring a worker to perform work or render services without adequate special remuneration or without a specified equivalent return, and directs that if such work has been performed or such services rendered the worker shall, notwithstanding any previous agreement to the contrary, be able to claim the corresponding wage; interesting, in that such a clause is still necessary in a modern law.[1] Otherwise, at least by the nineteenth century, it is usually a matter of assumption that the contract includes some offer of remuneration.

This remuneration is, in agriculture, almost always both in cash and in kind, remuneration in kind outweighing. Nothing except remuneration in kind is first forbidden in Roumania by the 1929 Act on Labour Contracts, which thus imposes at least a small cash wage. Otherwise all the legislation practically without exception concentrates on insisting that both kinds of remuneration shall in fact be paid and paid punctually. It is illuminating to note the insistence with which definite intervals for payment come to be laid down, daily, weekly, or monthly, and in the case of yearly contracts, every quarter (but this was originally a reform); these intervals tend to become shorter, so that weekly payment of cash wages even in the case of yearly contracts is laid down in the German Provisional Code. Another claim of the workers is satisfied where it is laid down that more of the total annual wage is due for the hard work of the summer (Austrian codes); but again the German Provisional Code lays down that the winter wage must not thereby be unduly reduced. These details show how many small points can arise out of these long contracts. Persistent non-payment or unpunctuality in the payment of wages usually entitles a worker to break the contract.

Equally important are the many stipulations which deal with the payment of wages in kind. Practically all texts came to include stipulations prohibiting a number of malpractices. The giving of goods for cash (and, strikingly enough, later, of cash commutations for goods unless with the workers' consent), of vouchers for goods, of spirits instead of foodstuffs (a not uncommon stipulation), of spirits in any case,[2] are all forbidden, as are any arrangements to compel the worker to agree to buy his necessaries from an employer's canteen. The reader will recognize a state of affairs which has led to truck Acts in all countries. Owing to the particular conditions of agricultural work and the practice of giving many agricultural

[1] The Act has passed under very peculiar conditions of inflation, which rendered the wage question extraordinarily difficult.

[2] Prohibited also in some Dutch collective agreements.

workers large allowances of the produce of the estate with a view to their selling the surplus and thus supplementing their very small cash wages, it is also necessary to add a stipulation forbidding the worker to agree to sell back—at illusory prices—this *deputat* to his employer or any person appointed by his employer. As regards benefits not consisting of saleable produce, e.g. land, cartage facilities, ploughing services, use of mill, &c., a number of careful clauses are laid down in Hungarian legislation, which may well be read—they are illuminating. Stipulations that board must be ample, of good quality, &c., are practically universal; it is occasionally added that meals must be the customary meals of the locality or that they must be palatable. The Hungarian Act of 1898 contains an important clause to the effect that the cash value of the board must be stated in harvesters' contracts.

Very interesting arrangements were introduced for the first time in agricultural labour law by some of the Austrian codes concerning both long-service bonuses and leaving grants. This was an attempt to express in money and on behalf of the worker something of the value attaching to the long service which agriculture so insistently requires and which, in the past, she has sometimes so peremptorily enforced: the arrangements are thus the lighted up side of the picture of which the reverse is sunk in the shadows of earlier centuries. At intervals of five or ten years, according to the agricultural labour codes of Carinthia, Lower and Upper Austria, Salzburg, and Styria, the worker is entitled to a cash bonus amounting to a certain percentage of his yearly *money* wage (the reader will remember that the money wage is the smaller part of total remuneration); the percentage ranges from 25 per cent. of the money wage after five years' service to 200 per cent. after forty years' service, according to the Carinthian and Styrian codes, which are the most generous. Under the Burgenland code an agricultural worker who, after having worked uninterruptedly for the same employer, is discharged without fault of his own or leaves prematurely for good reason, is entitled to a percentage, ranging from extremes of 25 per cent. after ten years' to 100 per cent. after forty years' service, of his yearly wages in money *and in kind*; arrangements similar in principle are found in the new Federal Austrian Estate Employees Act of 1923. These arrangements are not found in other legislation, and certain of them have since been abandoned owing to the present agricultural depression. But they are in themselves interesting as showing an attempt made by agriculture on original lines to adapt something of the spirit of the modern treatment of labour to the still rather old-fashioned conditions under which so many agricultural workers, especially farm-servants, work.

§ 10. *The agricultural labour codes and Ordinances in Europe define and illustrate usages still common in other parts of the world.*

Further details of the contents of agricultural labour codes will be found in the chapters on 'Hours of Work', 'Housing', and 'Collective Agreements in Agriculture'. The description of the general character and contents of these codes and the farm-servants' Ordinances has already proved long, too long perhaps, it might be argued, in view of the fact that so much of the older legislation is falling into disuse after the War. Nevertheless, it is necessary to be made aware of the former state of affairs for various reasons. In the first place, such systems having been continued over long periods, indeed, over generations, with accompaniments sometimes of the utmost misery, they must necessarily leave a difficult heritage behind. Giving all the credit possible to new and enlightened governments in their endeavours to free the rural populations of east and central Europe, and allowing also full weight to such factors as the neighbourhood of the Russian Revolution and to the successful carrying out in these countries themselves of agrarian reform with its final destruction of the power of an entrenched agrarian aristocracy, nevertheless the effects of decades of history do not vanish in a moment. It is hardly to be expected that the agricultural wage-paid worker in the more remote districts will at once have leaped into the full satisfactions of a modern labour contract. He has been best catered for in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany, and Poland, where there has been definite legislation on his behalf; to a lesser extent in Roumania. Elsewhere legislation has been abortive (Estonia) or has not been attempted. In many places his conditions of service are still largely settled on a customary basis.

In the second place, though we have referred solely to Europe in our examination of the agricultural labour codes, analogous conditions are found in many other parts of the world. These conditions are not so definitely laid down, they do not form so close a system, and they have not so integral a place in the general labour law as the European servants' Ordinances and labour codes have had in the development of European labour law. But it is easiest to understand these rather fragmentary legislations, or even many customary usages in other parts of the world, if the substance and nature of this European legislation is first grasped in all its implications.[1]

[1] See also Appendix No. 3, *The Agricultural Labour Contract in Tropical and Sub-Tropical Countries.*

VII

HOURS OF WORK

§ 1. *Working hours in agriculture; the natural tendency to excessive effort in summer and relaxation in winter.*

On no subject touching agricultural labour have more violent opinions been expressed than on that of the hours which ought to be worked in carrying on agricultural operations. Undoubtedly the position of the workers in this matter, as of the persons principally concerned, merits our most conscientious attention. It is on their behalf that hours must be limited—the cry arises out of human considerations; we are treating it here as the first of the 'human conditions' in agriculture: its intrinsic importance implies that. Nor can the attitude of the workers admit of any doubt. They have for years complained in a great many countries that their working day is far too long.

This complaint is apt to be met with the argument that the natural circumstances under which agricultural operations are carried on do not admit of a regulation or of a restriction of hours. We will therefore first examine the problem in a somewhat general way.

The problem of working hours in agriculture has two separate aspects, and it is the combination of these which creates the real difficulty. In the first place, there is animal husbandry of every kind. The care of animals is a continuous duty, in which no neglect can be contemplated. It is true that the regular periods of work imposed by such duties are interrupted by intervals when little or nothing need be done, but these intervals do not allow freedom enough to the worker to be considered as full leisure time. Nevertheless, in spite of the peculiarly onerous demands which such duties thus make on those responsible, their carrying out has usually an innate character of stability throughout the year, with only brief exceptions during breeding periods. Animal husbandry gives rise to the long working day, but a regular one.

The problem is the exact opposite in crop-production. Here the time-table swings to all extremes. There are usually two peak periods, sowing and harvest, when the whole efforts of the farming staff scarcely suffice to master the situation. The weather often intensifies the urgent character of the work. Thus, in crop-work, while operations do not imply the tiresomeness of the long spreadover, they expose the worker to the alternate tyranny of rush work and idleness in constant succession.

It is one of the oldest principles of crop-farming to try and even

out the unevenness of Nature's seasons by planting a variety of crops, calculated to require their chief care at different intervals; in this way a continual succession of tasks in crop-growing is available, which, taken one after the other, call for a fair degree of regularity of effort. 'Mixed farming', properly so called, is a further advance; by joining animal husbandry to crop-production a certain innate balance of labour consumption is obtained—if there are not turnips to be hoed, there are cows to be milked, if there are not cows to be milked, there are turnips to be hoed: 'there is always something to be done on a farm.'

In essence, this has been an effort to secure the benefits[1] of either form of production—animal production and crop-production—simultaneously. It may, however, often be asked whether the object pursued—namely the regularizing of the calls on labour—has been attained, or whether, instead of a combination of advantages, an accumulation of disadvantages has perhaps come about. The adjustment of the operations to secure perfectly smooth running throughout the year is a supremely difficult task. The effort to adjust tends to run out into mere multiplicity of operations and overwork—an evil tradition is created.

These remarks apply to the spring, summer, and autumn. In the winter there is quite another difficulty, that of want of work. This difficulty also has never been adequately dealt with. It brings with it the great evil of irregularity of occupation, if not of total idleness and unemployment. The problem has become more intense in proportion as farming equipment and construction have during the last century been gradually modernized and supplied from factories, so that the usual repairing tasks of the winter have largely fallen away, not to speak of the total decline of rural creative handicrafts such as weaving and woodwork. In tropical countries also the agricultural population can be idle half the year owing to the climatic conditions and is correspondingly poor. Ultimately, the seasonal factor has a supremely important influence on agricultural employment as a whole, which we shall examine at a later point in this book.

§ 2. *The difficulties of regulation need not prove insuperable.*

It is plain, in view of all these facts, that when the workers approach the farmers with demands for (*a*) a shorter, and (*b*) a more

[1] The benefits, of course, include the conservation of soil fertility by combining the keeping of animals with the cultivation of the land. This is no doubt to be conceived as the principal object, the smoothing out of labour performance over the year being the second most important aim.

regular working day, they are putting a difficult request. It is easy to dismiss it as an impossible one. Nevertheless, this easy dismissal fails to carry conviction. There is another side to the situation. Have the reasonable requirements of labour ever been seriously and fairly considered? Has not the farming industry been built up with an almost criminal disregard of human effort? Far too often the worker's labour is dispersed by the cultivation of distant areas which ought to have been consolidated long ago; it is wasted because the work is not properly planned by his employer; operations are needlessly extended through want of proper tools; hour upon hour is consumed in the course of the year because the lay-out of the farm is absurd; finally, there is in any case a tendency to extend production to a point where it can secure the producer a living only at the cost of inordinate effort, and the farmer, while he expects the worker to join in this common effort, permits the reward secured by such additional labour to accrue solely to himself. It is not only natural circumstances which have created the long working day in agriculture.

The demands of the workers therefore require to be examined on their merits and with an unprejudiced mind. In this examination it is of principal importance to realize that both a regularization of the length of the working day over the course of the year and actual restriction of hours have already been achieved in practice in some instances. These positive victories for the workers have not, except perhaps in a slight degree here and there, been due to pressure of a political character; on the contrary, one or two political victories in this field have proved illusory. In general, the policy has been pursued almost without public notice and arrangements have been attained because employers were genuinely persuaded that they were possible. If the proof of the pudding is in the eating, then the 'experiment' of restricted working hours in agriculture may be described as an established one, even if not yet over a very wide field.

§ 3. *The question raised internationally in 1921.*

The idea of regulating hours of work in agriculture by international agreement was put forward at an early stage in the international discussions which followed the War. The question was, in fact, mentioned before the Peace Treaty was signed by the Italian representatives at the Commission of the Peace Conference which dealt with labour questions.[1] In a Memorandum to define the functions of future international machinery to handle such labour questions the Italian delegation had the hardihood to refer to the 8-hour day in

[1] International Labour Office, *Official Bulletin*, vol. i, pp. 241, 243.

agriculture. Subsequently the machinery was set up, the well-known International Labour Organisation. A part of that Organisation was a conference, which was to be called annually under the title of the International Labour Conference. The first two sessions of this Conference, held in 1919 and 1920, were devoted respectively to industry in the narrower sense and to maritime questions. In 1921 the turn of agriculture seemed to have come.

An agricultural labour programme was therefore drawn up and included the item of hours of work. It might naturally be expected that the discussions would be considerably influenced by what had been done in 1919 and 1920, and this, in fact, was the case in so far as concerns the decisions reached in 1919.[1] The outstanding decision taken in 1919 had been the adoption of an international Convention[2] laying down the principle of the 8-hour day and 48-hour week for workers in industry. The task in 1921 was to apply this to agriculture.

Opposition was, however, already crystallizing rapidly. Even the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, which early in 1920 took the decision to place agricultural labour topics on the 1921 agenda, was not unanimous and did not venture beyond the phrase 'adaptation' of the 1919 decisions (especially, of course, of the 8-hour day) to agricultural labour, while the documents prepared for the use of the coming conference were constrained to mention the fact that objections had been lodged and to defend the action taken on the best terms possible. The subsequent efforts of two governments went so far as to attempt to have agriculture altogether excluded from the competence of the International Labour Organisation, an attempt very properly defeated by an advisory opinion of the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague given in 1922;[3] for it is abundantly clear that there was no such exclusive intention in the minds of those who drew up the Peace Treaty. However, the opposition was so far successful as to prevent the discussion in 1921 of the specific question of the regulation of hours of labour in agriculture; this item, when formally challenged at the outset of the proceedings, obtained only 63 as against 39 votes.[4]

[1] The session of 1920 was itself only an attempt to apply some of the 1919 principles to maritime labour.

[2] A Convention has to be ratified, independently and separately, by the 'competent authority' (usually the parliament) in each country. When so ratified, but not before, it acquires the character of a binding international engagement on the countries ratifying: every country is free to refuse to proceed to ratification. See Appendix No. 7.

[3] International Labour Office, *Official Bulletin*, vol. vi, pp. 339–73.

[4] *International Labour Conference, Third Session*, Geneva, 1921 (Record of Proceedings), vol. i, pp. 90, 131.

By only a few votes the necessary two-thirds' majority required to place an item on the agenda of the Conference was lacking. The Conference was able by a later vote of 73 to 18 to adopt a resolution declaring that 'the regulation of hours of work in agriculture be inserted in the agenda of a future session'. But, as was pointed out at the time, this decision was not binding on the Conference in the sense that the topic had to be brought up again within a certain period; indeed, it was only on the understanding of its non-binding character that it was adopted.

Thus the first discussion at Geneva of the problem of working hours in agriculture was a very stormy one; it ended in a completely negative way. The agricultural workers can bring a serious accusation against the post-War international community, namely, that their case as regards working hours was for years never even discussed at international head-quarters. In view of the notorious failure of the (industrial) 8-hour day Convention to secure ratifications sufficient to make it a really effective instrument of international labour policy, the relegation to the background of the claims of the agricultural workers on the subject of the length of their working day has possibly been inevitable; but it does not make their case any the less hard.

§ 4. *Opinion in 1921 unprepared: the difficulties of the eight-hour day in agriculture: the forty-hour week.*

The fact is that the topic was—in 1921—too new. The opposition which so instantly arose was in part genuine astonishment and alarm. Few had ever heard of hours of work in agriculture being regulated and restricted. The information which the International Labour Office managed to put together in preparation for the 1921 debates showed, with one exception, 1916 as the earliest year in any of the fifteen countries referred to when such a measure had been a matter for legislation or other decision; in many countries nothing whatever on the subject of formal or agreed regulation of hours in agriculture could be discovered. The contrasts in national legislation between industry and agriculture are in this direction very great. By 1919 a whole century had elapsed since the idea of cutting down by law overlong hours of work in factories had first been mooted; a great body of experience and an illuminating history of effort was ready on which to build. The situation in agriculture was, and still is, very different. Not everything therefore must be attributed to the wane of the first wave of post-War enthusiasm for social reform or to the opposition of any particular government.

Not only were the agricultural workers many decades behind the industrial workers, but the idea also gained credence, and not unnaturally, that they wanted to start at once on top gear. Those who might have been willing to consider regulation of hours as such were frightened by talk of the rigid 8-hour day in farming. The word *adaptation*, so carefully chosen by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office in 1921, was ignored or pushed aside, and obscure editors of country journals did not hesitate to vaunt their superior knowledge of rural conditions by exposing the impossibility of working eight hours day after day on a farm and in pouring their scorn on the doctrinaire debaters of Geneva. In truth, the practical difficulties of applying anything that can with correctness be called an 8-hour day in agriculture are so obvious that it becomes doubtful whether it is worth while embarrassing public opinion with a discussion theoretically on the basis of the so-called 8-hour day in agriculture. An early statement from the workers' side[1] deprecated thus forcing the issue, and attempted to concentrate attention on the idea underlying 'adaptation'. But the agricultural workers themselves have never been united on the point. The National Union of Agricultural Workers of England and Wales, a vigorous and important trade union, still maintain an unyielding formal demand for an 8-hour day in agriculture. The question thus raised causes great embarrassment, for to withdraw from such a demand implies that agricultural workers are willing to accept a position inferior to that accorded to workers in industry, all of whom claim the 8-hour day and many of whom enjoy it or an even shorter day. A compromise resolution adopted by the Fourth Congress of the International Land Workers' Federation at Geneva in 1926 formulated the problem rather ingeniously by stating that:

'the efforts to secure an international limitation of the working day in industry to eight hours without extending at the same time the slightest degree of protection (concerning hours) to the agricultural worker must necessarily encourage the drift of population to the towns';

the resolution terminates by demanding 'the same rights to protection by law' as are accorded to workers in other occupations.[2]

[1] M. Jouhaux, French workers' delegate at the 1921 International Labour Conference: 'I should say that the workers have never contemplated the absolute application of the 8-hour day to agriculture. We entirely recognize that special procedure will be needed in order to apply this legislation. I think, therefore, that this most misleading argument should not be put forward any longer.' *International Labour Conference, Third Session*, Geneva, 1921 (Record of Proceedings), vol. i, p. 80.

[2] Internationale Landarbeiter-Foederation, *Bericht des Sekretars über die Tatigkeit in der Zeit vom Oktober 1928–Mai 1931*, Stockholm, 1931, p. 13.

The interpretation of what exactly may be counted to amount to 'the same rights' thus becomes the point at issue. In effect, everybody who wants any regulation at all wants much the same thing, namely, the striking of *an average in the course of the year*. It was perfectly legitimate, when the 8-hour day was the great topic, to start from the claim that the average so struck should not exceed the eight hours worked by the industrial worker (Agrarian Programme of the German Social Democratic Party, Kiel, 1927; Agrarian Programme of the Austrian Social Democratic Party, Vienna, 1925). These revised demands usually make full allowances for large recognized exceptions in certain branches of farm-work or on certain types of farming enterprise. Thus scaled down, they may nevertheless be described as maximum programmes at the time when they were formulated. Arrangements much less categorical, which merely ask for regulation of some kind, are frequently accepted by the workers as no small instalment of their desires. Thus the statement on agricultural policy issued by the French General Confederation of Labour in 1927 simply notes that the Confederation 'has never relaxed its claim for a regulation of the hours of work of agricultural wage-earning workers'.[1]

With the total alteration of the industrial situation consequent on the existing world depression, ideas about the length of the working day have, as is common knowledge, recently undergone a radical reformulation. The demand for the 8-hour day has been replaced by the demand for the 40-hour or even the 30-hour week. The grounds on which demands for shorter working hours are put have also shifted: economic arguments, more especially the spread of unemployment, are used to reinforce the pleas originally based on social considerations. The 40-hour week in industry has recently been the biggest question before the International Labour Conference. At an early stage of the discussions on this subject the agricultural workers requested that the topic should not be handled without reference to agriculture. It was, however, held by the so-called Tripartite Preparatory Conference on the Reduction of Hours of Work (Geneva, January 1933) that it was not a competent body to deal with hours of work in agriculture (the item in that form had neither been mentioned in the preparatory communications to governments nor were agricultural delegates in fact present). The Resolution which was put by the whole body of workers' delegates to that Conference was therefore not directly voted but referred to the Governing Body of the

[1] *Le Peuple*, 22 Dec. 1927, cited in International Labour Office, *Industrial and Labour Information*, vol. xxv, no. 5, p. 173.

International Labour Office. This Resolution,[1] which is of considerable importance as reopening the topic of working hours in agriculture internationally after a silence of twelve years, states (*a*) that hours of work in agriculture are too long, (*b*) that the reduction of hours of work in industry ought *ipso facto* to raise the question of hours of work in agriculture (the old plea for equivalent, even if not formally identical, conditions in agriculture and in industry), and (*c*) that similar economic arguments substantiating the demand for shorter working hours apply to agriculture as to industry, a great increase in unemployment having recently been remarked in agriculture; the Resolution terminates with a demand that an inquiry be undertaken by the International Labour Office into hours actually worked in agriculture. This inquiry is now pending, so that the question of hours of work in agriculture may be said at length to have been reopened for international discussion. Further than that the matter has not got, for no commitment has been made as to any international policy.

It therefore becomes particularly necessary in view of the reopening of the question before the International Labour Organisation, to review with as much accuracy as possible all the experiments so far carried out in regulating working hours in agriculture. These experiments will therefore be analysed in the following sections of the present Chapter.[2]

§ 5. *National legislation: some practical considerations.*

In practice the problem falls into separate parts, each of which can be attacked by itself. It is unquestionably much easier to lay down arrangements for staff hired from outside and employed on routine operations than for the men and women in and about the farm-house —the farm-servants—who are responsible for the thousand and one odd jobs which have to be done, and who, as a rule, are in charge of stock. Yet even the hours of such staff need not be limitless. They can be stated in such terms as will either secure a good night's rest, or certain Sundays off duty, or the Saturday half-holiday, or even more strictly as beginning and ending when certain specified tasks have been performed, or possibly as the amount of time required for the looking after of a specified number of animals which must not be exceeded;

[1] See Appendix No. 7.

[2] The facts mentioned in the next sections of the present Chapter will be found set forth in detail in *I.L.R.*, vol. xxv, no. 1, pp. 79–101, 'The Present Regulation of Hours of Work in Agriculture', and in International Labour Office, *Studies and Reports*, Series K, No. 11, *Collective Agreements in Agriculture*, Geneva, 1933 (Ch. II. ii. 1, 'Hours of Work').

in any case, if the hours of the outside workers are brought down, it is very unlikely that those of the resident farm staff will not also be greatly eased by pure imitation.

It has in all cases been necessary to start the demand straight away with a claim for a restriction of hours of adult male labour. It was quite impossible to imitate the appeal to humanitarian principle of the early nineteenth century in dealing with factory conditions, when a start was made on the initial plea of preventing the overworking of child labour and female labour. In agriculture the work of women and children is largely seasonal and often lasts only a few weeks. The particular evil of long hours does exist, but it is not prima facie the worst of their working conditions, which are characterized by low wages rather than by anything else. Male labour has therefore had to make its own claims good, and on the grounds of simple common sense. The advance in industrial conditions has throughout been a powerful stimulus, and it is not surprising that the most marked progress has been made in countries where industrialism is predominant or becoming important, e.g. in Germany, Czechoslovakia, Italy. The worst problem arises in countries of peasant farming where there exists nevertheless a class of wage-paid workers. The situation is here baffling from the point of view of the worker, who finds it very difficult to advance any arguments which have a clinching effect on the mind of the small employer.

§ 6. *Abortive early post-War legislation.*

The actual legislation on hours of work in agriculture in force in Europe differs widely in scope and value. We may pass very summarily over early post-War efforts which have proved either abortive or short-lived. In Spain an 8-hour day Decree was adopted on 15 January 1920, which, contrary to what was being decided in most countries even during this brief period of post-War enthusiasm for social reform, included agriculture in its scope; a stipulation permitting the adoption of a 48-hour week instead of an 8-hour day was included, while another special Decree of the same date attempted to make the principle work in agriculture mainly by taking out of the operation of the basic Decree the pastoral industry, all harvest work, and all persons employed in a part domestic capacity in the farm household, and further by making arrangements for overtime. There is no evidence that this Decree, as concerns its application to agriculture, ever got beyond a paper enactment. Some promising legislation in Estonia, which dated from an even earlier period immediately after the War, eventually also led to nothing. In this country an initial

Proclamation of November 1918 laid down the 8-hour day for all industries, agriculture included. This was followed by a special Act of 13 September 1919, which mentioned a total 2,250 hours in the year to be worked by agricultural workers; the distribution over the year was left to provincial committees representative of the interests concerned. The system of committees broke down and another special Act of 13 May 1921 fixed daily hours for the year 1921–2 as follows: May to September 11 hours, October 9 hours, November 7 hours, December and January 6 hours, February and March 7 hours, April 10 hours, which make an average of 9 hours over the year; a more permanent Act of 21 October 1921 set up a revised system of committees and reaffirmed the principle of the 9-hour daily average over the year. Once again the whole system (which was to deal with other working conditions as well as hours) proved abortive, principally owing to the general weakness of the workers and to the absence of sanctions in the legislation; the committees have long since ceased to exist, and no attempt has been made to revive them. Very similar legislation was discussed in the Latvian Parliament in 1924, but rejected, while a Lithuanian Act of 18 April 1922, which laid down a 10-hours daily average over the year with variations from a day of 7 hours in December to one of 12 hours in May to August, was replaced by a very loose enactment as early as 12 April 1924, and eventually (as far as the clauses on hours were concerned) abolished by a further Act of 1929, which omits any stipulations whatever on hours of work. Nor were proposals made later, in 1927, in the Finnish Parliament by a Commission set up to report on the question, accepted; the Commission had proposed a daily 9-hour average over the year with a maximum 10-hour day (except in the extreme north), and 6-hour weekly, and 150-hour yearly, limits to overtime.

It would have been too much to expect that countries so new to social legislation could at the first attempt have succeeded in legislating, or in any case in enforcing legislation, on a subject so difficult as hours of work in agriculture. The efforts rather hastily made are to be attributed to the general wave of post-War enthusiasm in the field of social reform, insufficiently supported by any solid working-class movement of wage-paid workers. But what really doomed these attempts to failure was a distraction of interest to other topics. Either the political situation altered completely, as in Spain and Lithuania, or else, as in Estonia and Latvia, agrarian reform absorbed the energies of the parties interested and no doubt to a large extent satisfied the aspirations which had originally been expressed as an effort at social legislation.

§ 7. *Legislation in Czechoslovakia.*

Not all instances of post-War enthusiasm, however, have proved ineffective. In Czechoslovakia,[1] where an enlightened and stable administration has paid great attention to social problems and where the general working-class movement has been strong, an early Act imposing an 8-hour day in agriculture has had a definite result, though possibly not quite that originally intended. The Act referred to was adopted on 19 December 1918, barely six weeks after the declaration of national independence, and applied to all industries, agriculture included, the agricultural employers declaring themselves in favour, though both they and the workers emphasized the difficulties which arise in this industry. Special arrangements were therefore made (also for transport workers). A Decree of 11 January 1919 laid down that the strict 8-hour day need not be retained and that working hours might be distributed over a period of four weeks so as not to exceed 192 (= 24 working days of 8 hours each); a system of permits to be given by local authorities further provided for 2 hours a day of special overtime for emergencies over not more than four weeks in the year, while ordinary overtime permits from higher authorities were to be available for a further sixteen weeks with a view to the seasonal needs of agriculturists. The Decree was thus intended to be fairly elastic. In any case it applied only to persons living outside the household of the employer—the daily or weekly workers; persons resident in the farm-house or occupying one of the farm cottages and engaged on permanent yearly contracts did not enjoy the protection of the Decree.

Even as thus drafted, neither workers nor employers were satisfied with the results of the Decree. The compensatory rest from one week to another within the four-weekly period was difficult for the employers to arrange during the busy season and did not appeal to the workers in view of the fact that they counted on their heaviest earnings just at such times. Within less than two years from the adoption of the 1919 Decree this arrangement had been abandoned in practice. Nor did the system of advance permits for overtime work well; they could not be obtained in time.

The final results of this part of the Decree have been as follows.

[1] International Labour Office, *Studies and Reports*, Series K, No. 5, *The Eight-Hour Day Act and its Application to Agriculture in Czechoslovakia*, Geneva, 1921, 96 pp., describes an inquiry carried out by the Czechoslovak Government into the application of the principle of the 8-hour day to Czechoslovak agriculture during an early period after the War, following on the Decree of 11 Jan. 1919.

The principle of overtime has been introduced and some extra payment secured therefor. One might have expected that such extra payment would begin with the ninth hour worked; this, however, is not the case; it begins only with the eleventh hour. Even this is not strictly enforceable under the Decree, which contains no stipulations for higher rates for overtime. Such rates have been laid down solely by collective agreements arranged between employers and workers under government supervision; as the basis of payment in Czechoslovak agriculture is per day and not per hour, the workers have not been able to enforce special rates earlier than the eleventh hour, although the ninth and tenth hours are formally overtime in the eye of the law.

The net gain even so has not been slight. The introduction of the notion of overtime which is paid at higher rates automatically puts pressure on employers to work a reasonable day and thus always constitutes a first step towards the limitation of hours. It is a weakness of the Czechoslovak system that these overtime rates are not specifically enforced by the law but depend entirely on the renewal of voluntary arrangements.

But the Decree has not by any means entirely failed even in its original intention of imposing a categorical limitation on working hours other than the limitation supplied by the economic pressure of overtime rates. Reference was made above to resident and permanent workers, and it was stated that these workers were excepted from the main provisions of the Decree. However, they have not been altogether forgotten, and it is laid down that in every 24 hours an uninterrupted period of 12 hours' rest (8 hours of which must be uninterrupted night rest) shall be accorded to them by their employers; this is another way of saying that their working day cannot exceed 12 hours. This period of 12 hours has therefore become the legal maximum working day in agriculture, and in practice applies to all workers, for outside workers (the day and week workers) never work longer than resident and permanent staff.

Thus the final effect of the Decree is to impose a maximum 12-hour day, of which the last two hours are, for about half the workers, paid for at higher rates. This is a respectable achievement in a new and not very wealthy country.

§ 8. *Legislation in Italy.*

The Italian legislation, which was initiated considerably later,[1] namely five years after the Czechoslovak Act (General Decree of

[1] Before the War §§ 72–113 of the Public Health Code of 1 August 1907 (with Regulations of 29 March 1908) laid down a 10-hour day for women

15 March 1923; Regulations on agriculture of 10 September 1923), also adopts the idea of the 8-hour day and the 48-hour week as a theoretical basis. It resembles the Czechoslovak legislation in being a general enactment applying to all industries and placing agriculture among them, but differs, in regard to its effects on agriculture, by limiting its stipulations wholly to day workers, omitting any provisions however summary on behalf of resident or permanent staff. The Regulations again allow considerable latitude. The agricultural employer is in the first place permitted to rearrange hours within any week so as to suit weather exigencies as long as he does not require work for more than 10 hours on any particular day; he is further permitted to extend working time to 60 hours per week (but again so as not to exceed a 10-hour day) for three months in the year on account of technical or seasonal requirements; thirdly, he may add overtime up to 2 hours a day or 12 hours a week (or an equivalent number of hours on an average taken over a specified period) to be paid for at rates not less than 10 per cent. above normal; finally, the usual clauses allowing operations to be prolonged even beyond these limits on account of emergencies include a very wide condition which makes this possible in case of risk or damage to production.

The working of these stipulations in part depends on the consent of the workers. The workers may conclude agreements with their employers specifying a period either longer or shorter than the three months mentioned for the extension of the working day on account of technical or seasonal requirements; they may agree to drop the 10-hour daily or the 60-hour weekly limit during this period—in this way the long summer working day could be re-established; arrangements about overtime in any case require the agreement of the parties and agreed extensions of time may be entered on for preparatory or accessory work.

Arrangements are enforced by a system of collective agreements. An examination of the texts of agreements in force for the year 1931–2 showed that the basic 8-hour day was strictly maintained therein, but with the necessary seasonal variations; a selection of typical agreements showed that the length of the working day was to vary over the year within the following limits: from 6 to 10 hours in three provinces, 6½ to 10, 6 to 9, 6 to 8, 7 to 9, 7 to 8 hours in one province each, while it was laid down as 8 hours without variation in two

workers on the rice estates of north Italy (9 hours for those who had to go to and from work), together with a 24-hours' rest once a week. In a good many cases the hours of men workers were also protected, but by collective agreements only, and hardly before 1900; the demand for the 8-hour day in agriculture was put forward both before and immediately after the War.

provinces; in a few cases the resulting average worked out at rather less than 8 hours per day throughout the year. The agreements did not take advantage of the permission under the Regulations to vary the arrangements laid down about overtime. A basic extension of the 8-hour day to a 9-hour day was made for all industries under a Decree of 30 June 1926, but under subsequent legislation of 11 January 1927 this extension was made subject to various conditions, including the consent of workers' organizations, and was in any case to be paid for as overtime.

The result of the Italian legislation is much like that of the Czechoslovak. A 12-hour day is possible, of which the last two hours would have to be paid as overtime. While, on the one hand, the Italian workers are better off than the Czechoslovak because this long working day can normally be worked only during three months of the year instead of throughout the year, on the other hand, they are less protected, inasmuch as there is no final legal prohibition against a day even longer than the 12-hour day; pressure being put on them, they might be compelled to give way on this point and work, say, a 14-hour day in the busiest season; they might also have to agree to extend the three months when the 12-hour working day is permissible. The latter risk is less serious than the former, the excessively long summer working day being one of the more important disadvantages against which agricultural workers require protection. At the moment none of the risks mentioned appear to be actual. Owing to the depression there are far too many workers seeking work and the organizations have tried to insist on the engagement of more workers; as the texts of collective agreements show, overtime is not at the present moment a subject of discussion.

§ 9. *Arrangements in Germany.*

We now come to the important Provisional Agricultural Labour Code of 24 January 1919 in Germany. This was in form a collective agreement between employers and workers to which the force of law was given. It is interesting that a text drawn up at so early a date after the War and during a period of great confusion should have maintained itself as so sound a proposition for so long. The original code contains three short clauses,[1] of which the principal states that the daily maximum working hours in agriculture shall be 8 on an average during four months, 10 on an average during four months,

[1] Two other clauses deal with the definition of overtime and rates therefor and one further clause releases from work women workers in charge of a household for certain hours and on certain holidays.

and shall be 11 during the remaining four months; there is no condition that these four-monthly periods need be consecutive periods, and in practice the period during which an average 10-hour day is allowed is often divided between the spring and the autumn. It is also to be observed that while only an *average* of 8 or 10 hours respectively needs to be observed during two of these periods, during the remaining period the 11-hour day cannot be exceeded on any one day even if an 11-hour average were to be maintained; this guards against an excessively long summer day; indeed, it has been held, by interpretation, that even during the other two periods the 11-hour day shall be the absolute maximum working day. If the month is assumed to consist of 25 working days, the final result is a working year of 2,900 hours,[1] which works out at an average of $9\frac{1}{3}$ hours a day.[2]

Thus there is no question of the 8-hour day, even in fiction. Moreover, the arrangements laid down are exclusive of overtime, which is unlimited. At first therefore the German workers seem to have got rather poor terms for themselves. But the moderate terms of the law have received considerable reinforcement by further collective bargaining over a run of years. The arrangements thus arrived at are, indeed, too complicated to admit of full analysis here, but it may be noted that the hours laid down in the various texts run from maxima only in three cases exceeding the 2,900 usually calculated under the code to others as low as 2,700 per year, while in some cases a maximum day is agreed on at any time of the year which is stated at only $10\frac{1}{2}$ or 10 hours instead of at the full 11 hours permitted under the code. Nevertheless, the arrangements do not, as a rule, envisage farm-servants, whose hours under the code are assumed to include the ordinary hours of other staff. There does not seem to be much attempt even in Germany to protect this group, who usually work on the smaller holdings; a few elementary rules, especially in Bavaria, offer them some slight protection against overwork.

§ 10. *Indirect methods of restricting working hours: night rest and day rest periods: Hungary, Austria, England and Wales.*

We now come to countries where direct legal stipulations regulating the length of the working day in agriculture are combined with stipu-

[1] In actual fact, on a strict calendar computation, a little more could be legally worked under the code.

[2] Two other clauses in the code direct that there must be at least two rest periods of an hour each per day during the summer months, that rest periods and feeding time of draught animals shall not be included in working hours, but that journey time to and from the farm to the place of work shall be so included.

lations securing a certain minimum night's rest for the agricultural worker, or even where stipulations as to rest alone exist. The latter indirect method of shortening, or at least regulating, the working day has already been noticed as applying to permanent and resident staff in Czechoslovakia. In Hungary some brief stipulations of this indirect character have for long been on the statute book, but though their intention is good, their value is to be questioned, in view of the very limited, if not altogether vague, protection which is all which they even ostensibly offer. The Hungarian Act No. II of 1898 regulating the relations of employers and day workers in agriculture provides in Section 49 that the working day of the agricultural day labourer shall last 'from sunrise to sunset', *but* that he shall be entitled to a midday rest of 1 hour and, between 15 April and 30 September, to two other ½-hour breaks in the morning and afternoon; nine years later Act No. XLV of 1907 regulating the relations of employers and resident farm-servants laid down that farm-servants must be allowed sufficient time for night rest in accordance with general local custom and the time of the year. Much more detailed and important are the stipulations included in the Austrian post-War agricultural labour codes. In these codes certain minima are laid down for the worker's nightly rest and in addition certain minima of rest are also secured during the day. The minimum nightly rest varies from 8 hours in Burgenland to be observed as a rule but without an absolute prohibition of night work, to 8 hours in the summer and 9 in the winter in Vorarlberg and in Salzburg, 9 hours throughout the year in Carinthia and Upper Austria, to 10 hours in the summer and 12 in the winter (but this is apparently to include day rest though not meals) in the Tyrol; breaks during the day are as a rule to total not less than 2 hours; in Styria day breaks must be so arranged that they occur at least after each uninterrupted period of 4 hours.

Obviously enforcement of a minimum night's rest automatically secures for the worker maximum limits to his working day: a simple sum in subtraction from the 24 hours is all that is necessary to ascertain what this maximum day amounts to in each case; it cannot be exceeded even during the busy season. The *maximum* working day is, however, useless as a basis on which to calculate total hours of work per year: no one, in agriculture, expects to work a maximum day on every day of the year. The only way to restrict total hours throughout the year on behalf of the worker is to state a year's aggregate or to lay down an average day. Only in four of the States (Lower Austria, Carinthia, Styria, and Burgenland) is an average working day, of 10 hours, laid down and this only for workers not entrusted

with the care of live stock (i.e. for workers other than farm-servants).

The farm-servant class is important in Austria, and by means of securing the night's rest and breaks the Austrian codes deal rather adequately with their hours; for other workers the direct limitation of hours does not equal what is secured in Germany.

With a single exception this exhausts what existed up till recently in the way of legislation on hours of work of agricultural workers in Europe. The exception is as follows. In England and Wales an Act, which is not designed to deal with hours as such, must nevertheless be taken into consideration in discussing hours. This is the Agricultural Wages (Regulation) Act 1924, which attributes powers to local committees to fix wages rates for specified periods, day, week, month, &c. The committees have so interpreted their powers as to state the number of hours which constitute a week's work—since the week is the usual period for wage payment in English agriculture. In this way a series of arrangements have been arrived at, the 48- or 50-hour week usually adopted in the winter, summer hours running from 50 to 54, occasionally more. It is to be observed that the text of the Act lays down no limits; overtime is unrestricted, and nothing need preclude the committees from extending even the standard working week to whatever limits they think fit. The representation secured to the workers on all committees is the real safeguard; their arguments and votes have been directed to a limitation of hours simultaneously with attention to wages, by the statement of standard hours and the enforcement of overtime rates beyond these. In one small particular the Act itself backs them up, for it directs the committees in the exercise of their powers to secure 'so far as is reasonably practical' a weekly half-holiday for workers. The hours cited above as laid down under the Act refer usually to general agricultural workers; special arrangements are mostly laid down, involving longer hours, for stockmen, carters, and shepherds.[1]

§ 11. *Regulation by means of collective bargaining: Denmark, Nether lands, Poland, Sweden.*

The English system, although enforced by and based on legislation, is in many essentials a system of simple collective bargaining and may therefore properly form the transition to a consideration of the regulation of hours by collective agreements only. We have already seen, in the case of most of the countries discussed above, how usefully

[1] For previous attempts at agreed hours in England see W. Hasbach, *A History of the English Agricultural Labourer*, London, 1920 (2nd ed.), pp. 388–9; for the weekly half-holiday in Scotland, see *The Scottish Farm Servant*, passim.

collective bargaining can reinforce legislative action. Regulation of hours which depends entirely on collective bargaining without direct legislative support[1] is found in Danish, Dutch, Polish, and Swedish agriculture. In all these countries very precise time-tables are drawn up by agreement between the parties concerned: the number of seasonal changes contemplated is surprising. In Denmark changes are made seven times in the course of the year, work starting at 6, 6.30, 7.30, or 8 a.m. according to the season and terminating at 4.30, 5, 5.30, or 6 p.m.; the length of the day works out on an average at 8 to 10 hours net, not inclusive of breaks lasting 1 to 2 hours; some slight rearrangement of hours is permitted for the getting in of crops. In the other three countries mentioned even more elaborate time-tables are laid down. In one Netherlands time-table there are fifteen, and in one Swedish time-table seventeen changes in the course of the year, while a Polish time-table alters no less than three times each month over eight months, making twenty-eight changes in all. Adaptation to variations of the light in northern climates, where a long summer day and a short winter day are given by Nature, is perhaps the reason. Total hours over the year are as follows: in the Netherlands perhaps 2,700 to 2,960 according to the agreement, but in the grazing districts 3,500 to 3,900; in Poland (five central provinces) 2,800 or 9·20 hours per day (but with a big range in the length of day from $6\frac{1}{4}$ net hours in the winter to $11\frac{1}{2}$ in the summer, or $7\frac{3}{4}$ to $14\frac{1}{2}$ gross[2]); in central Sweden the yearly averages vary from 2,737 to 2,800. Once more these time-tables and averages apply exclusively to workers not resident on the farm and not attending to stock; arrangements for workers engaged on the latter duty are, however, not wholly omitted. In Denmark stockmen must work 10 hours per day or $66\frac{1}{2}$ per week before becoming entitled to overtime pay; in Poland 2 hours, but not more, of preparatory work can be demanded of horsemen, while the hours of shepherds, night-guards, and artisans are differently arranged; in Sweden drivers and farm-servants are required to clean stables and attend to three draught animals before regular work begins, for stockmen the working hours are not, as a rule, to exceed 10 per day, while milkmaids working without machines cannot be obliged to milk more than 150 litres per day in three milkings.

[1] But in Poland the conciliation and arbitration authorities intervene if no collective agreement is concluded, while both in Denmark and Sweden the collective bargaining system as such is backed up by legislation; see Chapter XI.

[2] Gross = including rest pauses. Gross working hours give a measurement of the time during which the worker is absent from his home.

The arrangements just described are not universally applicable over the whole extent of each country, but on the whole they are very fairly typical, and their influence is largely felt even in districts where they have not been formally adopted.

§ 12. *The new legislation in Spain.*

Before concluding this section on Europe, some note must be taken of very recent measures initiated by the late Socialist Spanish government. Mention was made, in § 6 above, of an early attempt in this country to legislate for the 8-hour day in agriculture, legislation which there is no reason to suppose was ever seriously applied. With a change in political régime, the problem was again attacked with vigour. The new Decree of 1 July 1931, which applies to all industries, is supplemented by a special Decree of 7 May 1931 referring to agricultural matters. The effect of the two measures taken together is to maintain the name of the 8-hour day, but in fact to lay down a maximum of 9 hours in the case of agriculture; hours lost may be made up on following days up to 1 per day and so as not to exceed 50 working hours per week, while fairly liberal arrangements are made for overtime, which, however, has to be paid for rather heavily by the employer; finally, there is an attempt to protect the night's rest of the resident worker: details deal with special types of occupation, including horticulture. The legislation is, on the whole, more or less strict, but political unrest has so far prevented a serious application.

§ 13. *Hours in Australasian sheep-shearing.*

Outside Europe[1] limitation of working hours in agriculture is found in the Australian and New Zealand shearers' industry. In Australia the demand for regulated hours goes back a long way. The campaign for the 8-hour day was, in fact, first heard of in the 1850's. It was pursued with vigour between 1873 and 1875, then suffered a set-back owing to economic depression, but again revived and spread rapidly (in urban industry) between 1880 and 1890. The noticeable feature of the Australian situation is that the agricultural workers, or a part of them, have always assumed that they were just as fully entitled to regulated hours as other workers; thus, as the 8-hour day spread, the sheep-shearers conceived it to be their right no less than that of other

[1] Passing mention may be made, for the sake of completeness, to agricultural hours legislation stated to be on the statute books of two Argentine provinces (Act of San Juan of 29 Nov. 1923; Act of Tucuman of 24 March 1923) and of the State of Ecuador (8-Hour Act of 11 Sept. 1916 applying to all industries); information as to application is wholly lacking.

workers. One of the biggest strikes in the history of Australian labour was launched in 1891 in Queensland by the pastoral workers, and among the points at issue was the fact that the pastoral employers, in the terms which they were offering to the workers, made no mention of the 8-hour day for sheep-shearing.

However, hours have never been so big an issue in Australia as wages or questions concerning the status of trade unionism. Regulated hours have now been for a long time a settled matter in Australian shearing-sheds. The arrangements depend on awards of the Industrial Arbitration Court. We may take the Commonwealth awards as most representative. The first Commonwealth award for shearers in 1907[1] simply states that no shearer shall be compelled to work more than 48 hours per week nor after 12 o'clock noon on Saturdays. In 1925 these 48 hours were reduced to 44,[2] and this arrangement stood again in 1927[3] and more recently in July 1933. The model agreement of 1927 states that these shall be worked in 2-hour runs as follows: 7.30–9.30 a.m., 10–12 noon, 1–3 p.m., 3.30–5.30. p.m., work finishing at noon on Saturdays, or else such other hours may be worked, not exceeding 8 on Mondays to Fridays and 4 on Saturdays as may be agreed upon. Further, by agreement work may be prolonged by half an hour on any day to finish off waiting sheep.

As shearers work on piece wages, their earnings are only indirectly affected by these limits. The limitation of the working period is, however, of important physical benefit to them. The 'shed hands' and other workers at a sheep-station who prepare the sheep, &c., work at time rates; since 1907 they[4] have worked 52 hours per week, with overtime pay after these hours at time and a half; a claim to reduce these hours to 44 has not been acceded to by the court.[5]

In New Zealand shearing-shed hours stand at 48 and 20 minutes per week as a maximum. Work lasts from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. or 5.30 a.m.

[1] Award of 20 July 1907, § 29; see *Commonwealth Arbitration Reports 1905–7*, p. 102; a quantity of interesting information on shearing work is incorporated in the pronouncement of the President of the court, the award itself, and the agreements; see pp. 62–107. For a refusal at this time to award hours for shed hands, see vol. ii, pp. 389, 422.

[2] Between 1925 and 1931 various attempts were made to introduce the 44-hour week in Australian industry; legislation has been both repealed and restored; for this intricate question see *I.L.R.*, vol. xxvi, nos. 1 and 3, July and Sept. 1932, 'The Standard Working Week in Australia', by O. de R. Foenander.

[3] Award of 14 Sept. 1927; *Commonwealth Arbitration Reports 1927*, pp. 626–741.

[4] Excluding kitchen staff.

[5] But the hours of shed hands, &c., are specially protected by being made part of the award itself, whereas the learned judge did not consider it necessary to make shearers' hours part of the award, but left these as part of the shearers' agreement only.

to 5.30 p.m., with intervals for meals and smoking (=rest pauses) as are mutually agreed upon between the shed-manager and the shearers' representative; work stops at 4 p.m. on Saturdays, unless 48 hours and 20 minutes have already been worked by noon, in which case work shall stop then; under certain weather conditions the manager may alter the intervals and extend the hours to the extent of half an hour a day in order to complete work.[1] An interesting interpretation of the New Zealand Court forebade work to be done even by agreement between 4 p.m. on Saturdays and 5 a.m. on Mondays, thus securing the Sunday rest for workers.[2]

Meanwhile, both in Australia and New Zealand, the ordinary farm-worker works unrestricted hours, which are often stated to be long.[3] There is a steady demand on the part of trade unionists for regulated hours in ordinary farm-work, and a steady refusal on the part of the courts to tackle the thorny problem. In 1908, indeed, the New Zealand Court went so far as to recommend a Saturday half-holiday, but nothing binding was laid down. However, with considerable effort hours have been arranged in butter and cheese work. The arrangements are interesting, as they show what the difficulties are in an occupation which, though industrialized, is nevertheless subject to the seasonal rushes so integral to agricultural production. The aim is the 48-hour week all the year round, but this is only secured by working 60 hours in the summer and 38 in the winter, or, at best, 56 in the summer and 44 in the winter, with arrangements for overtime. This however, is much better than the unregulated hours, often excessive, which used to be worked before the awards governing this occupation were issued.[4]

§ 14. *Possibilities and results of existing systems.*

The time has now come to sum up, if that is possible, the net result of these measures and agreements. What do the arrangements about

[1] Department of Labour, *Awards, Recommendations, Agreements, Orders, &c., made under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1925*, vol. xxvi, Wellington, 1926 (awards of six industrial districts, all of 28 July 1926; the hours there laid down were left untouched by the new awards of 1931, &c.).

[2] Ibid., vol. xxxi, 1931, p. 39.

[3] Regulation of hours does not apply in either country except to really large enterprises. On medium-sized enterprises, rather than face the demand for regulated hours, employers have been known to fall back on the share-farming system, and this perhaps in part accounts for the maintenance of this system in this part of the world. It should be realized that in New Zealand the 1932 Act abolishing compulsory arbitration now affects the whole situation, for agricultural as well as for industrial workers.

[4] According to the *New Zealand Worker*, 2 and 23 Nov. 1927. The awards in these occupations are intricate; there is a good Memorandum of the court in *Awards, Recommendations, &c.*, vol. xxx, p. 152.

working hours in agriculture, when achieved, really amount to? A very careful consideration of the effects apparently attained is necessary. The first question which the reader will ask is, are the specified or agreed hours observed? On the whole, there seems reason to believe that this is the case. Not, of course, in every particular and certainly not on every farm which may be formally within the purview of a particular set of regulations; some of the legislative provisions noted must, indeed, be counted as expressions of good intention rather than as enforceable proposals—certainly the rules as to minimum night rest, excellent and indeed important as they are, could with difficulty be made subject to inspection. But the straightforward arrangements as to the length of the day's or week's work are not difficult to observe, especially when workers are put on operations, as so often in European continental agriculture and as in Australian and New Zealand sheep-shearing, in groups or gangs. Everything here depends not on the government inspectors of whom few are available, but on the strength of the workers' own organizations, on the feeling of solidarity which they create among their members, and on the general willingness of the employers to meet the workers' wishes; the organizations alone, backed up by the best employers, can really enforce the observance of hours, which observance thus becomes a question of collective action in the best sense of that expression.

It is very important, in looking at this side of the question, to realize that there is a minimum of real interference with the employer's arrangements; in other words, there is little, and in some countries no, limit on overtime. It is understood that workers do not refuse to work overtime; to do so might be to throw the operations of the farm into confusion. The employer is therefore enabled to get in his harvest, &c., as long as he is willing to pay for that privilege. Nevertheless, it is true that most arrangements about hours could be made illusory if overtime rates were fixed rather low; the money check on irrational hours would then be too slight. Much therefore depends on the actual rates laid down. A few Acts, but not all, and no agreements, try to place an absolute final limit on overtime. The Spanish legislation of 1931 is conspicuous both for the heavy additional payment it imposes on the working of overtime and for imposing a rather low absolute limit. In no case will it ever be easy to strike the exact balance between the true exigencies of a production so seasonal as agriculture and an employer's bad management.

A further concession to the employer is the range permitted in the length of the ordinary working day, without overtime, at different seasons of the year, a range which in Poland, for instance, was noted

as running from 6¼ hours in the winter to 11½ hours in the summer; the summer working day is here nearly twice as long as the winter working day. The range is very convenient in farm operations. It is disadvantageous to the worker, who of course prefers to work more regularly the year round. Arrangements therefore appeal to him more or less in the degree in which they contrive to break through an exaggerated practice on this point and to establish a more regular yearly time-table. However, two special considerations apply. In the first place, work done in northern latitudes must take advantage of the longer summer hours of daylight, the time for summer operations in any case being short, and cannot avoid the limitations imposed by the correspondingly short winter daylight. In the second place, it is up to a point the worker's own wish to work hard during the summer. It is very usual to give extra harvest bonuses and most agricultural workers' families count heavily on the summer earnings. Here again a compromise has to be struck allowing for the different factors. But the inordinately long working day at particular seasons of the year is one of the more pronounced evils from which agricultural workers have suffered in the past; consequently, all serious arrangements must seek to impose some degree of restraint.

In general, the legislation analysed above, especially the European legislation, shows a distinct progression. The earlier Acts and Bills started with an unproved assumption that the 8-hour day could at that time normally be worked in agriculture, and involved themselves in untenable proposals to that effect—proposals which perhaps justify the sarcastic prophecy of the French Government in 1921 that the 8-hour day in agriculture could only work out as 'a sort of legal make-believe consisting entirely of exceptions'.[1] The later Acts or agreements (or a later interpretation of an Act as in Czechoslovakia) more often than not proceed on the basis of a 9-hour, 9½-hour, or even a 10-hour day. When it is realized that this is an average day, that summer days are longer, and that there may be overtime to work, it cannot be said that the worker is asking for what is unreasonable.

§ 15. *Advantage to the worker of some regulation.*

All the same, the worker can gain very directly from a regulation of hours however loosely interpreted. In the first place, he gains by the principle of regulation itself. He knows when his normal day's or week's work ends. This is a much better state of affairs than to

[1] International Labour Office, *Report on the Adaptation to Agricultural Labour of the Washington Decisions concerning the Regulation of Hours of Work* (the 'blue' report), Geneva, 1921, p. 11.

leave this important matter to chance, to custom, or to the employers' caprice. In the second place, he may gain by a more reasonable balance between summer and winter work. In the third place, he may gain some addition to his earnings when overtime is necessary, or contrariwise, some real security as to free time when the employer avoids the expense of working hours which would be legally scheduled as overtime.

These points may be put thus: absolute or even partial prohibition of the inordinately long working day in the summer can save the worker great fatigue; insistence on a certain regularity of work through the year may secure his subsistence; the rule of Sunday free time and a Saturday half-holiday may give him the life of a human being. In general, it may be admitted that the worker's gain is almost in direct proportion to the degree in which traditional hours based solely on the seasonal needs of production are boldly broken through; where the time-table represents merely a substantiation of old customary working time, difficulties have been eluded rather than overcome.

The present situation is not easily analysed. The economic depression is having an inevitable effect. No progress is now being made in bringing further agricultural hours legislation through parliaments, while the general weakening of the agricultural workers' movement (if that is pending) would remove for the time being the only organizations capable of seeing that the time-tables already accepted are effectively observed. On the other side is the influence of a big reduction in hours in industry. If this should come about it would have inevitable reflections in agriculture. The prevailing situation in agriculture itself is at least in part the result of enormous advances in agricultural technique, advances which have largely taken the form of labour-saving machinery. What except shorter hours can possibly be the final result? Common sense answers that nothing can prevent this most desirable consummation.

For desirable it is: the exploitation of the agricultural worker for generations past by requiring from him inordinately long hours of work has been one of the greatest evils of rural life. A new demand for leisure is springing up on all sides which agriculture must satisfy. There is no real reason why this should not be done in a business-like way: it is perfectly possible, as our analysis of existing arrangements has shown. It is therefore useless any longer to dismiss the request for shorter hours as either folly or ignorance.

VIII

HOUSING

§1. *The social importance of agricultural workers' housing.*[1]

THE housing of agricultural workers constitutes a social problem of considerable importance, and it is very regrettable that higher standards of accommodation have not yet been attained. The bad housing of rural districts has so often been made the subject of comment that it is hardly necessary here to repeat these descriptions. Shanties or hovels or tumble-down cottages unrepaired and without heat, drainage, or water-supply, with tiny unopened windows and mud floors, without larders, coal-sheds or wood-sheds, or sanitary conveniences, badly situated and without proper access paths, are not fit habitations for workers' families, however modest their wants. Nor are bunks placed inside the stable, or even a straw palliasse on the ground close to the animals, proper accommodation for young men responsible for tending these animals. The stable for the beasts themselves in one district may be far better than the houses provided for the men and women who look after them in another! Such conditions are disgraceful and public common sense and duty should have abolished them long ago.

Of course, not all or even the major portion of agricultural workers' housing is in this state. One of the more pleasing features of rural life here and there is the existence of thoroughly good houses inhabited by rural workers, more often perhaps by smallholders, but sometimes also by wage-paid workers. Even before the War there were in almost every country which made any pretence at a social programme a few good houses in a number of rural districts. After the War some very good construction followed on agrarian reform programmes, the building funds being provided as part of those programmes. Some delightful houses were built, for instance, in Latvia for the settlers on the new post-War holdings in that country, and the reclamation of the Zuider Zee area in Holland has recently caused excellent houses to be constructed; many more examples of the same kind could be quoted. Moreover, a great deal has been done in a number of countries, through the pressure of public opinion and by the insistence of public authorities, to improve accommodation

[1] *I.L.R.*, vol. xxv, no. 3, pp. 368–87, 'The Housing of Agricultural Wage-paid Workers'; *Studies and Reports*, Series K, No. 11, *Collective Agreements in Agriculture*, Geneva, 1933 (Ch. II. 3, pp. 92–4. 'Housing'). These two sources give detailed information for Europe. For Australia and New Zealand the official reports on the Shearers' Accommodation Acts require to be consulted.

for temporary agricultural workers engaged on seasonal jobs like fruit-picking. In fact, the situation may be roughly summed up as follows. There is a good deal of definitely very bad rural housing in all countries and of this very bad housing the wage-paid agricultural workers get quite the worst; the conditions under which some of these workers live are intolerable. The standard of the remaining permanent accommodation for such workers is usually only fairly good and sometimes only just possible, but here and there some very good housing indeed has been created, of a standard altogether superior and quite up to modern requirements. Temporary accommodation has certainly been greatly improved of late years, and though rough and ready is often adequate to its purpose.

§ 2. *Regard to be paid to local requirements.*

Little importance need be attributed to inadequacies arising out of social and local custom. The separation of the sexes, for instance, is not at all rigidly carried through in some places, but no harm arises because non-separation is a recognized practice carrying no immoral temptations. Only if such custom shows signs of changing does the moment come when it is important to cater for the new demand in the matter of housing also, in order to prevent that unfortunate situation when the standards of the people have advanced but the accommodation which they use constitutes an obstacle to abiding by such new standards. In the same way, housing in tropical or in primitive countries should be an inducement, and not a hindrance, towards such matters as cleanliness, sanitation, &c. The housing requirements of such countries are obviously simpler than in countries of temperate climate, but owing to the prevalence of many fatal or serious infectious diseases actually of greater moment (though even more thoroughly neglected) than in these colder countries. Indeed, a public rural housing policy in tropical countries can scarcely be said to exist, though large plantations do quite often (mostly with western capital and always for private ends) provide good housing for their employees, e.g. the tea gardens in Assam and the rubber or other estates of Dutch employing companies in the Dutch East Indies.

§ 3. *The causes of bad housing in rural districts.*

The causes of bad housing in rural districts are not difficult to diagnose. Practical and material difficulties, the state of rural population increase, financial stringency, and absence of good legislation

all play their part. Practical problems include the difficulty of providing drainage, water, gas, or electricity and the cost of keeping up these services over wide areas and for a small number of customers in each area. There is also the cost of transporting building material. The age of country dwellings and their general solidity is, strikingly enough, apt to be another practical disadvantage. Some old farm-houses are so firmly constructed of stone that no one thinks of pulling them down; yet they may date from an age which paid scant attention to hygiene and health. Low ceilings, small windows, damp walls and floors, and even such arrangements as box beds persist because the buildings in which they are incorporated are too solid to be sacrificed, however serious the threat of rheumatism or tuberculosis for the inhabitants. In Europe one of the greatest changes needed is in regard to site. In northern climates earlier ages appear above all to have sought shelter; perhaps cold was felt more when clothing was less adequate and fat less abundant in the diet. At any rate, many farms and cottages, many hamlets, especially in England, are by historical continuity badly situated in low spots where the absence of wind is dearly paid for in an all-the-year-round dampness. In the south of Europe the desire for another sort of protection, namely, from assault and intrusion, has caused innumerable villages and small towns to be set on the more easily defensible of the neighbouring hills or even rocks. The crowding in these mountain towns and villages is most unhealthy and access to them sometimes inconvenient to a degree. In some parts of Europe the whole rural population is thus closely herded together at night in an insanitary way while the country round is destitute of dwellings; cultivation of the fields involves long daily journeys to and fro, while harvest operations pretty well necessitate sleeping in the open; in Spain workers may require mules to get to their work and spend an hour or two on the road.[1] Country planning is just as urgent a need as town planning. In this respect the newer countries like Canada, Australia, and the United States have started with great advantages over Europe; in Asia and Africa, on the other hand, the planning of village lay-out is scarcely yet thought of.

Nor is it by any means without importance—again we speak principally of Europe—that age and remoteness lend a picturesque fillip in the eyes of strangers to countryside habitations. The rose-covered cottage which attracts the passer-by, but whose inhabitants know the misery of walls not water-tight, rooms without heating, and no sanitary facilities, is no fairy story. Unquestionably antiquity,

[1] *I.L.R.*, vol. xix, no. 6, p. 870.

picturesqueness, and remoteness do combine to interfere with the formation of healthy public opinion about rural housing.

Occasionally the stationary numbers of the population have a curiously paralysing effect on local building; there is just sufficient housing to go round, and the surplus population which cannot be accommodated in a particular district moves off. Even shrinkage of population may be accompanied by a decay of existing housing which proceeds faster, so that many cottages become uninhabitable or would be reckoned so if others were available; in quite up-to-date countries respectable families are found living in dwellings which have been roundly condemned by the local health authorities. On the other hand, the opposite condition, namely, normal increase of population, may easily result in overcrowding; the number of bedrooms in country dwellings seems, all over Europe where a one-roomed and two-roomed type of house persists, to be quite inadequate; this is one of the greatest evils of rural life. Nowhere do rural housing programmes foresee or meet natural changes or natural developments. Thus in England the commendable habit of acquiring 'week-end' cottages for the holiday use of town-dwellers has not infrequently had the absurd effect of depriving country workers of much-needed homes, while the giving of old-age pensions, by enabling old people to retain their cottages instead of being obliged to take refuge in the workhouse, has had the even more incredible result of interfering with the marriage and settlement of young couples. All these circumstances are so many invitations to agricultural workers to leave the country and seek the town, as has often been noted.

§ 4. *The problem of finance.*

In the end all these causes of bad housing may be pretty well reduced to one cause—finance. Rural districts having once slipped behind in their housing programmes in Europe, the United States, and some other parts of the world, and never even having begun systematic and planned building in a vast number of backward regions, it seems extremely difficult, if not impossible during the present period of depression, to make good the sins and omissions of past generations. Perhaps the ultimate reason for all this neglect has to be sought in some indirect but fundamental factors. Building programmes and the administration of building regulations are almost everywhere in the hands of local authorities and are permissive only; the central authorities, however, supply the funds or part thereof. There has been a fatal division of responsibility between

local and central bodies, and, above all, a fatal absence of initiative. The ultimate means of action is pressure from parliaments, but rural society is often weak politically. A vicious circle of political weakness, inertia, want of funds, and want of courage is created, so that it proves very difficult to focus public opinion and public action in any effective way.

§ 5. *The raising of standards.*

Without money not a great deal can be done, and the present time is a bad one for making calls on public funds. Nevertheless, continual pressure should be applied to do as much as possible on the funds available. Above all, two things would be useful, and not a great deal of expense would be involved in carrying them out: to build a few first-class cottages in key positions and use the fact of this construction as propaganda among the country population so as to raise the standard of their desires, and further to insist that such standards of fitness and decency as have been laid down in existing legislation *should be faithfully and severely enforced.* If some of the best housing could be created in every country, and the absolutely worst also abolished everywhere, a very great step forward would have been taken. Housing is a matter of accustomed standards, and nothing has so degrading an effect on the mentality of a village as the knowledge that some of its inhabitants are living in hovels. While rural bad housing may be concealed from, and seem remote to, the casual passer-by, it is by the nature of the case a matter of everyday information to the village population itself; nothing explains away, nor should explain away, this flagrant sore where it exists.

§ 6. *The question of ownership.*

To these two suggestions some persons would add a third, that of encouraging as many agricultural workers as possible to acquire their own home in ownership. The ownership of cottage and garden is a definite and certainly a useful ideal. A good deal of legislation has been adopted, e.g. in Belgium, France, and the Netherlands, and some important associations have been created to encourage it. However, some strong arguments can be brought forward against this policy in so far as it is advocated on behalf of agricultural wage-paid workers. In the first place, however low the interest and easy the terms, and however lenient the authority administering the loan, the debt on the property which is being acquired is a very heavy drag on the low-paid agricultural workers; it takes a lifetime to pay off the money. What is far more important is the fact that ownership

fixes the wage-paid worker in one spot. This means that he has scarcely any choice of employment, and that if he should fall out with his employer he may have great difficulty in finding work within reach. His awareness—and his employer's awareness—of this situation really deprives him of half his bargaining power, though in other respects he is in such a strong position. The disadvantages of ownership acquired at such a cost are very heavy. In actual fact not very many wage-earning agricultural workers get as far as ownership.

On the other hand, it can hardly be denied that the owned cottage does give the worker not only a great deal of material comfort but also another kind of independence and security—he is not faced with the misery of threatened eviction on losing his job. This question of eviction from the worker's home on discharge from his job is one of the curses of the agricultural housing situation. The difficulty arises because accommodation is often found for the worker by the employer on the employer's estate or in a cottage belonging to him. This is done as part remuneration, or another arrangement is for the employer to offer a cottage on a regular tenancy, which tenancy is, however, terminable at short notice. Whatever the exact detail of the legal arrangements, the worker, if he loses or gives up his job, also sacrifices his home. This puts a most unnatural pressure on him; he feels quite unable to face the situation—the penalty of standing out is too great. The worker is indeed here in a cruel position.[1]

This explains the importance of rural public building programmes. It is not only a question of raising the quality of accommodation available in rural districts, but also a question of quantity, quantity

[1] The so-called 'tied cottage' is a matter of acute controversy between employers and workers. It has an effect on wages, as the fear of losing the home prevents workers from accepting work away from the farm, e.g. on road-making. A good explanation of the English law is given annually by the National Farmers' Union in their *Year Book* (section entitled 'A Miscellany of Information for Tenants and Owner-Occupiers'); the National Union of Agricultural Workers of England and Wales recently held a special inquiry and published a Memorandum (analysed in *I.L.R.*, vol. xxv, no. 3, pp. 387–9); cf. also Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and Ministry of Health, *Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Agricultural Tied Cottages*, 1932, 33 pp., which, however, is inconclusive. A few tentative efforts have been made in other countries to protect the worker. In Poland, under an Act of 12 April 1927, which was passed in the first instance for a year but has been renewed, workers enjoy some degree of protection from eviction for a period of two months, while in Czechoslovakia, under an Act of 28 March 1928, similar protection is given for one month, which, however, is a good deal less than what is allowed to the non-agricultural worker in analogous circumstances. The question is also under discussion in Sweden. In Italy the contract of the *obbligati* gives the worker the right to a permanent dwelling in consideration of engaging to place at the employer's disposal (but as against wages) the services of members of his family.

affecting very vitally the general bargaining position of agricultural workers in negotiating with their employers. Housing is clearly a principal item in the worker's life and career, and unless he is assisted in holding his own, he may be put in a most disadvantageous situation.

A word must be said as to the employer's position. It is not necessarily out of malice or heartlessness that the employer has made himself master of the housing of his workers. It is often a real necessity in practice for the owner of an estate to provide accommodation on or near it for the workers. There is no other housing, and the question of nearness to the job is just as important to him as to his workers, seeing that he stands to lose heavily if his men waste time and strength in long daily journeys. Most large estates on the continent of Europe would hardly be workable unless the estate itself housed the workers; but if ownership is conceded to the employer at all, it is obvious that he will assign what he owns to his own workers and not to other people's workers.

Public, and therefore independent, ownership of a sufficiency of housing accommodation with easily terminable tenancies for wage-paid workers on low rentals is the only real solution;[1] the public landlord can afford to be an unbiased landlord. Yet it would be foolish to suppose that a sufficiency of publicly owned accommodation at cheap rates will be available for many years to come. Accommodation by employers is likely to continue for a long time even on behalf of married agricultural workers, while in the case of unmarried workers employed in or about the farm-house itself or in stable work close to the farm-house, as in the case of temporary workers arriving in groups or gangs, it is difficult to foresee any other practical arrangement even in the future than that of employer's accommodation.

§ 7. *Accommodation supplied by employers: the responsibility thereby created.*

This being so, the question of what quality of accommodation is to be offered by the employer to his workers becomes of considerable importance. It is here that a great advance must be made. The standard of accommodation offered to agricultural employees should be (1) in adequate relation to that enjoyed by the employer himself, (2) as good as that enjoyed by other rural wage-paid workers. The former point is more subtle than appears at first sight. It is unfortunately only too true that the agricultural employer's own standard

[1] View adopted in a resolution of the Sixth Congress of the International Landworkers' Federation, Stockholm, 1931; see Internationale Landarbeiter-Foederation, *Niederschrift vom 6. Kongress, Stockholm, vom 7. bis 11. Juli 1931* (translation in *I.L.R.*, vol. xxv, no. 3, pp. 386–7).

of housing, especially in peasant districts, is often far beneath what it ought to be. This is an almost fatal hindrance to raising the standard of housing of the worker. If the farmer himself does not mind dirt and discomfort, he is not likely to worry about the dirt and discomfort in his workers' quarters. The bad general traditional standards of rural housing are much to be deplored. The remarks made above about out-of-date constructions explain what it is that hinders the farmer from acquiring a taste for good modern building either on his own behalf or on that of his workers.

Comparability with the housing of other wage-paid workers in the country works out too often as a question of rent. The agricultural worker's wage is so low that he can afford only the cheapest accommodation. The worst cottages in a village are always inhabited, not by a craftsman, postman, or railway man, but by an agricultural worker's family. The rent paid by agricultural workers, either in cash as tenants of their employers or reckoned against them as an allowance towards their wages, does not pay repairs, so that many cottages fall into disrepair. It is not easy to see the way out of this difficulty of low rent, which to some extent defeats the efforts even of public authorities to provide accommodation for agricultural workers.

When all is said and done, and when all provisos have been made, it nevertheless remains a definite principle that agricultural employers, when undertaking to house their workers, should be under an obligation to do so properly, that is to say that, though they cannot fairly be held responsible for an inadequate *quantity* of housing in their neighbourhood, they can and must be held responsible for the *quality* of that amount of housing which is in fact in their hands and which they wish to assign to their own workers.

§ 8. *Legislation v. collective bargaining.*

The employer's obligation as to quality can only be brought home to him by legislation. This implies two things—the adoption of regulations in themselves adequate, and their enforcement. Either process is very slow and the second one—enforcement—is apt to be particularly unsatisfactory. It is no use disguising the fact that the local enforcing authorities are only too often part of a local administration which is dependent on, or influenced by, farmers and landlords; how are such interests to be impelled to act against themselves? As already remarked, only a really strong central government can insist on something being done, and central governments are prone to forget the tiresome, thorny, and ungrateful problem of the agricultural worker's home.

The workers themselves have made some attempts to deal with the matter. Their organizations have stung the authorities into action as often as they could. In addition, these organizations have occasionally inscribed minimum housing conditions in their collective agreements where such are drawn up with agricultural employers. This is done in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Poland, and Sweden. The clauses inserted in these agreements apply, obviously, only to provided accommodation or 'service dwellings', to adopt the term commonly used to describe employer's accommodation. They usually refer either to the state of repair to be maintained in the dwelling, or else to its size. This shows rather clearly that these are the two points most often deficient in the eyes of the workers; either the cottage is not weathertight and is dirty, &c., or else it is too small. But collective bargaining covers only a fraction of existing service dwellings; in many countries, and in some districts in the countries mentioned, there are no collective agreements. Nor, as a matter of fact, has experience shown this form of control to be very satisfactory. The question of enforcement is even more difficult than it is in the case of legislation. Not that collective agreements are in themselves so weak, but the whole of the rather elaborate arrangements to secure their observance cannot be invoked to enforce the whitewashing of a single kitchen. This is a practical difficulty of no small importance. Collective bargaining is very useful on housing questions as it enables the workers to set forth their *desiderata* and to obtain the employers' general consent to the standards demanded; it can therefore be a good preliminary to legislation.[1] But it is unpractical, rather than actually illogical, as a substitute for legislation.

There is therefore no evading the need for the action of the law. Legislation must be reasonable. It can, if desired, be fairly detailed, but much can also be accomplished by laying down simple and obvious principles, derogation from which should be punishable by no trivial fines following on non-observance of inspector's orders. Certain standards are, after all, necessary and are enforceable. In drafting special legislation to control the housing of agricultural wage-paid workers, account must, of course, be taken of all existing rural health codes. These govern service dwellings for workers as well as housing for the general rural population. Indeed, in some countries

[1] It is worth noting that the minima for service dwellings laid down in the first national collective agreement in Danish agriculture were subsequently incorporated in the Danish 1921 Act on the Relations between Employers and Assistants.

there is no other legislation to which appeal can be made. In the following account, however, reference has been made to special[1] legislation only. To have gone beyond this would have been to attempt an impossible task, and even in the case of special legislation a complete review or summary is out of the question over the international field. The information given in the remaining paragraphs of the present Chapter must therefore be considered only as, at best, typical.

§ 9. *The housing of married workers.*

The housing of married workers must first be considered. The nature of the housing given to these workers fixes the conditions under which the mass of agricultural workers pass the greater part of their lives as adults and under which their children grow up. From the point of view of the number of persons affected this is therefore the most important part of the whole problem. The general health and living standards of the agricultural wage-paid population are involved.

The standard of this accommodation varies greatly. It may run from the neat cottage and well-kept garden with all reasonable conveniences and amenities to the miserable shanty or hovel mentioned at the beginning of this Chapter. Where accommodation for married workers is provided by employers, the standard which has to be maintained is sometimes defined in general terms in the text of an Act or of Regulations. Such service dwellings must, for instance, be 'free from objections in regard to morals and health', must 'satisfy moral and hygienic requirements', and so on. (Similar phrases are used in reference to service housing assigned to unmarried agricultural workers, or to temporary agricultural workers, or the same phrase may govern all types together.) Such words are excellent in intention, but it must be observed that they are in themselves a reflection on the adequacy of general building or health codes when it comes to service accommodation in country districts. If such codes were sufficient, these words would not be necessary in special Acts or special clauses.

[1] 'Special' legislation does not necessarily imply a separate Act. A separate Act may be a convenience, but there may alternatively be clauses governing agricultural workers' housing in an agricultural labour Act (Germany, Austria), or clauses governing dwellings in general in a general labour code applicable to agriculture also (Belgium, France), or special clauses on service dwellings may be found in general building Acts or in public health Acts, or again of course in any of the Regulations deriving their power from such Acts (hop-pickers' accommodation in England).

Are they in themselves, however, adequate without further indications? The answer could scarcely be in the affirmative. No housing inspector and no rural health or building authority would be expected to enforce such words without further guidance. It was, at any rate, considered a victory for the workers when, at the International Labour Conference in 1921 in the course of the discussion on the Recommendation dealing with agricultural workers' housing (Recommendation dealing with the Living-in Conditions of Agricultural Workers), they succeeded in persuading the Conference to substitute for a phrase of this general character adopted in committee some more detailed stipulations, and indeed, some detailed content must be given to such a general direction, if it is to be worth anything.

The following list of points which should arise for detailed consideration in regard to dwellings provided for married agricultural workers may be drawn up: healthiness of site, proper exposure, drainage of the soil, access roads and paths, house-drainage, water-supply, other services such as gas and electricity; organic character of each dwelling rendering it suitable to be allocated to one family only, entry doors; building materials; size of dwellings, number, size, and height of rooms; heating and lighting; character and sufficiency of annexes; treatment of surroundings; repairs and upkeep. These points are in addition to such obvious considerations as constructional safety or safety from fire, which are almost invariably dealt with by general building laws.

A rather formidable list, perhaps, yet every item matters to those who have to occupy the accommodation given. Common sense will indicate that higher requirements may legitimately be laid down for new constructions, while a minimum only may be demanded in the case of existing buildings.[1]

Legislation or Regulations never deal with all these points, admirable though such a counsel of perfection might be. Moreover, certain items such as gas and electricity supply will for many years to come remain matters for recommendation rather than for enforcement (heating capacity, on the other hand, is rather frequently laid down as a compulsory requirement in special legislation). General or special legislation usually deals with drainage, water-supply, and also with the important question of repairs. Repairs and upkeep are also,

[1] A useful system of awarding points to the various factors to be attended to and basing judgement on the aggregate of points earned by a specified dwelling was used in a Swedish inquiry; see *I.L.R.*, vol. xxiv, no. 1, pp. 75–87, 'Housing Conditions of Agricultural Workers in Sweden'.

as was stated above, mentioned in collective agreements, which further try to secure a sufficiency of annexes.

Above all, attempts are made, both by the legislator and by the signatories of collective agreements, to deal with the crucial question of size. Undoubtedly the question of size is one of very great difficulty. Ideally speaking, the four-roomed cottage, containing a kitchen living-room, plus a scullery, one bedroom for the married couple, and two more bedrooms for the children according to sex, would be a minimum; but we cannot close our eyes to the fact that the three-roomed and even the two-roomed cottage is frequently assumed to be the very most that can be hoped for and that the law will enforce. The situation is further complicated by the great sacrifices many rural families make to maintain a parlour as well as the kitchen. This practice is very frequent in England; indeed, it is considered almost indispensable when a certain degree of prosperity has been attained; it is also noted in Sweden. At first sight the effort to maintain this extra sitting-room in a house where bedrooms are lacking may seem a foolish extravagance, but it represents an ideal of the agricultural working population; it has also some practical points in its favour—where, for instance, would the good furniture and possessions acquired on marriage be kept except in such a room?

It is, however, only in the more prosperous countries that a parlour is found. In new building programmes in England the parlour appears and disappears in a curious way, much according to whether labour interests are able to exert their influence on the type of house to be built or not. As might be expected, the texts of Acts and Regulations do not attempt to insist on a parlour. They confine themselves to laying down extremely modest requirements, and do not go beyond a declaration of principle about 'adequate size'. Thus the agricultural labour codes of the Austrian Provinces simply state that the dwelling must be of 'sufficient size'. The German Provisional Agricultural Labour Code states that the service dwelling of a married worker must be 'of sufficient size in respect of the number of his children and the sexes'; read together with the clause that such dwellings must satisfy moral and health requirements it might reasonably be supposed that an absolute minimum of two bedrooms was indicated; however, no commentator of the code has ventured to assume so much, and the single family bedroom was thus apparently still permissible even under this code. The Hungarian Farm Servants Act states that dwellings constructed after the coming into force of the Act shall allow each family 'a room and a small room'. Of collective agreements, a single German district agreement stipulates that

a married worker's dwelling shall consist of three rooms plus kitchen and cellar; the Danish national agreement stipulates for at least two rooms plus kitchen and scullery, while new or reconstructed dwellings must comprise three rooms; a Polish agreement demands a room and a small room.

These examples show that the minimum is far from high. Other attempts to lay down a minimum area of floor space or minimum cubic content for each dwelling seem even more difficult. The Swedish national collective agreement, which states that a married worker's dwelling must consist of at least two rooms and a kitchen or of one room and a kitchen of a minimum combined area of 35 square metres, admits an arrangement by means of which an indemnity of 10 kronor per year shall be payable to the worker in respect of every 3 square metres below that minimum. This ingenious arrangement no doubt does something, but it is obviously not really satisfactory. It merely shows how difficult it is to secure the simplest minimum of size even in a country as advanced as Sweden. Nevertheless, in new constructions minimum height of rooms might easily be made a *sine qua non*.

Amenities of much importance are heating and water-supply; agricultural workers have suffered greatly from the lack of either. The northern countries are beginning to insist on the former, the southern on the latter. The Swedish national agreement stipulates that it must be possible to keep dwellings 'well heated'; the Danish agreement demands at least one good stove, or, in the three-roomed dwellings, two; the provincial codes of Salzburg and Styria state that dwellings must be heatable; the Italian Health Code insists, on the other hand, on the availability of drinking-water. The 1921 Geneva Recommendation does not mention the latter point, but on the former states that unless climatic conditions render heating superfluous, accommodation, whether intended for workers' families, groups of workers, or individual workers, 'should contain rooms which can be heated'. Undoubtedly the question of building materials, especially flooring, also requires attention; the Austrian collective agreements insist that all inhabited rooms shall have wood floors; the Polish agreement stipulates for distempering of walls as well, and Belgian Regulations are very particular on this point.

Connected with water-supply are questions of drainage and sanitary arrangements. Not everywhere can sewage disposal arrangements be expected, but it is disgraceful that even the most primitive sanitary conveniences can be lacking in advanced countries or are so totally inadequate as to be only fit for condemnation. This is usually illegal,

but it is extremely difficult to get the law enforced.[1] General rural standards are very low on such points, especially in peasant districts, and a great deal of educational effort is needed as well as continual inspection and steady pressure of public opinion. The demand for bathrooms is beginning to be insisted on in all newer buildings. On no point is there, in fact, such a range from bad to good as in respect of drainage and washing facilities attached to rural cottages.

German and Italian collective agreements pay great attention to the annexes to be provided with the dwelling allotted to a married agricultural worker. Annexes are uncommonly useful from two points of view—they relieve the pressure on the house-space, and they enable the worker to carry on certain supplementary occupations which are of great value to him. In the northern European countries the first consideration has been the most important. A small cottage is much less overcrowded if, besides housing the family, it does not also accommodate a winter's supply of coal, wood, potatoes, other family provisions, tools, and the family washing, not to speak of chickens, &c.; special relief is given by sculleries and wash-houses, larders, wood-sheds, and store-houses. The collective agreements in Denmark and Sweden make mention of such annexes, while the Polish agreement mentions a brick path to lead to the front door and the well. In central Europe and in Italy, on the other hand, the stress is on annexes such as vegetable gardens, pig-sties, and hen-runs, which enable the worker to carry on some of the side-lines of farming on his own account; in Hungary agricultural workers run miniature establishments by these means.

Continuous dwellings, or 'barracks', are quite common in some parts of Europe for married agricultural workers and their families. They tend rather to start the 'rural slum', but are not held objectionable, at any rate in law. In Hungary, several municipal authorities have recently issued Regulations that not more than two families shall share one kitchen.

One might go into endless details about the houses in fact assigned, and the houses which ought to be assigned, to married agricultural workers by employers. The information very summarily set forth above shows how many points have to be taken into account. It is a question of insisting on certain essentials and aiming at distinct ideals.

[1] *The Scottish Farm Servant*, July 1931 (complaints only remedied after waiting periods averaging 21 months, other complaints outstanding over periods averaging 31 months).

§ 10. *Accommodation for unmarried workers.*

The accommodation to be given to unmarried workers resident in or close to the farm-house itself also raises some difficult problems. The first essentials are the same as in the case of the married workers —safety, warmth, cleanliness, space, and a little comfort; add to these the important but often neglected assets of personal privacy and security for possessions. In general, residence creates a quite special relationship between master and employee, in which the nature of the accommodation given can have a considerable influence. The farm-servant, man or woman, is usually a young worker, and his future outlook on life is affected by the conditions which he encounters while resident with his employer. The old patriarchal relationship survives in part, and thousands of employees still sit 'below the salt' at the farmer's table. The accommodation question then resolves itself mostly into a question of sleeping rooms. But there tends to be a much greater separation than formerly. There is therefore sometimes a phase when the patriarchal relationship has disappeared and other standards have not been properly substituted. The accommodation offered to farm-servants in Europe in these circumstances can be very bad indeed and far below what the general standard of European civilization ought to tolerate.

It is to be noted that the farm-servant contract is specially prevalent on peasant farms; the single worker, who is all that the smaller struggling peasant properties can afford, is practically always a resident farm-servant, and it is here that the worst conditions of lodging are encountered, largely owing to the low standard of living generally prevailing on such farms. In Canada and the United States of America, on the other hand, as also in Australia and New Zealand, the general high standard of housing in these newer countries ensures a very fair quality of accommodation for the single resident worker.

As in the case of the married workers, a preliminary proviso is sometimes laid down that farm-servants' accommodation must be 'unobjectionable as regards health and morals', 'proper and sufficient for the comfort and health of the workers' (Belgium, Germany, Tyrol, New South Wales, &c.). Indeed, in Germany this proviso was laid down on behalf of farm-servants many years ago, and only extended to cover married workers' accommodation after the War.

As regards specific points, almost all those mentioned in the various codes, Regulations, and agreements are of real importance, so that it is difficult to distinguish between essentials and details. Certainly

a good dry room, or a good dry dormitory where there is a large staff, with a minimum of air-space per person and tolerable natural lighting, a separate bed with adequate bedding and some other furniture, does not seem too much to ask; moreover, room and bedding must be kept clean (there is complaint of the negligence with which farm-servants' quarters are treated), and they must be in a general sense habitable and not too miserable in appearance (the young men's quarters are sometimes particularly wretched-looking). If heating absolutely cannot be provided, it is an old custom to allow the resident workers to use the farm kitchen up to a certain hour. Some washing accommodation and sanitation are essentials and lockers for possessions or lockable doors are not really luxuries.

None of these points compare in importance with what is universally admitted to be the principal consideration of all, without which, indeed, they do not come up for regulation. This is the insistence on an adequate separation between the farm-servant's sleeping accommodation and that of the animals which he has to tend. The habit, in Europe, of requiring farm-servants to sleep, not in the farm-house itself or in a building suitably set aside for human habitation, but in sheds or stables housing the farm animals, is condemned by all responsible authorities, but nevertheless persists and has not even yet been legally forbidden in all European countries. It was an old custom, not even so very surprising in view of eighteenth-century manners; the advance of living standards challenged it and then refuge was taken in the presumption that animals require attendance at night. Granted that this is so from time to time, such occasional attendance need not entail the assigning to the farm-servant, as his sole sleeping quarters, of a corner in a stable, on a palliasse near or even in contact with the animals, with no place whatever for clothes or possessions, no opportunities for cleanliness or decency. Some notorious and terrible descriptions have been given of the couching, one cannot call it housing, of farm-workers in this way.

The International Labour Organisation Recommendation of 1921 incorporates a prohibition of this practice as one of its principal articles. At that time there was a general consensus of government opinion against it, although one or two countries did not object to sleeping quarters in stable buildings provided there were separate entry (Denmark, Sweden, Italy; in the last case, such entry must be at a certain distance from entry to the stables proper). Since that date France, where the practice has been notorious,[1] has required until

[1] Details have frequently been communicated to sessions of the French Parliament; one such description will be found in the *Journal officiel*, 1924,

1929 to get prohibitory legislation on the statute book; another full three years passed before the necessary Regulations to make this Act effective were issued. Regrettably, one of the post-War agricultural labour codes of the Austrian Provinces (Styria) condoned the practice, though it is laid down that a proper bedstead must be provided, which indicates something a good deal better than what was sketched above. In Belgium only two Provinces, Brabant and Hainault, have formally forbidden the practice. In east Europe it is legally allowable. The general standard of civilization must of course be taken into account in such a matter as this. The many French protests against it, frequently from agriculturists themselves, must be placed as a make-weight against the tardiness of the French legislation in western Europe. But that the last vestiges of such accommodation should be swept away on an ordinary modern farm working on modern methods and with the pretension of catering for modern world needs in primary products scarcely admits of argument, and the legislation and enforcement of the legislation to deal with it should be quite uncompromising.

§ 11. *Accommodation for temporary workers.*

Finally, there is the question of accommodation for temporary workers. It was pointed out above that from the nature of the case this is supplied by employers; the work to be done is normally some routine crop operation on a few large farms and bodies of extra workers, working as 'gangs', are each year required to supplement the efforts of the regular farm staff. The fact that the need is a recurring one should make it worth while for the employer to go to considerable expense in providing decent accommodation. This motive alone, however, would never have effected the improvements of the last twenty or thirty years had it not been for the steady pressure of the central and local authorities in a great many countries; behind authority has been public opinion, which has seen in the scandalous conditions formerly thought good enough for housing such workers something inconsistent with the general standards of our social life—and undoubtedly bad housing, even temporary, can

pp. 1711–13; the account in the publication of the International Labour Office entitled *The Technical Survey of Agricultural Questions*, Geneva, 1921, pp. 470–80, is based on French sources. These descriptions appear to go back to the results of an inquiry held in 1914. The matter was before the Legislature for many years. In 1927 the French National Council of Labour turned its attention to the topic and issued recommendations (analysed in *I.L.R.*, vol. xviii, no. 6, pp. 773–6). The Act of 1929 was the outcome. For a report of the position up till recently, see *Le Musée social*, Feb. 1933, pp. 50–4.

do much harm, not only by directly inviting disease and lowered health, by the invidious effect it has on the worker's general moral efficiency and outlook, but by bringing down the housing conscience of the district. Government intervention has been furthered by the comparative ease with which inspection can be carried out; the evil, after all, where it exists is rather glaring, the workers being all collected together in a few places at given times and employed by a limited number of farms. Of course, there is a temptation to argue that for such a short time (a week, ten days, a fortnight or at the most three weeks for many operations, especially fruit-picking operations) anything will do; further, that the type of worker employed on such seasonal work is careless of property—the employer remembers with the most lively dissatisfaction a single unfortunate experience of dirt and destructiveness. There is some truth in such contentions,[1] but thousands of workers who do seasonal work would indignantly repudiate the accusations of dirt or slovenliness or any sort of carelessness, and it is a fact that some workers now do make inquiries beforehand as to the kind of accommodation offered before they will agree to accept the work; moreover, not all operations last only ten days, some last for weeks at a time. Nor is the weather always fine.

This matter of the weather is of some importance, because the type of building provided is apt not to be too well guarded against it, so that the workers suffer both from cold and wet. It is the hardships inflicted by severe cold, for instance, which have led to the Swedish and Norwegian legislation on minimum standards of accommodation for forestry and timber workers in the northern zones of these two countries. It is to be observed that in this case the housing is difficult because the place where the work is to be done is itself so remote; the number of workers, however, is not great, and their work is temporary only in the sense that it lasts no more than six months; still, they are removed from their families and homes, and that is the essential point.

There are four principal requirements to observe in connexion with buildings designed for the housing of seasonal workers: weather-

[1] It must be taken into account that seasonal work is especially attractive to poorer classes of the population living in the more remote parts of a country, or living across the frontier in the adjacent part of the next country. When this is the case, it may well be that such workers are accustomed to a pretty low standard of comfort. But the housing of alien workers (which used to be about the worst) is now frequently controlled by international treaty. For this see International Labour Office, *Studies and Reports*, Series O, No. 3, *Migration Laws and Treaties*, vol. iii, *International Treaties and Conventions*, Geneva, 1929, xii+383 pp.

tightness and, if necessary, warmth, avoidance of overcrowding, supply of water for drinking and washing, and some sort of sanitation; to these might perhaps be added arrangements for enforcing some order and tidiness. The last point is rather well secured by appointing one of the workers as a camp overseer, and paying him for this work—a system which has proved distinctly successful in practice; for want of some such simple arrangement, piles of refuse may accumulate and the accommodation be left in a sad state. Neither the problem of weather-tightness, and its allied problem of a dry site, nor that of avoidance of overcrowding is very difficult to deal with; the question of size is solved on peremptory lines—so many workers per unit of floor space or cubic space, to accommodate more being a contravention of the law; the problem is not nearly such a puzzle as the problem of the size of the married worker's cottage. The separation of the sexes is usually observed and is also a matter of simple arrangement; some accommodation provides family compartments, which is certainly useful where workers arrive in families. In general, the authorities in all countries have to fight against the practice of turning any existing shed or odd building into housing for seasonal workers; it is precisely in respect of these buildings that it is so difficult to arrange for water and sanitation—the latter, of course, very seldom water sanitation. The authorities have also to insist on the provision of separate bunks or mattresses—some regulations still allow unmattressed straw (but it must be clean!) and have sometimes hard work to convince farmers that workers must cook and eat, and wash and dry their clothes. A minimum of repair and restoration (e.g. white-washing) is also frequently insisted upon. There is a general similarity in the list of essentials laid down, which do not vary much from country to country, but some Regulations are a great deal more detailed than others; cf. the Dutch Huts Decree of 1924, which prescribes in centimetres the length and width of bunks, the height of bunks above the floor, the space between bunk and partition, and the width of the centre gangway; even more detailed is Australian and New Zealand legislation on the accommodation of shearers. In practice, of course, there are wide variations, especially on such points as interior furnishings. The beautiful provisions made by some employers for housing temporary employees can only arouse admiration and set standards which it were well to copy.[1]

[1] An example in *Journal of the Min. of Agriculture* (England and Wales), Feb. 1924, pp. 1017–23 (accommodation at eight centres for raspberry-picking in Scotland).

§ 12. *Conclusions.*

Any attempt to sum up the many considerations which arise in discussing agricultural workers' housing must eventually lead to a few principal conclusions. The problem is a money problem, of course, but it is not only that. The question of a deliberate getting away from bad old standards is also of no small importance, but above all the question of getting legislation on the statute book, i.e. specialized legislation controlling accommodation supplied by agricultural employers to agricultural workers. This is the only practical way of enforcing those minimum standards of hygiene and comfort which are so necessary and from lack of which the working population is suffering so severely. The compulsion on the employer on this head is really essential, and the legislation, if sensibly drawn up, should be capable of enforcement *and should be enforced.* At the same time it would be well to make headway in the direction of building more accommodation, always at low rentals, at the expense of public authorities; such building cannot be an economic proposition and it is just as well not to pretend that it will be. It will relieve the employer, who is finding himself less and less in a position to shoulder the expense of construction; it allows village planning, and it puts both worker and employer in a fairer and more straightforward position in their mutual negotiations about the offering and accepting of employment.

IX

EDUCATION

§ 1. *The distinction between general and vocational or technical education.*

EDUCATION is the conscious and systematic imparting of knowledge and training by one human being to another, usually younger, for some recognized purpose. What this purpose may be is a subject on the discussion of which it would perhaps be unwise to enter here too largely. But it may be agreed that the widest purpose of education in general is to endow succeeding generations with such information, understanding, and ability as shall make them fit to take their places in human society. There are, however, other narrower purposes which may also from time to time constitute the end aimed at by educational effort. Among these is the purpose of enabling the pupil to carry on a specific occupation. Education in this sense is termed 'vocational', because it fits for a vocation; or 'technical', because it communicates a knowledge of technique.

This division into 'general' and 'vocational' education has grown up in the course of the last fifty years. It is a recognized division in all countries of a more or less developed culture. But there is nothing inherently impossible in considering a training for a specific occupation as simultaneously a training for citizenship or for life in general. Any form of instruction, properly pursued, which teaches the pupil to distinguish principle from detail, the essential from the ephemeral, which contributes to accuracy, thoroughness, judgement, imagination, and other basic qualities, can constitute an education, and it is possible, though not easy, to attain such ends by a training directed largely or entirely to technical and manual tasks. It is rather a matter of experience and convenience in the more advanced countries to separate out those elements which train for general purposes and call these general education. However, when once this has been done, the consequences are important. The relative attention paid to the two forms of education matters a good deal, and harm may be done by an injudicious emphasis in the one direction if accompanied by neglect in the other.

In countries of less developed culture the problem is rather to secure a good education of any type. Education is indeed the product of leisure and of comfort. This is as true of vocational as it is of all other education, and it is a very important fact to bear in mind. No society will be able to afford a system of general education and no

industry a system of vocational training which cannot provide for those born in that society or engaged in that industry some utilizable spare time and a decent standard of existence. Here we at once encounter the biggest obstacle in the way of education of whatever type in an agricultural community. Such education has throughout to struggle against the disabilities imposed by a laborious calling carried on by poor populations.

§ 2. *Normal educational career of a country child where a system of compulsory education prevails.*

We will start with a rapid survey of the normal educational career of a member of the agricultural working population in a country which can afford a system of compulsory elementary education. The child begins with a period—six or seven years—of attendance at a rural elementary school. His school, sometimes the church or chapel, and occasionally the boys' club, &c., are the only educational influences he submits to outside two, which are as follows. He may receive some hints about the house or farm from father or employer, and he may have his imagination and intelligence stimulated by echoes from urban civilization, sometimes through cinema, or radio, but in reality more deeply by contacts with relatives or comrades who have removed to the towns; a good deal depends on the latter influence, and some distinction may be drawn between neighbourhoods where there is a frequent to and fro of travelling between town and country, and those where sheer remoteness prevents this; the latter are apt to lag far behind.

As regards the teaching which he receives from father or employer, it is usually on agricultural operations, but it is apt to be elementary. It is conceived less as training for himself than as assistance to others. It may consist in being set to weed, to carry milk, to gather wood, &c.—tasks which have scarcely any educational value whatsoever, or which may in themselves be detrimental to education because time-absorbing, exhausting, monotonous, or unpleasant. Occasionally the task given—herd watching in lonely upland pastures, for example—is very bad indeed for a child's intelligence and something like a brutish outlook may develop. Indeed, a child may early conceive a distaste for agricultural employment for no other reason than that he has been set to tasks too heavy, too dull, or too long. Here everything really depends on the personal and local circumstances. The attitude that the child is needed about the house or on the farm is a valuable one if it does not degenerate into domestic or economic tyranny, but its reconciliation with educational needs is a difficult question.

The girl's position is in every way similar. She may be taught some domestic duties by her mother, but she too is not infrequently called on for assistance, either unpaid or paid, in home or local agricultural operations.

On leaving the elementary school the child, as a rule, at once plunges into employment. 'Continuation education', as it is called, may, however, allow the ex-school child some opportunities of further schooling. Continuation education is a part-time education—sometimes only in the form of evening classes—designed to fit in to the daily routine of earning one's living. A whole-time, and therefore much more complete, education is provided up till about the sixteenth year in a secondary school, where such a school is accessible from a rural district, for those children who are free to attend it and can afford to do so. A few scholarships may be open for this purpose, as also for the further purpose of enabling the country child to proceed to higher studies at a college or university. This, however, is comparatively rare.

§ 3. *Vocational education for agricultural populations.*

We now come to the subject of vocational education in agriculture.[1] On this there is a good deal to be said.

Vocational education in agriculture has in the last generation made great strides; though it cannot take the place of a good modern secondary and university education, it has been able to supply some intellectual stimulus to rural districts. It is a really important factor in country life, and the effects will probably be more noticeable as time goes on. In many respects agriculture is far in advance of other industries in its attempts to train its workers in the pursuit of technical knowledge.

Vocational education in agriculture is mostly classed as lower-grade, intermediate, or higher-grade. We may briefly indicate the facts at the basis of this classification.

Lower-grade agricultural education caters for persons, especially young persons, actually engaged in farming. The aim is to teach not one operation or a single series of facts, but to give some systematic general idea of agriculture, or at least of some big department of agriculture. Though elementary, the instruction must be introductory to the subject as a whole, so that the pupil could, if opportunity offered,

[1] International Labour Office, *Studies and Reports*, Series K, No. 9, *Vocational Education in Agriculture*, Geneva, 1929, 244 pp., discusses the general principles underlying this type of education and gives a detailed survey of its organization in 32 countries. Cf. also *I.L.R.*, vol. xx, no. 5, pp. 666–89, *Education in Agriculture*, by L. E. Matthaei.

pass on to a more thorough knowledge. Above all, as the classes are to be attended by those who are in the course of earning their living, they must be cheap, convenient, and accessible. Courses and demonstrations are therefore usually held at a number of local centres, and do not by any means always imply residence in institutions; they are frequently held in the winter, and sometimes relegated to the evenings.

Lower-grade agricultural education is at the very root of a good vocational agricultural education system. It reaches just those groups of the agricultural population who need to be reached and who will never be in a position to take any great initiative in providing themselves with instruction in their life-occupation.

Intermediate agricultural education is a more serious and intensive training, aiming at greater thoroughness, and implying much more leisure on the part of the pupil, as two years' or even longer residence in some training institution is expected. Such instruction calls for the payment of tuition and boarding fees on a certain scale. The aim is to reach a recognized degree both of theoretical and of practical efficiency such as can be tested by examination and will secure a certificate or diploma. Intermediate institutions train a number of persons to take up farming in a professional way, not only as farmers, but as teachers, instructors, organizers, &c. In fact, they cover the whole training ground up to entrance to the agricultural college proper or the university.

Higher-grade agricultural education means advanced education at a university, college of university standing, or similar institution. What such advanced education implies is so well known that there is no need to define it here. A number of problems arise as to standards and arrangement of curricula, but these can hardly be included in our present discussion.[1] A great deal, however, depends on how they are solved, for on the quality of the higher-grade agricultural education and the outlook it provides hangs much of the success of the whole national system of agricultural education.

In spite of its considerable success there are many defects in modern vocational agricultural education; there are also large gaps in the general education of rural populations. Indeed, the problems of vocational and general education are so intertangled in rural districts that it is difficult to consider one form of education without bearing the other in mind also. The problems of vocational education would almost solve themselves if those of general education were attacked first.

[1] See, however, below, § 9, on the desirability of including labour investigations in research programmes.

§ 4. *Defects in the general education of country populations.*

There are three principal heads on which the general educational standards of rural districts may be criticized. The first is the big fact that compulsory education even of an elementary standard does not exist at all in many rural districts. Masses of rural workers are illiterate. The intellectual life of such rural communities is at a static level. There is a sort of self-evolved village life which suffices for the mental needs of the inhabitants; but these needs are usually narrow, and there are practically no other intellectual contacts and little interchange of thought with the outside world.

In other countries where compulsory elementary education does exist, the rural elementary school runs the danger of being rather isolated. It too often constitutes the only important formal intellectual stimulus which exists in the lives of many thousands of country dwellers. It is the only element in many country parishes which is systematically and continuously linked up with some large outside movement. Of course, religious institutions and sometimes the country doctor, the women's institutes, or even, in some countries, the neighbouring big estate will encourage some intellectual life; there is also the daily newspaper, the radio, and in a nearby town perhaps a cinema—a library or agricultural trade union are more rare. But while these institutions may or may not exist, may or may not be efficient, the school is universal and is above all obligatory: it must teach and it must see that its pupils attend. It is therefore all the more to be regretted that standards of teaching should apparently be condoned in country schools which are frequently inferior to those achieved in town schools. This criticism is brought by those who are in a position to speak in almost all countries, and it can scarcely be doubted but that it is true. The consequences are that not only from the standpoint of his personal advancement does the country child get a poorer chance than the town child, but that an inferior quality gets stamped on rural education and therefore on rural life in general.

Finally, there is the fact that compulsory education ends in any case at the age of 13 or 14. It is rare indeed among the wage-paid agricultural classes to find parents who can afford to maintain for further educational effort a boy or girl over the elementary school age as a non-contributory member of the family. The formal general education of the agricultural wage-paid classes, therefore, ceases abruptly at 13 or 14 years of age. It frequently ceases earlier than the education of a child whose parents are in industrial employment.

Far too many education Acts permit, on one plea or another, the withdrawal of children from rural schools before the age of 13 or 14 in order that they may be sent into agricultural employment, where children in urban districts are strictly kept to their school attendance until that age; the tendency also to allow the rural school summer holiday to be arranged, or even to allow special holidays to be arranged, or to admit individual withdrawals from attendance, for the purpose of 'releasing' the children from their educational tasks and making them free to work for the neighbouring farmers or for their parents, during the periods of the harvest stress of work, is thoroughly deleterious to the child's best interests. This is one of the severest complaints which agricultural labour has to bring against the present organization of society.

But, indeed, the present situation can scarcely be said to be advantageous even to the child of the industrial wage-earner, who may perhaps receive a somewhat longer education. In no circumstances can that education be considered to be long enough or in any proper relation to the intellectual needs of the ordinary human being. The immense advantages which have been conferred on modern populations by compulsory elementary education must not blind us to the astonishing lacuna introduced in modern life by the sudden termination of formal instruction half-way through the mental life of most adolescents. It is admitted that the age when a boy or girl thus ceases to receive a systematic schooling bears no relation to its real capacity for being educated; on the contrary, the years 14 to 16, 17, or 18 are perhaps the most receptive of intellectual impressions, the human mind not attaining an ordinary maturity until the near approach of manhood or womanhood. The decision which imposes this early cessation of formal, general teaching on the larger number of the inhabitants of modern states is artificial, being dictated solely by financial considerations. Intellectual starvation between the ages of 14 and 18 is one of the strangest disabilities which modern poverty still imposes on society.

It is agreed that continuation education can scarcely provide a remedy for this cessation of formal general schooling at so early an age. In any case, in regard to continuation education the country child is once more clearly at a disadvantage as compared with the urban child. While the chances of the child of urban wage-earning parents to continue its general education in some form, even if only a part-time education, are not abundant, in the country such opportunities must be described as positively deficient. Rural continuation education is a luxury, and few governments can afford to spend much

on it. Compulsion to attend is very seldom enforced. In any case, attendance for a few hours per week cannot be considered a substitute for a real secondary education. How indeed can the child do two things at once? It cannot both be earning its living and attending school. Yet with this faint chance of a modicum of continuation education we positively arrive at the end of the general instruction which falls to the lot of the average boy or girl born of a wage-earning agricultural worker's family; secondary or university education is seldom attained.

All country children, finally, if they come from wage-earning homes, are apt to suffer from bad housing, underfeeding and underclothing, and from insufficient dental and medical attendance. Diet is often badly balanced where it is not definitely inadequate. Factors on the assets side are space and air and opportunities for roving. Space and air, however, are only met with outside the buildings in which the child passes a large part of its day—ventilation is an unknown quantity in many rural homes.

Before passing on to ask what chances such a child has of some vocational education to supplement its scanty general instruction, we may ask how the matter stands with other classes of the agricultural population who are a little better off, that is, the class of independent farmers, whether smallholders or in a larger way. These classes are less hampered by poverty. Nevertheless, they are, as a rule, far from wealthy, except the larger land-owning group which we exclude from our survey. Smallholders frequently dare not attempt to send their children to secondary schools because the factor of distance implies boarding fees which are quite beyond their means. Where the attempt is made, inferior schools are apt to be patronized even by quite well-to-do farmers and a poor tradition is set up. There is little recognition among farmers that the results of scholarship are an important influence in daily life and a childlike faith exists in the adequacy of empiricism. This is partly due to the fact that a career, or at least a niche, usually exists somewhere within the farming world for a farmer's son or daughter; the same lack of initiative which is sometimes also observed in the business world is apt to obtain and is a contrast to the busy striving upwards of the sons and daughters of professional classes. Moreover, farming society, of which there are often several very distinct social grades within a district, is apt to be exclusive, and intellectual contacts with a university or other centres are unusual; where this vicious circle is broken through, as in Scotland, the results prove what excellent material the ordinary farmer's boy can be for higher educational training. Otherwise contact with general university life or other centres of

comparable intellectual stimulus is apt to be far too much confined to the upper classes in the country.

Throughout, therefore, the real trouble with country populations is too little general education. Those who present themselves whether for lower-grade, intermediate, or higher-grade vocational training in agriculture are too often most inadequately prepared to profit by it. Again and again do teaching staffs in agricultural institutions complain that they have to complete the gaps in general education before they can make any headway with technical instruction. In any case, there is a most awkward interval between the end of the elementary school career at 13 or 14 and the earliest age (usually 15, 16, or 17) at which attendance is allowed at the lower-grade agricultural vocational course. During this interval the child sometimes loses the taste for learning and becomes very indifferent to any intellectual stimulus. He may actually forget a portion of what he learnt at the elementary school.

§ 5. *The difficulties of vocational agricultural education.*

Thus vocational agricultural education, when it is offered to a country population, is compelled to make headway against conditions which are apt to be distinctly unfavourable. Moreover, the situation repeats itself. The same difficulties which stood in the way of a continuation of the child's general education put obstacles in the way of its vocational training—the imperative need to earn a living, the scantiness of the leisure allowed by the obvious occupation of agriculture, the poverty of the parents already engaged in that occupation, finally, the physical hindrances of distance and want of communications in the countryside—all these are so many factors automatically militating against the likelihood of attendance at vocational schools or courses. Whatever is done has in any case to be fitted into the tyrannous routine of agricultural operations; this means that only the winter, and sometimes only the evenings, are available for any real study. But the relegation of lower-grade courses, designed for young people, to the winters or the evenings is the exact contrary of what is educationally desirable, and makes the teacher's task almost impossible. In the winters no practical work can be done—but the pupils are just at the age when practical work should be done, theory does not appeal to them—while in the evenings no difficult tasks can be set, for the pupils are too tired. The pupils are apt to give to the courses the worst of their abilities and the least of their energies. In such circumstances first-rate teaching is required if the classes are to seem superior to what any intelligent young person can

pick up by mere practice and observation on the farm itself. It is therefore neither easy to get pupils to the courses nor to keep them there.

These considerations apply forcibly to lower-grade vocational courses. But they scarcely change in the case of intermediate teaching. Though the circumstances are slightly different, at bottom it is the same problem. The farmer, and especially the smallholder, asks why he should pay to send his son, whose services he can ill spare, to an institution in order to learn what, after all, he can be taught without cost on the home farm itself; and it is by no means easy to meet the double argument, that about expense and that about doing without the son's services, or to explain exactly in what consists the superiority of the institution teaching to what the father himself can impart.[1] When it comes to higher education, in a way the problem is easier. Those accustomed to pay attention to higher-grade education are usually in a better position to judge for themselves of the advantages of such education, which in any case has a very great attraction to the would-be student. However, access to such education for the poorer members of the community is practically impossible except in the rare cases where a really good system of scholarships opens the way.[2]

§ 6. *The small proportion of agricultural populations who are vocationally trained.*

It is therefore not in the least surprising that only a fraction of the farming population should ever have been taught, except in an empiric way, the art of farming. The estimates of the numbers of responsible farmers who have received systematic teaching in the business of their occupation give some results which cannot but cause reflection. While in a very few countries like Belgium and Norway one out of every three or four persons in charge of holdings, i.e. farmers or managers, are receiving training, in Czechoslovakia the proportion is one out of every

[1] Special smallholders' schools, concentrating on the teaching of what are sometimes known as the 'side-lines' of agricultural production, namely, poultry, pigs, fruit, bee-keeping, &c., have proved attractive in Norway, Sweden, and Finland. Smallholders are often badly served by the ordinary agricultural schools, as these must teach the growing of the staple crops, which, however, are seldom the *cash* crops of the smallholder and the standard of production of which on the smallholding is often a minor point.

[2] *I.L.R.*, vol. xiv, no. 3, pp. 400–5, analyses one of the official reports on the system of scholarships instituted in recent years for the children of agricultural wage-paid workers and allied classes in England and Wales; there is a similar system in Scotland. A large number of scholarships are also given in Czechoslovakia, where enormous efforts are being made to improve the education of the country population; see E. Reich, *La culture intellectuelle agricole dans la République tchéco-slovaque*, Prague, 1931, 187 pp.

six, in Switzerland perhaps one out of every ten, while in newer countries like Estonia and Latvia we come down to one out of every twelve, thirteen, or fourteen, and that only on the assumption that attendance will keep up to the present mark. In Austria[1] the last census, that of 1930, revealed that actually only between 2 and 3 per cent. of working farmers and their relatives assisting them had received some type of vocational agricultural education; that is to say that in a whole district perhaps only one or two persons among those responsible for carrying on the industry of agriculture, perhaps none, may ever have seen the inside of an agricultural school or college.

When we come to the wage-earning agricultural population we can only register an even scantier interest in vocational education. An International Labour Office questionnaire circulated to governments in 1924 included questions designed to collect information on this head. It was clear from the answers that the attendance of wage-paid workers at agricultural courses was a rarity. Interestingly enough, more by proportion were found in higher-grade institutions than at the bottom of the ladder; these were the exceptional individuals, who would have made their way in any case. How indeed could it be otherwise? How are workers at the same time to attend classes and also earn their living in an occupation in which the shorter working day is rejected as 'impossible' and the Saturday half-holiday is unusual?

There is an old inherited stock of skill in labour operations on the farm, the handing on of which from one generation to another is very casually carried out. The acquisition of such skill—by the wage-paid worker—seems to be almost a matter of chance. The country boy or girl, as described at the beginning of this Chapter, may pick up a few hints from his parents or neighbours and by generally using his eyes and ears, but he is really thrown into his employment when the moment comes, neck and crop, and none except his master and fellow-workers make any attempt at teaching him his job; he is therefore entirely dependent on their good humour, their teaching ability, and their general outfit of knowledge. Though manual dexterity in a high degree is acquired by practice and often an extensive practical acquaintance with the minutiae of many farming operations, yet the results are on the whole poor, as might indeed be expected. There is no system, and much obstinate and blind following of routine; much wasted effort is required and is also given.

[1] Figures analysed in *I.L.R.*, vol. xxvii, no. 2, p. 245; the inclusion of relatives of farmers makes it difficult to compare the figures with those for other countries; there is no information on the numbers of wage-paid workers who have received any form of vocational training.

The status of the agricultural worker is in this way unnecessarily lowered. Farming implies such an aggregate of possibilities that intelligence, as well as routine skill, are assets in *all* who pass through the farm gates. For this purpose an attendance of the wage-paid worker at some point in his career at a general lower-grade agricultural course, or at one of the extension courses, would be sufficient. Attractive courses, easily accessible, dealing sensibly but scientifically with the carrying out of labour operations are much needed; courses in milking are of this nature and are very useful—indeed, dairying is the one agricultural occupation where systematic teaching is usually obtainable by all who enter it, which perhaps accounts for the fact that the workers in this occupation are usually well paid and endowed with considerable self-respect.

§ 7. *The demand for a 'rural bias' in countryside education.*

The intellectual opportunities of rural peoples are thus, on the whole, deficient even in countries where compulsory education has been in force for many years. There is bred a great dependence on, and belief in, traditional experience and traditional forms of management among agricultural populations. Such experience is usually wholly empiric. As we might expect, this state of affairs makes individuals who are hardworking, shrewd, clever, and determined, but narrow-minded, obstinate, suspicious, and quite averse to anything unknown. This is the conventional character attributed to the countryman, and there is a great deal of truth in the picture. Even the greatest well-wishers of agriculture realize this, and the realization has evoked a strong desire to break through the rather sinister hardening of country life into so narrow a mould. It is natural to reconsider the rural school and to ask what improvements could be effected in the outlook of country children, and here perhaps is part of the origin of the movement which demands what is called a 'rural bias' in rural elementary education.

The question of the rural bias in education has possibly received an undue amount of attention. It may simply indicate a demand for more teaching on non-literary subjects in elementary schools, both urban and rural. This change in curriculum can be advocated on purely educational grounds and must be judged on these. Moreover, it is no doubt necessary, and most advantageous, to draw the attention of school children to their immediate surroundings and to make them take an intelligent interest in the objects they meet day by day. If the rural bias means no more than this—to teach the country child to appreciate the life of the country—it is all to the good. Country

children are also often extraordinarily indifferent to natural beauty—here there is much awakening to be done. But with all this it must never be forgotten that the six or seven years of elementary school life are the only period, as has already been stated above, during which thousands of children have the chance of learning anything about the content of the world as a whole; to open up vistas of unsuspected knowledge, or even to indicate some quite simple information, is an aim which must not be lightly sacrificed; localization of knowledge and of curricula must therefore be kept within reasonable limits.

A bigger question arises when the rural bias is interpreted as something beyond this, as a deliberate attempt to train the child attending the rural elementary school for the profession of agriculture and not for any other occupation. Such predetermined choice of the child's occupation is unfair. It is unwise in conception, for it introduces a dangerous difference of outlook between rural and urban populations, which existed formerly but which vanished in the nineteenth century—precisely under the influence of an education system identical for town and country. Finally, it is futile. Such 'bias' in the child's education never yet persuaded an unwilling child to become an agricultural labourer if other forces did not impel it in the same direction. As a matter of fact, the whole controversy is rather artificial. As long as elementary education ends in the fourteenth year, the technical knowledge which can be conveyed is too slight to be worth much; there is therefore a great deal of talk about what in the end amounts to very little. An examination of the statements of those governments which, in answer to the International Labour Office questionnaire of 1924, declared themselves to be rather in favour of a rural bias in rural education[1] revealed that what was taught in their countries was pretty well what other governments described as 'nature study lessons' or 'lessons on country life'.

The above observations must not be taken to indicate that in countries where the general state of the population is far less advanced a simple and admirable educational curriculum could not be offered which included a good deal of technical and practical training in agricultural subjects. The problem is here quite a different one, and there are very strong reasons for not offering to primitive populations what to them becomes a mere arid imitation of western literary instruction. But in countries where elementary education is already universal and compulsory, the fact remains that a certain standard of general

[1] International Labour Office, *Industrial and Labour Information*, vol. xix, no. 8, pp. 283–96, 'Rural Bias in Elementary School Education' (is a survey of these answers).

instruction is assumed to be the ordinary stock-in-trade of the citizen, so that any plan for stealing hours out of the already limited curriculum for occupational training is an injustice to the class of the population required to submit to it.

§ 8. *The success of 'extension' education among agricultural populations.*

Of far greater importance has been the introduction of methods of teaching which under the name of 'extension' teaching seem likely almost to revolutionize the educational standards of rural populations. Extension teaching is so called because it 'extends' the teaching of recognized educational centres to a radius beyond their immediate confines; the word 'extra-mural' is used for the same purpose in other education, but in agricultural education the description 'extension teaching' is now commonly adopted.

Extension teaching, which in agriculture is largely an invention of the New World, has methods which are peculiarly its own; they have the qualities of originality and simplicity. The pivot of an extension system is the authoritative individual, the 'agent' or 'representative', 'lecturer' or 'adviser', 'demonstration officer' or whatever other name is inflicted on him by an unimaginative Ministry or Legislature, who gains the confidence of the farming world and who is so admittedly in touch with national research stations that he can be trusted to bring the newest ideas and the best information, fresh from the factory, as it were, for the consumption of his audience. He therefore brings good wares, but he is not provided with any stall or shop from which to sell them,[1] and perhaps this is his salvation and that of his audience. Instruction given on extension methods is literally hawked round the countryside. The personal visit, the demonstration class or week, the demonstration caravan or train, are its most characteristic components. Classes and courses are of course also held in buildings, but are frequently moved and are almost peripatetic, or, if not, are given in a number of localities. Thus knowledge is brought to the very doors of the farming population; courses are short and simple and are cast into easily understood form or concentrated on a single topic at a time; there is an absence of trouble and there is practically no expense—all that is required is a certain initial interest and the willingness to put learning to the test by practice. Even a shy country population—and country people are shy—will respond to such a generous informality. As the ideas brought forward definitely appeal to self-interest, an audience is easily secured, and if the extension officer has been well selected, an influential system of advice, encouragement, and teaching

[1] The principal extension officer often has an office.

is rapidly built up. A particularly successful recent innovation is the Young Farmers' Club, which is a small group of children, youths and girls, each of whom carry out some simple operation of husbandry, such as the rearing of a calf or the cultivation of a garden crop, in part competition and part combination with each other, under the guidance and advice of an extension teacher.

Extension teaching can be instituted in any country. It is a good ally to improved methods of formal elementary education, e.g. to the so-called 'consolidated' rural school, which means a larger central school serving a whole district, to which children can be brought in arranged transport from a certain distance; this is a plan which has been adopted in the United States, Canada, and parts of Australia for some time past, and latterly in England, and has greatly improved rural education, as the larger unit allows of better and more varied teaching and more separation of children by age. Or else such extension classes can be linked up with the 'village college', such as has been started at Sawston in Cambridgeshire, England, the idea here being to give some really adequate form of continuation education, more attractive than the rather ineffective efforts of the past. Again, where there is no literate education, recourse can be made to other than literary methods. Everywhere the curriculum can be localized and adapted as circumstances require, and the expenses are moderate and can be increased and decreased without throwing the whole machine out of gear—a great advantage; public money and effort can be economized by the use of voluntary agencies such as agricultural societies, &c. The distasteful principle of compulsory attendance is also avoided. Such instruction, moreover, is inclined to be practical; it appeals to all ages and all classes of the agricultural population, and, in particular, has solved a problem which no other form of agricultural education has been able to touch, the instruction of the adult peasant already engaged for many years in farming, who, by reason of his long practice, deficient general culture, scant leisure, and above all by reason of his being entrenched as a little master in his own kingdom, was inaccessible to new ideas.

§ 9. *The influence of scientific research.*

Agricultural extension teaching, and indeed agricultural vocational education as a whole, is unthinkable without modern research. The experiment station is the necessary background to the agricultural 'agent'. The rich results attained by modern agricultural research are the stock-in-trade of the agricultural extension teacher without which he would come empty-handed; it is useful when he can be

brought into intimate touch with those responsible for carrying on research or actually be directed by them in his work. In fact, the success of an extension system of teaching largely depends on the way in which the relations between experimental work and teaching are managed. The intimate connexion between research and agricultural teaching in general has placed such teaching in a peculiarly fortunate position for some time past. The great advances made in investigating the natural laws governing cultivation of the soil and the rearing of animals have had a most inspiring effect. The processes of discovery, it must be remembered, are ultimately pursued for scientific ends; they are carried on, whether supported by government moneys is immaterial, in that independent way which it is the privilege of science to assume; the advances made are fundamental, undeniable, and secure from obscurantism; they are public, democratic, and altogether international. They have directly influenced the standard and aims of agricultural teaching and have supplied that intellectual stimulus which it is the duty of all true educational effort to convey. A strong idealist strain is found in much agricultural vocational teaching, especially in extension teaching, and this is in part due to contact with the research outlook.

This being so, it is all the more to be regretted that a whole field of investigation and teaching has been neglected from the research point of view which is of the utmost importance—the field of investigation into, and teaching on, labour problems. Considering the importance of human labour in agriculture, it is astonishing that so little thought has been expended on the subject of how best to use it. The low rates of wages have been deceptive, but above all the ease with which workers could be secured. That the problem of labour should so seldom have been studied even from the mere money-making point of view in this profit-making age is surprising.

A beginning has at last been made by the creation of the experimental stations at Pommritz in Germany and Uhrinévès in Czechoslovakia, the work of the first of which, at any rate, immediately attracted world-wide attention. The United States Department of Agriculture has also in the last few years begun to publish the results of inquiries on the utilization of labour; England and Germany have responded by an interest in machinery problems in their relation to human effort, while these two countries, together with Italy, Australia, Canada, and many other countries, have started a good deal of investigation into the cost of labour on the farm. This experimental and inquiry work is of the utmost value, and it is only to be regretted that it should not have been started years ago.

Where direct investigation into labour problems is not within the sphere of a research station, yet each station could undertake to give some systematic training in the model performance of tasks to the small number of workers with whom it comes into immediate contact. The writer may be excused for referring to a valuable labour training experiment carried out by her husband at the tropical experiment station at Indore in Central India. This station was a cotton research station, and the use of a wage-paid force was purely incidental to the scientific investigations to be undertaken. At the outset a not uncommon situation was encountered—an untrained and depressed local labour force, unused to discipline and ignorant of its duties. Systematic training was taken in hand with the most brilliant results. On those occasions when the labour engaged by an outside contractor had to be brought into the station, the difference between this foreign element and the Indore trained worker could be seen at a glance—so much more alertness, willingness, intelligence, better physique and greater strength, better time-keeping and higher quality of work. A special feature was the system of certificates and promotion. Definite operations were taught, and efficiency in these carried a much-valued certificate and extra pay. Moreover, these certificates began to acquire a local value—trained workers were asked for in other Indian States and were supplied, or workers retired to holdings of their own to apply the knowledge gained on their own behalf—this was encouraged; new workers were then taken on and trained. This demonstration of teaching possibilities, it must be remembered, was carried out with a force of wholly illiterate labour. It was supplemented by 'cultivators' meetings', when local cultivators were invited to attend at the station for a week once a year and learn what was going on; these also were completely successful.[1]

Analogous teaching opportunities are within the compass of most experiment stations, as some wage-paid labour is usually employed. Even if only a dozen wage-paid workers could be trained at each station, it would be worth while. It should therefore be considered whether a useful beginning could not be made in the systematic teaching of wage-paid workers—the idea of certificates for proficiency in special operations is a good one and easy to carry out—with a view not merely to increasing the skill of this group of the agricultural population, but also to assisting them towards a more honourable place in the agricultural hierarchy, and with a view in any case and above all to making an end of the assumption that untrained workers are good enough in farming.

[1] *I.L.R.*, vol. xxiii, no. 5, pp. 636–43, 'An Experiment in the Management of Indian Labour', by A. Howard.

The whole question of the education and training of the agricultural wage-paid worker needs a fresh attack. So much has been done for rural populations by means of compulsory elementary education, even with its present deficiencies, and so much is being started in the way of agricultural technical education generally, also in the form of 'country life' movements, that it seems a thousand pities if a systematic effort cannot be made to get one stage further and to give that technical assurance and that recognized professional status which is the foundation of a satisfactory professional life to those who after all constitute the largest professional group in the agriculture of so many countries. No doubt the scarcity of foremen's posts is a difficulty; the agricultural industry is split into so many tiny units of production, each managed by the owner, that the chances for the wage-paid worker of climbing up the professional ladder are not great. But inherently agriculture does still require what modern manufacturing industry is getting less and less to require from its wage-paid workers, the exercise of considerable skill and the use of intelligence, and as far as we can foresee this will always be so.

X

RIGHTS OF ASSOCIATION AND COMBINATION, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, AND THE AGRICULTURAL TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

§ 1. *The importance of all forms of collective action for agricultural workers.*

We have now completed a survey of certain of the conditions under which agricultural wage-earners work and live. The important question of wages has still to be dealt with and will be discussed in the first Chapter of our next Section, Part IV, 'Economic Conditions'. Before proceeding to this discussion, however, it will be worth while to interpose some consideration of another topic. How far can the conditions which we have been describing, or any other conditions of work and living for agricultural wage-paid workers, be influenced or improved by means of collective action?

It is perhaps hardly necessary to define what is meant by 'collective action'. Every one understands the now accepted principle which permits workers to get together (right of meeting), to enter a common organization (right of association), to determine that whatever conditions of work are to be allotted shall be the same for all workers and to make a bargain with employers to that effect (rights of combination and of collective bargaining), and, eventually, in the case that the employers should refuse to enter on such a bargain or fail to honour it when entered upon, to confront them with a united refusal to go to work or to continue at work (right of strike).

§ 2. *The struggle to obtain the right of combination and strike for agricultural workers in various countries.*

These rights, which are the very foundation of a modern working-class movement, were not obtained without the severest struggles, in which agricultural workers from time to time played an honourable part. Unfortunately, in certain countries of Europe agricultural workers were in a peculiarly weak position during the nineteenth century, which was the period when this struggle was fought out. As has already been explained in Chapter VI above on 'The Agricultural Labour Codes', in not a few European countries a distinction was made between agricultural and other workers by the maintenance of the old servants' Ordinances applying to domestic servants and to agriculture. In addition to their many other severities these

Ordinances imposed one further disability, and this was precisely the denial of the rights of association, combination, and strike. All these Ordinances practically without exception refused to recognize such rights and severe penalties were envisaged in their texts for any attempt at such action. As was also stated in Chapter VI, the validity of these Ordinances or the Ordinances themselves were prolonged in certain countries by definite constitutional enactments about the middle of the century, the efforts of more progressive parties to bring about some amendment being thus wholly defeated.

From that time onwards until the outbreak of the World War a persistent demand was maintained in these countries for parliamentary action to terminate this situation; great stress was laid on the absence of the ordinary rights of combination and of strike among agricultural workers; a certain right of association in organizations had meanwhile become possible even in agriculture. It was always remarked as rather astonishing that this demand to complete the rights of the agricultural worker was unsuccessful, and it was perhaps in part accidental that the situation was never solved. The change in the legal and constitutional position after the War brought the necessary relief. Complete equality was achieved with workers in non-agricultural industries. Only one European country, Hungary, still refuses the right of combination and of strike to agricultural workers.[1]

In countries outside Europe the situation differs. The majority of countries have never made any distinction between the rights of agricultural and of other workers; in Australia and New Zealand historic strikes of agricultural workers took place at the end of the nineteenth century. In some South and Central American countries the right of combination is restricted in general, but only in Cuba and perhaps in Guatemala does there appear to be a statutory distinction between the rights of agricultural and of other workers on this head. In South Africa the bulk of agricultural workers are natives, whose contracts are governed by legislation quite separate

[1] While the Hungarian trade union movement in general is subject to strict administrative control, the agricultural workers are, in addition, formally forbidden by Act of Parliament either to go on strike or to exercise any kind of combined action in furtherance of a strike (§§ 62, 65, 66 of Act No. II of 1898 and § 57 of Act No. XLV of 1907; see section on *Hungary* in International Labour Conference, Seventeenth Session, *Report of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office upon the Working of the Convention concerning the Rights of Association and Combination of Agricultural Workers*, Geneva, 1933, 13 pp.; this is the official report presented to the Conference on the first ten years' working of the Convention mentioned; though strictly limited to a bare definition of the legal situation in each country, it is a document of intrinsic importance; for the Convention see § 3 of the text of the present Chapter).

from that applying to white workers; this legislation severely restricts the rights of combination of such native workers. On the other side, the growth of organization and the use of concerted action among Japanese tenants, who constitute the working-class agricultural population of Japan, may be noted.

§ 3. *The 1921 International Convention concerning the Rights of Association and Combination of Agricultural Workers.*

With a knowledge of the pre-War European situation in mind the advocates of workers' rights in the International Labour Organisation requested the inclusion in the Geneva programme of international decisions on behalf of agricultural workers (Third Session of the International Labour Conference, 1921) of a Convention[1] pledging the States which ratified it to grant to agricultural workers the same rights of association and combination as were accorded within their national territory to other workers. A text was accordingly voted to this effect and has since been ratified by twenty-three States. The ratification of this engagement must necessarily terminate, unless or until denounced, any special disabilities of agricultural workers on this head in the ratifying States; it does not, as should be carefully noted, pledge States to guarantee any particular rights either to agricultural or to the general body of their workers. Both Italy and Germany have now abolished the right of strike of all workers, either State having previously ratified the Convention. Nor are they by any means the only countries which have placed some restriction on rights of association, combination, and strike, seeing that a number of countries refuse to recognize the existence of Communist or extreme organizations, or else reserve to themselves the right to exercise special powers of coercion in cases of national emergency, &c. The merits of the Convention are nevertheless not small. It guards against any repetition of the pre-War inequality between agricultural and non-agricultural working populations in regard to their primary rights of united action.

§ 4. *The spread of collective bargaining in European agriculture after the War.*

In the first few years after the War, before the severest phase of the present economic depression set in, great progress was made by the agricultural workers in undertaking associated and combined action. The principal advance has been in Europe. This post-War activity among agricultural workers may conveniently be considered

[1] See Appendix No. 7.

under two headings—the rise and spread of collective bargaining in agriculture, and the agricultural trade union movement proper. These two phases are closely connected but not absolutely identical; not all collective bargaining in agriculture presupposes an agricultural trade union, though such bargaining normally rests on union effort, nor does every agricultural trade union movement advance to collective bargaining, though it is very common for it to do so.

In one form or another collective bargaining is now known in the agriculture of at least eleven[1] European countries (Austria,[2] Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Germany,[2] Great Britain—England and Wales, and Scotland, separately—Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain,[2] Sweden); to these may be added Australia and New Zealand, the systems there being older and of a rather special character. The observations in the present Chapter apply principally to Europe, but the Australasian systems must also be kept in mind; they are very important in showing how far collective bargaining can be carried in certain agricultural occupations.[3]

Collective bargaining in agriculture has since the War spread peacefully, indeed, almost unnoticed, and could in 1933 be stated to cover five million agricultural workers. The general absence of controversy attending the carrying on of negotiations has been rather remarkable. Yet it would appear that to start collective negotiations in agriculture is not easy; the frequent non-existence of employers' organizations, the obstinate attitude of employers who have never been accustomed to face combined action on the part of the workers, certain inherent difficulties on the side of the workers themselves which will be referred to below, create difficulties which it is not easy to surmount. But when once this initial stage has been passed, both sides are usually quite glad to continue on the basis won. The difficulties of the last twenty years in procuring a suitable supply of labour in good time and without endless trouble and dissatisfaction have induced many agricultural employers in central Europe to be ready to enter into

[1] International Labour Office, *Studies and Reports*, Series K, No. 11, *Collective Agreements in Agriculture*, Geneva, 1933, 122 pp., gives a survey of the subject in nine countries. The findings of a Commission of the seventeenth Session of the International Labour Conference on this report when submitted to them are printed in the *Record* of that Session, pp. 675–6.

[2] Note must be taken of recent political changes in these countries, which are likely to alter the forms under which collective bargaining is carried on.

[3] The Australasian systems rest on an important series of laws, and cannot be considered in the same category as the ordinary collective bargaining of Europe. Some information on their history will be found in Appendix No. 2, *s.v.* 'Australia and New Zealand', and some results attained are mentioned in Chapter VII (hours).

arrangements which tend to stabilize conditions and maintain workers in their jobs. There is also the sense of fair play towards the workers, which has grown greatly in agriculture in recent years.

§ 5. *Forms of collective bargaining in agriculture.*

There are various forms of collective bargaining in agriculture. All are copies of processes worked out in other industries, from which agriculture has taken what she needs. Indeed, where a system is already in force for other industries, agriculture simply enters into such general system. Elsewhere, arrangements which apply to agriculture only have been made, but no particularly original ideas have been evolved. A rather special problem in agriculture is the variety of conditions found within the same national territory or even region. It must be the aim of the workers to level these up and to make the backward parts of the country conform to the standard of the more progressive districts; indeed, this is one of the principal purposes of a collective bargaining system. This process, however, cannot be completely insisted upon; conditions are too difficult. A compromise is therefore sought, of which a particularly useful form in agriculture is found in the drawing up of one national or wide regional covering agreement laying down some important basic principles, backed by a number of local bargains which settle wages rates &c., perhaps within certain limits. This system has the advantage that the life of the covering instrument can be ensured for long periods, thus securing the continuance of negotiations and of certain primary points, while at the same time sufficient elasticity is allowed; the local negotiators are in a much firmer position than they would be if there were no covering agreement. However, collective bargaining in agriculture is by no means systematized in this or in any other direction. All sorts of arrangements are in vogue, which it is unnecessary to describe in detail.

The question of renewal is always of importance. The absence of regularized arrangements for renewal invites an uncertainty of situation which can rather too easily be made the occasion for a fresh trial of strength between the parties. It is therefore to the advantage of the workers to insert clauses stating that the force of an existing agreement is prolonged either for a specified period, say three months, while negotiations may continue, or even until such date as a new text is in force. In agriculture the normal period of validity of a collective agreement is one year, which corresponds to the fundamental needs of agricultural production.

Another small point is that even the date of renewal matters. If

renewable in the spring the workers have the advantage, as their services are immediately needed; if in the autumn, the employers have it, as the workers are then the petitionary parties. In Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, Poland, and some parts of Germany, agreements run from some date in the spring; in Sweden and Mecklenburg-Schwerin from an autumn date. Other agreements expire with the calendar year, which usually means an unsatisfactory prolongation of negotiations until the need for beginning spring operations makes some decision essential. In general, it may be stated that much of the success of collective bargaining depends on having these points systematized and some clear arrangement in force as to obligation to renew texts, date of entering into negotiations, and situation arising if negotiations are unsuccessful.

The actual formal drawing up of texts shows great variety. Some texts are fairly complete documents, others rather casually put together. Certain texts have survived with very little alteration from the early post-War years; this is not a good sign, as it shows that both parties have been on the defensive and that there has been no real development.

§ 6. *The extent of government intervention.*

The question of government intervention is the pivotal question of collective bargaining in agriculture. Though it must not be thought that such bargaining is in essence other than a voluntary settlement between the parties, yet unless backed to some extent by the public authority it is likely to fail in its object.

These authorities can intervene or, more important still, take the initiative, in various ways and at various stages. They can insist that negotiations be started; they can claim to be present and to take part in the negotiations; they can arrange that where the outcome of voluntary agreement is *nil* some decision is substituted by other means; they can recognize the contractual nature of an agreement; they can declare it enforceable against other than the original negotiating parties; they can inspect its carrying out.

Examples of all these forms of government intervention are common and have contributed greatly to the success of collective bargaining in agriculture. Almost more is to be learnt from their absence. In Estonia promising arrangements of 1919 and 1921 were soon rendered abortive because the authorities were not armed with any penal powers for enforcing the election of representatives and therefore the start of negotiations. A Hungarian Act of 1923 to create elected wages committees representative of both sides has had a

practical outcome in a very few districts only, the authorities not taking the initiative in setting up these committees where the workers do not venture to insist. In France the local public authorities in certain districts have frequently presided over collective negotiations between agricultural workers and employers and have given such recognition as was possible to the terms arranged, but the law does not recognize these bargains as enforceable and they have invariably ceased to be effective within very short periods. In the Netherlands the start and carrying on of negotiations has until recently been on a voluntary basis and has been partial, covering only a few districts and certain groups of workers; their continuation was always rather doubtful; the government is now exerting greater pressure in view of the large subsidies which are being granted to farmers. In Scotland the idea of collective negotiations encounters difficulties, and can scarcely be said to be effective at the present time.

In Denmark and Sweden the collective bargaining movement is well recognized in agriculture, though it is not in force in all parts of these countries; it is not used, for instance, in the north of Sweden where smallholding prevails. The strength of the movement in either country lies in the determination of the workers to insist on it and on their good organization; also on the general acceptance of the principle of collective bargaining in other industries. The governments have intervened with compulsory conciliation and arbitration boards when negotiations have broken down; they may thus be said to hold a watching brief in the background, and this has naturally been very important on critical occasions and has prevented the system from collapsing. The authority and influence of the State is perhaps more directly involved in Czechoslovakia, in spite of the fact that there is no formal legislative compulsion on employers, except in Slovakia. Negotiations are annually arranged in the presence, and under the presidency, of government authorities, who play a big part in getting the system accepted; their enforcement, however, rests only on the voluntary pledge of the central federations on either side. So far this has worked successfully, and the terms are observed even by unorganized employers. In Slovakia, where there is a poor and rather illiterate class of worker, the terms are enforced on a statutory basis with a view to the protection of these workers.

Collective agreements have been used a good deal in Austrian agriculture and have been backed up by provincial legislation forbidding contracting out.[1] Still more important was the growth of collective

[1] The Agricultural Labour Code of Salzburg, § 2, states that a collective agreement *may* form the basis of an individual employment contract; in the

bargaining in Germany in the period between the end of the World War and the recent National Socialist Revolution. State intervention has here taken an interesting form. All negotiations were completed between the two parties alone without interference and without the presence of government officials, but the authorities retained reserve powers of enforcing any of the bargains made on all employers and workers, within the district covered, whether parties to the negotiations or not. This, while it did not ensure that the whole country was subject to regulated conditions, yet was a powerful support to the principle of collective bargaining. The arrangements made were not special to agriculture but part of a general system. The system which will succeed this under the present National Socialist régime will apparently be of an authoritarian character. Another authoritarian State in Europe, namely, Italy, has paid great attention to collective bargaining in agriculture, and, like Japan, is attempting to introduce the principle of recognized terms, subject to control, even between tenants and owners of land, the relations between these two classes being, indeed, in either country much in need of improvement and supervision. The practice of collective bargaining was, however, very firmly and successfully established in Italian agriculture before the Fascist régime and before the War, Italy standing out from all other countries by her frank acceptance of the principle of united action in agriculture at a date long preceding its introduction elsewhere.

An immense responsibility attaches to the presidents of the industrial arbitration courts in Australia and New Zealand. Had agricultural workers succeeded in getting themselves brought under this system, they could have claimed that their working conditions were being more clearly recognized and supervised by the public authority than in any other country in the world. Recently, however, they have lost ground in Australia, while in New Zealand the system itself has received a severe set-back. This leaves us with the English and Polish systems, to which we may add mention of the Spanish, which when introduced was apparently to be on rather the same lines, but which has not yet been tried out. The English and Polish systems, which are confined to agriculture and not part of general systems, must certainly be considered as successful. Under the revised Polish legislation of 1924 government representatives, acting alone, take

opinion of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture (1933) this clause was sufficient to forbid contracting out. In the other provincial codes prohibition of contracting out is more clearly laid down. It should be noted that the provincial Diets which adopted these codes have now ceased to function.

the place of, and act for, the representatives of the two parties when these cannot be elected or cannot come to terms. This proviso was the result of the situation in 1919 and following years, when arrangements altogether broke down and some very desperate and widespread strikes took place among agricultural workers. The firm action of the authorities has undoubtedly been due to the sense of public danger thus involved. What is interesting is to see the rapidity with which the idea of negotiation has subsequently been accepted by the disputing parties. This illustrates what was said above about the difficulty of getting negotiations started and the comparative ease of carrying them on when once the various interests concerned have got used to the idea.

The same firm determination to take the initiative and to see that negotiations are not only started but also carried through has accompanied the application of the Agricultural Wages (Regulation) Act[1] of 1924 in England and Wales; here the public authorities are obliged, under the terms of the law, to see that committees are set up, the legislation thus differing notably from the comparable Act in Hungary. As in Poland, this proviso has been the result of an illuminating experience. The voluntary conciliation committees, which in 1921 replaced the first compulsory system of negotiation between employers and employed in English agriculture, established during the War period, proved a complete failure; they were either never set up or never functioned properly. Interesting also has been the general working out of the Act. It is commonly found that the government nominees on the committees have the final decision by casting their votes with one or other of the parties; they are thus really in the position of arbitrators as well as of mediators. This must inevitably be so where, as under the English Act, these representatives take part in the proceedings throughout; the other two parties, when not agreeing, will be inclined always to thrust the responsibility on the impartial members.

§ 7. *The results of collective bargaining in agriculture.*

What have been the scope and contents of collective bargaining in agriculture and what has it achieved? Has it positively improved conditions for the wage-paid worker in agriculture, and, if so, how? How far can it replace protective legislation laid down by parliaments? Something has been made of the criticism that collective

[1] The Act refers to the fixing of wages (for which purpose a standard length of working week is adopted, see Chapter VII, § 10) and to a weekly half-holiday, but not to other conditions.

agreements apply pre-eminently to the day worker or short-term worker in agriculture and to large-scale estates, and scarcely touch the conditions of the resident farm-servant, especially when the latter is employed on the smaller and more remote peasant farms. This is, for instance, particularly noticeable in Austria, where, of the 450,000 agricultural workers employed for wages, only about 34,000 employed on large-scale enterprises, including forestry enterprises, have formally benefited by collective bargaining. On the whole, this limitation does not matter much. It is just the worker on the large estate who is to spend all his days as a wage-paid worker; his working conditions matter to him for years on end. The wage-paid worker on the peasant farm is more likely to be the son of a farmer himself and perhaps later to accede to a smallholding. In any case, the raising of conditions for one group of workers inevitably raises conditions for others, and the conditions on the smaller farms could never be too grossly out of adjustment to those on the larger.

Rather more serious is the failure to secure conditions on behalf of women and children. It is rare to find even a mention of terms for children, and women's wages and hours are but summarily treated; at any rate, it cannot be stated that women have benefited to any noticeable extent by the use of collective negotiations in agriculture. For quite different reasons social insurance constitutes another field in which collective bargaining has been of little use; the arrangements to be made are too complicated and too far-reaching; such things must be left to social legislation. On questions of housing the usefulness of collective action is also doubtful; inspection and enforcement are decidedly difficult, so that the terms laid down are apt to be theoretical.[1]

In practice, the questions which are settled by collective bargaining in agriculture are wages, hours, and a few analogous matters such as holidays, indemnities, &c. The question of wages always takes precedence and frequently forms the contents of a separate 'wage-bargain' or document. The collective bargains drawn up in the early post-War years have resisted the economic depression remarkably well, and they have, in general, protected the worker's earning power; wage adjustments have been carried out at any rate in a regularized and orderly way, though not, of course, without vehement disputes and stubborn resistance. But it is above all in the regulation of hours of work that collective bargaining has achieved its greatest success in agriculture. It is an impressive fact that by means of such common action agricultural workers have been able

[1] See Chapter VIII, § 8.

to secure for themselves far better terms in the matter of working hours than any so far laid down on their behalf by law. This alone entitles collective bargaining in agriculture to be treated with respect. Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of a regulated working day in agriculture without some assistance from collective bargaining; it would be so very difficult to enforce hours unless the workers themselves were prepared to take a hand.

§ 8. *The question of enforcement.*

This question of enforcement is interesting. From one point of view the collective bargain is a particularly practical method of securing good working conditions in an industry like agriculture. It avoids that bogy of the government inspector and does not invite the oft-quoted difficulty of asking for heavy official intervention in so scattered an industry as agriculture. It is perhaps better to trust to the constant day-to-day efforts of the interested parties themselves to enforce the points agreed upon. However, in Poland and England government inspection is used, so that it might be argued that in these two countries we have something going beyond the collective agreement, and, indeed, it is possible to classify the English and Polish systems more as social legislation than as collective bargaining. Elsewhere there is usually the possibility of appeal to a tribunal; where this is lacking the bargain is not enforceable and the whole system very weak. Such appeal to a tribunal, however, depends entirely on the initiative of the injured party; it is not taken in hand by the public executive authority, which makes no attempt to hold itself responsible for the execution of the terms.

While this is in some ways very convenient, it has also its dangers and its shortcomings. It means that a formally valid collective bargain could in practice quietly be flouted as soon as the workers lost their grip on the situation. There have not as yet been complaints on this score. On the contrary, the workers claim that the terms of collective bargains are widely observed by employers who have not formally acceded to them or in districts or for groups of workers not formally covered by them.

§ 9. *The place of collective bargaining in the agricultural industry.*

We have sufficient grounds for arguing that collective bargaining is one of the most sensible innovations admitted in recent years into the carrying on of the agricultural industry. It is particularly suitable as a medium for allowing workers who are beginning to be rather conscious of the backwardness of their working conditions to work

continuously at the task of improvement without being discouraged by the hopelessly difficult process of seeking a hearing in overburdened legislatures. It allows employers and workers together to hammer out practical and above all rapid adaptations of an old industry to modern technical conditions which are changing greatly.[1] In no case can it replace needed protective legislation. It cannot be made sufficiently complete, nor can it be finally secured against unforeseen attack and even collapse. It is in any case hardly possible to suppose that it can give any results except where the conditions are to some extent favourable. Employers must be prepared to treat the workers as fully qualified opponents, or better as fully qualified collaborators: any survival of an old aristocratic or even of a paternalistic outlook is bound to wreck that confidence in the sincerity of the other side without which the process of negotiation is quite futile; collective bargaining is, in truth, only possible in a modern State where the current ideas on labour questions are already advanced. Moreover, the process must not be mixed up with violent political controversies; the political atmosphere is useless in the committee room. On the other hand, the workers must not be in a helpless position; they must be able to command some prestige and position. It follows necessarily that the workers must be to some extent organized if they are to appear as successful negotiating parties. This brings us to the important question of agricultural trade unionism.

§ 10. *The character of agricultural trade unionism.*[2]

Agricultural trade unionism has grown up under considerable difficulties. The natural forces which give rise to trade unionism are association, contiguity in work, and identity of interests; the presence of large numbers of workers day after day in the same building or factory, doing the same work, breeds an *esprit de corps* which is the essential background of trade unionism all over the world. These conditions are absent in agriculture. It is rare to find really large

[1] An excellent statement on this point will be found on p. 13 of the International Labour Office study on collective bargaining in agriculture mentioned in note 1 on p. 174.

[2] International Labour Office, *Studies and Reports*, Series K, No. 8, *The Representation and Organization of Agricultural Workers*, gives in Part III, 'Agricultural Trade Unionism', details of the birth and growth of agricultural trade unionism in 29 countries; *I.L.R.*, vol. xviii, nos. 4–5, pp. 552–73, *The Agricultural Workers' Federation in Palestine*, by Dr. Walter Preuss, is a separate account of a new movement. 'The Organization of Wage-Earners in Agriculture', by J. F. Duncan, in *Proceedings of the (Second) International Conference of Agricultural Economists*, Menaska, Wisconsin, 1930, pp. 449–58, may also be mentioned. The position alters rapidly under the influence of the political situation and the future cannot be forecast.

numbers of workers side by side on the farm or employed on a single farm; in the few cases where this happens such workers are not the permanent workers of the farm and do not constitute the principal labour force; they are seasonal or quite temporary workers brought in for a special purpose. The permanent labour force of most farms —the key men—consists of a few persons only. Often there is a single farm-servant, who lives in considerable isolation.

Identity of interests also is not nearly so clear cut. There is more community with the employer than in other branches of production. The nature of the work itself is such as to arouse a strong common feeling between employer and employed, while residence in the employer's house must also be taken into account in many cases. If such residence does not breed a feeling of friendly intimacy, it nevertheless prevents the worker from being able to oppose his employer effectively even when such opposition is thoroughly justified. Indeed, the trade union membership of the single resident farm-servant is a very difficult proposition, as all agricultural union organizers are well aware. There are no organizations of agricultural workers whatever in Canada or the United States of America,[1] probably because Canadian and United States farms almost exclusively employ one worker only, who is frequently a resident worker.

It is therefore not surprising that the agricultural trade union movement on the whole should show only a restrained amount of antagonism to employers' interests. It is not usually a bitter movement. The strike[2] has been employed more frequently than might at first sight be realized; some strikes have been prolonged, and some have been very intense; even the 'black' strike (i.e. the strike during which workers refuse to feed the animals) has been known. But the strike, while it flares up and dies down in agriculture, and while it has on one or two historic occasions been almost of a sensational character, has never constituted the hall-mark of agricultural trade unionism. The strength of that movement has always lain in well-marked directions, in peculiarly fine personal work done by its leaders, in educative effort among its members, and latterly in persistent daily and hourly carrying on of negotiations for collective bargaining or similar purposes.

§ 11. *Origins and history of agricultural trade unionism.*

The agricultural trade union movement has been much affected

[1] The beginning of some organization is now reported from Minnesota and New Jersey.

[2] See Appendix No. 5.

he rural exodus. The constant loss to the countryside of the most getic, cleverest, and youngest among the rural population has nt a corresponding weakness in the movement. Where the neighring town or the metropolis has not drawn workers away from culture, they have been lost by emigration; half the former cultural trade union membership of Scotland, for instance, is to ound in the British Dominions. In French agriculture the trade on movement flares up at intervals and as invariably peters out— continued drainage to the towns combined with the absence ny very significant division between employer and employed in ich rural life has again and again condemned such a movement terility. In Italy, on the contrary, where there has always been ery dense rural population in spite of much emigration, one of most successful phases of agricultural trade unionism existed veen 1884 and the outbreak of the War.

he early history of agricultural trade unionism must be sought eparate national movements like the one just mentioned in Italy. England there was the well-known movement in the 1870's ieered by Joseph Arch; this movement was notable for its great porary success, for the sympathy extended to it by many not of working classes, including many clergy, and for its rapid disap-rance, which was partly due to Arch's own encouragement to members to emigrate. Other early movements can be traced in land, Denmark, Sweden, and above all in Australia, where a very able early record of trade union effort, which has left a deep mark he history of trade unionism, can be quoted from the pastoral istry. Then followed the Netherlands in 1900, Hungary in 1905, tria in 1902 and 1906, and Germany in 1909, the first year after adoption of a new Act on the right of association permitted any nization among agricultural workers.

part from the Australian, many of these original movements e abortive, obscure, or of small importance, or else they died down the Arch movement in England and the many unions created ntervals in France between 1897 and 1911. There was rather earth of endeavour just before the War, though the successful tish Farm Servants' Union was founded in 1912. After the War e was a great burst of activity; many new unions were founded ch in some countries have disappeared again or carried on a very arious existence, being much drawn into the political controversies heir respective countries. In other countries, however, there been a solid advance, in spite of some retrogression which has oubtedly overtaken agricultural trade unionism in the last few

years of the depression. Certainly the history of agricultural trade unionism has been very chequered. The agricultural workers have often been dependent on the help and even at first on the initiative of a central trade union body; they have set themselves to imitate the methods and ideals already evolved by workers in urban industry. But their difficulties have been very great; the turnover in agricultural trade union membership is still enormous owing to removals, leakage into other occupations, low wages, and other causes. In view of the legal difficulties formerly put in the way of combined action among agricultural workers and the general social strength of the landed aristocracy and farming classes, it is scarcely surprising that agricultural trade unions were created late and continued with difficulty.

§ 12. *The international movement.*

It was not until after the War that any attempt at a concerted international movement was made. The two organizations which then rather suddenly sprang into being in 1920 reflected the accepted distinctions which had long since grown up in the world of international trade unionism: one organization, the International Landworkers' Federation, was created within the 'Social-Democratic' movement, and another, the International Federation of Christian Landworkers' Trade Unions, within the 'Christian-Socialist' movement. At the moment of their greatest expansion in 1920 these two organizations together counted over three million members, but they have never again approached these numbers. The first organization has shown the most life and has had some influence in international discussions. It has suffered rather severely, however, by the necessary withdrawal of the Italian workers under Fascism and again, in 1933, by the suppression of the important German branch in consequence of the turnover in that country to National Socialism; a later accession to strength was the affiliation of a huge Spanish branch, created two years ago at the founding of the new Spanish Republic; but this branch has also recently been immobilized. The future history of this international organization must inevitably be bound up with the history of international trade unionism generally—obviously this is one of the difficult problems of international life. The excellent start which has been made ought at all costs to be continued. An international organization of agricultural wage-paid workers has an important function to fulfil, first, in securing attention to agricultural labour problems at Geneva—no easy task in view of the gaps in the constitution of the International Labour Organisation—but also

because, quite apart from League of Nations proceedings, it is most essential that the feeling of solidarity and possibilities of co-ordinated action among agricultural workers all over the world should be encouraged. The agricultural problem has entered on the international stage, and those engaged in it are therefore bound to envisage action on an international basis.

§ 13. *The importance of stating the case for agricultural labour.*

The importance to agricultural workers of stating their case cannot be over-estimated.[1] If agricultural trade unionism did nothing else than secure a public hearing for the facts of the labour situation in agriculture, it would do a great deal. There is still in the farming world something of the work to be done which marks a pioneer period —there are many old prejudices and preconceived notions, much general indifference and even hostility to be overcome, in addition to the undoubted real difficulties of instituting reforms. The public is to be instructed and the state of affairs in many distant countries to be illuminated for the first time. There is work for years to come. Freedom of combined action among agricultural workers, the practice of bargaining with employers for identical conditions for all, the habit of uniting together in common organizations for this and analogous purposes, are the undeniable rights of agricultural wage-paid labour and are assets to any community.

[1] Some recent agricultural trade union programmes analysed in *I.L.R.*, vol. xix, nos. 4–5, pp. 666–89, 'Workers' Agricultural Programmes in Austria, England, and Germany', by Dr. Fritz Baade; a wider point of view very ably set forth, ibid., vol. xxv, no. 2, pp. 165–88, 'A New Policy for Agricultural Labour', by J. F. Duncan.

PART IV

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

XI

AGRICULTURAL WAGES

§ 1. *The importance of agricultural wages.*

WE have now obtained a general view of the agricultural worker's legal rights and of his working conditions. The remainder of the present volume will be devoted to a discussion of his economic position. The first subject to be attacked must be that of wages. Indeed, the question of wages so far outweighs all other questions which arise in the course of the agricultural worker's life that one sometimes wonders whether anything else can matter at all. The rights and conditions described above take on an entirely different complexion according to the wages rates which accompany them and make them bearable or otherwise.

§ 2. *Nature of the information about agricultural wages.*

There is, on the whole, a great deal of information about agricultural wages. We say on the whole, for the reader who has finished reading the present Chapter will have noticed some conspicuous lacunae. There is, for instance, only very limited information about agricultural wages rates in Asiatic and African countries. This is not particularly disastrous, because the economy of these countries is not yet directed towards a systematic development of wages systems; in particular, their agriculture is not dependent on the work of wage-paid persons. As has already been pointed out, these countries are peopled by masses of small cultivators, and any investigation of the prosperity of these regions would naturally take the form of an inquiry into general rural living-standards rather than into wages. Agricultural wage-earners do exist and, in the aggregate, their numbers are large; but their wages are customary and in kind; they scarcely change at all and are not indicative of the current economic situation. They are, indeed, often nothing but fiction, on account of the state of permanent indebtedness in which the worker stands to his employer.

Nevertheless, it is regrettable that more systematic figures are not available on the wages of labour employed on large-scale tropical plantations. Some reliable information exists, but it has not been regularized or co-ordinated. A comparative analysis has not yet been made.

Much more lamentable is the scarcity of information about agricultural wages in many of the South American countries. From these countries there is a large export of staple agricultural products

which compete on world markets with similar products from other countries. It is therefore particularly to be regretted that full and regular information is not available about agricultural wages in South America. Figures are published from time to time, but they often lack support and in any case are entirely insufficient.

Lastly, it is to be noticed that about a dozen European countries do not publish official agricultural wage statistics. The absence of good figures from the Netherlands, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia is particularly regrettable, as these countries, like the South American countries, enter their produce on the competitive world produce markets.

A general difficulty which applies to almost all countries is the absence of facts about agricultural earnings. Everywhere the inquirer is confronted with wage rates only, and these are often minimum rates. Although it is not on the whole probable that earnings in agriculture greatly surpass such minimum rates, yet some difference there must be, especially for certain groups of workers. Some recent information on the income of agricultural workers' families is extraordinarily illuminating on this question.[1]

However, the chief difficulty which arises in a world study of agricultural wages is the formal incomparability of agricultural wages rates in any one country with those of almost any other country. To the eye of the statistician this incomparability may appear such as cannot properly be surmounted. Indeed, it would be wrong to gloss over the great objections which preclude a satisfactory international statistical analysis of world wages in agriculture. The present writer is, however, convinced that there is much to be gained from a general study of agricultural wages on an international basis, even if direct comparisons between actual rates from one country to another must as yet be avoided. From such a general study a picture can be constructed of identical movements in a large number of countries, and this picture, merely by its accumulated effects, is very impressive and shows clearly where the present-day agricultural worker stands in regard to the monetary or financial remuneration which he earns.

§ 3. *Difficulties of an international comparison.*

One of the main difficulties of an international comparison of agricultural wages is the number of different wages rates which are known and recorded. From among these, for purposes of comparison, a choice has to be made of only one, or at most two, rates for each country. This severe selection is essential. To deal with too many figures is to lose all grip on the subject. The choice is, however, a

[1] See Appendix No. 6.

matter of difficulty. In some countries information is altogether incomplete, in others it is almost too complete. Above all, the reference is frequently to very different things.

There are at least three main types of agricultural wages rates recorded, namely, (*a*) rates which represent *the wages earned by the whole body of agricultural workers* in any country; (*b*) rates *earned by one group, the most typical* in any country; (*c*) separates rates *earned by separate groups of agricultural workers* in any country. This is to refer to adult men's wages only. There are other figures to be considered for women's wages, for the wages of junior workers, and also for forestry and horticultural wages, not to mention wages for special jobs. The following are a few of the facts which appear to be typical of the situation.

In Australia a rate is published, together with excellent index figures, which is a combined or representative rate, constructed by the census authorities from recorded particulars of wages in seventy-two agricultural and horticultural occupations. Nothing could be more satisfactory. Such a wage allows of a sound comparison with other industries in Australia and also with agricultural wages in other countries. But we already note a minor difficulty when we come to Australia's nearest neighbour, New Zealand. Here we have everything *except* the combined representative wage, i.e. we have rates for a variety of different agricultural occupations and also index figures for agricultural wages in general, but, as it happens, the actual figures in shillings and pence for a combined wage are not published. If we take a long jump and come to Sweden, we find a figure which is also most informative, namely, a carefully constructed agricultural wage-earner's average annual income. It is, however, a figure for earnings, not wages rates, which perhaps may give the statistician pause. However, the difference between this and the Australian figures need not be exaggerated, and the Swedish series is unquestionably one of considerable importance in the comparative study of agricultural wages. Finally, we may note the information in Canada and the United States of America. In both countries the statistics assume a general figure, which is the wage for all hired workers on farms without distinction. This wage, therefore, also is a representative wage, though it is constructed on a much simpler basis than the Australian.[1]

[1] It is constructed from local particulars collected by the respective crop correspondents of each country. The characteristic of the wage is that it is a general wage which embraces all agricultural workers, there being no difference made in practice between the wages given in the different branches of agricul-

With that our list of absolutely generalized or representative wages in agriculture ends. We next have a group of figures for wages rates paid not to all agricultural workers in any one country, but to a typical group of agricultural workers. There are various series of this kind. The figure computed for England and Wales is a general figure for all ordinary farm-workers, i.e. for workers other than stockmen, cowmen, &c.; this means for workers other than the most skilled workers. This figure is not unsatisfactory, but tends, of course, to be rather low. In Scotland there is the figure for married ploughmen, deemed to be the most typical group of agricultural workers. In Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Italy there are rates for day-workers only; of these the Czechoslovak figure is published on the basis of farm accounts, by a public institution, but not by the government. Germany, Poland, and France publish wages rates for several important groups of agricultural workers; the German figures are not averaged for the whole country, and the official figures fail to give a cash value to wages in kind;[1] the French figures appear only every second year, their purpose is to constitute a basis for social insurance payments, and they have been freely criticized as most casually put together. There remain the Scandinavian and Baltic countries, where the difficulty is the publication of such a choice of figures that it is difficult to select any one rate as particularly typical.

The reader must not, of course, assume that these considerable disparities have been the result of arbitrary decisions on the part of national authorities, or, worse still, the outcome of indifference or carelessness. In each case there have been sound reasons for the choice made. The object has always been to select, first, those figures which could be ascertained with a fair degree of accuracy, and, second, those which were relevant to the purpose in hand, which has usually been rather straightforward, namely, to accumulate information sufficient to guide the decisions of national governments and national legislations in dealing with agriculture.[2] For

tural production. (Differentiation all over North America is according to region, and also according to season of the year; see below.)

[1] Figures published by the German Landworkers' Union make good this omission up to 1933 and are therefore used in the Table printed at the end of this Chapter.

[2] In England and Wales a report on agricultural wage rates is a statutory duty imposed by the Agricultural Wages (Regulation) Act of 1924, but the eventual purpose is that mentioned above, namely, to guide policy. In France, as has already been stated, agricultural wages are estimated for social insurance purposes, and this has also been so with one set of German figures. In Australia and New Zealand there is an impetus to ascertain agricultural wages because of the frequent claims to bring the fixing of those wages under the industrial conciliation and arbitration system.

this purpose the record of a general rate, of a typical rate, or of one or two typical rates is all that is required. The idea of an international comparison does not enter in, as national authorities are not concerned with any such process.

National statistics of agricultural wages are like a series of reflections of the agricultural situation in each country. The quieter the situation, the more perfect will be the reflection: the more disturbed it is, the more broken is the image. Such as they are, they must be used. They are indispensable to our task, and it is to be assumed will be gradually improved as time goes on—indeed, the practice of collecting agricultural wage statistics in a continuous way is rather a new one; in a number of countries regular series of figures have not been long available. It is therefore permissible to suppose that they can be both extended and made more perfect.

§ 4. *Principles on which an international survey can be attempted.*

Assuming that out of the mass of figures at our disposal we want to arrive at the general facts of the agricultural wages situation, on what principle can we proceed? The best plan will be to find an illustrative group in each country where agricultural wages figures exist, note the wages of these groups, and finally supplement our knowledge by any other information available. By choosing typical groups we shall know that the figures which we have cited are at least representative of each country considered; in addition, it must be our aim to get our series as uniform as circumstances allow.

For this purpose it will be advisable to set up a Table which can be roughly divided into three portions. In the first portion we will insert cash wages of resident farm-servants given *in addition to* board and lodging, and in the second portion the *whole* wages (cash and value of wages in kind together) of other permanent workers also resident at the farm-house or on the estate. The first group will tend to represent, in continental Europe, the younger unmarried workers, and the second group, again in continental Europe, the older *deputatists* or older married workers who receive a cottage and food and other allowances in kind for themselves and their families. We shall further insert the wages of workers on permanent (or at least on monthly) contracts in Canada and the United States, in the first portion of the Table their cash wages only (given in addition to board and lodging), in the second portion their total wages (inclusive of the value of board and lodging). It is true that the distinction between unmarried and boarded, and married and not boarded, workers probably does not apply so normally in these two countries

as in Europe; the giving of accommodation and board at the farm-house appears here to be more a matter of convenience and mutual arrangement than to mark any distinction between different groups of workers, younger and older. However, the conditions on which wages are actually paid conform sufficiently to enable us to group all these workers, together with the married ploughman of Scotland and the Irish farm-servant, as workers on permanent contracts. The reader will note the omission of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Italy from this part of the Table, figures for resident workers in these countries not being available as national averages allowing of a suitable entry.[1]

The third part of the Table stands apart. It comprises the wages of day workers or of workers on other short-term contracts. These groups represent the great mass of agricultural workers who are not permanent resident workers; historically these include all those groups of the agricultural working population who derive from the 'free' classes outside the local jurisdiction of the lord of the manor or the household jurisdiction of a 'master'. They also include the agricultural workers on weekly contracts in some Anglo-Saxon countries. They may be summed up as one huge class, but with important subdivisions. In Hungary, for example, the day workers are largely the relatives of the permanent married workers on long-term contracts, and their earnings do not represent earnings of principal bread-winners; however, there is also a class of day workers, principal bread-winners, who own a dwarf holding and seek some paid work. In France the day worker is a principal bread-winner, with or without the resources of a smallholding. In all countries the composition of the whole group varies between these sub-types.

The wages of day workers are very important in agriculture. They register, as no other wages do, the constant fluctuations of the passing economic situation. Moreover, they are an all-cash wage, and therefore particularly suitable for comparison with prevalent non-agricultural wages. Indeed, this is a comparison which reflects some very crucial facts, for so often the worker himself has the alternative between day work at a neighbouring farm and, for example, day work on

[1] It might be thought that record of cash wages only for the first group of workers (those boarded and lodged at the farm-house) is hardly adequate or illustrative in view of the fact that their board and lodging usually makes up over one-half of the total value of their remuneration. This, however, is to ignore the fact that it is the cash wage which, by moving up and down, best registers their economic situation. Moreover, it is the size of the cash wage which matters to the farm-servant, board and lodging being—so to say—a foregone conclusion. It is true, however, that this part of the Table offers no possibilities of comparison with any industrial wages.

road-making. The different wages given are therefore a determining factor in the social life of rural populations and a frequent cause of individual action. These considerations apply a good deal less distinctly to the wages of weekly workers.

The results of the application of the principles which we have been discussing will be seen in the Table of Agricultural Wages which forms an appendix to the present Chapter. To this the reader may now turn. Before, however, we discuss the figures themselves, certain elements which bear on their interpretation must be considered. These are: the period of payment; local and seasonal variations; and payments in kind.

§ 5. *The period of payment.*

The reader will have noticed that very dissimilar periods of payment are implied in the figures set forth in the Table. The fact is that, in agriculture, wages are paid in respect of many different periods of labour or quantums of performance. They are paid, under different circumstances, by the hour, day, week, month, six months or season, or year; they are also paid for piece-work or by the whole job (as in harvest); finally, bonuses on performance and other analogous gratuities may be arranged. The bulk of agricultural wages are, however, paid as time wages.

The variety of the time periods which are the accepted bases for agricultural wage payments for different groups of workers inevitably introduces considerable difficulties in the way of a comparison. Ideally speaking, the year would be the most scientific unit, consonant with the yearly swing of agriculture on which at the outset of this book we laid so much stress, calculated, moreover, to smooth out seasonal fluctuations of remuneration. Provided we could get at figures of total agricultural earnings, as distinct from mere wage rates, it would permit of some comparison, if such a comparison is indeed possible, with the yearly incomes of those smallholders whose financial situation is sometimes compared with that of the agricultural wage-earner. A number of the rates mentioned in Series I and II of the Table are reckoned per year; it is, perhaps, doubtful how far the rates in each case represent total earnings. Still, they are available for comparison as soon as the much greater puzzle of ascertaining the true income of smallholders shall have been solved. They are also available for comparison between each other on a gold basis or dollar basis, for years up to 1932, if the reader cares to undertake this operation—but it should be remembered that the gold value of a currency does *not* represent its purchasing power within a country.

In some of the remaining cases in Series I and II and in some cases in Series III of the Table we have wages reckoned per week; this is normal in England and Wales, Scotland,[1] the Irish Free State (for certain workers, see Series III of Table), Australia, and New Zealand. Here methods of payment in agriculture, indeed, the agricultural labour contract itself, have for decades been under the dominating influence of urban industry, where weekly payments are the universal rule. The reader can, if he likes, multiply the weekly rate by 52 to get at a yearly rate. There is perhaps no inherent objection to this, though it is certainly bold to take for granted, especially in Australia and New Zealand, that the worker will, in fact, have had a full 52 weeks' work in the year; the question of extra summer earnings also rather complicates the problem. But the great advantage of the computation per weekly period in agriculture in these countries is precisely that it permits a comparison with industrial wages; in view of this, a comparison with other agricultural wages may perhaps be foregone.

This leaves hourly and daily rates. Three countries, Czechoslovakia, Germany, and Italy, quote hourly rates in agriculture. In these countries agricultural working time is, in fact, regulated on a basis of hours; in Germany, the total number of hours over the year is normally known for each district and group of workers, and the same may be said for many groups of workers in Italy. The principal reason for the quotation of agricultural wages rates per hour in these countries is, however, again the fact that industrial wages are now so quoted in either country, and the same remarks apply as were made in the preceding paragraph in connexion with the payment of agricultural wages by the week.

Finally, there are daily rates: of all the periods known for the payment of agricultural wages the day is the most difficult to utilize with accuracy. This is unfortunate, as it is the basis of so large a number of agricultural labour contracts in so many countries. The difficulty is not a formal but an actual one. We can assume the number of actual working days in agriculture over the year without Sundays and holidays to be about 300 in countries of temperate climate; but it is most necessary to bear in mind that the number of days on which work can be done is not in the least the same as the number of days on which any individual day worker obtains work. The number of days worked over the year *per individual* is seldom

[1] But in Scotland wages are, in practice, more often bargained for per half-year for farm-servants (cf. Irish Free State, rate given in Series I). The official statistics, however, give a statement per week.

the full 300; even 250 is a high figure, the quantum is more often 200, 180, 150, 120, or even in bad times down to 90 or 70. Remember that in Finland the day worker who gets eight weeks' continuous work in the year counts as a 'permanent' day worker. Consequently, to multiply the daily wages of a day worker by 300 or even by any very definite figure with a view to getting at an annual wage comparable with that of the *deputat* worker or some other permanent worker might be highly imprudent.[1] This does not invalidate the important and useful comparison which, as was pointed out above,[2] can be made between day rates in agriculture and day rates in an alternative industry to which the agricultural worker has access in rural districts, or day rates in unskilled urban industries. It simply means that the road-worker or the unskilled urban worker is himself exposed to a similar risk of irregular employment, so that the comparison holds good; according to circumstances the agricultural or the other worker may be bearing the greater risk in this direction, the agricultural worker's risk being, as a rule, very heavy; but the building labourer's risk can be almost equally so. It does, however, make extremely difficult any comparison between the wages of day workers in agriculture and the wages of other agricultural workers.

§ 6. *Local and seasonal variations of agricultural wages.*

Scarcely too much can be said on the subject of local variations of agricultural wage rates. The extent to which they can go is astonishing. The figures given in the Table, being national averages, convey nothing on this head. Such national average rates are composed of local particulars of which the lowest may be only one-third of the highest, and these local rates themselves are averages; a difference of at least 30 or 40 per cent. between the lowest and highest rates in any country for the same groups of workers is normal. In an interesting computation made by the Norwegian authorities for 1930–1, where the national average rates were taken as an index = 100, the lowest and highest local rates stood at indexes of 88 and 119 for farm-servants' wages and of 69 and 142 for day workers' wages; in Scotland, in 1931, the married ploughmen's summer weekly wage ranged from 30*s.* 6*d.* to 44*s.* 6*d.*; these are both small countries. In larger countries the range can be very great indeed. It is notorious in France, where the rates given in one part

[1] There are exceptions. In some parts of Germany the 'free' workers, who are day workers, work, like the *deputatists*, all the year round. When examined, their hourly wage rate is often found to be almost identical with the *deputatist* rate.

[2] See § 4.

of the country are no guide whatever to those given in another. In Italy, in June 1932, the average hourly rate for day workers was calculated at 0·82 lire in one province, but at 1·64 in another—exactly twice as much; in a huge country like the United States wages in the southern States are about one-third of what they are in the more prosperous parts of the country. In reality, however, this example is not so significant as the facts observed in countries which are not only much smaller in area but where the racial, social, and economic conditions are more even throughout.

Every agricultural trade unionist will deplore these local variations. The 'islands' of low payment persist year after year and almost generation after generation, and constitute the hardest problem for his union; no efforts seem able to raise the wage rates in these districts. What may be called the normal rate of wages, which could be expected throughout the country, *is invariably pulled up to a higher level whenever and wherever an agricultural district feels the influence of any neighbouring urban or industrial production.* That this is so is a fact of the greatest significance. The universality of this phenomenon is to be noted. In the more remote districts opposite influences are at work. Perhaps the poverty of the agriculture, unquestionably a disadvantage in marketing and transport, but above all *the lack of an alternative employment for the agricultural working population*, sometimes even ignorance of the fact that such alternative employment exists elsewhere, all injure the workers' bargaining position and combine to pull down the average wage rate at least as many points as it is capable of being pulled up in the mixed industrial-agricultural districts; the results of the two pulls away from the normal in opposite directions are the differences in wages observed in one part of a country and another.

Compared with local variations, the seasonal fluctuation of wages is not so important. The question is closely allied with that of hours, as the actual amount of earnings, as distinct from rates of payment, may fall in winter to rise in summer because of alterations in the length of the working day. An actual difference of rates at which payment is made is nevertheless also to be noted. It may be rather considerable in the case of day workers, but is not uncommon even in the engagements of permanent workers. The general influence of the seasons upon earnings is probably correctly given in the Swedish estimate (as a basis for computing the average annual income of a wage-earner referred to above) of two days at summer to one at winter rates; it must be remembered that the 'summer' often includes well-paid spring and autumn operations.

The worker's feeling on seasonal wage changes concentrates on two points. The first is not to let winter rates, or at least winter earnings, fall too low; otherwise there is a real difficulty in getting through the winter. The second is not to forgo, for the sake of a levelling up of the winter wage, the chance of all extra wages in the summer. Not only is the summer working day often a very long and tiring one—so that the expectation of a high reward is natural—but extra summer earnings are a necessity in the family budget. 'The harvest money pays for the boots' has been almost a tradition in English agriculture, and, indeed, it is difficult to see how the ordinary agricultural worker's family would be clothed except for the summer earnings. Needless to say, all those workers who get summer or seasonal engagements only have every interest in keeping up the summer rates, and this may account for the high rate paid for such seasonal operations in countries where these workers are organized or have otherwise acquired a good bargaining position. In any case, it usually pays a farmer to master his seasonal operations at a good pace and in good time, and he is therefore prepared to pay a considerable amount in cash for that purpose; the Canadian farmer, for instance, knows that even a few hours in getting his wheat off the field and to the railway siding may make all the difference in the bargain he will be able to drive with the interests owning the silos.

The attention attributed to seasonal variation of agricultural wages is well illustrated by the careful record kept of such variations in some countries where different agricultural operations follow each other rapidly. Estonia records three seasonal rates for day workers, Latvia no fewer than six, namely for grass-mowing, the rye harvest, cereals harvest, flax harvest, cereals threshing, roots harvest; in 1931 the day rates for these operations were respectively 3·21, 3·10, 2·73, 2·79, 2·69, and 2·39 lats. Other examples of the seasonal variation of wages are, for day workers, 17·39 and 19·89, 23·40 and 26·50, 18·71 and 21·22 crowns (acccording to district) in Czechoslovakia (1931); 4·28, 4·71, and 5·51 crowns in Denmark (1931); 2·00 and 3·60 pengö in Hungary (1930); 1·24 and 1·33 lire (per hour) in Italy (1931); 4·12, 4·43, 4·71, and 5·14 crowns in Norway (1931); 3·57 and 4·71 crowns in Sweden (1931); for more permanent workers, 209 and 287 crowns per winter and summer engagement respectively for farm-servants in Norway (1930–1), and $43 summer and $36·58 all-the-year-round average monthly cash wage (without board or lodging) in Canada (1931). These are a few examples chosen at random—the year 1931 is cited in preference to any later date, because one of the principal effects of the reigning economic depression has latterly

been almost to obliterate the regular seasonal rise and fall of agricultural wages. It should also be noted that shearers' wages and wages of other pastoral workers in Australia and New Zealand are seasonal wages.

§ 7. *Payment in kind.*

The payment of wages in kind is one of the most characteristic features of agricultural wages. The reader will be surprised at the varied forms which such payment in kind can take. There is, of course, the ordinary form of board and lodging at the farm-house. On the question of lodging the reader is referred to the Chapter on 'Housing' above. On the question of board there is not a great deal to be said. It is still quite usual for the worker to share the farmer's meals, or, if not, at least the diet is apt to be the same or similar and is usually ample,[1] for anything less than an ample diet would be foolish on the part of all concerned in view of the amount of muscular work which has to be done; special arrangements are often made for supplying food and drink to harvest workers in the field, including those not usually boarded, much care and thought being sometimes expended by the employer on giving a proper and varied diet at this time, so as to allow the worker to resist the heat, thirst, and fatigue of harvesting. There is an old tradition of employer's generosity in many countries in giving a feast at the end of the harvest period to the harvesters.

Of great importance are the food allowances given to the worker who is not boarded; these are supposed to be sufficient to maintain him *and his family*; they are, in fact, a survival from the system when the proceeds of cultivation were shared out between all members of the community. The variety which these food allowances may take is interesting. Every form of food product is given, the quantities being most carefully fixed: cereals or flour, meats and meat products, vegetables, milk and dairy products, fruits, wines, oils, &c. In this connexion it is important to notice that agriculture maintains a distinction between the married and the unmarrried worker by fixing the food allowances differently; this distinction may range from merely giving rather larger allowances of a single product (e.g. potatoes) to a complete adaptation of the quantities of different allowances strictly according to the number of children. The effectiveness of such adaptation depends on what portion of the wage is given in kind, though a distinction in cash wages also is not unknown.

[1] But in times of stress the employer may be tempted to save on the quality of the food supplied to his workers. Cf. personal statement by the late Director of the International Labour Office, *I.L.R.*, vol. xxiii, no. 4, p. 465.

After lodging and food allowances come heating (i.e. fuel allowances of all kinds including petroleum, or wood rights) and lighting. Clothing, the giving of which used to be general (sometimes the amount was laid down by contract or even by law), is now seldom supplied by the employer. But we rapidly pass to those even more significant allowances or rights which in some countries permit the worker to establish himself in a miniature agricultural enterprise at the gates of the large estate. These allowances centre round the use of land. Some of the area which goes to make up the whole complex of the big estate is, in fact, shared out among the population which lives on and from such estate. In England the tradition of a garden plot for each worker's family was with difficulty rescued by definite allotments legislation from the rude shocks of the Enclosure period; a few fruit-trees and the right to keep poultry is also common, but this right and the right to keep pigs is a matter of contention (owing to an alleged temptation to steal corn or other produce). In Scotland the worker less commonly has a good garden, and suffers thereby. In Belgium, France, and the Netherlands all phases of access of the rural working-class population to land may be studied, but the question is no longer very directly connected with the payment of wages; legislation (which is important) tends to treat it as an independent question on its own merits. It is in the north, centre, and east of Europe[1] that the so-called *deputat* system has really to be studied. In these countries not only has the worker the right to raise crops and keep animals, but everything is supplied to him by his employer for that purpose: the land, either a definite piece or an area each year, and this sometimes ploughed, manured, and seeded, or at least with the right to use the employer's implements and draught animals; the stock and the buildings for stock; feed or pasture for stock; straw and litter; wood and water rights;[2] threshing, milling, and baking rights; and so on.

We swing round in the United States to the worker who demands from his employer garage space for a car.[3] Thus does agriculture have to adapt herself to varying needs and epochs.

Pursuing our question of allowances somewhat further, we now advance to systems of remuneration which are quite frankly based

[1] But many employment contracts in Italy may also be compared, though the word *deputat* (which is of German origin) is not used in connexion with them.

[2] Water rights: a good example is the recent Federal Labour Code of Mexico, of 26 Aug. 1931, which (Chapter XVII, § 197, IV) secures the necessary water for domestic uses and stock to all agricultural workers on an estate. In general, this code enforces what can only be described as a *deputat* system.

[3] *I.L.R.*, vol. XX, no. 4, 'Allowances in Kind given to Farm Labourers in the United States'.

on the sharing-out principle only; such systems consist in engaging workers to cultivate or otherwise take charge of a definite crop area, &c., on condition of receiving either the produce from an agreed portion of the area or an agreed share (percentage) of the total harvest. This system can be well studied in Hungary, where it has been the subject of legislation,[1] but it is also common in Italy and in other south European countries, nor should the reader forget that it exists in the southern States of the United States, in South Africa, and in all tropical and sub-tropical countries.

The idea of sharing out is, of course, most natural in agriculture. It is hardly necessary to recall what has just been said about the antiquity of the usages which survive perhaps even more clearly in these arrangements than in the fixed *deputat*. Yet the surprising thing is that they do survive. Why, in a modern world, should the agricultural worker share the risks which in other industries capital (i.e. the employer) has been so eager to assume? What can justify placing on the agricultural worker's back this burden, for clearly the worker's remuneration on such a system will fluctuate violently with harvesting results and may vanish with harvesting losses, a danger from which, under ordinary methods of payment, he claims to be immune? The objections are obvious and seem to contradict the whole wage principle. A systematic effort to provide against them was included at an early stage in the law on the subject in Hungary, referred to above. The same objections, though in a lesser degree, apply wherever the wage in kind exceeds a certain proportion of total remuneration.[2] In such cases the worker is expected to sell a portion of his *deputat* with a view to adding to those cash resources which the farmer is unwilling to supply to him except in a small measure. Where this is the practice—and it is not an uncommon one—the worker runs all the marketing risks which attach to the selling of agricultural products; indeed, the receipt of a really large *deputat* puts the worker in somewhat the same position as if he were due to receive percentage shares of the harvest.[3]

The survival of these sharing-out systems and of wages in kind generally are, in truth, due to causes which are special to agriculture. The extreme difficulty of securing sufficient cash resources as agri-

[1] Act No. XXIX of 1900 respecting the Legal Relations between Tobacco Producers and Tobacco Cultivators. Cf. also § 92 of Act No. XIII of 1876, amended as §§ 10 and 35 of Act No. II of 1898.

[2] *I.L.R.*, vol. xxiii, no. 4, p. 465 (objections put forward on behalf of German workers stated to receive 85 per cent. of their remuneration in kind).

[3] The *deputat* is assumed to be supplied off the farm; sometimes the farmer has to buy additional quantities of products to make up the *deputats*.

culture pursues its task are well known; eventually this problem goes back to those fundamental causes, that waiting period in agriculture and its attendant consequences, which we examined in our first Chapter. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that no employer in agriculture ever has as much cash as he really needs; the cash income of smaller farmers not dealing in large staple products is sometimes extraordinarily limited. In these circumstances there is little inducement to turn over from arrangements, however cumbersome, which save the paying out of large sums in money wages, which satisfy the workers, and which in any case are traditional.

But do they, in fact, satisfy the workers? It has to be admitted that from the oldest times the giving of wages in kind has been a subject of endless dispute between master and man. Legislators have recognized the need for guarding against fraud or at least against a dishonest negligence. All the conditions which during the nineteenth century called for the adoption of Truck Acts in industry can be present in agriculture also. Why then should agriculture be deprived of Truck Acts? Organized agricultural workers have long asked for the complete turnover to cash at any rate of the big *deputat*;[1] in England there is a sustained campaign of objection to the 'tied' cottage. In most cases it may be freely argued that the in-kind wage disguises the low wage. The system of allowing workers to conduct their own small sales of portions of harvests is troublesome, unsatisfactory, and, in any case, totally irrational.

Actually the continuance, even after the War, of the in-kind wage is due to the survival of the original conditions which evoked it and then kept it in existence through so many past centuries. It is due to the fact that maintenance and not profit has still to play a part as the *raison d'être* even of the largest estate. The turnover to the cash nexus is only half accomplished in agriculture and is not actively pressed for by the masses of the agricultural population at a time when an assurance of the bare means of existence in the form of food, fuel, and shelter is once more of greater value than the promise of currency. Both during the food shortage period of the War and during the present time of stress the allowance in kind has had, and has, advantages too solid to be ignored. At such moments workers cease to press for a change and, as most employers are in any case opposed to one for the reasons given above, the old systems continue.

[1] There seems to be no objection on the part of workers to smaller allowances in kind, like potato 'lines'. On the contrary, it is felt, and probably with reason, that the smaller in-kind allowances hardly affect the size of the cash wage, and therefore are real and quite useful additions.

It is to be regretted in many ways that they do. The change to the cash system has long been due in agriculture and would certainly assist in the understanding and control of agricultural wages. Moreover, the handling of a cash income is very educative and would permit the agricultural worker to distribute his spending more according to his choice. It might add to the aggregate cash purchasing power of the world and, in view of the large numbers of persons who would benefit,[1] it might alter the allocation of working-class income, perhaps allowing of a larger appropriation on clothing, education, or amusements. Finally, it would expose the state of agricultural wages in all their nakedness, and this would be a good thing; for, as our next section will show, the most depressing feature about agricultural wages is their universally low level.

§ 8. *The low level of agricultural wages.*

With these facts in our mind we can now turn to consider the figures themselves. To a large extent they convey their own story, but some general observations will be helpful.

Agricultural wages always have been, and still are, very low. This becomes only too obvious when they are measured against industrial wages. It is a fact of the greatest significance that *agricultural wage rates seldom attain much more than one-half, are often only one-half, and occasionally even only one-third, of an average industrial wage.* This statement is broadly true, both of great producing agricultural countries and of smaller countries; exceptionally, in Australia and New Zealand, agricultural wage rates approach within 15, 10, or even 5 per cent. of average industrial wages, while in a few other countries also (Great Britain, &c.) they approach the three-quarter mark of an ordinary industrial wage or even go somewhat beyond it. But this does not alter the fact that in all wage tables agricultural wages rank at the bottom of the table; they are apt to fight for the last place with such occupations as the restaurant industry or domestic service, or even with women's wages as such.

There is thus generally speaking a huge gap between the remuneration of agriculture and of industry. This gap is no new phenomenon. Practically from the moment when the Industrial Revolution made itself felt, this wages differentiation has been drawn between the two sides of production—the agricultural and the non-agricultural. It is impossible here to trace the course of agricultural wage payments over a long period. Suffice it to say that there were no signs of any

[1] It is not suggested that the all-cash wage could be adopted in all circumstances or in primitive countries.

abatement of this differentiation at the beginning of the twentieth century. Just before the War an ordinary agricultural worker was earning, in Australia 49*s.* 5*d.* per week, in New Zealand 41*s.* 8*d.* to 45*s.* 8*d.* per week, in England and Wales 18*s.* 0*d.* per week, in Sweden 811 kronor per year, in Ontario, Canada, $32 per month. But the same worker could have earned in industry, per week, in Australia 55*s.* 1*d.*, in New Zealand 52*s.* 6½*d.* as a bricklayer's labourer and 68*s.* 5¼*d.* as a bricklayer, in England and Wales 23*s.* to 27*s.* as a labourer, over 30*s.* as a tram-driver, and over 40*s.* as a bricklayer, in Sweden, per year, 1,241 kronor (average for all industries), and again per week (not per month) in Toronto $13.20 as a bricklayer's labourer and $24.20 as a bricklayer.[1]

Before going on to discuss some of the factors which contribute to this state of affairs, it will perhaps be well to trace in somewhat greater detail the course of agricultural wages, as far as this can be ascertained, during the last few years. This will throw light on some of the fundamental aspects of the situation.

§ 9. *Recent movements in agricultural wages.*[2]

In order that we may not lose our way in the whole mass of figures of agricultural post-war wage movements, the quotation of which is apt to be very confusing, the following short-hand presentation of the facts in table form[3] will be our best guide. The reference through-

[1] The figures are chosen from International Labour Office, *Studies and Reports*, Series D, No. 16, *Wage Changes in Various Countries 1914 to 1925*, Geneva, 1926, 143 pp. (for Swedish agriculture the figure for married drivers). But almost any wage table will show comparable facts.

[2] For a study on the effects of the economic depression on agricultural wages after the War up to 1931, see *I.L.R.*, vol. xxiii, no. 4, pp. 453–75, 'Some effects of the Agricultural Depression on Agricultural Labour', by L. E. Matthaei. In this paper the present author came to the conclusion that during this period, in the seven countries examined, there had been no real closing of the gap between agricultural and industrial wages in Canada or New Zealand, and an actual widening thereof in the United States and Germany; only in Sweden, England and Wales, and Australia had that gap been slightly narrowed. On the other hand, there had been some small general rises in prosperity (less for agricultural than for other workers—hence the widening of the gap); these had been most noticeable in the case of the lowest paid workers, as is usual when a rise in wages takes place.

[3] The nominal agricultural wage rate for 1927 in each country = 100 gives nominal wage index figures for 1931 to 1933; the national cost of living indexes for 1927 = 100 give cost of living indexes for these three years; the real wage indexes set forth in the Table are obtained by dividing the nominal wage indexes by the cost of living indexes in the usual way; the necessary figures will be found at the foot of the larger Table of Agricultural Wages constituting an appendix to this Chapter. In the Table in the text reference (*a*) is to wages in Series II of this larger Table; reference (*b*) is to wages in Series III. For

out is to 'real' wages, i.e. to wages in their relation to prevailing cost of living, or, in other words, to what the agricultural worker can buy.

Indexes of the Present State of Real Wages in Agriculture

(1927 = 100)

	Austral. (*b*)	*Can.* (*a*)	*Czech.* (*b*)	*Denm.* (*b*)	*Engl. & W.* (*b*)	*Eston.* (*b*)	*Finl.* (*a*)	(*b*)
1931	98	76	100	105	114	89	108	92
1932	95	65	100	99	114	82	98	84
1933	99	65	98	99	115	78	96	84

	France (*a*)	(*b*)	*Germ.* (*a*)	(*b*)	*Hung.* (*b*)	*I.F.S.* (*b*)	*Italy* (*b*)	*N. Zeal.* (*b*)
1931	109	108 (1930)	114	121	82	102	81	121
1932	119	119	115	121	73	103	82	93
1933	..	..	..	..	56	100	83	83

	Norw. (*b*)	*Pol.* (*a*)	*Scot.* (*a*)	*Swed.* (*a*)	(*b*)	*U.S.A.* (*a*)	(*b*)
1931	99	71	109	101	105	84	83
1932	94	62	113	100	102	71	65
1933	91	..	108	..	..	66	61

From the Table as a whole some interesting conclusions can be drawn. Some improvement in agricultural real wages has taken place since 1927. This improvement has been confined almost exclusively to European countries. In the overseas countries the agricultural workers have not held their own nearly so well. Already early in 1931 it was being stated by the United States Department of Agriculture that some agricultural workers in that country were working for bare board and lodging, while in January 1933 average wages there were as low as they were in 1899 and only three-quarters of what was being paid just before the War. With the United States and Canada we may couple Hungary; it is agreed by informed Hungarian writers that agricultural wages have consistently gone down since the War and that they have now reached a mere subsis-

England and Wales and for Scotland the unified cost of living figure of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has had to be used. For France, both the wage and cost of living bases are 1926 = 100. For Germany the wage figure is for December.

In New Zealand wages happened to be low in 1927; this makes the index for 1931 unusually high; the subsequent figures show an abrupt fall.

tence level, if, indeed, they are not far below the poverty line. The figures for Poland to some extent bear out the same story, though Polish wages have resisted the crisis rather well over certain periods. Roumanian[1] and Yugoslav wages, if we had them, would probably show a very low level from 1929 onwards.

Now these—Hungary is the best example—are four European countries where agricultural wages seem likely to be directly affected by the state of agricultural exports. Does this, coupled with the state of wages in North American agriculture, put us on the track of a conclusion? Is it because these countries are dependent on export markets that their wages have come down with a run? Estonia also is an export country and her wages are down. So are Latvia's. But we are faced with the fact that Danish and New Zealand wages rose, at least until and including 1931, while Australian wages have certainly not sunk as far as Canadian or United States rates.

Something no doubt is to be attributed to the fact that Denmark, New Zealand, and Australia are countries of animal husbandry, whereas Canada and the United States, Hungary, and Roumania are cereal-exporting or fibre-exporting countries; it is admitted that the markets for animal products have been better in these years than the markets for vegetable products, which have been in a state of chaos. Nevertheless, the explanation is probably to be sought also in other directions.

If we pick out the countries or groups of workers where real wages have held their own in agriculture, we see that they are those countries or those groups where *the bargaining power on the side of the workers has been really effective.* A good indication, in the negative sense, is the extreme weakness of the wages of day workers everywhere. Day workers are always in a poor bargaining position. There are far too many candidates for jobs; as a rule, the market is invaded by poverty-stricken smallholders and often, because the work is unskilled, by purely casual workers; we noted above[2] that the day wage in agriculture was peculiarly sensitive to the economic position. Contrast the position of the permanent worker; he is sought with eagerness by employers, and his bargaining position is usually by no means bad.

In truth, in discussing the wages position in agriculture there are always a number of factors to take into consideration, such as: the export position on world markets; the bargaining power of the

[1] For Roumania see some not very satisfactory figures in the Table of Agricultural Wages appended to the present Chapter.

[2] See § 4.

workers; its reinforcement whether by trade union organization or by government backing and action; the general state of the labour market and the special demand for a particular type of worker or the reverse. It is the interaction of these factors which determines the wages level at any point. No one cause accounts for the position, neither export competition, nor government intervention, nor workers' action. That action can, after all, itself only be effective when springing out of a naturally strong bargaining position. The contrast between France and Italy is here instructive. In Italy the workers are officially organized and supported by their government; in France they are neither organized nor supported; both countries protect their home market heavily and both have some export of specialized agricultural products. Why then have wages fallen in the one case, risen in the other?[1] The explanation is to be sought in the fundamental facts of the population situation. In Italy[2] rural population pressure has always been notorious and has not in late years been relieved by the usual outlet of emigration. In France there is increasing rarity of rural population, which has lately been rendered even more noticeable by a specially rapid advance in industrialization, attracting workers to the towns and withdrawing them from agriculture.

In addition to all the influences mentioned and their constant interaction there is one more factor—habit and tradition. Habit and tradition are very powerful forces in the agricultural economy, as we have already noted. It may sound curious to mention them as a constituent element in the making up of agricultural wages, but they undoubtedly are such an element. More especially do they play a considerable role in determining the wages position between the small farmer and his farm-servant. The very idea of the adaptation of wages to changing economic conditions is modern, and it is not surprising that this idea of fluctuating payments should be repugnant in some quarters: custom seems a sure guide, the demand for a higher wage a mere expression of insubordination on the part of disaffected workers. Recent changes in price levels have brought this of good, that they have been educative to all concerned by the sheer process of breaking through the established sanctity of certain

[1] For the rise in French agricultural wages see an illuminating analysis by M. Augé-Laribé in *I.L.R.*, vol. xxv, no. 1, pp. 43–7. For the fall in Italian wages see Confederazione Nazionale dei Sindicati Fascisti dell'Agricoltura, *I salari nell'agricoltura tratti dai contratti di lavoro dal 1913 al 1931*, Rome, 1931, 273 pp.; the figures there given are based on indications in collective agreements and apply to day workers; the net result is to show the real wage index, where 1913–14 = 100, as 98 in 1927, 101 in 1928, 98 in 1929, 97 in 1930, and 88 in 1931.

[2] Cf. Hungary and Poland.

accepted money levels in agriculture. Faced by violent changes in what he receives, the farmer also changes his rather rigid attitude as to what he gives. Of course, such education is altogether unnecessary where an instructed group of employers are negotiating. The difference is indeed rather marked between the appeal to well-organized groups of employers in a large way acting through associations, often assisted by highly paid secretaries or managers who have made intensive studies of the whole situation, and that to single smaller farmers, who arrive at local labour markets to engage their farm-servant on the spot and at whatever rate they have been used to give or which they happen to hear their neighbour offer, men whose whole tradition is against joining an association or submitting to economic guidance by whomsoever it may be. Difficulties in fixing rates with the first type of employer are difficulties of hard bargaining and are frankly based on the current financial and economic position and reinforced with statistical argument; difficulties in negotiating with the second type of employer are of quite a different order and consist largely in the struggle involved in arranging any departure whatever from a preceding position. Yet it should by no means be assumed that the customary element in wages-fixing acts always to the detriment of the employee. Custom sometimes greatly protects the workers, as in a falling market farmers usually hesitate to reduce an established rate, even with a new man. Finally, it should not be forgotten that wages are a matter of public knowledge in the countryside, and that this acts as a powerful deterrent to malpractices or abuses.

The influences which determine the level of agricultural wages are many and sometimes subtle. No simple statements about such wages should be accepted, for no such statements are proper to the situation which has developed in our complicated and confused modern economy. This does not mean that we must abstain either from establishing what analyses we can or from aiming at what improvements are possible. On the contrary, it is incumbent on us to pierce a little deeper and to try and establish something of the fundamentals of the whole position.

§ 10. *Fundamental influences on the agricultural wages situation.*

The wages of agriculture are low because the earning power of agriculture is low. It would indeed be absurd to ignore the low earning power of agriculture as an integral part of the agricultural wages situation. By comparison with industry agriculture is far behind in its productive capacity because it is far less well equipped,

financed, and organized; by comparison with the output of the industrial worker the agricultural worker's output is modest, partly for the same reasons as determine the achievement of the whole of agriculture. We cannot enter into these large questions, at any rate not at present; the question of the efficiency of the agricultural worker is discussed in the following Chapter; that of the efficiency of the whole of agriculture—a vast subject—is touched upon in our Conclusions. But while we cannot enter into this difficult item in any adequate way, yet we cannot forget it: it must at all times be borne in mind that the levels of agricultural reward are determinable by the standards of agriculture's effectiveness, by her capacity to maintain progress.

This leads us immediately to a second point. If agricultural wages are low because agricultural earning power is limited, the very moderateness of such wages makes them also rather stable. In other words, it is difficult to lower further wages which tend at all times to be near subsistence levels. This applies pre-eminently to the remuneration of the ordinary agricultural workers; the remuneration of selected groups such as shepherds, stockmen, &c. is determined by skill and cannot be characterized as subsistence wages; the remuneration of these workers also tends to be stable but for rather a different reason, simply because it is always difficult to obtain good workers of this type—a first-class man in these occupations is at all times sure of a tolerable living. In fact, there are three main wages levels in agriculture: the wages of such skilled workers, the wages of permanent general workers not specially skilled, the wages of day workers. If at the one end the wages of the specially skilled agricultural worker tend to keep up to a fairly high level, if at the other end the wages of the day worker (who is sometimes almost the casual worker) tend to fluctuate freely with the current economic situation, the wages of the general more permanent worker—the middle group—tend to be low indeed by contrast with industrial wages but not to move except rather slowly and over longish intervals. In Europe, at any rate (where on the whole agricultural wages are lowest, tropical countries excepted), it is by no means infrequent to observe employers showing the greatest distaste for reducing wages of workers who have served them for years, even when from a strictly economic point of view these wages are higher than the profitability of the farm seems to warrant: the reason invariably quoted is that a reduction in wages already close to the margin of what is decent would push the worker altogether below the line of a tolerable existence; that is to say that wages in agriculture cannot be considered without the influence of

tradition and feeling and do not easily sink below their customary modest level in those forms of agricultural exploitation which have for generations been carried on in much the same way.

In fact, agriculture is not a carefully thought out business proposition, launched at a propitious moment and continued just as long as market conditions hold; it is interpenetrated—and this applies to America and Australasia no less than to Europe, Africa, and Asia—with the idea of existence as such, the idea of living as well as of earning. We have shown that agricultural wages are low, very low: there can be no doubt of that. But we have also indicated that there is great resistance (and not only from the recipients of those wages) to seeing them sink utterly below a sort of traditional or accepted line, what most agriculturists would call a possible amount. Any effort to depress wages beyond this point constitutes a shock to a rural community; it is a wound dealt to the whole conception of rural life and one which that community cannot contemplate at all. This idea of the rural worker's maintenance as part of the whole working of rural society has great influence on the giving of wages.[1] It implies a function which must be fulfilled.

But when that function is fulfilled it implies no more. As long as the worker's family is maintained at a customary standard of comfort it is almost impossible to get any rise in agricultural wages; they tend always to sink to this required level,[2] though, as we have seen, not often to sink below it.

There is another consideration. If the worker is not a mere earner of wages, but is, with his family, a constituent part of an ordered society, if his remuneration is conceived as family maintenance, *it is also conceived as family earning.* Historical evidence points to the family and not to the individual as the earning unit in agriculture. Not that whole families are employed on one contract by the same employer or on the same establishment, though this is a possible form of labour engagement in agriculture used in earlier times and in

[1] For instance, it is a generally acknowledged fact that large agricultural estates often maintain, principally for humane reasons, persons past work or unable to work properly. There is not much formal evidence, but a local German inquiry showed thirty estates, even after the introduction of the Federal Insurance system, lodging and boarding 110 persons not capable of work and another 108 whose working capacity was 50 per cent. of normal, at an average cost of 1.54 marks per morgen; cf. *Zusammenstellung von Leistungslöhnen im Kreise Schweidnitz; Schriftenreihe des betriebswirtschaftlichen Ausschusses beim land- u. forstwirtschaftlichen Arbeitgeberverband fur die Provinz Schlesien,* Schweidnitz, 1927.

[2] The 'rut' into which agricultural wages always seem to fall was discussed at the 1928 Congress of the National Union of Agricultural Workers of England and Wales; see *The Landworker*, April, May, June, July, 1928.

primitive agriculture and still showing lingering traces in some modern contracts. What is meant by our statement is this: that rural society is based on the assumption that the aggregate earning capacities of the whole rural family will be contributed to the maintenance of such family. Rural society does not know the luxury of the system which allows a principal wage-earner to support all his dependants out of his sole earnings.

Just as the small farmer is accustomed to put the labour of all members of his family almost from babyhood to senility into the digging of his fields and the rearing and gathering of his crops, so has the agricultural wage-earner been accustomed for many decades to regard the earning capacities of his so-called 'dependants' as an integral part of his livelihood. It is only here and there that an advance has been made beyond this. A good example is England; the break came about rather suddenly, in the second half of the nineteenth century, largely through the operation of the Gangs Act of 1867 and of the Elementary Education Act of 1870; but the first results of withdrawing the labour of the rural workers' children from the fields was the direst poverty—part of the earning capacity of the family had been rent away and the wages of the principal adult earner were not in the least calculated to fill the gap.[1] Indeed, the process in this direction has never been properly completed; English adult men's agricultural wages stand almost half-way between what they should be if their amount were really equated up to industrial levels and what they would have remained if the whole agricultural family were still engaged on earning. By contrast in Germany, and also in Hungary and many other countries, the agricultural wage-earner's income is still altogether a composite one, the wage of the principal earner constituting only about two-thirds of it, as two recent and illuminating inquiries in Germany have shown.[2]

The *leit-motif* of rural living is the multiplied small earnings of many persons. This situation has developed out of general population conditions in the countryside. In addition to the decisive effect of the restrained earning capacity of the whole of agricultural production, in addition to the all-round stability which is a marked feature of the rural economy and which keeps wages rather level, there is another fundamental influence at work—the plethora of candidates for entry into what is the unique or main industry of unnumbered

[1] The facts are particularly well brought out by C. S. Orwin and B. I. Felton in the *Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England*, vol. xcii, 1931, 'A Century of Wages and Earnings in Agriculture.'

[2] See Appendix No. 6.

communities. For millions of persons born in rural districts there is no escape from an agricultural career. While other industries are selective and attract roughly that number of candidates who can find accommodation, while suffering only from unforeseen changes in employment levels, which, of course, may be very violent and cause extreme disturbance at certain epochs as at present, agriculture *starts* with too many candidates; neither selection nor rejection is possible, for where would the rejected go? That old necessity of maintenance, the old law of existence, must somehow be made to function. Agriculture thus fills the thankless role of acting as the great population insurance system of the world, always capable of supplying human labour for industrial jobs, never expecting to be relieved of more of her supply than it is convenient for industry to absorb, ready in times of stress once more to give some modicum of accommodation and shelter for the refugees expelled from urban occupations. It is often said that agriculture has no unemployment problem: agriculture has always an unemployment problem. This problem is not the violent problem under which urban industries suffer; it is endemic, a lowering disease sapping the health of countryside populations.

The effect on wages is permanent. It might almost be said that agriculture never pays the real wage determined by her profitability and by her proper capacity to employ labour without waste. Were it possible for the rural population to go into agriculture *or not* according to the true demand for their services, the whole wages question would take on a different complexion. On the rare occasions when this does happen the results are interesting. Over periods beginning respectively about fifty years ago and with the end of the War there was for some time in Scotland a fair choice for the rural worker between an agricultural job in his own country and emigration, in France a fair choice between an agricultural and an urban job; in the first country agricultural wages remained high, in the other they rapidly rose to a much more reasonable level than had formerly been observed. If the same process had gone on to the same extent in more countries—there were some beginnings of it after the War in Germany and elsewhere—a definite pulling up of the rural wage level would have followed. The reflux of population back to rural jobs owing to unemployment in the towns at present makes this impossible.

On the whole, however, the conditions indicated are permanent. The existing phase of world unemployment is at the moment accentuating the forces in a particular direction by sending population

back to the farms or by ceasing to draw population from the farms, but the principal elements are always there to shape the agricultural wages situation. It is not that any one would desire to see a scarcity value given to agricultural labour; human denudation of the countryside, besides bringing many general social problems, tends to deprive agriculture of skilled workers and to force cultivation along undesirable extensive lines instead of allowing intensive farming to develop naturally. It is simply that the marked oversupply of labour in agriculture brings a situation which by contrast with the urban might almost be described as distorted. If production is to be run on the profit motive at all, that industry which without assistance has to carry the entire burden of population changes is not merely handicapped at the start, it is, so to say, altogether prevented from joining in the running.

This topic is so important that we shall devote a special Chapter to it. Before doing so, however, we must pay some attention to the other side of the problem of earning, namely to performance or efficiency.

NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS

SERIES I. The whole year's *cash* wage is shown for resident farm-servants or resident permanent workers; where the year is not a calendar year, the season 1927–8 is taken as =1927; in each case figures are averages for a whole country.

In the following particulars the figures are exceptional.

For the Irish Free State, the half-yearly wage is given.

For the United States, the monthly average of the yearly wage is given, and this wage represents the reward of seasonal as well as of permanent workers.

For Germany, there exists neither a convenient yearly wage nor a national average. The only figures available are for July (in 1932 for April and December) and these end in 1932; the figure in the Table is for principal farm-servants in Upper Bavaria (arithmetic mean between the highest and lowest records).

SERIES II. This series is designed to show the wages of permanent and older, usually married, men, *deputatists*, &c., accommodated in cottages on an estate; the figures include value of housing, of allowances, and of any meals given. As far as possible, figures show total wages for the year (the season 1927–8 being taken as =1927) and averages over a whole country; however, the figure for Scotland is a weekly summer average (married ploughmen) and that for the United States a monthly average of the yearly wage (as in Series I, seasonal and permanent workers together). For Germany the rate is an hourly one for *deputatists* in Randow, Pomerania, the months being as in Series I.

SERIES III. The reward of day workers (inclusive of the value of any meals or allowances given—a few allowances are left out of count) is shown at

Table of Agricultural Wages

Series I. Cash wages of resident workers, men (farm-servants and similar groups): *in addition to* board and lodging.
Series II. Total wages of resident or permanent workers, men (*deputatists* and similar groups): *inclusive of* value of board, accommodation, or other allowances in kind.
Series III. Wages of workers, men, on day, week, or short-term contracts: *inclusive of* any allowances in kind reckoned as wages.

SERIES I

	Canada	*Denmark*	*Estonia*	*Finland*	*Germany*	*Irish Fr. St.*	*Latvia*	*Lithuania*	*Norway*	*Sweden*	*U.S.A.*
	$	Dan. crowns	Est. crowns	Fin. Mks.	RM.	£ s.	lats	litas	Nor. crowns	Sw. crowns	$
1914	155	..	..	..	..	..	320 (1913)	..	320 (1916)	326	20·90
1927	385	690	302	3,641	33·79	14 12	563	460	579	560	34·58
1930	326	672	306	3,914	48·86	14 7	487	420	519	567	31·14
1931	240	617	248	3,417	45·22	14 1	471	430	491	556	23·60
1932	176	570	192	2,722	iv. 27·65 xii. 23·78	13 15	313	375	455	525	17·53
1933	161	568	173	2,541	..	12 13	305	280	428	512	15·86
1934	..	..	201	2,680	..	12 6	320	250	442	..	..
	Indexes of the above (1927 = 100)										
1930	85	97	102	107	145	98	87	91	90	101	90
1931	63	89	82	94	134	96	84	93	85	99	68
1932	46	83	64	75	iv 82 xii. 70	91	56	82	79	94	56
1933	42	82	57	70	..	87	54	61	74	91	46
1934	..	..	67	74	..	84	57	54	77	..	..

Table of Agricultural Wages (cont.)

SERIES II

	Canada	*Chile*	*Finland*	*France*	*Germany*	*Poland*	*Scotland*	*Sweden*	*U.S.A.*
	$	pesos	Fm. Mks.	frs.	pfenn.	zloty	*s.* *d.*	Sw. crowns	$
1914	323	..	..	..	..	..	22 0	720 (1913)	29·72
				5,421 (1926)					
1927	629	..	9,637	5,993 (1928)	39·35	1,847	38 2	1,334	48·63
1930	559	5·33	9,628	6,690 (1930)	40·48	988	36 8	1,260	44·59
1931	439	5·63	8,953	..	41·43	1,119	36 6	1,247	35·03
1932	341	6·03	8,010	6,549 (1932)	iv. 39·28 xii. 36·23	890	37 0	1,213	26·67
1933	322	6·43	7,708	..	..	..	34 8	..	24·51
1934	..	..	7,871	..	..	..	..	..	..

Indexes of the above (1927 = 100)

				(1926 = 100)					
1930	89	..	100	111 (1928)	103	53	97	95	92
1931	70	..	93	123 (1930)	105	61	96	94	72
1932	54	..	83	121 (1932)	iv. 100 xii. 92	48	97	91	55
1933	51	..	80	..	..	..	91	..	50
1934	..	..	82	..	..	..	..	..	..

SERIES III

	Australia	Canada	Chile	Czechosl.	Denmark	Eng. and Wales	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany	Hungary
	s. d.	$	pesos	koruny	Dan. crowns	s. d.	Est. crowns	Fin. marks	frs.	pfenn.	pengo
1914 . .	49 5	..	.	.	.	18 0	.	.	.	.	..
1927 . .	94 3	64	.	1·24	4·91	31 8	2·04	32·38	18·48 (1926)	35 00	4·23
1930 . .	87 5	56	6 00	1·28	4·78	31 8	1 96	32 33	22·50	40·00	3·93
1931 . .	80 3	43	6 30	1·18	4·52	31 6½	1 66	25·59	..	39·00	3·17
1932 . .	74 9	34	6·60	1·18	4 27	31 1	1 32	23 02	22·35	iv. 34 00 xii. 34 00	2·70
1933 . .	71 11	32	7 00	1·13	4 40	30 7½	1·21	22·65		..	1·96
1934 . .	..	..	..	1·08	.	30 11	..		21·39	..	..

Indexes of the above (1927 = 100)

									(1926 = 100)		
1930 . .	93	88	.	103	97	100	96	100	122	114	93
1931 . .	85	67	..	95	92	100	81	79	..	111	75
1932 . .	79	53	..	95	87	98	65	71	121	iv. 97 xii. 97	64
1933 . .	76	50	..	91	90	97	59	70	..	.	46
1934 . .	..	..	..	87	.	98	..		116	.	..

	India	Irish Free State	Italy	Latvia	N. Zealand	Norway	Roumania	Spain	Sweden	U.S.A.
	ann. pies	s. d.	lire	lats	s. d.	Nor. crowns	lei	pesetas	Sw. crowns	$
1914 . .	..	.	.	.	42 0	.	.	.	..	..
1927 . .	7 6	25 6	1·73	3·27	62 6	5·38	..	3·00	4 24	64
1930 . .	7 3	24 6	1 52	3 24	69 0	4·71	63	3 00	4·19	56
1931 . .	5 11	24 3	1·33	2 82	69 0	4 35	47	3·00	4·15	43
1932 . .	5 7	23 6	1·18	1 94	45 5	4·04	38	4·50	3·93	34
1933 . .	..	22 3	1·15	2 01	41 3	3 90	37	4·50	..	32
1934 . .	..	21 0	1·14	.	42 4	..	..	..	.	..

Indexes of the above (1927 = 100)

1930 . .	97	96	88	99	110	88	..	100	99	91
1931 . .	79	95	77	86	110	81		100	98	71
1932 . .	74	92	68	59	78	75	..	150	93	50
1933 . .	..	87	66	60	66	72	.	150	..	46
1934 . .	..	82	66	..	68	..	..	..	..	50

Cost of Living Indexes

(1927 = 100)

	Australia	*Bulgaria*	*Canada*	*Chile* (1928 = 100)	*Czecho-slovakia* (*Prague*)	*Denmark*	*Estonia*	*Finland*	*France* (*Paris*)	*Germany*	*Gt. Brit. and N. Ire.*	*Hungary*
1930	97	96	101	100	100	92	99	94	113	99	94	96
1931	87	83	92	96	95	88	95	86	..	92	88	91
1932	83	76	83	105	94	88	90	85	102	xii. 80	86	88
1933	80	71	79	130	93	91	84	83	..	..	84	82

	India (*Bombay*)	*Irish Free State*	*Italy*	*Latvia* (*Riga*) (1930 = 100)	*Lithu-ania*	*N. Zea-land*	*Norway*	*Poland*	*Rou-mania*	*Sweden*	*U.S.A.*	
1930	89	98	97	100	82	98	87	94	110	96	95	
1931	71	93	87	91	74	91	82	86	80	93	86	
1932	71	89	83	79	62	84	80	78	66	91	77	
1933	67	86	80	76	53	80	79	71	61	90	76	

summer time, when their principal working period falls (but exceptional harvest rates are not quoted, except for India where no others are available). The rates are averages over a whole country, but, in the absence of these, rates for typical districts have had to be quoted for Czechoslovakia (cereals district of Bohemia), Germany (Upper and Lower Silesia), India (Bombay Presidency, rural areas—the rates in 'urban' areas are higher), and Spain (Toledo). Rates are monthly in Canada, weekly in England and Wales, the Irish Free State, Australia, and New Zealand, hourly in Czechoslovakia (arithmetic mean between highest and lowest records), Germany, and Italy, daily in all other cases. Rates for regular daily workers have been preferred to those for casual daily workers in Denmark and Sweden, but in some other cases the figures apply to purely temporary workers, occasionally to regular and temporary workers together. The figure for Roumania is described in the official sources as 'labour cost' per day. The only figures available for ordinary day workers in Estonia leave out the value of meals, which are given by the employer; this is perhaps nearly a crown per day and this amount must therefore be added to each figure in the Table.

The following facts are important.

The two sets of figures for Canada and the United States in Series I and II respectively do not represent different types of workers as do the figures for the other countries in these series. In Canada all permanent workers are considered as one class and one wage rate only is recorded for them, in the United States this class is enlarged to include seasonal workers also; the cash part of these rates conforms only roughly with the sort of wage entered in Series I, the cash plus value of board and lodging with what is entered in Series II. Seasonal workers' rates for Canada and casual workers' rates for the United States are entered in Series III, and these correspond better with the type of wage given in Europe or elsewhere to daily or temporary workers.

In Series III the weekly wages for England and Wales, the Irish Free State, Australia, and New Zealand are grouped with wages given for daily work, as these wages are earned by ordinary agricultural workers on what are legally, and (especially in Australia and New Zealand) often also in fact, short-term contracts. Some arguments could also be advanced for inserting these wages in Series II of the Table, as such short-term contracts tend frequently (especially in England and Wales) to be continued throughout a year or over many years and thus come to represent the wages of permanently engaged workers. However, in order to get wages truly comparable with the *deputatists'* and other similar wages of Series II, it would be essential to choose in these four countries rates for *head* ploughmen, stockmen, &c., in fact, for more skilled workers (some of these rates will be found in the article in the *International Labour Review* mentioned below). The rate for Australia is a combined rate representative of the reward of all agricultural workers and an arbitrary choice had therefore to be made as between Series II and III for the mention of this rate.

All particulars as to how the rates mentioned are arrived at, and further figures, will be found in 'Statistics of Wages of Agricultural Workers in Various Countries, 1927–1934' in *I.L.R.*, vol. xxx, nos. 5 and 6, November and December 1934. As far as possible, the figures in the present book have been

brought into conformity with the figures in that article, more especially in view of the fact that the series started by the *Review* will probably be continued.

The indexes of nominal wages, with the base 1927 = 100, have been calculated *ad interim* by the present author until indexes announced in the *I.L.R.* shall have appeared. The indexes of cost of living have been reduced to the base 1927 = 100 from the figures given in *I.L.R.*, vol. xxxi, no. 1, January 1935.

Comparability with industrial real wages is exceedingly difficult. The reader is referred to some comparative information on industrial real wages given in *The Director's Report to the Seventeenth Session of the International Labour Conference*, Geneva, 1933, p. 42, and the same report to the *Eighteenth Session*, Geneva, 1934, p. 37.

Some information on agricultural wages in China, Japan, and Mexico is available in *Statistics of Wages of Agricultural Workers*, &c., as mentioned above. An elaborate comparison between agricultural wages in 1914 and 1931 in Austria will be found in *Bericht des Vorstandes des oesterreichischen Land- u. Forstarbeiterverbandes an den sechsten ordentlichen Verbandstag*, Vienna, 1931, 100 pp., see pp. 31–79, *Unsere Lohnkampfe*. In Switzerland information on agricultural wages is from time to time published by the Association of Swiss Peasants. The last of these inquiries was for 1929–30; see an analysis in *I.L.R.*, vol. xxiv, nos. 2–3, pp. 258–71.

Existing legislation on agricultural wages includes: (i) relevant portions of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Acts of AUSTRALIA (Federal and State legislation) and of NEW ZEALAND (see Appendix No. 5, *s.v. Australia and New Zealand*); (ii) ENGLAND AND WALES: the Agricultural Wages (Regulation) Act, 7 August 1924, together with Statutory Regulations Nos. 1123 and 1124 of 24 and 27 Sept. 1924 and No. 1360 of 29 Dec. 1925, reviving principles earlier incorporated in the Corn Production Acts 1917 and 1920 but repealed by an Act. 19 Aug. 1921; the characteristic of the English system is great decentralization; inspection is carried out and numerous prosecutions instituted; full details may be studied in the excellent annual *Reports under the Agricultural Wages (Regulation) Act 1924*, issued by the Ministry of Agriculture; ESTONIA: Act of 13 Sept. 1919 to regulate Hours of Work and Conditions of Employment of Agricultural Workers, subsequently replaced by the Act of 1 November 1921 to regulate Hours of Work and Wages of Agricultural Workers (see Appendix No. 2, *s.v. Estonia*); GERMANY (and AUSTRIA): the regulation of agricultural wages depended on the legislation in force for backing up collective agreements in any industry and declaring them 'generally applicable', i.e. compulsory; details may be studied in International Labour Office publications on this subject; under this system the first bargaining process, which was carried out without any State influence, was the important one; the State only intervened to enforce such a bargain over wider areas; the system had some defects; HUNGARY: § 10 and § 55 of the Act No. II of 1898 concerning the Regulation of Legal Relations between Employers and Agricultural Workers and § 35 of Act No. XLV of 1907 concerning the Regulation of Legal Relations between Farmers and Farm-Servants both secure certain minimum wage rights (not rates); under the 1907 Act retention of a farm-servant's wages (which are largely in kind) by way of fine for damage must not interfere with such servant's dwelling, fuel-supply, or food; this in effect secures to the worker a minimum subsistence under all circumstances; under the 1898 Act,

for harvest workers paid in percentage shares of a crop, it is laid down that employment contracts must also mention either a definite minimum weight of crop or an equivalent in money which the workers have the right to demand in substitution for such percentage shares; this guards against underpayment of workers in case of failure of crop, as is not infrequent on the stormy Hungarian plains; an older 1876 Act under similar circumstances only allowed them to appeal to the public authorities when the crop was less than half the normal; the early dates of these interesting provisions is to be noted; since the War legislation has included Order No. 1420 of 24 Feb. 1921 respecting the Determination of the Wages of Agricultural Workers employed in Agricultural Undertakings, of Wages for Harvesting and Threshing, and likewise of Payments in Kind for Threshing (= *L.S.* 1921—I. Hung. 1); Act No. XXV of 28 May 1923 respecting the prevention of the Unjustifiable Exploitation of the Labour of Agricultural Workers and § 7 of Act No. XXIV of the same date respecting the Regulation of Proceedings within the Jurisdiction of the Administrative Authorities in Actions arising out of Employment in Agriculture; these Acts set up local committees for the fixing of agricultural wages, but there is nothing to ensure that a committee must be set up in any district; the legislation thus fails to be effective and is in this respect very instructive; POLAND: Act of 1 August 1919, amended by Acts of 11 March 1921 and 14 Feb. 1922 respecting the Settlement of Collective Disputes between Employers and Workers in Agriculture; Act of 24 March 1923 concerning the Authorization of the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare to convene the Special Arbitration Board to settle Collective Disputes between Employers and Workers in Agriculture; Act of 18 July 1924 to authorize the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare to convene Special Arbitration Boards for the Settlement of Collective Disputes between Employers and Workers in Agriculture, together with various Decrees, Orders, &c.; the Polish legislation has been extremely successful and shows the importance of authorizing the central government authorities to assume large powers of initiative and even coercion at the *outset* of a period of regulation; SLOVAKIA: Decree of 20 Feb. 1919; this permits the compulsory enforcement of wages rates on behalf of the illiterate and backward population of this region, who are accustomed to work in labour gangs on the beet fields; SPAIN: Act of 12 May 1928; set up local committees; it does not appear that this Act has been effectively carried out; URUGUAY: Act of 15 Feb. 1923 respecting a Minimum Wage for Agricultural Workers (=*L.S.* 1923—Ur. 1) and Decrees of 8 April 1924 issuing Regulations (= *L.S.* 1924—Ur. 1) and of 20 June 1924 amending Regulations; this legislation lays down minimum rates stated in the text of the Act; there is no information as to its application.

XII

THE EFFICIENCY OF AGRICULTURAL LABOUR

§ 1. *The importance of dealing with the problem of human efficiency in agriculture.*

In our last Chapter we laid some stress on the principle that reward in agriculture depended on standard of performance; this, it was observed, was true in the labour field as in all other directions. If this is so, the question of performance, or efficiency as it may be called, merits close attention.

Not much has been done in the way of inquiry into the efficiency of human labour in agriculture. We noted in our Chapter on 'Education' that only two[1] of the many existing agricultural experiment stations in the world were devoted to scientific experiments on human performance in agriculture, and, in general, we realized that there was a pronounced tendency to remain satisfied with the handing down of routine methods, at any rate for the manual part of the agricultural task. This is in sharp contrast to the reception given to improvements for the handling of so-called technical problems in agriculture, where an eager desire to profit by such sciences as soil chemistry and physics, plant and animal physiology and pathology, is widespread and very advantageous to the whole body of agriculturists.

Yet, were it but realized, not only does the present state of agriculture provide notable opportunities for immediate advance in the perfecting of human performance, but there have already been in the past many beneficial revolutions effected in agricultural practice in this direction, even without the help of any very systematic or sustained policy to advocate them. These revolutions have taken place because the circumstances which pointed the way to them were too strong for the cultivator.

In view of this, the mental resistance which is apt to be aroused when new ways of doing old things are suggested is not justified. The history of agricultural technique has, despite the general conservatism of agriculture, on the whole been an honourable history, and there is even now a mass of data available which, if collected and analysed, would provide the cumulative evidence to prove to agricul-

[1] Pommritz in Germany and Uhrinévès in Czechoslovakia; see Chapter IX, § 9. A detailed account of the work done at the Pommritz Institute will be found in *I.L.R.*, vol. xv, no. 3, pp. 374–413, 'The Science of Farm Labour: Scientific Management and German Agriculture'. This article also gives useful references to German literature on scientific management in farming.

turists themselves how immense have been the strides which their industry has made. The present level of achievement could, if this view prevailed, be notably advanced, for it is in truth mostly in the non-adoption by the majority of agriculturists of existing improvements on the labour side of agriculture that backwardness now lies rather than in absence of knowledge or lack of inventions.

§ 2. *The cultivator's contest with Nature.*

The amount of human labour used in agriculture is very great. It is perhaps the most 'labour-consuming' of all occupations: the finished agricultural product is the outcome of a massive expenditure of human effort. This is at first sight surprising, because—as we did not fail to note at the outset of our inquiry—the fundamental work in agriculture is done by Nature: it is the law of natural increase which is the basis of results. The type of agriculture, however, which consists in simply stepping aside to take advantage of Nature's bounty is exceedingly rare. A very different kind of action has to be envisaged, as we made plain when we opened this book with the sentence that all agriculture means *interference* with Nature. Indeed, the agriculturist is a most busy and also a most deliberate person. In regard to what he does he may up to a point quite reasonably be compared with the manufacturer, in spite of the distinction which is normally assumed to lie between the two sides of production, the agricultural and the non-agricultural. After all, the manufacturer himself is only utilizing the working of natural laws. All he does is to take certain raw materials and put them in juxtaposition to other raw materials or subject them to mechanical or other physical forces; this gives him certain results, chemical or physical in their nature, which he has foreseen. So also does the agriculturist act. He is a chemist, aware that if he assures the presence in the soil of certain substances and the accessibility of certain quantities of water and air, i.e. of certain other physical substances, the elements which themselves constitute a plant-seed will enter into known reactions with all these, so that the result will be a plant and eventually a harvest. From this point of view our word 'interference' might be sharply criticized. The cultivator is not interfering with Nature, but commanding her. The point, however, which we would make here is that such mastery is not a contemplative process but presupposes and involves effort, and certainly the farmer's life is famous for its activity. In particular, the ensuring on behalf of the plant or animal of exactly those conditions which will start the creative process requires not only knowledge and forethought but also much manual human labour.

It must not be forgotten that every plant is engaged in a life-struggle with all other plants for space, light, air, water, food. This natural competition is a deadly one. It is carried on both via the leaf and stem system and also through the root system, which is engaged in just as fierce a contest as the part of the plant which we see. The farmer has throughout to reckon with this natural struggle. His efforts are devoted to securing specially favourable conditions for one kind of plant—his 'crop'—at the expense of all other plants. This process has been going on for centuries and has gradually covered the earth with cultivation. But the neglect only of a single season—perhaps even of a few weeks or days—will be an instant invitation to Nature once again to invade her old domain with the plants which she favours; if she is allowed to occupy the disputed territory for long enough she will not hesitate to put it under the growths which are best able to survive; these are her strongest children. In most places this would eventually mean the return of forest or some form of jungle, with here and there patches of marsh plants or reeds. Such growths are know as 'the final succession' because, except for man's interference, they would finally succeed all other growths over the face of the earth.

If man refuses to give way to Nature and decides to favour the more 'useful' at the expense of the unwanted plants, he must be prepared for almost unremitting toil. There is no such thing as a lasting victory. Nature never relaxes. She seizes every opportunity of replacing the favoured plants, the specialized crops isolated by man, with her own wild tangle of competitive claimants. The battle has literally to be re-fought each day, and it is this which constitutes the great labour of agriculture.

Space has to be secured for the favoured crop. There is, then, first of all a clearing of the site, drainage, and perhaps even terracing or irrigation to be seen to. Nature does not do this. She puts in each place the plant which can *the most easily* survive there, the short grass on the tundra, the tree on the mountain-side, the reed in the marsh, the cactus in the desert. The attempt to interfere with her plans involves consequences of infinite labour. The draining of marshes to allow of pasture or arable cultivation is a classic illustration, but the terracing of the soil on mountain sides, soil originally held in its place by a protective and deeply rooted forest growth, in order to allow of much shallower cultivations like tea or rice is at least as good a one. Even on the level the cleared fields and spaces which in modern countries we take as a matter of course represent an almost incredible capital of past human effort. A further expenditure

of operations on the upkeep of these 'unnatural' conditions has to be envisaged from time to time and is part of the ordinary business of farming.

The ground thus cleared or made empty, protected from sliding or other movement, relieved of unnecessary water, or otherwise kept in some stable condition, there follows the work of securing the special features necessary to producing a large crop. In effect, most crops are grown with unusual amounts of food, &c., supplied to them, unusual in the sense of being more generous than Nature of her own accord would give. The business of ploughing and 'cultivating' the soil—'working' it, as it is most expressively called—dates from the discovery of an old secret, namely, that plants thrive on the accession of air and water to their roots. Preparing the soil surface in a certain way, putting it into a certain state of physical division, enables extra quantities of air and water to be supplied to the root systems of plants. Sometimes further operations are necessary to conserve the accessibility of the air and water thus supplied. At any rate, the soil conditions must be kept thoroughly appropriate throughout the life-cycle of the plant. The results are seen in much richer growth, but a multiplicity of operations have been involved, all laborious.

The plant thus generously nurtured is rather a special product. On the one hand, it stands in need of protection from those stronger competitors which Nature, as we have noted, is for ever pushing forward to occupy the ground. These are the weeds which the farmer eradicates, not once only, but perhaps several times in the season, so persistent are they in their habit of encroachment. On the other hand, the agricultural crop has a capacity of growth all its own, the outcome of better nourishment and centuries of empirically pursued seed-selection. This is so pronounced that it is worth while to count on it; the farmer has learnt that he gets his best results in some crops by allowing only a certain number of plants to survive: the crop may therefore have to be thinned. Each surviving plant is a first-class specimen, so abundantly supplied with nutriment through root, stem, and leaf that it is quite able to put forth a special manufacturing[1] effort on man's behalf. It is on this reward that man has reckoned.

Yet the coming of the reward only involves fresh toil; indeed, it entails some of the most laborious work known to the cultivator. The processes of harvesting mean either the cutting or gathering up of the whole plant, and perhaps subsequent drying, as in hay-making, or the lifting or digging up of roots, or the plucking and

[1] See page 3 of Chapter I.

amassing of pods, fruits, or seeds, or of special leaves or shoots (tobacco, tea), &c. All these processes involve endless work. Then the gathered product has to be conveyed to a granary or store, which means heavy shifting; there it may perhaps have to be treated by some further process, such as threshing, winnowing, or slicing.

Finally, the cultivator must return to the field and see that there are re-incorporated in the soil down to a certain depth elements to compensate for those which the crop has withdrawn in the course of its growth. Though in this the farmer is again only applying natural laws, his methods have to be more concentrated than those of Nature; in one operation he wishes to add to the soil what it may take Nature many seasons to restore. He therefore undertakes much spreading or digging or ploughing in of manure or fertilizer.

All this implies a quantity of work. It is only by inordinate effort that this great round of duties can be accomplished. The larger amount of this effort is in the form of physical movements; the actions of the human hand and arm, back, legs, and body, are required in ceaseless repetition from the busy cultivator in the course of the year. Nor is this all. Growing crops cannot be moved nor can they be spatially concentrated; there is no question of conveying them past the worker on a belt. They are fixed in the soil and they demand a natural area within which to grow, which it is usually fatal to diminish. In order to perform his duties the worker must therefore convey himself to the field and within the field must present himself to each plant in turn; this causes him to cover a literally uncounted number of miles as he works. Thus walking has to be added to digging, bending, stooping, lifting, carrying. It might finally be noted that some crops are specially inaccessible and hang beyond man's natural reach, while others are buried in the ground and require to be extracted.

It is worth while dwelling on these simple facts because the accumulation of human physical actions which they imply is so stupendous.

The care of animals only adds to the daily number of movements and displacements. Most domesticated animals require to have food put in front of them, to be driven to and from the drinking place or to have water conveyed to them, to have their stables cleaned if stabled; these actions have to be carried out each day, one or more times. If horses, they require grooming and shoeing and harnessing; if cows, twice-daily milking; if hens, their eggs have to be collected. There is general care to be bestowed; there are operations like shearing, and so on. Here again what a vast array of human actions are

the necessary accompaniment! It is the human hand and arm, the human footstep and voice, which invariably initiate and command, which persuade and compel the animal to carry on its life process, always in the direction and for the purpose foreseen and planned for man's advantage.

§ 3. *The use of tools and of power.*

The great laboriousness of agricultural operations arises out of *the endless repetition of the same manual act*; it is inevitable, partly because of the number of objects to be handled and partly because of the impossibility of leaving off or interrupting work directed to the care of living things. This laboriousness induced man from a very early age to look round for some assistance. There are essentially two principles on which such assistance can be given. One is to add force in some form to the human hand or arm, &c., the other is to help in that displacement of the worker which is such an unavoidable part of cultivation operations; the two principles therefore are those of power and conveyance.

There are also several distinct phases in the acquisition of assistance. There is first the invention of hand-tools. Starting with such primitive devices as the pointed and forked stick, the advance was made to the spade, hoe, rake, axe, saw, wheel, ladder, &c. This marks a definite epoch, some agriculture, notably in parts of China and even in Japan, still being so carried on as 'spade agriculture' by means of perfected hand-tools. But the stiff resistance of the soil when it has to be loosened, turned, or divided, together with the need for rapid progress from plant to plant, are problems. To overcome the earth's resistance by means of increased pulling power and to accomplish this more rapidly, power or 'draught', as it is called in agriculture, is used.

Power or draught enables larger tools to be used, to be used more effectively, and to be operated more rapidly. At first draught is in the shape of domesticated and harnessed animals. This phase lasts for centuries and is known in every country and climate of the world. Only at a late date and only over rather limited portions of the earth's surface is it replaced by motor power. Motor power enormously surpasses animal power in efficiency. It also permits the worker himself to be carried to his work and at his work with ease and celerity and with a great saving of fatigue.

In this evolution the passage from hand-tools to animal draught is the crucial phase, but the passage from animal to motor power is also of supreme importance; the latter process only started to any extent in 1850, and this is a revelant point to notice.

§ 4. *The increased mastery over Nature thus secured.*

What are the effects of this perfecting of tools and these additions of power? The more powerful and swift is the moving force, animal or mechanical, the more perfect the tool or appliance, the greater in that case is the amount of work which can be done. In rising progression the man with the ox can cultivate more than the man alone, the man with the horse more than the man with the ox, the man with the tractor more than the man with the horse. This increased mastery of man over Nature is the most significant fact in the evolution of agriculture. It may show itself in various ways, either in enlargement of the superficial area cultivated,[1] or in the increased volume produced from a given area, or in higher quality of what is produced; the mastery of means does not only imply a simple topographical extension of cultivations, for the soil has an internal as well as a superficial surface, which can be more adequately dealt with the more perfect are the means at the disposal of the cultivator. In any case, the agriculturist's duties augment with the general intensification[2] of agricultural production. Nor, finally, must it be forgotten that with the increasing complication of the means of labour at his disposal and the increasing obligation on him to accomplish more abundant and more varied work, the mere selection and arrangement of operations becomes a matter calculated to absorb much time and effort; in other words, he has added the whole business of management to his original simple tasks.

§ 5. *The preponderant part still played by human labour in agriculture.*

There has thus been a measurable advance, part of which lies within historical memory and record, of man's efficiency as a cultivator. The tool, the animal, and the motor can now do what human arms, backs, legs, and eyes once had to accomplish; they are more swift, more powerful, and less liable to fatigue. How far has this process

[1] A number of estimates on this particular point have been made in the United States of America. It has been calculated, for instance, that one man, with some temporary help at harvest, could handle on old-fashioned methods 320 acres of cereals, with a heavy tractor 700 acres, with a modern light tractor and 3-share machine 1,000 acres, and with absolutely up-to-date machinery occasionally no less than 1,600 acres (*Yearbook of Agriculture*, 1932, p. 419); or, again, that between 1870 and 1925 there was an average all-round advance in the area of improved land looked after per cultivator from 32 to 49 acres. These estimates refer only to the last hundred years and only to a certain type of agriculture and improvements effected in a certain type of machinery; advances equally important, though perhaps less easily measurable, have gradually taken place in a number of countries; see §§ 8, 9, and 10 below.

[2] See Chapter II, § 2.

gone? How far, in other words, is man now able to substitute other forces for his own muscles? What part remains to him when he has done so and to what extent has he perfected the execution of his own role?

The use of draught animals and the perfecting of machinery have not got so far that human labour is not still one of the most important elements in agricultural production. The fact is that, even granted the use of tools or of power, man's continued personal exertions are still everywhere necessary; he is needed for the directing and guiding of the improved tool and he must drive or manipulate the power. But it matters more that innumerable operations still have to be carried out by hand—nothing has been invented to deal with these mechanically,[1] and even animals can only do the cruder part of the drawing, pulling, or conveying. What counts, finally most of all—and it is decisive for our analysis—is that no improvement has been universally applied; some of the greatest advances in the use of tools and of power are quite unknown over vast regions of the earth. That disparity, that variety of agricultural operations to which we have so often drawn attention in the course of this book, is most striking in matters of the application of the instruments of working to all the needs of husbandry.

Machines, animals, and human muscular effort are to a large extent interchangeable, and many complicated combinations are possible. Different systems of agriculture differ enormously in the part they assign to the human instrument. If the general tendency is to call less and less on human bodily strength and muscle, there is a compensating need for more management and foresight, which, of course, are another form of human exertion. But, on the whole, even quite straightforward muscular effort by human beings still plays an enormous part in the carrying on of the agricultural industry. Estimation is difficult. The monetary cost of the human contribution is often quoted as a *prima facie* indication of its importance. This method of measurement is not too sound, but gives a good rough idea. Including the estimated cost of the farmer's own labour as though he were a hired worker working for wages, but excluding, as a rule, the cost of management, the cost of human labour in agriculture lies mostly between 35 and 55 per cent. of the total production costs on a farm, with extremes in different types of farming at about

[1] It is especially important that entirely satisfactory machinery has not been invented for dealing either with cotton-picking or with root-topping or lifting. In addition, all fruit-picking processes would seem to defy any kind of mechanization.

23 and 65 per cent.[1] These figures are drawn from farming accounts in rather progressive countries and on rather progressive farms; of course, in more primitive farming the human labour costs are much higher in proportion, and, except for the purchase of a small amount of seed, the hire of the land, and the acquiring and upkeep of a few tools, constitute almost the whole cost of farming.

This being so, the efficiency of human labour in agriculture is a matter of great moment. It must matter to the worker himself, to those who employ him, to the whole number of persons engaged in or dependent on agriculture, and finally to the community, that this immense volume of effort should be used to the best advantage and should produce the best results.

§ 6. *Efficiency of the individual in agriculture: physical performance, equipment, selection of the worker, fatigue, piece-wages, &c.*

We will start with a consideration of individual performance. We have already noted more than once the skill which is implied in the accomplishment of most agricultural tasks. We noted that this skill was usually handed on by imitation and practice. We did not deny that in this way a high routine standard was attained, but even in the course of this admission we drew attention to the effort which was apt to be wasted in the process, to the absence of good systematic instruction, to the lack of intelligent preparation for the manual, and even for the other duties of the agriculturist.[2]

The practical limits of the efficiency of the individual in agriculture have not yet been reached in any country. Whether we take the carrying out of manual operations or questions connected with the arrangement of tasks, or whether again we consider the equipment with which each worker sets to work, we are everywhere met by evidence of incomplete and faulty execution. This statement can be amply confirmed in detail. There is really no difficulty is establishing, on Taylor principles of motion study, that in agriculture, as in all other industries, human physical performance is very unfinished.[3] In Germany three commonly used methods of plaiting bands for

[1] Cf. League of Nations publication No. C.E.I. 27, *The Relation of Labour Cost to Total Costs of Production in Agriculture*, Geneva, 1927, 66 pp. There has been much fresh information on the cost of labour in agriculture since the issue of this document, but the figures given in the text will be found normally correct in modern farming.

[2] See Chapter IX, § 6.

[3] Examples will be found in the important volume entitled *Berichte uber Landarbeit*, Stuttgart, 1927, edited by Dr. Derlitzki, Director of the Pommritz Institute. Some of the facts mentioned in this Chapter are taken from this source.

sheaves when investigated gave output indexes of 78, 62, and 58 only as against a maximum of 100 attained by a superior but not much used method; the 40 seconds of an admittedly quick worker in the gathering up and binding of sheaves in their own straw could also be reduced to 30 seconds after a single day's training. In England instruction given to a slow and inefficient worker enabled him to pick a black-currant bush in 10½ instead of in 14½ minutes. An experienced observer,[1] who has specialized on the analysis of manual skill in farming operations, estimates an average of only 60 per cent. of maximum possible skill to be attained by farm-workers in England, inflicting an annual loss of £40 millions on an aggregate wages bill of perhaps £100 millions; yet in England the standard of manual skill is very high; in each district there are some workers who, according to this observer, display the 'quintessence' of skill and the lack of it in others seems due to sheer want of training. He makes the interesting observation that one can tell from a man's actions a quarter of a mile away whether the work is being done correctly or incorrectly, and states that a number of girls, after training, attained an output in a variety of operations considerably greater than that of men their senior in age who were untrained; one may add, as a point of interest, that the idea of training emanated from one of the largest *industrial* employers in this country.[2] The superior performance of trained women over untrained men in purely manual jobs has also been demonstrated in Germany.

The question of faulty movements, however, may be sometimes almost disregarded beside the question of faulty equipment. Such faulty equipment is bound of itself to breed an indifference to good performance on the side of the worker. Equipment can be either bad or unsuitable or simply inadequate. Very small alterations may make a great difference. Improvement does not always mean decrease in the number of tools taken into use, as often the same tool is used for too many different operations. But there can be no justification for the quite haphazard variety in forms of tools within the same agricultural district or region. It was found that 600 different tools were being used in Germany for potato-lifting, while a map showing forms of rakes in that country in 1925 looked like a map of the Thirty Years War. There is here a want of standardization which is incredible, did one not know the force of traditionalism in agriculture. There has been plenty of invention, but not enough popularization;

[1] W. J. Malden, *Physical Culture in Farm Work. A Systematic Training for Workers on the Land*, London, n.d., 92 pp.

[2] The late Lord Melchett.

some forms of advertisement have been oddly lacking in agriculture. True, a good tool ought to make its own propaganda, and sometimes does so, as has proved to be the case with more than one new piece of agricultural equipment. But local prejudice is strong, and information frequently lacking. A small special illustrated periodical on agricultural equipment would be useful in every country.

Nevertheless, by no means everything is to be attributed to simple unawareness. There is a casualness about the choice and adoption of smaller equipment in agriculture which is constantly evoking the remarks of keen observers. It is freely stated that both employers and workers need to be educated to far more exacting standards, so that the former do not, for instance, omit to supply the right number of baskets or receptacles and the latter do not excuse themselves for inferior performance by reason of such omissions. A mechanical potato-digger becomes an expensive acquisition if the potato-sorters who follow it are 'constantly kept idle' for want of baskets or sacks and if the sacks supplied are unsound.

There is, indeed, in agriculture much that can only be called lack of discipline. Much time is wasted owing to preventable causes and much unnecessary labour performed; domestic service alone can rival the record of agriculture on these two heads. A clear distinction should be drawn between *supplementary* time on a job, e.g. time necessarily unproductive because a machine is being turned in a field or a gate is being opened or closed, and time *lost*, e.g. time spent by workers in waiting for each other or for a machine or wasted because a gate is made to open the wrong way. After all, the timing of agricultural operations is distinctly difficult. Men are to work in collaboration and keep pace with each other, or with animals, or men and machines and animals are all at work together. Pre-selection of workers, pacing and timing, therefore, all repay themselves in much enhanced output. Selection of workers, especially of workers of comparable capacity for team work, is indeed of obvious importance. An experienced farmer will bear this in mind. Yet extraordinary instances are quoted of complete inattention to the point. As against the 7 cwt. of potatoes per hour harvested by a selected team (selected by a gangswoman) the harvest of an unselected team, put together haphazard by the farmer himself, was only 2 cwt. per hour. Some interesting investigations have been made at Pommritz on the relative efficiency of team, column, and individual work. The pace of the team or column appears to be that of the slowest individual, and the output of a column of workers, badly spaced, actually sank to 42 per

cent. of a maximum 100 of efficiency per individual owing to the inclusion of a single poor worker.

Fatigue is almost a special problem in agriculture. Fatigue is easily taken for granted in field and similar operations, yet a great deal of it could be eliminated by quite simple means. The mere provision of a bench to avoid packing on the ground left one of the packers at the end of the week 'feeling like a new woman'; incidentally it paid the employer handsomely by a reduction of packing time per 10 chips from 3 minutes 13 seconds to 2 minutes 31 seconds. Even the use of stick-seats or stools in fruit-picking can be arranged. The use of seats in general field operations is, indeed, a point on which some countries have long since forged ahead. North American observers have expressed surprise at the non-attachment of seats to field machinery in Europe; such seats are invariably provided by the overseas manufacturer. It appears to have been thought in Europe that the carrying of the human performer would unduly increase the draw for the animal team, but this does not seem to be the case.[1] This is only one of the instances in which unnecessary human fatigue has been imposed. The elimination of excessive fatigue is a reasonable aim in farming, and would be advantageous even from a commercial point of view. The deteriorating influence of fatigue in rural life has been stressed by the Director of the Pommritz Institute, who has stated that (as regards health and hygiene) 'the evil effects we see in rural populations are not primarily due to the bad general hygienic conditions of life but mainly to the *unfavourable conditions of work*, especially to long hours of work, the arduous nature of their work, and the overwork occurring in certain seasons'.[2]

A special form of fatigue is mental fatigue. This may arise out of monotony. On the whole, agriculture has been rightly praised for the variety of its tasks, but in large-scale farming and more especially for field-workers, even in smaller-scale farming in some operations, there can be great monotony. In any case agricultural work is prone to give an impression of endlessness, just because the processes of Nature are such continuous ones and never stop; perhaps also because the whole extent of the work is visible all the time to the worker's eye: placed in the field he gets no relief from the thought of what is in front of him. This sense of endlessness is curiously allied with a sense of hurry: however immense the task, yet it must be mastered with speed if the uncommandable forces of Nature are not once more

[1] *Beriche uber Landarbeit*, pp. 23–8.

[2] League of Nations document *Conf. Hyg. Rur.* 37 (roneod doc. No. 11, 7 July 1931; address by Dr. Derlitzki to the European Conference on Rural Hygiene).

to get the upper hand; the natural factory cannot, in truth, be shut down. All these elements, the element of monotony, the element of endlessness, and the element of hurry, are powerful contributors to mental fatigue. The best way of eliminating them is to divide the apparently endless task into portions which can be begun, mastered, and ended within a foreseeable period; this is stimulating. A simple application of this principle is the payment of piece-wages. Agriculture has always made use of this efficiency principle. Piece-wages have been known from the earliest times in farming, are quite common, and usually very successful. It is almost normal to pay harvest work on a piece-wages system;[1] indeed, the wide prevalence of piece-wages for such work in all sorts of different countries and civilizations is rather striking. It shows that here is a general problem instinctively solved in similar fashion all over the world. The use of premium piece-wages is much more recent. Premium piece-wages are higher wages given as a task progresses, the last portions of the task being sometimes paid a great deal higher than the first. The object is to get something done rapidly, the 'premium' being on speed; in agriculture the day is the usual period within which the premium must be earned—there is a 'spurt' at the end of the day's work. Such a wage, though expensive, conduces to rapidity of performance and is therefore useful to the employer where a harvest or other operation has to be mastered in a hurry. It is a selective wage, the different workers earning very different amounts. It is usual, and indeed only fair, to consult the workers before introducing so complicated a system into farming, but it has been tried in Germany with success. The fact that such a system can be used in agriculture and can so directly influence performance is an interesting point.

The problem of the adaptation of reward to performance is, indeed, a matter of some moment to agriculture. There are oft-repeated complaints that wages do not sufficiently distinguish between the good and the bad worker. As has already been remarked, there is certainly a lamentable absence of foremen's posts, and this may be one reason why, in so skilled an industry, higher standards of individual efficiency are not more frequently attained. For the attainment of efficiency some stimulus is always necessary, and a straightforward financial stimulus is not only justifiable but is, after all, the recognized method in other industries. It is only because agriculture is indeed a great craft that, in despite too often of the lack of this financial incentive, so much skill is preserved and handed on. This is particularly

[1] Reckoning all payments on 'shares' systems to be piece-work systems, which they are in essence.

noticeable in animal husbandry, the classic instance being perhaps the skill of the shepherd. But that the standards of individual performance in farming could be greatly raised, especially where they have become stereotyped and old-fashioned, is a truth which the most recent investigations have amply demonstrated, even if the lesson has not yet been broadly applied.

§ 7. *Planning of labour and management: effect on labour of the lay-out of buildings and fields.*

If emphasis on the best types of labour performance is lacking in the detailed execution of operations, a revised use of labour in general is still only an ideal in farming. Very seldom does a farmer make an intensive study of method with a view to the optimum use of labour. It is traditional to follow accepted types of farming and to fit the use of labour on to these for better or worse. Like other unromantic unions this combination may last a long time, but when disturbed it can—also like unromantic unions—prove extraordinarily uncomfortable. Of late years a general *malaise* in the employer's attitude to labour is observable, at any rate in European agriculture; the farmer's feeling as a man is often stated to be in conflict with his 'needs' as an employer: if he gives way in the one direction he seems a harsh master, if in the other, he runs the risk of being gazetted as a bankrupt technician.

The explanation of this is that many existing farming systems are still built up on the assumption of an uninterrupted supply of cheap labour. This is not a fact which need evoke moral criticism; it is the lingering heritage of history. But the assumptions of these older economics have been gravely disturbed of recent years. All sorts of new influences have to be reckoned with. There are more exigent social services to be paid for, a much more insistent cry for better living on the part of the workers themselves. This situation has not been fairly faced. The public and often the governments want one standard: the farmers say they cannot afford it. The farming community has struggled on, submitting uncheerfully to 'social experiments', cheese-paring the use of labour wherever possible, but not venturing on radical revision of labour methods.

There is the same need for inquiry and even for practical experimentation in the wide field of labour planning and labour management as there is in the field of individual performance. Such experiments are not easy to carry out. One has become notorious in France;[1]

[1] See a lively account by the enterprising employer himself: A. Javal, *La Confession d'un agriculteur*, Paris, 1929, 249 pp.

the experiment here was conceived quite definitely as a revised use of labour in farming. An inquiry conducted by the Oxford School of Agricultural Economics into successful farming experiments in England has incidentally revealed that most of these new ventures have involved an entire replanning of the labour factor. The now famous Hosier system of milk-farming, for instance, has demonstrated the importance of the labour group;[1] such a labour group is a unit of labour which can only be added or subtracted as a whole to a farming enterprise, which has definite duties assigned to it, can be reckoned on for a given rate of performance, and, it may be remarked incidentally, earns high wages because its efficiency is throughout being used and not being wasted by the employer.

Such experiments require great courage and are comparatively rare even in large-scale farming. They are only possible on large farms (and perhaps even here only with some public assistance). The regular estate-manager has time to give to the labour problem; he has one or more foremen under him, and usually some other assistance, clerical or legal; he has received an excellent technical education calculated to make him the master of what he has to do. The position of the smaller farmer is quite different, and the rigid traditionalism of his labour management, which has struck all advocates of rationalized farming, is inevitable. This traditionalism is almost a necessary evil. Without any professional business training the smaller farmer is his own buyer, in the course of which duty he is much beset by worthless or even fraudulent offers of material; he is to a large extent his own lawyer; he is certainly his own accountant and cashier; up to a point grader and processor of his own goods; his own merchant (and selling takes up an inordinate amount of his time). It needs a very good clear head to deal with such a distracting round of duties, and this partly accounts for the marked absence of any labour planning at all on thousands of smaller farms.

It is, indeed, a minor tragedy endlessly repeated that the smallness of the unit of exploitation in agriculture does not usually allow of planning of the day's work from a regular office. That condition imposed by Nature, which decrees that each plant shall take up a certain amount of space and shall be fixed in the soil, thus imposing on man the need for infinite displacements and movements in order to get at his crops, alone makes good planning essential; it is so obvious that these displacements must be studied and reduced to

[1] University of Oxford, Agricultural Economics Research Institute, *Progress in English Farming Systems*. V. *A Pioneer of Progress in Farm Management*, by C. S. Orwin, Oxford Univ. Press, 1931, 36 pp.

the minimum compatible with the needs of the farm. Too often, however, the men are assembled in the farmyard in the morning to receive hastily thought-out verbal instructions, only to have such instructions recalled later in the day or to find that they involve a retracing of footsteps involving a great waste of time. That this is no rare phenomenon is vouched for by many serious investigators, who concur in urging the laying down of written plans of work even for small farms, or at least of arrangements settled the previous evening with due regard to alternatives according to weather. This must sometimes seem a hard counsel to a tired and overdriven farmer, but probably in no industry so clearly as in farming is the dictum that the most work can be mastered by the most thought so utterly true.

The amount of labour used should also be appropriate to the size of the farm, i.e. all the labour available should be employed to the best advantage all the time. There should neither be overstaffing, which leads to waste, nor understaffing, which leads to overwork, scamping of tasks, and bad management. As far as possible such obvious truths are borne in mind. The trouble is that there is often little, if any, possibility of adding to or subtracting from the scale of an existing enterprise when for some reason the labour force alters in composition. This is especially felt in peasant farming. The return to the farm of an adult son or daughter may grossly overstock the farm with labour; or, vice versa, their departure may lead to injurious understaffing. This is one of the big problems of small-scale farming and, in truth, constitutes another of the disadvantages of an industry split up into such small units of exploitation.

Further difficulties are entailed by bad lay-out. The disadvantages of bad lay-out arise almost wholly out of the waste of labour involved. The lay-out of the land, i.e. the arrangement, shape, and size of the fields to be cropped, is the most important item and should take precedence of every other consideration. Incredible as it may seem, in quite a large number of countries, both in temperate and in tropical climates, both in advanced and in subsistence agriculture, men, not satisfied with the difficulties imposed by Nature, must needs add an unbelievable number of additional journeys by a system of the fractioning of properties, so that the fields which one owner has to get to lie separated and sometimes quite far apart. The splitting of properties through the laws of inheritance, when these enjoin, as they so often do, that each heir shall take an equal portion of each field or kind of land, has resulted in a 'fragmentation', as it is rightly called, of the cultivated surfaces into scraps and strips of

fields, sometimes only accessible through other scraps and strips, to which in its worse phases the Italians have given the expressive name of a 'powdering' (*pulverisazione*). Fragmentation is a dreadful example of want of rationalization in farming. Hundreds of thousands of miles are walked unnecessarily each year in peasant farming throughout the world because the law has been more important than common sense.[1]

Bad lay-out of farm buildings is also only too common. This is sometimes due to carelessness or indifference, but more often is the result of easily understood causes. The farming system pursued has frequently altered entirely since the farm was taken up, but no one occupier has ever been rich enough to reconstruct the whole of the farm buildings; it has therefore never been possible to revise the lay-out.

Such reforms, especially the reconstruction of buildings, are inevitably held up by want of capital. The lack of sufficient fluid capital in agriculture is largely the explanation of the unrationalized state of this industry. It is a pity that so few forms of farming ever give large lump sum profits into the same hands at one time. As a rule, only pioneer farming does this, where an accumulated natural soil richness is exploited for the first time or rather 'mined'. Here good lay-out is often not so necessary, as monocropping is the rule; in no case is there a question of the most expensive of all processes, namely, re-lay-out. But in the older, more complicated farming systems, where there has been a long derivation by inheritance, and where therefore there is an extreme need of reconstruction all round —public and private ownership, roads and paths, buildings, &c.— profits are much smaller and rather slowly distributed over the farmer's working life.

The rationalization of agriculture is a vast problem, of which the fringe only has been touched in the present remarks. Almost any investigation shows up the possibilities. A quite ordinary example of bad arrangement of jobs in poultry-work was found to entail an unneeded expenditure of nearly two whole days per week—practically one-third of the labour performed was being wasted.[2] There is no doubt that many accepted practices would bear a thorough overhauling, just as many old-fashioned tools should be replaced. Yet

[1] A few striking figures of waste of labour involved by fragmentation of land will be found in *I.L.R.*, vol. xxv, no. 5, pp. 678–80, 'Fragmentation of Holdings in Germany'. There is a large general literature on the problem of fragmentation.

[2] Cf. *I.L.R.*, vol. xxi, no. 5, pp. 700–10, 'Labour Efficiency Investigations in English Farming' (pp. 706–7).

this is by no means always apparent at first sight; proof, and ample proof, must first be offered before it can be assumed that an experienced farmer will pay attention to a new method which runs counter to accepted usage. But where is the instructor, capable but impartial, enthusiastic but sensible, who is able and willing to bring this new knowledge to the notice of the farmer? Moreover, such an instructor must have authority at his back; he should come from some institute or body which is known to concern itself with this particular department of the farmer's art, which has acquired a reputation in its advocacy of labour efficiency, which is believed to pursue this task without ulterior motives in the interests of the whole farming community.

Such a teaching force scarcely exists, and it is therefore not surprising that the pupils also are lacking.

§ 8. *Mechanization in agriculture.*[1]

Somewhat different is the problem of mechanization in agriculture. The difficulties which we have just been considering do not loom so large. The characteristic of mechanization in agriculture has been its rapid spread, its eager adoption without extraneous pressure by whole farming communities. The situation therefore is obviously a special one and needs examination.

'Mechanization', to use a convenient term, means, in agriculture, the adoption of machinery, usually of motor-driven machinery, to replace human labour or animal power. It is to be noted that the motor is not added to animal draught but substituted for it, that the machine which is motor-hauled or motor-driven is not added to the labour of a group of human workers but replaces them. It is in this substitution that lie the advantage and the problem of mechanization.

Mechanization is sometimes spoken of as though it were a new thing in farming. That is not so. Mechanical helps as applied to agriculture are only the continuation of those inventions of tools and appliances to which we have already made reference and of which the first essays are beyond human recollection. Mechanization has been gradually adopted in agriculture. In fact, one of the most interesting things about its application in that industry is the almost accidental way in which it often inserts itself into a farming system run by human labour and animal power, conquers a certain operation

[1] Cf. *I.L.R.*, vol. xiii, no. 3, pp. 309–26, 'The Influence of Machinery on Agricultural Conditions in North America', by Dr. W. A. Riddell; vol. xxiii, no. 3, pp. 324–68, 'More Mechanization in Farming', by L. E. Matthaei; vol. xxv, no. 4, pp. 525–35, 'A Further Examination of the Effects of Mechanization in Agriculture in the United States'.

or a certain phase of operations, and then for a long time advances no further. The period from 1860 to 1920, for instance, was a period when, in quite advanced systems of farming, human hand labour, animal draught, and mechanical appliances were found in simultaneous use in many parts of the world, only empirically systematized and harmonized as far as the instinct or genius of each farmer permitted.

This is still going on, and is a curious state of affairs. The fact is that the use of mechanical means in dealing with agricultural problems is difficult. The machine has to cope with exactly the same problems as face the hand, the tool, or the animal for which it is a substitute. In particular, it has to present itself to each plant in turn, just as a man has to do. As machines made of metal are necessarily heavy and as cultivated soil is often loose, the conveyance of the machine has been peculiarly difficult, and this problem alone has caused the failure of many a good invention in agriculture. Indeed, the use of the machine which was stationary in the farmyard, to which therefore the agricultural product could be 'fed' in the factory sense of that word, is so much easier that it has frequently preceded by a good deal any attempt to use mobile machinery; chaff-cutters and slicers and milk-separators became popular almost as soon as invented because products could be brought to them. Sheep-shearing by machinery is one of the neatest applications of this principle. Use is made of the natural power of the living animal to convey itself. The sheep are mustered and driven considerable distances to the shearing shed; are lifted into the right position; the rest is human skill, as it always has been, except that the actual strength of human muscles is replaced by electric power supplied from overhead through a cable attached to the shears in the shearer's hands. Yet so important is this simple substitution of power for human muscular effort that in spite of all the difficulties involved and the large amount of very skilled human labour which is still required, it may be said to be the practical basis of the Australasian sheep industry. Just in the same way the modern creamery industry is built up on the separator. This invention has been responsible for the scale on which modern dairying is carried on; without it modern dairies could not exist.

These examples are quoted to show the decisive importance which a single good invention can assume in the history of an agricultural occupation. The same effects have, of course, always been observable in manufacture: a single key invention revolutionizes and *creates* industries.

Among the most difficult to master of agricultural processes are harvesting operations. The great bulk and weight of most harvests,[1] the fact that often only a portion of the plant (the ear or pod) constitutes the product to be initially annexed by man, thus involving tiresome processes of separation from stem or stalk, the threshing, winnowing, cutting, slicing, crushing, turning (hay), or drying processes which are additional to gathering, all this makes harvesting work throughout the world extraordinarily heavy. The result is a great 'peak', as it is called, of the most intense labour at certain seasons of the year. It is not that crops have been too large; the difficulty is that at certain points, until machinery was invented, crops of any size had to be dealt with entirely by the infinite labour of hand motions. The difficulty was universal; the small farm and the large farm both knew only too well the burden of the rush season, and masters and men may be said equally to have been the victims.

The invention therefore of machinery capable of dealing quickly with this great accumulation of operations has been of outstanding importance. Improvements have always been ardently pursued even in hand-tools used for harvesting; the scythe, for instance, has been most carefully adapted to its purpose. But it was the discovery, after many trials, of the feasibility of pulling over the ground an animal-drawn machine, to which was attached a series of knives revolving against a fixed bar, that enabled whole fields to be cut in a fraction of the time hitherto necessary and with half the fatigue. This great primary invention of the mower or cutter just before the 1850's was rapidly followed by the almost equally important discoveries of a mechanical device for gathering up and tying the sheaves, the so-called 'self-binder' which abolished the hand labour of binding; of the steam thresher which abolished the hand-flail; and, much later, of the various forms of the 'combine',[2] and of devices for blowing the threshed grain or conveying it along a belt to the required storage place or receptacle; the use on a large scale of the last two inventions, the combine and the blower, has come about since the War.

The popularity of the combine has spread in a few years with

[1] Javal, op. cit., pp. 166–9, makes the interesting calculation that the harvest from 120 hectares of wheat, say 700 tons, has to be manipulated fourteen times between cutting and final delivery to industry, implying the handling of 10,000 tons gross, or, until the moment of leaving the farm itself, of 7,000 tons gross.

[2] Thus named because it combines the cutting and threshing processes on the field and abolishes all binding, stacking up, and need for conveyance to a threshing-floor.

lightning rapidity in the great wheat tracts of North America, the Argentine, and Australia. Its swift adoption has been unprecedented. It mechanizes triumphantly the remaining processes of cereals production, eliminating for ever the last manual operations for these crops; grains can now be machine-handled right through, from sowing to milling and baking. This is indeed a great achievement, but it may nevertheless be suggested that the original invention of the machine-reaper, together with its follower the self-binder, has been the most influential stage in the seventy years' evolution of grain-cultivation. It was these early inventions which were the foundation not merely of a new industry of large-scale grain-growing, but actually of great additions to world population; they literally made possible the existence of whole new classes of human beings. The urban populations of Europe of the latter half of the nineteenth century were populations machine-fed from North America and other overseas countries, which had been willing to turn over their enormous plain cultivations to mechanized operations.

It is impossible here to set forth all the stages of mechanization in other agricultural operations or processes. The coming of the light tractor, the popularity of which dates from about 1917 in the United States, has been almost as revolutionary as the coming of the combine; it has immensely eased the work of the farmer, enabled him to expand his cultivations in certain parts of the world at a time when labour was difficult to obtain, and, incidentally, brought down the horse population of the United States alone by seven million animals in a few years;[1] this has important secondary results, because both the land used for feeding draught animals and the human care bestowed on them are released for other purposes. The point about the new farm-tractor—it almost amounts to a new invention—is that it is light and cheap. The tractor, in turn, has evoked the adaptation of the appliances which are attached to it; the principle of widening machines so as to deal with a greater surface during each haul has been adopted. The result has been machines like the gang-plough, which may draw seven or nine shares through the soil at once. These again require heavier tractors, but the heavier tractor is able to haul more than one piece of equipment as its 'hook-up'.

The effect of the imposition of one discovery on another is always to tempt the farmer to expand his enterprise. The idea of a larger

[1] *Yearbook of Agriculture*, 1930, p. 16, Washington; the period is between 1918 and 1928; since 1928 there has been a certain tendency to fall back on horses again, owing to the expense of acquiring tractors.

gross output is invariably attractive in agriculture. The fact that the motor car, which is now at the disposal of so many farmers, can transport the manager of a farming enterprise, and even the workers, as quickly and as often as is necessary over any reasonable distance has practically burst the old traditional confines of the farm: no longer is it necessary to take conveyance of persons into account as a limiting factor. Where land is cheap and easily transferable, this must mean a certain enlargement of the area of the single enterprise, and such an enlargement can, in fact, be traced of late years in North America.[1] That it has not gone further is not so much due to the economic depression as to the limits which are set by the tradition of the farm worked by family labour with the help perhaps of a single paid worker. As far as can be foreseen, expansion in North America would not take place to an extent likely to interfere seriously with this characteristic type of farming, even if times were prosperous. But the fact of expansion, both in the form of the extended enterprise and in that of the creation of many additional enterprises, cannot be doubted whenever a mechanical principle is newly applied in a vital way to the needs of agriculture. This has important consequences.

We have mainly drawn our illustrations of mechanization in agriculture from the great applications made of mechanized principles in North American cereals farming. This is justified, for these wide rolling plains with their monocrop cultures lend themselves to mechanized treatment. It must not, however, be thought that mechanization in agriculture begins and ends here. We have already made reference to the milk-separator and to electrical shearing. It is very noticeable that the use of mechanical appliances or motor power takes different forms or develops in slightly different directions in the farming of different countries. The difficulties of mechanizing agriculture are so great that only now and again is a satisfactory invention launched; when launched it popularizes itself at once in those centres which have an opportunity of knowing about it; when very striking it quickly attains an international popularity. But as such satisfactory inventions, capable of attaining an international status, are comparatively rare, certain national preferences grow up in the use and adaptation of mechanical aids to farming. Thus France and Czechoslovakia have definitely embarked on the use of electricity, while haymaking machinery seems at the moment likely to popularize itself in England. Statistics of increased numbers of machines in agriculture have to be read with understanding if this point of

[1] *Yearbook of Agriculture*, 1932, pp. 413, 422; ibid., 1930, p. 17, Washington.

the rapid popularization of certain machines in certain regions at different epochs is to be followed. The net result of all the information which can be put together on the subject is to show that when a machine is *suitable* to the type of farming where it is introduced, and when it is practical and strong, it almost always registers a success.

§ 9. *The displacement of human labour caused by mechanization on the farm.*

The most remarkable effect of the introduction of machinery in agriculture is a saving of human labour. This saving can be enormous, especially in crop-production. The machine is so much more powerful than a man, moves far more quickly, covers a great deal more ground, and can perhaps also perform several operations at the same time; it can often carry with it to the end of the field the product collected and this without fatigue, or, contrariwise, can start on its journey fully supplied with enough fertilizer, liquid, or seed to deal with a big area; thus, in addition to a great increase in actual performance, much fetching, carrying, and conveying is once for all eliminated. It is not surprising that one machine can replace much human labour.

Significant figures can be given as to the decreased labour required in agriculture with the introduction of mechanical assistance. According to a statement published by the United States Department of Agriculture, an acre of wheat yielding 15 bushels required from 35 to 50 hours of manual labour when reaped with a sickle and threshed with a flail; the use of the cradle saved about 10 hours per acre. The advance to the self-binder and stationary thresher brought the hours of labour required down by an enormous proportion, only 4 or 5 hours' operations being necessary with such machinery. A further gain, bringing hours of labour down to 3 or 4, was achieved by the use of the header, an improved form of reaper; but a further extraordinary reduction to only three-quarters of an hour spent on each acre for the whole process of cutting and threshing is introduced by the use of the combine.

An estimation of the cutting process alone shows a decrease in labour expenditure per acre, again in the United States, from 8 man-hours after 1865 to 0·4 at the present day—one-twentieth only of the former quantum of labour is now required. An estimation of the cultivation and seeding processes shows a reduction from 10·4 man-hours per acre in 1850 to 1·45 in 1894–6 and to 0·13 in 1920—one eightieth only is required; the latter calculation shows that the

advance was not all made in the middle of last century and this is borne out by much other evidence. Taking the whole evolution of operations into account from hand-tools to the very latest machinery, some comprehensive estimates have been published on official authority which are very striking. It is calculated that, for dealing with an area of 50 acres of grain in one day, for the cutting process 200 men would have been required when the sickle only was used: now, with the header, 2 will suffice; for all harvesting processes together, including threshing, 320 men would have been required with sickle and flail: now, on a combine, 5 will suffice.

Wheat is the salient example. But taking five of the principal field crops of the United States, wheat, cotton, maize, hay, potatoes, a rough average of the work done on all five shows that the $108\frac{1}{2}$ man-hours spent on an acre of these crops in 1850 by hand methods had fallen to 54·6 in 1924 and could even have been reduced to 25·6 had the machinery then known been most widely in use. In Canada man-power is stated to be already four times as effective as it was only a decade ago, and this seems to be a rather accurate calculation of the maximum extent of the change; in the types of crop operation referred to above one man is certainly now able to do the work of four or five. In other work and in other circumstances the gain in efficiency is less dramatic. In dairy work, when machinery is introduced with real success, this gain can scarcely exceed 25 per cent. per worker, i.e. only one man out of every five can be dropped. There is therefore a big range in possibilities according to the type of farming and the nature of the work to be done.

§ 10. *The final outcome of technical advances in agriculture.*

At the very outset of our whole inquiry we declared agriculture to be a dynamic, not a static, industry. This statement of itself implies advancing technique. No doubt mechanization is a particularly striking means towards the technical advancement of agriculture. We have discussed it at length because it bears so directly on the labour problem. But immense technical advances have also been made by applying the knowledge gained from discoveries of the working of natural chemical and biological law; this knowledge dates from Liebig's researches into soil chemistry in 1840. We must take all these factors together if we want to discuss the efficiency of agriculture.

The maintenance or rather the scaling up of that efficiency is very important. It is essential that agriculture should hold its own in modern life. It is therefore satisfactory to dwell on the evidence that

this scaling up is taking place. A general advance within an historical period cannot be doubted; proofs can be given of striking increases in wheat, cotton, rubber, sugar, wine production, indeed, for almost all the staple crops. This increase in gross production of natural commodities is one of the major facts of the present economic situation.

But on what basis has this increase been won? If the greater gross production of recent years is solely due to the fact that the industry of agriculture has itself expanded in size, i.e. is being carried on by a greater number of the world's population, that would be one situation. But it would be quite another if this greater gross production is the result of the efforts either of the same number of persons as before, or even of fewer. In other words, can we point to more output *per person* engaged in the industry? Is there really an increased efficiency of human labour?

All the facts point in this direction. We must refer to our third Chapter, in which a distinct shrinkage in agricultural working populations was noted. The data are no doubt complicated, for the all-round growth of populations has to be taken into account; the shrinkage in the agricultural sections of such populations is often only a comparative shrinkage, as we explained. Still, the two general tendencies of increasing agricultural production and decreasing human labour forces may be fairly opposed, and the conclusion envisaged that each person working in agriculture is becoming more and more able to produce in an efficient and adequate way.

It would be surprising if this were not so. After all, the facts which we gave above about mechanization alone were remarkable; they showed that one man can now do work which used to engage the energies of a whole group. Taking every means of advance into account, namely, scientific discovery, mechanical invention, better education, &c., a few figures are available—and no doubt many more could be extracted from available records—which amount to a definite assertion that this increased efficiency of the human agent in agriculture really has come about. We may select by way of example some specially interesting calculations supplied from Australia.[1] Between the years 1911 and 1924 inclusive production efficiency per person moved from an initial figure of 1,000 (calculated separately in each branch of production mentioned) as follows: in crop-production to 1,505, in pastoral production to 910 (a decrease), in dairy production to 1,779, in manufactures to 1,075, and in all

[1] Calculations made by the Commonwealth Statistician and supplied to the International Labour Office in 1930; see *I.L.R.*, vol. xxiii, no. 3, pp. 353–4.

industries together to 1,079. In other words the human worker has taught himself, in the short space of only thirteen years, to produce over half as much again as he used to in crops and nearly three-quarters as much again in dairy work. He has lost ground somewhat in the pastoral industry, but taken all in all his advance in agriculture immensely surpasses, for this period, his advance in other directions.

These figures must not be taken as typical. It is distinctly unusual to find agriculture advancing more than manufacture. The relation is usually the other way about—agriculture advances, slowly or rapidly, but manufacturing industry advances much more. In Italy, for instance, according to a recent estimate, while agricultural production doubled between 1889 and the outbreak of the War, industrial production increased eight times during this period. The same sort of situation has been observed in the United States—industry has far outstripped agriculture in its advance; yet agricultural efficiency has improved more rapidly in the United States than almost anywhere else.

There are two big considerations which may be dwelt on by way of final deduction from all these facts. Both will have to be taken up again in our Conclusions. The first is the relative general inferiority of agricultural technique to industrial technique. This is a specially difficult question, which we must wholly defer for the present. The second we must discuss here at greater length. It is that the technical advance in agriculture, undoubted though it has been, is yet extraordinarily uneven.

It could be described as halting. In no country whatever are anything like all the available improvements, even those quite obvious and well known, put into force by everybody. It is quite a generous estimate to assume that they are being adopted by one farmer out of every four or five. We noted above that on an acre of land in the United States (average of five main crops) 54·6 hours of human labour were actually being expended in 1924, but that these could have been reduced to 25·6 hours had all the machines then known been in use all over the country; in other words, less than one-half of attainable efficiency *was in fact being attained.* The average level of performance was actually far below what could have been done thirty years earlier, for even in 1894–6, with the machinery known at that period, an expenditure of only 30·2 hours could have sufficed; it is significant that small grains, which could be machine-produced at 3·1 man-hours per acre in 1894–6, on a national average still in practice demanded 15·5 man-hours in 1924.

Present official estimates declare the actual efficiency increase per

worker in agriculture in this country since 1850 to be only about one-third of the possible efficiency increase; 'the farming industry of the United States,' it is asserted, 'is at present operating at no more than 25 per cent. of possible maximum efficiency.' But the neglect of available inventions and available discoveries is a world-wide phenomenon in agriculture. In no sense is the case of the United States of America exceptional. On the contrary, this country is distinctly more progressive than most others in respect of the use of inventions which save human labour in farming. Canada is in a comparable situation, perhaps rather ahead; she does not have to carry the burden of the unprogressive farming of the Southern States[1] of her neighbour. Australia, New Zealand, Argentina are not far behind, if, indeed, they are not rivals and equals.

But after that an entirely different situation meets us. We come to countries which have never laid the same stress on saving human labour. Efficient as their agriculture is in most directions, Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, Denmark, &c., have never sought at all costs to replace the human worker by machinery. By stages we approach the countries where no machines at all are to be found—the human arm is too ubiquitous.

Herein we have the most salient illustration of that unevenness in world agricultural development which we claimed to be the principal characteristic of this industry. Here is indeed a kaleidoscope, one more important, more influential, far more significant than any contrast between tundra grass in one latitude and waving cultivated crop in another. The final phases of this situation, charged with consequences of great social bearing for the future happiness of farming communities, have come about on the whole rather rapidly and only in recent times, from causes which lie plain and are easily traced. There can be no doubt at all that absence of population, i.e. of available workers, at an early date impelled the newer countries to have recourse to every sort of device for replacing the missing human labour. But the methods thus adopted have themselves in turn become a factor in the situation. The machine has been so powerful that it has positively tempted to expansion, each more powerful machine to more and more expansion. Thus a particular type of agriculture has grown up, aiming at cheap costs, mass output, and, as a rule, at an export market. While itself thoroughly commercialized, European agriculture has never been compelled to

[1] Some information on the progress of mechanization in the Southern States of the United States is given in *Yearbook of Agriculture*, 1932, pp. 428–31 Washington.

substitute much machinery for that mixture of animal draught and human skill which is its distinguishing characteristic.

We could continue our contrasts in other directions. We could contrast European agriculture, based on the small farm and individual skill, with plantation agriculture; we could consider the use of human labour in subsistence agriculture and the risk which such subsistence agriculture runs of being disturbed by the intrusion of foreign-grown products. But we must sum up. The use made of human labour in agriculture is so different in different parts of the world that a clash is almost inevitable if and when produce grown on one system meets, in commercial rivalry, produce grown on another. The most dangerous features in this situation are the *unused* labour improvements of which agriculture is aware but which she has so far only in small part adopted. The present situation may therefore at best be described as one of precarious balance, while the future holds not merely dynamic, but revolutionary, possibilities.

XIII

LABOUR DEMAND AND OPPORTUNITIES OF EMPLOYMENT

§ 1. *The permanent problem as to opportunities of employment in agriculture.*

BEFORE summing up the conclusions to be drawn from the whole body of facts which we have been considering, we must enter on a discussion of one final topic, that of opportunities of employment. If has been justly said that the outstanding problem for the agricultural worker is not so much rates of wages as possibilities of work, not so much what he is to earn but rather whether he is to earn at all. Stated in this way the problem must not be confused with the present problem of general unemployment due to the prevailing post-War depression. That problem has had its repercussions on the agricultural situation also, but it is not this that we mean. It is an inherent situation which confronts us, an endemic, not an epidemic, *malaise*. We have to consider what are the chances for a worker, domiciled in a country district in the present age, of being accommodated in the industry to which he naturally first looks for employment—agriculture—and what factors can intervene to make his position tolerable or the reverse. In treating this topic we shall scarcely be able to have recourse to detailed statements of the nature of those which we were able to make in previous Chapters on such specific and restricted topics as hours, housing, wages, &c. The issues opened up are exceedingly wide, and such observations as we can make will therefore have to be of a very general, if not of a speculative, nature, and will, in any case, have to be limited to only two aspects of the problem to be treated, namely, the effects of the seasonal law and the effects of the rise of industrialism on the agricultural employment situation.

§ 2. *The effects of the seasonal law in imposing want of occupation: success or failure of peasant societies in overcoming this problem.*

In contemplating agricultural production the first fact which strikes the inquirer is that during the dead season nothing can be done. No excuse is needed for dwelling on this fundamental fact, the importance of which was stressed in our opening Chapter. It must always remain the severest natural disadvantage to which agriculture is subject.

The fact is that what is a season of rest and recoupment for Nature means for man a season of idle, i.e. of *unused*, capacity for work. This, in a world which is founded on the use by men of their labour, con-

stitutes a severe problem. Moreover, it is necessary to guard against the illusion that the disability thus encountered has been overcome in the course of history. It is not so easy to realize what has happened, for a sort of double evolution has taken place. If, on the one hand, agriculture has in many countries by special methods taught herself how to triumph up to a point over the seasonal law, on the other, the increasing values which daily result from the application of human effort render any disuse thereof more and more disadvantageous. Clearly, the more valuable an instrument is, the greater is the loss when it is put aside.

Thus, while this problem of unused labour is a very early one in agriculture—contemporaneous, we may suppose, with the first efforts at cultivation ever made—it is also a very modern one. There is a good deal to be learnt by putting a few of the facts into some sort of historical and geographical setting, for, as might be expected, there are by now great contrasts between different regions of the world in respect of the attitude of their populations to Nature's seasonal rest. A complete survey of practices would be quite impossible. It will be sufficient to take one period and one continent only, the change over from an older peasant cultivation to modern agriculture in Europe. The evolution which here took place is illuminating.

The older peasant cultivation referred to—about the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—was characterized by the fact that it had worked out a solution of the seasonal law which appears to have been fairly satisfactory. The winter was passed partly in the construction and mending of equipment and partly in such arts as the spinning and weaving of flax and the making of clothes or even in delayed agricultural operations like threshing—with the flail a long process which took many weeks. In this way the empty months were usefully filled up, the adjustment being as good as could be managed, given the conditions of the times.

The achievement of this balance of tasks over the year was perhaps rather fortuitous, and was certainly far from perfect; at any rate, it was greatly helped by two circumstances. In the first place, the cultivator was able to work during the winter on some tasks which were not purely agricultural; they were craft tasks. In the second place, he enjoyed a very temperate climate which enabled him to stretch the season as far as possible. Where these two conditions are absent very different circumstances obtain, and it will be found that peasant agriculture can suffer as severely as any other type of agricultural society from seasonal idleness. This is at present well exemplified in large areas of Asia and Africa, where a peasant

economy has been in existence for many centuries, but where we nevertheless see cultivation dominated by a rush of seasonal activity followed by a degree of seasonal idleness far surpassing anything which has ever obtained in Europe. Climatic causes intervene to prevent a reasonable distribution of effort over the year, while occasionally, as in India, custom or religion has also divided the productive task between different sets of persons and some caste or analogous system decrees that the cultivator's leisure shall not be turned to other things. It is necessary to mention these facts in order to guard against the assumption that all types of peasant agriculture are necessarily successful in adjusting their labour to Nature's law.

On the contrary, it would be almost easier to argue that they frequently register a conspicuous failure to do so. The poverty of many present-day peasant populations is distressing and is the rule rather than the exception; it is frequently referred by competent observers precisely to the cessation of activity during the off-season, whereby as much as one-third or even one-half of the year may become non-productive time. Yet it must not be forgotten that the European peasant of preceding centuries was also very poor. He produced little beyond his own subsistence. Any attempt to obtain something more out of his efforts was attended by great dangers and easily led to oppression. This is well illustrated by the state of France in the eighteenth, and of Roumania in the nineteenth, centuries; in either instance the temptations of an advancing culture and luxury impelled the upper classes to try and wring out of peasant systems of cultivation surpluses which they were not fitted to produce.

To sum up this part of our argument. Peasant or other more primitive types of agricultural society suffer greatly under the seasonal law. In favourable circumstances they can achieve a distribution of labour over the year which is not unsatisfactory but which never goes beyond a certain point; at the best they can so far surmount the difficulties of seasonal idleness as to be able to maintain themselves at a fair, more often at a rather low, standard of comfort but without the capacity to produce noticeable surpluses. The demand for these implies a different attack on the cultivator's problems, in the course of which a fresh adjustment has to be made to seasonal requirements.

§ 3. *The rise of modern agriculture; increase of agricultural production and the rivalry with manufacturing industry; the two principles of diversification and intensification of cultivations.*

The break-up of the old European peasant economy and the substitution of modern systems was brought about by changes in the

technique of agriculture. After many centuries of comparatively static practice some remarkable advances were registered. The cultivation of roots revolutionized rotations and laid the foundation of modern animal husbandry; this revolution has continued, an even more marked expansion of the animal industries being brought about by the acceleration of world transport, which has made fresh nutritional supplies for flocks available. Great progress was made also in crop-cultivation. The new variety in crops and the new variety in methods enabled the farmer to deal with the conditions imposed by Nature in a way which had not hitherto been possible. A longer succession of cultures was envisaged and the 'season' greatly extended; in the winter the bulk of the animals remained to be cared for—they had no longer to be slain and salted down. Thus was born what is known as 'mixed farming', which has so largely determined the course of modern agriculture.

This increase of tasks would not have been feasible if aid had not come to the farmer from another side—he was now being supplied with all the equipment, tools, and clothing which he needed from other sources. The new tools made farming much more effective, and, combined with the new farming methods, made much *more* farming possible. The standard of production rose enormously. From this point of view the setting free of the farmer from his old craft labours was of the greatest benefit both to himself and to others —it enabled him to devote himself to his real business: the agriculturist began to specialize on agricultural tasks.

Such, in brief, was the rise of modern agriculture. But the facts are not exhausted by this short statement. Important as was the reconstruction of agriculture and the revolution in agricultural practice, parallel events in another sphere eventually proved more influential than any advances which were registered by the cultivators themselves. Agriculture, indeed, increased and intensified its production, yet its pace was still that of natural processes. But a type of production—the industrial—had been started and rapidly progressed at an enormous rate, which knew no law of the alternation of growth and rest, which had to submit to no waiting period, no ripening interval or dead season, which could continue at work uninterruptedly throughout the twelve months of the year and if necessary throughout the twenty-four hours of the day at a tempo which is a complete denial of the slow processes of biological increase. From the outset the pace and style of manufacturing industry were a disastrous challenge to agriculture.

We thus have three fresh conditions shaping the situation. First,

the possibility of extending the succession of crops—and this word includes the harvest to be obtained from animals—permits the cultivator to cut the duration of winter idleness down to the shortest period possible; second, the elimination of the old craft tasks allows of more attention to the true business of agriculture, though it is also apt to make the problem of seasonal idleness, when it does come, more pronounced; in the third place, agriculture is now working side by side with another form of production which enjoys the inestimable advantage of being able to set its workers to productive tasks all the year round and at an increasing pace.

The stimulation to agriculture which has come about from these three conditions is very marked. It is only fair to realize that much more is being attempted by modern cultivators than was ever performed or thought of in preceding ages. This heavier task is only possible on the basis of a greater effort and the arrangement of this effort has become a far more difficult thing.

The two specific disadvantages of interrupted activity and low rate of production have each to be overcome. In other words, seasonal idleness has either to be turned into all-the-year-round activity or else it has to be discounted by a greatly enhanced scale of production during the rest of the year. This gives us the two principles of *diversification* of enterprises, depending on crop variety, and of *intensification*, depending on crop specialization. Agricultural enterprises may be roughly defined as aiming at one or other of these and their classification becomes complicated only because a certain number are seen to combine both. The adoption of either principle means the appropriate consequence in the sphere of labour relations, and this we must now proceed to consider.

§ 4. *Effects of seasonal working of agriculture (a) on permanent workers engaged in diversified farming, (b) on temporary workers engaged in intensified summer operations.*

If the first principle is adopted and an attempt is made to prolong the life of the enterprise over a great part of the year, a body of workers must be always available capable of rendering assistance as required. The very diversification of crops, the cultivation of which is so complicated and so intricately continuous, makes such a labour force indispensable; no enterprise run in this way can be quickly brought to a termination nor even quickly transformed, and the yearly employment contract, which gives a unique complexion to agricultural labour relations in most parts of the world, is simply the expression of this truth. The workers thus essential to the running of a

diversified farming enterprise are known under many names. They are the *deputatists* and farm-servants of the north, east, and centre of Europe; the *statare* of Sweden, the *komorniky* of Poland; the *valets de ferme* of Belgium and France; the *garzone*, &c., of Italy; the ploughmen, stockmen, and ordinary farm-labourers or orramen of England, Wales, and Scotland; the hired farm 'help', when engaged for the year, of Canada and the United States, &c.

How far are the labour arrangements made satisfactory from the point of view of these workers? Undoubtedly they and their families are secure of a subsistence during the winter; it is precisely permanence of employment which characterizes their situation. This constitutes the principal attraction of this type of labour contract and is the motive which impels thousands to welcome it. A certain adaptation to seasonal exigencies has, nevertheless, to be accepted. Winter earnings are always much lower than summer earnings; it will be recollected that in our examination into hours of work we sometimes found the winter day reduced to as little as fifty per cent. of the longest summer day. If pushed too far, seasonal adaptation may reach a point at which the workers object, because, they say, they cannot live on the results of so little work. It might in these cases be argued that the principle of prolongation of activities has broken down and that winter maintenance of the workers has in consequence failed to be secured.

This, however, is not the real accusation to be brought against this system; as stated above, the workers are usually sure of a bare subsistence during the winter. But this principle seems capable only of producing an average living which is pitifully insufficient when judged by modern standards of working-class life. Many of the arrangements seem hardly to have emerged from old sharing-out systems suitable to subsistence farming: while the technical farming practices are modern, the wage distributions are still medieval. This is most clearly seen in some of the countries in the east and centre of Europe. There is a really marked inability to turn over from the in-kind to the cash wage. The fact is that when this system is put on a purely cash basis a glaring light is thrown upon its real nature. The great expense of maintaining a labour force without really adequate opportunities of providing them with productive work becomes apparent. The old craft tasks of the winter, in view of the general slowness of effort at that epoch, were just sufficient to justify the all-the-year-round retention of labour and its remuneration out of the general resources of the farm. The new diversified agriculture can do the same thing up to a point, but only up to a point. It is probable that with every effort the problem of winter idleness has not

been truly surmounted; sometimes it has been disguised with fill-up jobs rather than solved: the farm is not really profitable all the year round: the dead season is no misnomer.

Maintenance from one seasonal bridge to another is thus paid for by both parties at a price. In trying to keep his labour force available for the succession of operations envisaged, the farmer who is an employer involves himself in heavy expense. The worker, for his part, finds that, while sure of his winter living, the amount which a seasonal industry, however diversified, is able to produce does not adequately cover his extra needs in the way of clothing, education, culture, &c.; this becomes particularly evident when the wage in kind is abandoned; the cash wage compares badly with what the town-worker can earn by his all-the-year-round efficiency. A not too successful attempt to defy the seasonal gap accounts, in truth, for much of the low wages in agriculture.

The application of the second principle, that of intermittent operations pursued with intensity, would appear in many ways to be more scientific. It has the advantage of remaining in closest conformity with natural laws instead of being an attempt to evade them. But in proportion as it conforms to physical demands it runs counter to social needs, for it is obvious that the worker engaged on a temporary basis may have great difficulty in finding means of supporting his existence during the rest of the year. Temporary employment in agriculture should therefore either presuppose that the worker has some other means of providing for himself in the intervals of working for a farmer, or else it should, strictly speaking, offer such rewards as are sufficient to maintain the worker after the time when he is actually on the agricultural job.

These conditions are naturally very difficult to fulfil, and the employment of temporary labour constitutes one of the biggest social problems in agriculture. Yet the use of temporary help is indispensable. As already stated, the principle of repeated but intermittent effort is the one principle which is really consonant with natural conditions and it is inconceivable to visualize agriculture without an enhanced periodic labour demand. The summer operations are the very life of the farm, and their profitability so greatly exceeds anything which can be attempted at other times that not even the most carefully diversified farm is able to forgo them; however important is the all-the-year-round work, yet extra summer operations are almost always added on and they often make the enterprise pay. This being so, it is necessary to consider by what methods and from what sources agriculture obtains that additional labour which from

time to time is so integral to her economy, and to what extent she is able to reward it.

The first and perhaps the simplest solution is to call on those members of the agricultural community who are still available when the adult male labour of the countryside has been accommodated in permanent jobs, either in agriculture or otherwise. The wives, the old people, the children who are capable of work, and any other members of the rural community at call are in most countries engaged to help during the seasonal rush; their help may be important. The practice is so far systematized that such additional earnings are assumed as a reliable part of the agricultural working family's income and are sometimes even mentioned in the principal worker's contract. The assistants thus secured emerge for their temporary period of earning from a state of non-earning or dependency. Large problems of policy are not raised except in so far as it is presumed that such workers will work at practically any pay that is offered. This is an evil, but on the whole the solution of the summer problem brought about is natural, straightforward, and satisfactory.

It is seldom that this solution suffices. The number of workers thus obtained is not enough. Occasionally casual or vagrant labour of a poor type is also sought in order to supplement the efforts of the home population. This is objectionable from every point of view, but the practice, though it may be referred to as illustrating the pressing need of agriculture for every form of help in time of stress, is not important; many farming enterprises have never known a casual worker and would not admit one. What does, however, happen is that calls have to be made on labour outside the immediate district.

This is perhaps the most important point in which labour practice in agriculture differs normally and regularly from labour practice in industry and it is bound to have a considerable effect on labour relations. The regular migration of labour is an integral part of the modern agricultural system. Various arrangements are made to attract workers of the right quality and in sufficient numbers. Distance seems to be no difficulty—seasonal workers come from far and often cross frontiers. Disorganization or confusion in effecting these engagements is the exception; should they occur they invite government intervention, as was the case some time ago on behalf of the women rice workers of North Italy, whose conditions of work have since been the subject-matter of detailed regulations; in Hungary also there are regularized conditions for the migration of the wheat workers into the great plains. In other cases rather satisfactory traditional arrangements have grown up for collecting and dealing

with candidates; these are self-help systems evolved by all parties together, such as have been gradually adopted (after a bad period of confusion) for the migration of London population to pick hops in Kent. Or long-distance travel is supervised by a railway, as in Canada, in which country clever arrangements are made for distributing the wheat-harvest workers to the points where they are needed. The most interesting organization is that of the sheep shearers in Australia and New Zealand, frequently referred to in this book. The shearers' gang is an autonomous labour group of remarkable independence. A system has been evolved whereby the whole pastoral industry uses these gangs in rotation; the range of climate by latitude greatly helps, the gangs moving down from north to south. In this way the rather small available supply of highly skilled adult male labour is made to suffice for the whole country and the total intensity of the national agricultural production is raised to an enormous height, the labour capacity of each shearer being used in the most economical way and to its fullest possible extent.

There are innumerable other streams or groups of seasonal workers busy in farming; they deal with sugar-cane and with coffee, with rubber, resin, and with timber, with cotton and with flax, with hay and with all roots, with grapes, olives, and other fruits, with vegetables and with flowers—even such an obscure industry as the putting of decorative foliage on the winter market is dependent on this principle of seasonal labour. Little is heard of these workers outside the country or district where they are employed. Yet it may truly be said that cultivation is unutterably dependent on them; were but one in every four to be withdrawn half the agriculture of the world would be paralysed.

But the problem of temporary work is naturally met in its greatest force when we come to the enterprise which is itself run as a seasonal proposition. The farm which ceases to exist in the off-season is perhaps not very common, but it is known. The early wheat 'section' of the North American prairies was such an enterprise. There was a period when the North American farmer, having ploughed, sowed, reaped, and sold his wheat, could vacate his holding and spend his winter leisure as he pleased, often in the neighbouring town or even at a regular pleasure resort in California. This was at one time at least fairly normal in parts of this continent; instances are even known of a combination of farming and teaching. The immense virgin fertility of these areas permitted such arrangements, which were a rare instance of seasonal agricultural enterprises run with such profits as to permit the operator a completely comfortable existence during the winter.

It is unusual to find the profits of any seasonal enterprise such as so easily to provide the means of winter leisure; as the price of wheat fell, the North American wheat farmer disappeared as a patron of the between-season amenities of his local town. Yet if the summer operations are, as we indicated above, to be counted on to bring the greatest profits of the year, if they are to approach even within measurable distance of the ideal which we mentioned when the worker was described as hoping to draw from them sufficient reward to support him after his working period, they must aim at no modest results. Even in its earliest days, when natural fertility was greatest, the North American wheat farm was no easy proposition. It might be run by two men or even by one, but it was a very intense enterprise in the sense that it was a project stretched to the utmost limits of human working capacity; it was 'labour-intensive', if we may invent that term, and that quality it still retains.

This labour-intensity appears to be the commanding principle of all successful seasonal enterprises in agriculture. As competition gets keener, especially that between agricultural and industrial production—the agriculturist must eventually hold his own against the manufacturer—this aspect emerges more and more emphatically. The amount of work which has to be got through per person is colossal, for it is only by increasing the rate of output, and often only by increasing the actual scale of the temporary enterprise, that the farmer can earn enough to master the consequences of that law of the dead season the working of which he is so frankly recognizing.

This is an exceedingly important point, and one which will be found to explain many of the difficulties of modern agriculture. The nature of the profitable seasonal enterprise should be such as to respond adequately to the exigencies of modern production; yet, when this is attempted, the farmer has to meet labour requirements which have been described as a positive 'nightmare'. Not only must each person concerned in the operations be a skilful and above all a most rapid worker, but a large number of workers must be assembled together. If by some magic this could be done in a really impressive way, if big bodies of workers could be produced at the right moment in the right place, huge farming enterprises would spring up. They do tend to do so where plantation labour, or its predecessor servile labour, is available (was not the Roman *latifundium* run on the basis of uncounted slaves?), or where migrant workers can be quickly summoned. It is the comparative rarity of being able to secure workers thus abundantly or with sufficient certainty just when and where required, not any supposed shortage of capital or difficulty in

buying enough land, that makes the really large-scale enterprise in agriculture rather unusual. There is no inherent reason why mass production should not develop in agriculture, but it could only do so if this fundamental difficulty could be overcome.

One way of dealing with the situation is the use of machinery, as far as such machinery is applicable to the operation contemplated. The point about a machine is that it can be put aside when not needed. True, this makes the intermittent use of machines in agriculture expensive as compared with their use in factories; nevertheless, they are nothing like so expensive as that human labour which has to be lodged, fed, and clothed all the year round, whether at work or not. Above all, it is infinitely easier to acquire such machines than to assemble workers. Is it not significant that the use of the combine-harvester spread like a prairie fire over the North American plains, in spite of the fact that each combine was actually used for a few weeks, a week or two, sometimes only for a few days?[1] This would not have been done if it had not been worth while, and is an overwhelming proof of the profitableness of anything that assists the farmer during his summer rush.

We seem to have arrived at the extreme logical limit of the principle of intensity, which, as we agreed, was one of the two alternative means which agriculture could adopt to enable her to hold her own against the increasing scale of industrial production. This principle of intensity is found above all to centre in the labour question. At every turn the intensification of seasonal operations presupposes the presence of the appropriate labour, and so urgent have been the calls that the agricultural economy has had to be shaped so as to satisfy these. The process has taken place within the last hundred years, and the innumerable arrangements made are the plain proof of the alteration in the outlook of agriculture, which can now no longer exist purely on the basis of a steady continuance of a limited and restricted round of activities. Modern competition, while it has impelled cultivators to stretch their all-the-year-round operations to the utmost and to get the most they can out of the quieter periods of growth, has at the same time forced them to amplify the summer, i.e. the most profitable operations, and in doing so has placed them face to face with labour problems of unsuspected magnitude.

It remains to sum up, as we did in the case of labour arrangements made in diversified farming, the social effects of such seasonal or intermittent operations on the worker, especially on the wage-paid worker. These are not altogether easy to describe. As a rule,

[1] The record is a maize-combine used for only one day in the year.

payment for seasonal work is good, at any rate for men's labour. The employer is too much in need of help at a particular moment to cavil at adequate rates of pay, and, as a rule also, the cash profits of his summer operations are sufficiently important to allow him to pay such rates with equanimity. To workers who have a regular if low income over the remainder of the year, the summer wages are an enormous help and the usefulness of these summer additions should not be left out of count in estimating the worker's earning capacity. But there are other aspects. Seasonal work is often migrant work, and on the face of it migrant work is not attractive. Questions of accommodation and general conditions, and also of separation from family life, arise. These are the smaller difficulties and can be dealt with. More fundamental is the unsatisfactory character of the relations set up between employer and employed. From the nature of the case these relations cannot recommend themselves. In the worst instances the seasonal workers are casual workers and all the undesirable features of casual engagements arise. This is no doubt the exception; seasonal workers are not, as has already been stated, commonly drawn from the purely casual classes, but even normally their relations with their employers are bound to lack that satisfying regularity which springs from permanence or that intimacy which, provided it does not degenerate into patronage and servility, goes so largely to solve the situation between an employer and his staff. The relations between a group of seasonal workers and their employer may best be described as incomplete. The situation has just time to settle down when it is again broken off. The best results are achieved where the same workers return year after year to the same farm; this, as a rule, works rather well and solves many problems. The inclusion of seasonal workers in social insurance systems, however, is usually held to be impossible, and this is a point which must not be forgotten.

An important general issue arises out of the practice of offering seasonal work to smallholders, who are thus tempted to desert their holdings and to earn a much desired addition to their cash income by doing occasional wage-paid work on the larger agricultural enterprises. This practice is widely developed in certain parts of the world. It is not a good practice. It cannot be a scientific proposition to take even the humblest cultivator away from his holding during the periods of seasonal activity. No doubt some latitude is possible, especially as between hill and plain country, where the harvest falls at different times and may, indeed, concern different crops, but it is a system impelled only by the poverty of the smaller farms, which are thereby once more proved to be totally uneconomic units of production. Incidentally, thepractice

is a continual temptation to the employer to arrange his wages in the knowledge that they do not constitute the worker's real income: the 'farmlet' in the background robs the bargain of its economic truth. There have been complaints on this score; it is even occasionally stated that the policy of dwarf-holdings is continued in order to ensure that this kind of labour shall be available for large estates.

Nevertheless, the real evil does not lie in any of these directions. It lies in the fact that the job ends when the season is over. The worker is engaged to help in the seasonal rush and for that only. He forgoes that old claim to winter maintenance which the permanent farm worker has managed to make good. This puts a very different complexion on the comparatively high rates of wages which are usually offered to seasonal workers. It is one of the most difficult features of the problem that there is no means of checking the exact extent of the distress or poverty of workers who have ceased to be employed temporarily on farms; in the off-season such persons disappear from occupation statistics. While there is no doubt that many seasonal agricultural workers are quite well provided for in between their wage-paid agricultural jobs, yet there must be thousands who can only bridge the intervals at a low level of existence: the summer 'harvesters' of the Canadian rural districts may become the homeless winter drifters of the Canadian urban centres.

§ 5. *Impossibility of evading the seasonal law.*

The consequences of the seasonal law cannot be evaded. That law gives rise to the biggest of the immediate labour problems in agriculture. Either the winter maintenance system throws a heavy burden on the farm, or the system of discarding the unusable labour as convenient throws that burden on some one else—either on the worker himself or on the community. Agriculture seems faced with the dilemma between running on lowest gear or of jolting off her passengers at stated intervals into the wayside ditches. These facts are one explanation of the gulf between agricultural and industrial wages; whether expressed as a low permanent maintenance wage or paid to him in the form of higher temporary reward, the cultivator's remuneration is necessarily constituted *of his seasonal worth spread over the year*. It is when agriculture meets, in modern competition, industrial production run on an all-the-year-round, and sometimes on an all-day and all-night, basis that the crushing force of this disability is brought home; in little over a century the agricultural worker has been completely outdistanced by those who have always worked at non-seasonal tasks.

The most successful proposition, on the whole, is to recognize the seasonal character of farming with steadiness of view. The effort to challenge that seasonal character, to obtain an even distribution of labour over the year within farming itself, can go some way and should be adopted as far as may be where circumstances point to it; but it is not ideal, mainly because it can seldom be carried far enough. The consequence is that the system of maintaining winter labour is found to be costly, burdensome to the employer and unsatisfactory to the worker; or else a fringe of smallholdings, not economically too sound, have to be kept going in order to provide the required extra labour at the right moment. With both these devices the labour curve is not finally surmounted; the seasonal rush is demonstrably the principal explanation of the persistence of children's employment in agriculture. The difficulties have, in truth, been disguised as much as they have been solved.

Machinery, indeed, seems to offer the most hopeful means of mastering the labour curve. But even machinery brings its risks. The capacities of the modern agricultural machine are so great that the temptation is to exaggerate: the thing which is an instrument tends to become a master. But, on the whole, and in spite of the call to expand the farm to the limits of the machine—which is economically right—agriculture which employs machinery is never so helplessly dominated by the labour peak as is non-mechanized farming. It may therefore be categorically stated that the best insurance against the burden of seasonal demands is the adoption of as much machinery as possible in farming.

Otherwise the remedy has to be sought outside agriculture, or at least outside the strict round of cultivation. The alternation of agricultural and other occupations, especially allied occupations, is the best way out of the difficulty. All forms of the working up of agricultural products, where these are not immediately perishable, offer just that seasonal relief which could be made to dovetail into agricultural operations; it would be the old solution of the winter craft work brought back in modern form. An interesting round of seasonal occupations has been set up in New Zealand with the help of the freezing and meat-preserving industries. In other countries there is the working up of sugar-beet for sugar, and so on; even an industry like the tourist industry may be a godsend, as many a Swiss valley knows. Above all, forestry affords the perfect example of alternation, both because it is an occupation naturally allied to strict agriculture and because it really is carried on during the winter months and not only in the late autumn or early spring.

None of these alternatives has been scientifically worked out; there has only been a sort of empiric social adjustment, but where this has existed it has worked well. If planning of industries is to be undertaken at all, it is a point to remember that a large number of workers in agriculture need remunerative employment outside agriculture during part of the year—we envisage the ideal condition where agriculture becomes, for some of its best workers, a half-time occupation.

§ 6. *Excessive number of persons who have to be absorbed into agriculture; contrast between agriculture and non-agricultural industry in this respect; consequent tendency of agriculture to remain unstimulated; the habit of estimating agriculture as secondary to industry.*

The repercussion on human workers of the seasonal rhythm imposed by Nature is not the only difficulty which dogs agriculture in the manipulation of her labour requirements. This question of the availability of workers becomes more fundamental the closer we look at it. In the concluding part of this Chapter we shall try to throw some light on the elements which compose the modern situation, though it will be impossible to do more than touch the surface of so large a problem.

It is obvious that the availability of workers in agriculture depends generally speaking on the state of rural populations. On the whole, rural populations are characterized by great immobility; it is the reverse of true to suppose that agricultural labour presents itself where most needed; such labour is quite unable to wander about the world looking for jobs. There is therefore no process whereby such labour becomes notably evened out, and the most extraordinary disparities are seen in the labour organization of agricultural enterprises between one part of the world and another. One could almost say that the agricultural labour problem consists of an infinite series of local problems. Nevertheless, these local problems, widely though they differ in their immediate character, are one and all resolvable into the same general question: how many workers does agriculture really need in comparison with the number of persons who are desiring or destined to become cultivators?

We must not be misled by the fact that in the present organization of agriculture there is often difficulty in obtaining seasonal labour into the facile assumption that agriculture attracts too few candidates in general. The seasonal difficulty is not a problem of the dearth of candidates, but one of management and of the assembly and concentration of workers. It would be in the overcoming of these

obstacles, not in the search after more workers, that the solution of seasonal labour requirements would lie. Indeed, in the comparative ease with which agricultural workers can be found to travel long distances and do hard work under uncomfortable conditions for very moderate reward we might see an illuminating commentary on the labour position in agriculture. Why is it that such persons are available at all? Why are they not already accommodated in jobs, all, so to say, but the halt, the maimed, and the blind?

It requires a very penetrating view into existing conditions to seize the true nature of agriculture's fundamental and most difficult labour issue—excess of candidates. Figures will here be useless, for the question is not what are the current capacities of agriculture as at present organized but what should be the employment capacities of agriculture if organized in an improved way. The argument is not that agriculture cannot accommodate all applicants, but rather that she does so to her own detriment.

We must start from the fact that the populations of the world have grown enormously, especially during the nineteenth century. This is the biggest social phenomenon of modern times and one of which it is scarcely possible to exaggerate the influence. With this increase in populations the question of the right use to be made of their labour capacities becomes of extreme importance. The origins of the existing situation are to be found in the divergence of production into two branches from the beginning of the nineteenth century, and in the rapid, though unequal, advance of either branch. The division into pronouncedly urban manufacturing industries or services and non-manufacturing and now non-craft-pursuing agriculture set up a silent competition for the fresh labour forces coming on in such unprecedented numbers.

The ideal adjustment would have been if urban industries could have advanced at a rate which should have permitted them to absorb precisely the number of persons whom the rural industries were capable of releasing: this, indeed, would have been perfect. But while urban industries have, in fact, increased in size to an impressive extent, this increase has even so been on the basis of technical inventions which have been fundamentally economical of human labour;[1] the number of workers absorbed by industrial manufacture, &c., has really been much *smaller* than might have been expected. If improvements in manufacturing machinery had been invented rather more slowly, there would have been a rather steadier absorption of labour away from agriculture into manufacture, services, transport, &c.

[1] The latest phase of 'rationalization' is only the continuation of this process.

In truth, urban industries proceed on the assumption that they shall be responsible only for those workers whom they really need; the rest are left in a sort of suspense account with agriculture. With difficulty does urban industry now propose even to support the labour force which had formerly been invited to an industrial task and subsequently found unnecessary: there is at once a demand that such unemployed persons shall be thrust back 'on the land'. This is to assume an accommodation power in agriculture which could only be described as stupendous, and it is wholly to ignore that agriculture itself might be at grips with a parallel problem.

It need not necessarily be denied that the birth of modern industry has afforded some degree of relief to agriculture. In the aggregate immense numbers of workers have been required for industrial occupations—it is allowable to recall that at times the 'rural exodus' has formed a matter of bitter complaint to agricultural employers, and to note the striking contrast between those parts of the world where industrialism has effectively initiated a withdrawing process and those where the entire absence of manufactures has left the whole rural population to support itself as best it can from the cultivation of the soil or occupations closely allied therewith. The relief afforded to agriculture might in truth have been sufficient had not agriculture itself entered on a process of development and advance.

The improvement of agriculture has been going on for at least a century and a half. We gave a few facts above as to the course of agricultural development from the eighteenth century onwards. In the middle of the nineteenth century began the invention of machinery and somewhat later the more extended use of artificial fertilizers. Even during the last twenty or thirty years notable progress has been made, and again in fresh directions—seed selection and soil improvement have advanced by leaps and bounds. Whatever the process involved, the best agriculture of to-day as far surpasses medieval or primitive cultivation as modern factories the old craft workshop.

If this is so, the consequences ought to be the same as in manufacturing industry. Agriculture, as a result of invention and science, should not merely be able to perform her functions more quickly and more effectively, but *should be able to achieve these improved results with a far smaller expenditure of human effort.* There should be a continual shrinkage of the human labour required in agriculture, only corrected in so far as a greater gross volume of produce is needed for growing populations; comparatively speaking, however, fewer persons should be needed for agricultural tasks.

Is this shrinkage of human effort taking place adequately? The

answer is decidedly in the negative. The pressure of candidates on the agricultural occupations is so great—simply owing to the fact that this is the sole occupation open to most of them—that such shrinkage is to be remarked only to a most limited extent. The agricultural and the non-agricultural sides of production handle their labour forces fundamentally on different principles. Labour-saving inventions in urban industry have always been quickly applied, indeed ruthlessly, without regard to the human existences thus wrecked. But only where a local or regional scarcity of population threatens are labour-saving devices sought in agriculture; even here, to our great surprise, they have only a minimum of the application which might have been expected.[1] Contrasted with agriculture's notable technical advances in other directions—treatment of the soil, care of crops and stock—the apathy in farming as to labour use and management is a significant fact.

The explanation is that while manufacturing industries have from the outset shaped themselves as businesses or professions, whose aim must be to show the largest volume of results produced with the utmost possible efficiency and the greatest possible economy, agriculture has throughout had to recognize a much older responsibility. This is the absorption of new population into the existing world economy. It has been necessary to find a means of existence for the succeeding generations as they arrived independently of the fact whether the prevailing state of world production was such as to require their labour. This is what is meant when agriculture is described as 'a way of life'. By this description it is implied that the continuation of existence of the agricultural populations is a sufficient end and that the search after improved production is a further and separate issue.

On the whole, agriculture must be allowed to have performed this primordial function well. The worst types of starvation agriculture are rather rare. Disregarding these worst examples and taking a bird's-eye view of the rest throughout the known centuries of human history, we are bound to be impressed by the achievements of the agricultural industry. That industry has kept alive and allowed to multiply, sometimes at a rapid rate, the vast populations of the earth; it has provided for these populations a settled social environment in the form of millions of small ordered settlements, whose organization and manipulation are not the less wonderful because unself-conscious and rather static; it has even been able to do this and yet to release great numbers of human beings for other tasks, to set them

[1] See Chapter XII, § 10.

free to follow pursuits entirely unconnected with cultivation, and while doing so, it has avoided some of the greatest mistakes which have attended the history of these other pursuits, in particular, that serious error of assembling great labour forces in one decade only to find them unwanted in the next—that slowness of development which dogs agriculture has its good as well as its bad side; the small unit of production, the family farm, with all its limitations, has not produced a problem like that of modern industrial unemployment. Agriculture has usually been much less clever than industry, but it would be possible to argue that here she had been wiser.

But it must be admitted that agriculture, in so far as she has been content with these aims, has remained unstimulated. This is especially apparent during the last fifty years, during which agricultural organization appears quite especially to have fallen behind industrial organization. Is it surprising that the general level of output per worker in agriculture bears very little relation to the general level of output per worker in industry? The two things are not often compared, for they are, indeed, seldom comparable, but it has been calculated that the money value of what is produced by an agricultural worker in east Europe is one-sixth of the value of what is produced by an industrial worker in west Europe;[1] it has even been asked with astonishment why the forty per cent. of European populations still engaged in agriculture are so unable to supply the other sixty per cent. with food and raw materials that large imports have to be brought in from other continents.[2]

It is by such comparisons that we realize how far agriculture still is from satisfactorily carrying out a further responsibility which has beyond question accrued to her in the course of the last century and a half. This new function is very different from her old one. It is to feed and supply not the agricultural populations themselves, but those other populations whose release to non-agricultural pursuits we have just mentioned as one of the achievements of agriculture. This task is essential to the world's progress and is not a whit less socially justified than the old agricultural philosophy of living.

But viewed from this standpoint agriculture becomes a business or profession, or should so become, and every improvement leading to the enhancement of production or to the economy of labour should be welcomed, should, indeed, be deliberately sought after. The aim

[1] Statement by M. Manoilesco, representative of Roumania, at the Second Conference for Concerted Economic Action, Geneva, 1930; see *I.L.I.*, vol. xxxvi, no. 11, p. 408.

[2] W. Woytinski, *Tatsachen u. Zahlen Europas*, Vienna, Leipzig, Paris, 1930, p. 191.

of agriculturists should then be exactly the same as the aim of industrialists, namely, to produce the greatest abundance in the most economical way and with the least expenditure of human effort. To some extent agriculture does seek to do this, but the confusion between agricultural production when directed to this end and agricultural production when providing a way of life is so great that it seems almost impossible to disentangle. This is regrettable, because a clear distinction between these two functions of agriculture is particularly necessary at the present time.

We thus have the strange contradiction that agriculture, which is really the most important of all industries, ranks in the second place. This comes about because, during this epoch of our existence, occupations pursued as businesses, on principles of efficiency, seem to us to have the most value. We therefore attribute to them the greatest influence and the most commanding position. A curious maladjustment is thereby created which goes rather far. *A generally* inferior position comes to be assigned to agriculture, which is in flat contradiction to the essential and important nature of the tasks allotted to her. Agriculture takes the second seat in parliaments and on international councils, her Ministries and Departments rank only as stepping-stones to higher things, she has the second call on money resources, she resigns her best brains to the city. A gulf opens between town and country in which all the poetic values are with the country and all the hard facts which count are with the town. Even at international head-quarters the agricultural State is expected to play second fiddle to the industrialized State. In a way this is very surprising when we remember the world importance of agriculture, but we cannot complain of any real unfairness when we look at the general efficiency of the industrialized States, far surpassing what the agricultural States, even when putting forth considerable efforts, are able to achieve.

The double functioning of agriculture, as we have called it, greatly complicates the employment situation. It is with agriculture as a business that the agricultural wage-paid worker is concerned. Profoundly though the roots of his existence strike back into that general rural organization of which agriculture shoulders the burden, yet, as a modern wage-earner, his claim is on the business side of agriculture. That claim is seriously interfered with by the readiness to accept as agricultural workers all members of rural populations whom urban industries cannot accommodate. The agricultural wage-earner may, indeed, ask whether the complete reconstruction of his own industry should not be his first concern.

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XIV

FINAL REMARKS AND SUGGESTIONS

§ 1. *General result of all observed facts is to demonstrate the poor position of the agricultural wage-paid worker.*

We have now made a fairly thorough survey of the outstanding features in the agricultural labour situation considered as a world problem. We must conclude by some attempt to arrive at coherent views on the more important points. It is, no doubt, difficult to generalize; we have so often laid stress on the variety of conditions in agriculture. Nevertheless, it is necessary to do so. If our conclusions are mistaken, they can be disproved, whereas if we are unwilling to hazard our opinions we are bound to decline into that attitude of passive acceptance which has been the curse of the agricultural world from time immemorial.

Our first general assertion is also our most important one. It is to state that the situation of the employed agricultural worker is not a good one. Moreover, his poverty and want of opportunity can neither be dismissed as a passing phenomenon nor be attributed to ill will on the part of his employers; many of these employers share in the prevailing rural burdens of loneliness, of want of culture and amusements, and of absence of material comforts, while passing economic depressions only serve to show up in a more glaring light a state of affairs of which the worst feature is precisely its permanence.

The situation, however, has never been entirely static. Movement, leading as a rule to betterment, is always observable at some point. The immediate post-War period was perhaps rather notable for a certain general advance in agricultural labour conditions in a number of countries. Indeed, here and there the agricultural worker had got some way in closing the gap between his standards of living and those of his industrial comrades; his wages had improved, his hours had shortened, his contract was better recognized, he was beginning to be protected against some industrial risks, he was also training himself to use the weapons of common action and collective bargaining; in this process the early formal recognition at international head-quarters of his claims as equal or 'equivalent' to those of the industrial worker had been a factor of importance. But in no sense could this salutary process be said to have been completed; it would have been too much to expect that the consequences of centuries of history could be wiped out in a few years. The post-War crisis, bringing with it profound political upheavals of which the end is nowhere in sight, has

naturally threatened even these moderate advances. As always, permanent factors are reasserting themselves and the inherent weakness of the agricultural worker's position becomes apparent.

§ 2. *Need for dealing with this situation as an immediate problem on the best terms possible.*

It is clearly important to notice that this weakness is only part of a larger problem. It is not only the agricultural wage-paid worker, but agricultural communities in general, especially in the more remote countries, who normally appear to be badly off; in some parts of the world whole populations exist under conditions which must make their lives scarcely worth the living. Throughout our discussions we have attempted to recognize this; we have tried roughly to set the agricultural wage-earner in his environment, and show where his situation is an inevitable consequence of general agricultural conditions. It might be argued that we should now abide by the logic of our own discussions, and refuse to consider any remedies other than fundamental solutions of the agricultural problem.

This argument is worthless. No fundamental solutions of general agricultural problems are in sight. We might equally well maintain that nothing should be done for the industrial worker until we are able finally to understand the nature of industrial society and shape it in accordance with certain well thought out principles. We must, of course, try gradually to realize the character of that human organization, agricultural or industrial or both, which we have been so sedulously building up in the course of our history; every item of information or discussion which contributes to this end will be useful. But to defer all action until we can get so far would be absurd. It would also be wrong.

Reform in social affairs is usually in the nature of an experiment, but of one which is well recommended and hopeful. The 'experiments' which will here be suggested on behalf of the wage-paid agricultural worker will not be blind gambles. They will be moderate suggestions which could be adopted at once by a number of communities and governments. They would constitute a small direct contribution towards improving the whole agricultural situation, while their indirect effects might be much greater. It is depressing that so little has been done for agricultural wage-earners during the last fifty years. The absence of any bold ameliorative measures on their behalf is a constant grievance and has a bad effect on countryside populations generally.

To say that farming scarcely pays even now and can carry no more

burdens is a further inadequate objection. Many of the measures to be suggested would fall on public resources and not on the farmer; others are questions of management and arrrangement or of receptivity to new ideas; others again have long been owed to the worker and cannot now be denied without injustice. Soundly run enterprises in other occupations have constantly to adapt themselves to higher labour 'costs' and do not find it profitless to do so. Above all, it might be realized that the idea of employing absolutely first-class labour in agriculture under absolutely first-class conditions is seldom tried out, though it is not unknown and has been successful. To initiate such a policy on a larger scale would be an experiment of worth and is not an impossible proposal.

§ 3. *Recapitulation of the nature of the agricultural industry.*

Before proceeding to our suggestions, which will be set forth very briefly and simply, we may recapitulate a few general facts. Agriculture is a skilled industry, employing an enormous mass of human labour, carried on partly by routine methods traditionally handed down, partly on a rationalized and scientific basis, but always under a remarkable variety of natural conditions. In spite of this regional variety certain fundamental laws establish themselves. These are very influential. They impose special conditions on agriculture to which non-agricultural industries need not submit. They are the law of seasonal decay, which means unproductive time; the law of a single turnover per year, which means restricted profits; and, in general, the law of gradual cumulative growth, the very essence of natural processes, which precludes changes too rapid and spells a certain inelasticity or even rigidity of organization. To these we may add that limitation of the earth's surface which has ultimately resulted not so much in scarcity of food-supplies as in the attribution of special values to the holding of land, greatly complicating the carrying on of the agricultural task.

Out of these conditions emerges an industry which is conducted on characteristic lines. The slow annual turnover, the difficulty of changing from one crop to another, perhaps even the huge original struggle of replacing the jungle sequences of Nature with ordered cultivations, indicate that what has been begun with such effort is not going to be lightly abandoned. In any case, agriculture is a very ancient industry. A thousand-year-old tradition has been built up, the empiric methods slowly evolved being sometimes curiously perfect. The conservative outlook is naturally dominant, and conservatism means that new problems are not very willingly faced; yet, in agriculture,

new problems are constantly being encountered. No industry is so living: we called it 'dynamic' at the outset of this book. The result of the tendency to retain existing practices in an industry which is constantly being challenged to replace them is a conflict which sways up and down throughout the agricultural world. The consequence is a very unequal technique, so that surprising contrasts are seen between different methods of husbandry even within the same country: there is not much in common between the cropper holding of the South of the United States and the wheat-farms of Iowa and Kansas.

In spite of its deep conservatism, the new, or what we may call the competitive factor, never vanishes from agriculture. The challenge it brings is always at work. This challenge can be deadly to old forms of husbandry which are unexpectedly brought into contact with modern knowledge. This is quite particularly seen when modern commercial capital discovers regions capable of producing vast natural materials at present in the hands of backward cultivators who look no further than their own immediate food-supplies; the moral and material conflicts resulting herefrom are a byword, but the situation itself is precisely what might be expected from the conditions governing agriculture. It is only one example of an uncertainty, what might almost be called an unreliability, which is the great characteristic of the present stage of agricultural development. Agriculture is not rationalized; it is not even systematized. But the knowledge which could induce rationalization and systematization is already in existence, and hangs like a Damocles' sword over agricultural civilizations, which could be completely destroyed if it were to be applied.

To some extent this uncertainty in the agricultural situation is corrected by the great reserve powers within agriculture itself. For, if the richness of agricultural wealth is slow to accumulate, it is also slow to decay. In other industries want of success brings quick penalties; capital vanishes rapidly, the factory or enterprise has to be shut down or sold. In agriculture the natural reserve power of each piece of well-farmed land makes it possible to carry on a certain cultivation for a long time; in the last resort the renewal of fertility which comes about by the operation of natural laws sometimes makes a sort of subsistence farming possible which may last indefinitely; something of this sort may be seen even in regions of commercialized agriculture. The result is not good. Agriculture fails to get rid of the inefficient or even of the unfortunate producer, and this inefficiency or ill luck is a great drag on farming as a whole; among other things, as the area of cultivation is limited, it tends to prevent the accession of new blood to the farming world.

The labour situation in agriculture is deeply affected by all this, by a conservatism which is yet liable to be dispossessed by modern practices, by a tendency to fall back on a natural reserve of strength which yet fails to secure a true prosperity. In labour problems, as on the technical side of agriculture, the vaguest practices, the oldest traditions, have to be studied side by side with the most precise legal texts. Again, the natural strength of agriculture continues to maintain thousands of agricultural workers in their accustomed surroundings, yet fails to make them really prosperous. Uncertainty and obscurity are as characteristic of the labour situation as for any other aspect of agriculture. Nothing existing in agricultural labour need surprise us, and the outcome in labour problems is as difficult to foretell as for the technical side of this industry.

§ 4. *Practical measures to be suggested on behalf of agricultural workers.*

In the difficult circumstances outlined the action to be taken cannot be of a very simple description. Different ideas will have to be brought into play at different points, and an attack made all along the line with varying immediate objectives. One measure will develop from another, and we shall proceed step by step; what is most needed in one place will long since have been dealt with elsewhere. As long as we are willing to admit that not all remedies will equally suit all circumstances, yet that any one remedy effectively pursued will ultimately come to the profit account of all, we need have no hesitation in being rather definite; we need not fear that bogy of being told that what we desire is 'inapplicable': it is sure to be useful somewhere. We may thus consider, as national possibilities contributing to general advancement, at least the following: shortening of hours of work, protection against industrial risks, higher wages, collective bargaining, the elimination of fatigue, better education, better housing, abolition of indebtedness. When we have briefly dealt with these topics, we may conclude this book by some mention of the existing machinery for formally internationalizing measures suggested as suitable for the improvement of agricultural labour conditions.

Working hours of wage-paid agricultural labour should be shortened wherever agriculture is sufficiently organized to admit of time-table arrangements and wherever the number of employed agricultural workers is sufficient within the country as a whole to justify this action on their behalf. Not only large-scale enterprises should be included in the arrangements laid down; something should be attempted to shorten the hours of the much overworked single farm-servant on the smaller farm. It is admitted that the supervision and

enforcement of these arrangements will be difficult; the experience of one or two countries, however, has shown that they are not impossible provided that a good deal of seasonal elasticity is allowed and that the working of overtime is conceded. Even where time-tables only stabilize customary hours they are some advantage; there is a great difference between working a recognized day however long and working entirely at the master's behest.

The working day of peasant cultivators cannot at present be shortened. The problem of leisure for this section of the agricultural population must be attacked by other means. It may be surmised that an acknowledged time-table for employed workers will slightly influence a local peasant population; at any rate, the adult son or daughter of the smaller peasant farmer who has been trained to work a 9-hour or 10-hour day when employed for wages on the neighbouring big farm will be inclined perhaps to work an 11-hour or 12-hour day at home, but not a 14-hour or 16-hour one.

The present working day in agriculture for employed workers, when subject to arrangement, seems to average out at about 9 or 10 hours, not at 8 hours. The calculation of time to be worked as an annual aggregate seems practical, but steps should be taken to ensure that not too long a day is demanded in the summer.

It should be honestly admitted that any substantial cutting down of working hours over the year will add to the employer's costs except in so far as elimination of undue fatigue may increase the rate of output of the worker; on this point there is as yet practically no evidence for agriculture.

The claim for the cutting down of working hours is best made on general social grounds—the overlong working day in agriculture is an anomaly when working hours have been so notably shortened in other occupations. The same reasons for advocating shorter hours in agriculture hold good as have always been advanced for advocating shorter hours in manufacture, &c.—the claim is made on broad humanitarian grounds with a certain regard also to increased efficiency. These claims are strong in the case of the agricultural worker, whose life is very exacting and on whom the absence of leisure in the past has had definitely deleterious effects.

Protection against industrial risks is greatly needed for agricultural wage-paid workers. A levelling-up process to the standard of non-agricultural industry is, as a matter of fact, now going on and should be encouraged; there is no real reason why agricultural workers should not be adequately protected against the risks of industrial accident, disease, &c. The question of insurance against

unemployment stands on a special footing. It is quite untrue to argue that there is seldom any unemployment among wage-paid industrial workers. On the other hand, it is also correct that the agricultural worker can frequently find a refuge in some small farm in a way not open to the city worker. This has its good and its bad side, but its importance as a first line of defence for the agricultural population is normally considerable. As agriculture becomes more commercialized the need for some protection against possible unemployment for the agricultural wage-paid worker grows; it is thus especially noticeable on the horticultural side of farming and horticultural workers might well be admitted to general unemployment insurance schemes without further parley; forestry workers, where forestry is rather specialized, are also apt to feel unemployment rather acutely according to the state of the timber market.

Any attempts, such as are now advocated, to place unemployed *urban* workers on farms or 'farmlets' should be carefully scrutinized; there is a danger here that short-sighted steps may be taken which may undermine the employment opportunities of the regular farm-worker; for example, sales of produce off such 'farmlets', when subsidized by government grants, should also be watched lest they undersell the regular farm produce. The aims of all such experiments should be clearly defined, and the new rural inhabitants only be allowed to compete on the labour market on the established terms. In general, the unemployment problem in agriculture needs elucidation. It is too closely connected with the population problem to be easily analysed. The decentralization of small industries and the distribution of electric power are probably the best remedies, as such measures enable the agricultural-industrial balance to be restored within the rural district itself.

In general, where the same protection against industrial risks cannot be given to the agricultural worker as is enjoyed by his comrade in other industries, such protection should be, in the terms of the well-worded 1921 Recommendation of the International Labour Organisation, at least 'equivalent'.

The problem of agricultural wages is one of extreme difficulty. The state of such wages, even in countries of organized agriculture, is an interim one; the influence of old sharing-out systems, of family earnings, is still discernible. In these circumstances to raise farm wages to the level of wages in urban occupations seems impossible. The comparison itself is not too easy; statisticians often burk the admittedly difficult figures for agricultural wages, being much afraid

of the inaccuracies which may arise from the calculation of wages in kind; in any case, agriculture is an immense and varied industry and the computing of an 'average agricultural wage' is intricate. Nevertheless, the gap between agricultural and other wages would appear too great. Together with the long working day, the low wages in agriculture are a direct cause why many good workers desert agriculture for other occupations.

Yet action, if taken, should not be envisaged as for a sweated industry. Agriculture is not a sweated industry. Not all agricultural workers, by any means, are underpaid, nor are the mass of agricultural workers of the type which is associated with a sweated occupation; the accusation of deliberate sweating is grossly unfair to the agricultural employer. The low state of agricultural wages is not, unless in exceptional cases, due to inordinate greed for gain on the one side nor to utter helplessness on the other. It is the result of inherited economic circumstances which it has taken centuries to produce and the modification of which can only come about very slowly.

Measures to be taken must therefore be reasonable and moderate. A good case can be made out in many countries for some legislative intervention in the form of an agricultural wages Act which will give the workers a better bargaining position. An obvious step is to set up local wages committees, representative of employers and employed but including government delegates or at least working under government chairmanship, to fix wages rates; care should be taken to see that such committees are in fact established throughout any given country, that the remoter districts, which most need such action, are not left out. While the original decisions as to rates should be arrived at by consultation of all parties and if possible by agreement, compulsory enforcement of these rates is essential; without some element of compulsion on recalcitrant employers, even if they be only a minority, not much will be done. Nor need the capacity of agriculture to concede rather higher wages than have hitherto prevailed be underestimated; the ineffective bargaining power of agricultural workers has tended to let wages drop below their economic level. In any case, the necessity for paying higher wages will stimulate agriculture to select and use labour more carefully and above all more effectively, and this will be of great benefit. The immediate effects of legislation on agricultural wages may be to retain some inefficient workers at a rather dear rate, but this is scarcely to be avoided, except in so far as workers whose capacity has been lowered by sickness or old age can from now on be cared for by public

measures of health insurance or old age pensions, both important means of relieving agriculture of heavy economic burdens hitherto assumed as a matter of course by many agricultural employers.

The raising of agricultural wages rates should add to the buying power for manufactured articles of the rural populations, who have hitherto had small margin to expend on anything except necessities. It should do something to relieve the present economic depression and to restore a proper balance between industry and agriculture.

The ultimate effect of any general raising of agricultural wages will probably be to bring agriculture into line with non-agricultural occupations to the extent of fixing wages at levels which will permit a single wage-earner to support his family.

In the suggestions just set forth the capacity of agricultural workers to enter into negotiations and conclude bargains is taken for granted. In countries where this assumption is too bold more definite government action may be required on agricultural wages. Here the laying down of an actual minimum rate, variable by Order, may be useful, though considerable difficulty will be found in enforcing such minimum when the workers are really unable to co-operate. In such backward countries, as a rule, only general measures to add to the prosperity of the agricultural proletariat can be contemplated; more access to the land and freedom from indebtedness are usually more important to any depressed section of such rural population than the raising of wages levels. The assembling of large bodies of workers on plantations, however, creates special conditions and it is quite possible here for the public authority to protect wages. The suggestion that the wages sheet should be formally sworn to each week by the person actually handing out the payments on such large enterprises appears excellent, as it enables immediate proceedings to be instituted for perjury and fraud if any defalcation is found; it is an ordinary experience at a certain stage of agricultural development to find oppression and chicanery exercised not by the employer but by his agents. Measures to render illegal the forced expenditure of wages at specified shops or with specified vendors are other means of protecting the agricultural worker's spending power. This should not interfere with disinterested efforts on the part of large employers to place suitable supplies of consumable goods at the disposal of employees when circumstances render such a proceeding useful.

The desire of the agricultural workers in the more progressive countries to organize themselves should be directly encouraged.

The attitude of the existing national law towards acts of association and combination must here be the guide, but unfair distinctions between the non-agricultural and the agricultural occupations should be abolished; they have always been an injustice to the agricultural worker and are now quite out of date. Post-War legislation emphatically furthering the principle of collective bargaining has opened up new vistas to agricultural labour and advantage should be taken of the opportunities for agreed action thus disclosed. This legislation points to some positive legal basis for bargaining as the best, and the present tendency of the industrial world certainly appears to be away from individual freedom of contract towards collective decisions. A reform of law on the subject of the individual agricultural labour contract is called for in a certain number of countries to precede this, but much progress has been made in this direction in recent years.

Far more attention needs to be paid to the elimination of fatigue from agricultural processes. A certain accusation of ultra-conservatism on this point could be brought against present-day farming. Equipment, not always of an expensive description, is available, which can so transform the agricultural worker's task as partly to do away with the incidence of excessive fatigue. The effect of the weather—sun, cold, damp—cannot, of course, be avoided, but excessive straining, pushing, and above all lifting of heavy weights and *unnecessary* walking can undoubtedly be dealt with. There is here an immediate field for investigation and reform. The larger agricultural experiment stations should be invited to add a labour investigation department to their work and should be supplied with public funds for this purpose; the rest will be a matter for education and informed propaganda. All types of public and private agricultural associations may be expected to help in popularizing the best practices.

In general, the efficiency of agricultural performance leaves much to be desired, but the subject is a large one and somewhat transcends the scope of the present discussion. The management of farming enterprises is obviously a difficult thing, and the smaller employers and occupiers require a good deal of help, advice, and direction to enable them to attain the best results in the use of labour.

This leads us directly to the subject of education in rural districts. While this education has made great strides in recent years, much remains to be done. Such measures as are taken will be for the benefit of the whole rural community and not for that of the wage-paid agricultural workers only, but the actual enjoyment of the opportunities offered needs to be secured to the wage-paid worker and to

his children by a wide system of scholarships, without which poverty precludes them from benefiting by the 'open door'. In general, the recognition of agriculture as a series of skilled occupations still largely awaits proper expression in gradation of jobs and above all gradation of pay. First-class specialized training for specific agricultural occupations is probably the most useful post-school teaching which can be offered to those who are likely to take up agricultural wage-paid employment, but a raising of the standard of general education in rural districts, especially by means of the consolidated or central school, is not less important. The 'rural bias' in elementary country schools is a catchword the good or bad of which depends on its interpretation; the assumption that children attending elementary schools in rural districts must enter an agricultural occupation should be avoided, and in no circumstances should their school-leaving age be earlier than that laid down for urban children. The great success of 'extension' teaching among rural populations is encouraging; together with such movements as the women's institutes, farm house-wives' circles, and young farmers' clubs, it opens up new possibilities in rural life, which perhaps may in the near future be once again placed on that communal and vigorous footing which the nineteenth century so carelessly destroyed in industrialized countries, so indifferently disturbed in the more primitive regions of the world.

Like better education, better housing will also be for the benefit of the whole countryside population, but here again the agricultural wage-paid worker has his own special case. His accommodation has not merely been bad, it has been worse than that of others; a very low standard of rural comfort has sometimes resulted with far-reaching effects. Expensive as new or reconstructed housing may be, it can scarcely be doubted that advance in this direction is one of the more immediate needs of the next few years; a great deal has been done already in connexion with new land-settlement schemes in Europe and the housing of temporary workers has much improved everywhere. Further legislation is needed to prohibit any offer of sub-standard accommodation by employers to resident farm-workers, but, as a general rule, public funds must contribute to better housing for existing agricultural populations. Nevertheless, in any further launching of large-scale agricultural enterprises for commercial purposes a good standard of housing for employees should be made a first charge on the private capital employed.

More important than either of these two topics, education and housing, is, for certain agricultural populations, the problem of

indebtedness. This is, indeed, the crux of the domestic agricultural life of many nations. Until something to relieve the burden of this indebtedness can be undertaken, there is not much to hope for in the way of progress for the mass of these rural populations. The topic is, however, beyond the lines which have been here laid down. It is a problem which would call for much study before practical suggestions could be formulated. In so far, however, as the development of a proper wages system is definitely retarded by fictitious arrangements working out at the end of the year to show the wage-earner in debt to his employer, thus depriving him, possibly throughout his life, of even the smallest opportunity of entering on a free contract, the matter is one which is necessarily bound up with agricultural labour problems. Freedom to sell one's labour on unprejudiced terms is the one essential pre-condition for negotiating an employment contract worthy of the name. To ensure this pre-condition may well be accounted the first step in a labour policy. No reform could be more influential in certain parts of the world than this, but it is not easy to see how amelioration is to be brought about quickly.

These are the principal points which may occur to an inquirer reflecting on the measures needed for the improvement of agricultural labour conditions. That such measures may tend to make agricultural labour more expensive is undeniable. It is, however, held by some that agricultural labour has been too cheap in the past, i.e. too cheap by comparison with the labour cost incorporated in the prices of manufactured articles. An increase of agricultural labour cost would, it is assumed, somewhat raise the price of agricultural as against industrial products. The theory has even been advanced that the principle of high wages could be successfully adopted in agriculture with excellent practical results.

At any rate, the cheapness of agricultural products should not be a cheapness secured at the cost of the comfort and welfare of the human beings who enter on employment contracts in that industry. This is the one absolutely certain deduction which we have to make from all our discussions. In so far as inertia, insufficient competition, unclear thinking, or even mere sentiment wrap agriculture round in a cloak which covers up the real facts of the agricultural employment situation, this inertia, conservatism, obscurantism, or sentiment must be laid bare and met as evils; in so far as the opposite condition, namely, cut-throat rivalry, especially when at grips on world markets, makes sellers and buyers callous to labour conditions which threaten or which are known but not reformed, this state of affairs must be countered and dealt with.

§ 5. *The problem of international competition: its effects on labour: the hope of abolishing needless waste of human capacity: the omission to formulate labour policies in connexion with tariffs.*

This brings us at length face to face with the crucial problem of international competition. Indeed, as the title of this book implies, it is the international aspects of the agricultural labour problem which are our special topic.

The international problem in agriculture arises out of the sale from one country to another of surpluses of agricultural produce. This practice, on a large scale, does not go very far back, perhaps not much farther back than 1850. It has not yet permeated the whole world, possibly not even as much as half the world. From 1900, however, it looked as though free exchange of results were to become the preponderant factor in agriculture. Then came the War; free trade was largely abandoned. The result is at present a period of the utmost confusion, without common plan or purpose on the part of the principal agricultural countries or, indeed, of the principal importing countries. The world of agriculture might be described as in an uproar.

Perhaps on account of this some persons might be tempted to say that the intrusion of the commercial selling element during the last hundred years has been an unhappy development, and that national self-sufficient and even subsistence agriculture had better been left untouched. This would not only be rather a cowardly point of view, but would, in fact, be a dangerous untruth. It was one of the merits of the nineteenth century that it shook agriculture out of its national complacency; the results of self-sufficient and subsistence agriculture were far too poor to have justified their continuation without some further advance. International competition has proved, as it always does, an unrivalled stimulating force, and, in fact, the world would now be many decades behind had that competition failed to take the course and exercise the influence it did. The agricultural situation as it is should be accepted.

The effects on labour of this state of affairs must be considered. These effects are so little acknowledged or discussed that they are not easy to set forth. As we might expect, they differ according to circumstances. It may be said that in some countries the effects of international competition on agricultural labour have not gone far enough; that in others they have gone too far; and that in others again they only threaten to do so, but that the threat is, of its kind, menacing.

That the effects of international competition do not go far enough is seen in an expenditure of human energy in some parts of the world on operations which, or the equivalent of which, are in other parts performed with far less trouble. No one would advocate a dead level of practice, which, in any case, would be impossible for many reasons. But one cannot help thinking that the cultivators of almost any country would profit by giving some consideration to the use and management of human labour elsewhere; at present there is almost complete apathy. The problem is not the same for all communities. To the poor cultivator labour is his only wealth; it must and should be applied generously to agricultural tasks, nor do we suggest that he could substitute expensive agricultural machinery for his own muscles. But just because labour is his only wealth, it should be valued and appreciated; indeed, a big advance is made by poorer societies when they realize that labour has a definite worth. Nevertheless, the amount of labour expended by poorer cultivators on simple cultivations is extravagant. This extravagant expenditure is a waste. Better information and training, the imitation of a more advanced technique learnt from elsewhere, should tend to abolish as unnecessary, we might say as unseemly, methods which make agriculture so incredibly laborious to thousands of human beings. In the case of the richer community, where manual work is paid for in money, any waste of labour is a profligacy which agriculture, hard pressed as she is by other more efficient industries, can ill afford. But many sins are committed in this direction by modern agriculturists, and, in general, even some highly commercialized agriculture has still to learn that cheap labour is usually dear labour. A closer and more intimate internationalism might here help a great deal.

In effect this is to state the fundamental problem of the European States to-day, and what we may expect and indeed may hope will soon become also the fundamental problem of such continents as Africa and Asia: how are all these regions of the world to transform their peasant farming into industrialized or at least modernized farming with the same output from a quarter of their present labour force? The whole industry of agriculture is in a state of transition and the interest of taking an international survey largely consists in estimating the rate of this transition by using the most progressive countries as measuring rods: nor is the task really much complicated by the fact that advanced technique on the use of labour has to be sought in America, Australia, and New Zealand, whereas advanced technique in other directions is best looked for in Europe. It is our business to consider the labour factor and not the other factors, and

we cannot but recognize the enormous international pressure of invention and transformation which is always pushing towards economy of labour and continually disturbing the relations between agricultural countries and also between agricultural and industrial countries. Hence the long-continued *malaise* of agriculture, in which there is nothing whatever to surprise us, for what else could we possibly expect?

We must be courageous enough plainly to state that to carry on the biggest industry in the world with an application of human effort of which a colossal proportion is not required is an obstruction to human progress, and that if methods for avoiding this are known in some countries—as they long have been—it is the first duty of humanity to see that they are put into use in all.

Nor, in doing so, need we fear the ultimate consequences of our action. It is the present poverty of the world which impedes the reform of agriculture. Populations are so poor that, though many persons can only afford to eat bread, yet there is a surplus of wheat. This is a distortion of natural needs. If these populations were better off, they would, indeed, require still less wheat, but far more flesh and dairy produce, &c., and these in the making would consume much more wealth, including the wealth of labour, than is called for now. The demand on the farmer is *indefinitely elastic if it can be exercised*, and all the preferable forms of food—meat and dairy products, vegetables, fruit—demand more labour per unit of maintenance value than the cheaply grown cereals from which so much of humanity is at present compelled to sustain itself. Large numbers of persons could eventually be absorbed on such tasks, and these tasks, if rightly pursued, need not entail the depressed working conditions which now too often accompany agricultural production. Let us hope that the numbers on the land, and the excellence of the lives they lead, will be one of the future surprises of history.

There is therefore no need to take a melancholy view. With such a tremendous future looming ahead agriculture can afford to speak with authority; she can afford to contemplate with comparative equanimity the immense losses which clearly must be sustained before any proper adjustment, even of an immediate kind, can be carried out.

As always, such adjustment spells disaster to a number of existences, and the pressing problem therefore is to seek means *at present* for furthering and encouraging these developments without incurring too many tragedies. So far as any action has been actually taken it has been in the form of defence against apprehended attack—

always a weak position. This defence has usually been a tariff, or its allied measure, a subsidy, &c. By the height of the tariff 'walls' which they have erected since the War nations have expressed the anxiety which they have felt about their national agricultures. The result has been occasionally, but very precariously, successful in maintaining existing agricultural conditions in a few rather well placed countries: France and Switzerland, by these means, have been able—so far—to leave their peasant systems untouched. This has only been done at the expense of an almost complete hold-up in the rural social development of the United States and Canada, so that, to use a very homely illustration, the world as a whole might say, like Alice and the White Queen, that by running very hard it had only managed to stay in the same place.

The means were neither illegitimate nor mistaken, but the aims were not sufficiently large or far-seeing. The survival of a peasant system, untransformed, without radical modification, is not, in view of the types of social existence now everywhere available to highly cultivated peoples, a sufficient aim to justify defence at all costs. Tariffs used for this or comparable purposes might be described as 'blind' tariffs and are usually deeply resented by the foreign interests which they penalize, who can see in the conditions thereby maintained nothing to justify the losses imposed on themselves.

Behind the high wall of the tariff there should be not an outworn structure but a fair building, and one with doors flung wide for all who can satisfy the porter at the gate that they are merchants of confidence bringing commendable wares. It has been a cardinal mistake that in the turnover from the old unimpeded commerce to the universalized tariff system more effort was not made to rescue the moral content—shadowy enough perhaps—of the nineteenth-century free-trade ideal and carry it over, in a different but substantial way, into what is apparently going to be the trading method of the twentieth century. That tariff systems of modern nations are pursued for limited commercial ends and have not avowed moral purposes is the most crushing criticism which can be brought against them.

In agriculture the tariff-makers have missed a great opportunity. In the innumerable tariff innovations or additions dealing with agricultural produce which have sprung up since the War two aims should have been sought and should have been publicly acknowledged. In the first place, it should have been the clear design of the tariff-imposing authority to insist on a reasonable but thorough raising of the standard of efficiency of their national agriculture; it would be possible to argue that all further State experimental work

in agriculture should be stopped until the majority of farmers in each country had adopted the bulk of the existing improvements made available for them by the good work of these services, paid for, it must be remembered, not only by farming interests but by the community at large, and not least by past generations, who, with their endowments, have made possible that pursuit of scientific truth at the universities which is the foundation of all help to the technique of agriculture. Only if higher standards of efficiency were demonstrably being sought could the question of direct money subsidies to agriculture, whether for experiment, for education, or for the simple maintenance of some branch of production, be entertained.

In the second place, the policy of tariff protection to agriculture should have been linked up with the raising of labour conditions. It is significant that this has not been done, because, if ever it was to be done within a period to be foreseen, the years after the War would have been the epoch when it could have been expected. It is true that some countries have since the War protected or further protected their agriculture and have also enacted a certain amount of legislation to help the agricultural worker; but a definite connexion between these two policies has not been established, though it may have been sometimes vaguely present in the minds of the legislators responsible. There is nothing inherently impossible in formulating such a connexion or even in expressing it as a legal responsibility laid on agricultural employers benefiting by the protection. Such a departure would be novel in agriculture, though not entirely unknown. The omission to seize the opportunity has been marked. We now have, especially in Europe, agricultural tariff systems without agricultural labour policies. It may be stated that to add a labour policy on to an existing tariff is an exceedingly difficult thing for any government to undertake.

It should freely be conceded that on no other point has the agricultural world a better claim for public assistance than on the labour problem. The agricultural labour question is a matter for the whole community and should be acknowledged as such. Assuming from our previous argument that we must think in terms of a reduction in amount of labour needed, temporary means of dealing with the labour released must be thought out. As far as possible the more experienced communities will turn away from a mere maintenance ('dole') system, and aim, however imperfectly, at offering to such released labour proper avenues of employment, satisfactory in their purposes and therefore satisfactory to the individuals who come to be connected with them. In agriculture there is almost unlimited scope. Even

highly developed countries require re-draining and a new lay-out, while less well cultivated areas call for an infinitude of effort before they can be comfortably habitable. For such permanent improvements only the community can find the money; the wealth thus expended may, if it is liked, be termed a subsidy, though such subsidies would be no blind gifts but rather in the nature of the talent which was taken from the napkin and used. To integrate such measures with a tariff system offers no fundamental difficulty; some proportion of the agricultural import yield might well be set aside to finance agricultural improvement, though it would be impossible to find the whole of the money in this way.

At any rate, the instrument of the tariff should be conceived and used as a social and not merely as a commercial tool, both to stiffen up the agricultural community generally, but quite especially to assist in raising agricultural labour from its present depressed condition. This is the only sane use of a tariff.

§ 6. *Impossibility of finally evading international competition whether on a tariff or free-trade basis: the inter-State labour bargain or Convention as a remedy: work of the International Labour Organisation on behalf of agricultural workers: suggestions for carrying that work further.*

But even supposing that something could be done on these lines, the danger to labour is far from being eliminated. Commodities are bound to pass between countries, and agricultural commodities above all. There are certain agricultural products—wheat, rice, cotton, wool, rubber, timber, oil-seeds, also less important crops like tea and coffee—which *must* cross from one part of the world to another; climate alone imposes this, and man has reinforced it by allowing himself to build up enormous populations in small areas incapable of subsisting except by means of food and other materials brought in from elsewhere.

As long as this international exchange exists, in spite of tariffs and even embargos, the danger of oppression to agricultural labour must go on. Indeed, a tariff which may help the home workers logically becomes a menace to the worker in the exporting country. The desire to sell at a price which shall compete with home-grown produce means that costs of production must be cut to rock-bottom by the foreign producer to allow of a margin sufficient to cover import dues. Tariffs may become almost a sort of invitation to lower the standards of labour conditions in *other* countries.

It therefore becomes essential to consider means of reinforcing the protection of labour exposed to this sort of pressure. Free trade

positively encourages, while tariffs do not eliminate, international competition, which, as long as there are higher and lower labour conditions in different parts of the world, must result in a threat to the higher standard countries.

This situation is not new. It was a marked feature of world economy before the War, and industrial production was much exposed to its evils, agriculture perhaps less markedly but with almost greater potentialities of having her labour standards eventually destroyed. It was with a direct reference to this situation and to combat it that at the end of the War the International Labour Organisation was founded as part of the League of Nations. Its working was based on the idea that, without distinction between tariff and free-trade policies and leaving complete freedom on this point, definite international treaties concerning the treatment of labour might be agreed to by any country Member of the Organisation, and that the application of this system might gradually serve to raise labour conditions all over the world.

This was to suggest a direct attack on the labour problem and was a bold scheme. It is probable that this direct attack along an international front will in the long run prove the best. Its great purpose is to eliminate unfair competition by means of binding inter-State engagements or contracts, known as Conventions, for specified periods. In addition, an appeal is made both to honour and to shame; to honour, in the form of the so-called Recommendation, which embodies carefully formulated standards on selected topics to which nations are asked to subscribe, and to shame, in the use of the weapon of publicity and inquiry, without which, indeed, the more formal engagements could scarcely be carried out.

By an advisory opinion of the Permanent Court of International Justice at the Hague, agricultural labour conditions were in 1922 declared to be included in the scope of the Organisation. The work which had been done in the agricultural field by the International Labour Conference in 1921 was thus confirmed, and the door opened for further efforts. Nevertheless, little attention has since been paid to agriculture either by the Conference, which is the legislating authority within the Organisation, or by the Governing Body, which may be likened to an executive.

Why is this? Agriculture is the largest industry of mankind; it is backward; it is world-wide in its operation; it needs, if ever a human activity did, co-operation, analysis, and reflection on the international plane.

The reasons for the slow progress made would appear to lie in the immense size, the variety, and the dispersion of agriculture. These

are very great difficulties, but they can be overcome. It is, however, doubtful whether they will be surmounted unless determination is shown. It would, therefore, be worth while to consider whether something could be done to make sound and effective international action on agricultural labour problems easier.

The idea that the Recommendation should be the principal instrument for ameliorating labour conditions in agriculture is not sufficient. A great deal can be done internationally by suggestion—a Recommendation is only a considered series of suggestions—but the bargain or contract, the strict engagement binding the signatory to definite action for a definite time, even if it be only action of a negative kind, for example to *abstain* from some unfair practice, is a necessary part of international give and take. The international agricultural labour situation will not emerge into a more healthy stage without some such firm commitments, the possibilities of which should therefore be explored and their difficulties frankly faced.

The principal difficulty is no doubt the size and heterogeneous nature of the units which compose the world of agriculture. How can such vast and such diverse regions enter into close international bargains suitable to all and capable of being fulfilled? The suggestion is here made to deal with this enormous problem piece by piece, in other words, to recognize the urgent need for bringing discussions down to a manageable size by some principle of the grouping of countries. It will appear a bold suggestion to those conversant with the rather rigid arrangements of the International Labour Organisation, which pre-supposes simultaneous consideration of problems by all States together, but there is nothing impossible in the idea and it could be carried out without constitutional amendment. Indeed, the attempt recently made to deal with labour engaged in coal-mining in the nine chief coal-producing countries in Europe only forms a useful precedent; many persons consider this an advantageous development of the work of the Organisation. It would hardly do, however, to attempt in agriculture to sort out discussions by dealing separately with labour attaching to one commodity, e.g. sugar or cotton, or even to one group of commodities like cereals; the possibilities of substitution of one product for another are too great and above all the cultivation of different crops is, as a rule, too intimately linked; but even this idea might be kept in mind and might find an application eventually in the case of such well defined products as timber.

The idea of the group of countries is much easier. We at once touch realities, such as may constitute a firm foundation for action. Nature has pointed the way, and has grouped the world climatically

and by continents. Well marked zones of agricultural civilization have developed within which broadly similar conditions obtain, so that very reasonable agreements could be made concerning the treatment of labour. It should thus be possible to contemplate inter-State action on agricultural labour which should apply with some fair degree of practicability to such agricultural zones as West, South, and North Europe including Great Britain and the Irish Free State; East Europe and Russia; the great overseas exporting countries of temperate climate, namely, Canada, the United States of America, Australia, New Zealand, and perhaps the Union of South Africa; the Near East and Egypt; African territories; the Far East; South America; the grouping given is a mere series of suggestions. The universal character of the work of the International Labour Organisation would be safeguarded by requiring the vote of the whole Conference to the adoption of any Convention or Recommendation and also by leaving all members of the Organisation completely free to adhere to a Convention or to adopt a Recommendation, whether their national territory were included within the group proposing such a decision or not. The widening of the area of agreement in this way could only do good, while the formal necessity for allowing adherence to all arises out of the constitution of the Organisation.

At the same time, the decisions would be much more practical if the problems were thus delimited. It would be better to undertake this delimitation deliberately than merely by implication, as now happens. It is not sufficiently realized that almost all existing Conventions and Recommendations of the International Labour Organisation referring to agricultural workers in practice apply only to a limited number of countries. A good example is the Convention on the Age of Admission of Children to Employment in Agriculture of 1921; this Convention has no meaning except in States which have already got a compulsory elementary education system in force more or less throughout their territory. Probably no Convention or Recommendation on any subject drawn up by the Organisation is truly applicable to every State in the world, but non-agricultural labour conditions are less diverse than agricultural. The problems to be treated do not differ characteristically as we traverse the world as they do in agriculture. This is largely due to the fact that machinery, mechanical traction, and other agencies commonly used in non-agricultural production and services tend to have identical effects on all human beings subject to them whatever their race and culture. This levelling effect has not yet been seen in agriculture, and it will be long before it can be expected.

As for the topics which could be made the subject-matter of international agreements on behalf of agricultural labour, additional to those already rather briefly dealt with in 1921 and in some other years, it would perhaps be premature to make suggestions, which should emanate from the responsible governments concerned in the matter. It may, however, be stated that the following would all be useful propositions: in Europe much more detailed agreements than the one accepted in 1921 concerning the accommodation to be provided by agricultural employers for resident workers; in Europe and in some other countries an agreement concerning machinery for fixing agricultural wages rates and, in general, concerning methods of wage payment in agriculture; in South America an agreement concerning freedom of agricultural wages from attachment for debts to employers; in the Dominions of the British Empire and the United States of America and some other exporting countries using agricultural machinery a rather strict Convention on the compulsory insurance of agricultural workers against accident; in the timber-exporting countries of North Europe a Convention or Recommendation on the conditions to be required in timber-felling and timber-floating work. The possibility even of some Recommendation or Convention on hours of work should not be excluded, for an agreement on this subject, even if it confined itself to such limited points as a maximum spread-over of the working day in the summer, varying by latitude, and the assurance of certain holidays or half-holidays in the course of the year, month, or week, would be of the utmost benefit and would be so great a step forward on the path to progress as could but bring joy to the heart of the social reformer.

Agriculture is a world activity; therefore the treatment of agricultural labour is an international responsibility. The acuteness of agricultural commercial competition is more influential than the diversity of methods of production, for prices are levelling things and prove singularly disregardful of local or regional difficulties. The history of agricultural labour impels us to recognize the great need for protecting the agricultural worker, and not least the wage-paid worker, whether from the greed and cupidity of mere profit-seeking interests or from the inevitable pressure on fair-minded employers of world competition, to which they must submit and in accordance with which they must sell their products. For if agricultural production is a world affair, without a labour policy it is meaningless; human labour is the preponderating instrument in the carrying on of cultivation, and agriculture will stand or fall by the use it makes of its labour.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX No. 1

THE 'AGRICULTURAL LADDER'

THE 'agricultural ladder' has been much studied in the United States, which is natural in a country of pioneer farming. Soon after the War fears began to be expressed that the opportunities for 'climbing' were not so great as they had been. Some alarm was felt at the increase in tenancy. Quite special views are held in the United States on tenancy of land. The tenant is reckoned to be the person who has not yet arrived at ownership or, in the worst case, who owing to want of success in farming has actually had to retreat from ownership of his own holding and sink to the position of a borrower of land. An increase in the national figures for tenancy is viewed with distrust as indicating either an arrest of the 'ladder' or as a decline in agricultural prosperity. Ownership on mortgage is considered almost equally undesirable; 'working for the bank' is a phrase used of American farmers farming on property carrying a loan from a bank. Considerable discussion on these points started in 1923 and 1924 on the basis of information collected during the 1920 census. (Cf. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Farm Tenancy in the United States*, Census Monographs No. IV, Washington, 1924; Department of Agriculture, *The Agriculture Yearbook 1923*, Washington, 1924 (pp. 505–660, 'Farm Ownership and Tenancy'); W. B. Bizzell, *Farm Tenantry in the United States*, Bulletin No. 278 of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, 1921, 403 pp.; G. S. Wehrwein, 'Place of Tenancy in a System of Farm Land Tenure' in *The Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics*, vol. i, no. 1.)

The mobility of the farming classes—by the word 'mobility' is meant (*a*) entry into the farming class, (*b*) exit from the farming class, (*c*) movement within the farming class from worker to tenant or tenant to owner, &c., both upwards (the 'ladder') or downwards (failure and bankruptcy), and, finally, (*d*) transference from one holding to another especially from smaller to larger or vice versa—is far greater in newer countries like the United States and Canada than in the older countries. In the United States, for instance, the average period during which farmers remain tenants appears to be only one-fourth what it is in England and Wales. In Canada in 1921 over 25 per cent. of existing farmers had farmed less than 5 years and nearly another 20 per cent. less than 10 years, while over 33 per cent. had been less than 10 years on their present farm; however, nearly 40 per cent. had farmed 15 years or more on their present farm; these figures seem to show a small but solid block of stable farm population in this country, but otherwise great mobility of that population (Department of Trade and Commerce, Bureau of Statistics, *Sixth Census of Canada 1921*, vol. v, *Agriculture*, Ottawa, 1925, p. 82, Tables 62 and 63).

The chances of wage-paid workers to rise in the agricultural industry are naturally bound up with these general factors. Their opportunities depend

partly on whether the farming class can provide for its own recruitment and thus takes up all the available holdings; also on whether there is a pressure of outside candidates wishing to enter the farming occupation (especially as smallholders), or vice versa an efflux of existing farmers from it—the 'retreat from the land', to use another American expression, arising both through downright failure or from the opposite cause, prosperity, the migration of successful farmers to the neighbouring country town as lawyers, estate agents, merchants, being sometimes a well-marked feature of American life; this thinning down of the farmers' class gives an opportunity to employees to rise in the ranks. In the United States 1920 census it was found that 47 per cent. of tenants had previously been wage-paid persons (42 per cent. wage-paid persons only and 5 per cent. both wage-paid persons and owners), while of those who had got so far as ownership 34 per cent. had previously been wage-paid (14 per cent. wage-paid persons only and 20 per cent. both wage-paid persons and tenants); the average age for reaching the tenancy stage was something under 30 and for reaching ownership something under 40. In Wales, on the contrary, only 22 per cent. of present farmers had previously worked as wage-paid farm employees; 10–11 per cent. of these had also been the sons of such employees; another 11 per cent. had been the sons of such employees but had not worked for wages themselves; in general, it is estimated that, making allowance for the factor of outside recruiting, about one in five of wage-paid workers on Welsh farms have a chance of climbing the 'ladder'. These figures, though they do not attain the American standard, are nevertheless very high for Europe, Wales being a country of small farming and small ownership (see a thoughtful paper by A. W. Ashby and Llefelys Davies, 'The Agricultural Ladder and the Age of Farmers', in *The Welsh Journal of Agriculture*, vol. vi, 1930).

Share-farming, i.e. a system where financial responsibility is divided between the owner of land and the tenant, may in certain circumstances constitute a rung in the agricultural ladder. This was so at one time, e.g. in New Zealand, many agricultural wage-paid employees working their way up to a farmer's position via this stage. But again with the close of the pioneer period in farming such opportunities become rarer and share-farming tends to become a permanent position in which the share-farmer remains all his life without attaining ownership (see a few remarks by H. Belshaw in *I.L.R.*, vol. xxviii, no. 1, p. 32; and International Labour Office, *Studies and Reports*, Series K, No. 8, *The Representation and Organisation of Agricultural Workers*, Geneva, 1928, pp. 186–7).

APPENDIX No. 2

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES ON THE AGRICULTURAL LABOUR CONTRACT

THE description of the agricultural labour contract in Chapters IV and V was necessarily made on rather broad lines. Many details could be added, though it must be admittted that in some countries the amount of information is extraordinarily scanty. The present appendix will give a slightly longer description of agricultural labour relations in four typical countries, Australia and New Zealand, France, and Hungary; the first two represent regions of pioneer farming, where, however, agricultural labour conditions have been a subject of discussion for many years; France is a western European country of advanced technique in farming and showing agricultural labour relations at a curious interim stage; Hungary, with an enormously important agriculture, is the remaining European country retaining Master and Servant right as the basis of the agricultural worker's contract. A few notes or references will be added for some other countries. Appendix No. 3 gives a description of the agricultural labour contract in tropical and sub-tropical countries.

Of International Labour Office publications the *Legislative Series* gives verbatim translations of the texts of many important Acts governing or affecting the agricultural labour contract, the *International Labour Review* has many descriptive articles, and the *Directors' Report* or the *Annual Review* (*Yearbook*) provides an annual summary of changes in agricultural labour legislation up to date.

I. AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND. The agriculture of both Australia and New Zealand is characterized by a peculiar mixture of large-scale enterprises, where labour and capital confront each other without disguise, and of smaller enterprises run on family effort, though often with a certain mount of paid labour. Share-farming is also known (in the dairying industries) and for many years provided a means whereby new-comers starting as workers were enabled to rise to ownership. It is now less important. In spite of the existence of family enterprises and of share-farming, Australasian agriculture cannot be said to include peasant holdings in the strictly accepted interpretation of that term. Farms are bought or acquired, they are not inherited, and there is an absence of the settled peasant mentality. There is a great deal of migration between town and country, and the way of life even in remote districts is urban adapted to country necessities. A special feature of Australian history has been the tendency for an undue amount of population to accrue to the larger cities. Even discounting the vast areas which are arid and therefore definitely uninhabitable, the proportion of rural to urban population is too small. 'Closer settlement' is an ideal, and there has been a long history of State intervention and State land-tenure with this end in view, but with some-

what uncertain results. In this country also the attractions of mining (especially the 'gold rushes') have proved a powerful and sometimes a destructive solvent of rural population (as can also be observed in South Africa). It is in any case necessary to guard against the idea that the general prosperity and expansion of a new country has resulted in an avoidance of rural poverty. In New Zealand the balance between town and country is better secured, perhaps owing to a more equable climate.

In general, agriculture in both countries is an export industry working side by side with manufactures sheltered by high tariff protection. It follows that the means of production, machinery, &c., on the farm are acquired at a very high cost, whereas the produce sold off the farm has to be low-priced to enable sales to be effected on the foreign market. This makes the situation of the farmer a very critical one, and continual discussion on the economics of farming goes on in parliament, in the press, and at the universities. Labour is vitally affected, as agricultural wages may alter rapidly according to the prevailing state of world produce-markets. Arguments for and against 'prosperity sharing' and 'adversity sharing' play a considerable part in any proceedings relating to the agricultural occupations before the industrial arbitration courts.

Machinery is much used, and there is great resemblance here to the agriculture of Canada and the United States. The idea of substituting machinery at all costs for the human muscle is perhaps a trifle less consciously pursued, but it is the opinion of competent observers that a great deal of human labour has been replaced, just as it has in North America; in particular, the almost complete disappearance of women paid workers is explained by the introduction of machinery in the dairying occupations. There has been, however, no noticeable final ejection of male workers, again as in North America the expansion of agriculture on foreign markets having been sufficient to absorb all labour available, though of late years it is suspected, at any rate in New Zealand, that the total number of agricultural wage-paid workers has slightly declined. Until recently, however, the effect of the introduction of machinery has apparently been only to expand the industry and also to stimulate the worker. The degree of skill reached in the use of the machines installed in agriculture is impressive, perhaps the classic example being the electrical shearing of a living animal like the sheep on the huge sheep-stations. This combination of skill and almost unlimited power has not conduced to the easy working day; the rate at which performance is expected when machinery is provided is altogether beyond what average farming practice is accustomed to look for in other parts of the world.

The situation is made possible for the worker because this phenomenally hard work is well paid and goes on only during part of the year. The good organization of the seasonal labour task is the distinguishing characteristic of Australasian farming. The travelling gang system is particularly well run, and is established not only in the pastoral industry and in threshing

(in the latter occupation, of course, in many other countries), but also in fruit and other harvesting, in scrub-clearing, and notably in haymaking and ensilage work (New Zealand). It is natural that seasonal work, its organization and claims, should rank very large in public affairs.

Less attention is bestowed on the position of the ordinary farm-labourer. There is absolutely no hereditary class of wage-paid general farm-workers. Jobs on a farm or jobs in any other occupation are freely undertaken in succession and many engagements of farm-workers are for quite short periods. The consequent mobility of the farm-worker gives him an independence almost like that of the Scotch farm-servant (who is also much addicted to changing his job, though only from farm to farm), but the general bargaining position of paid farm-workers in Australia and New Zealand outside the pastoral, fruit, and threshing occupations is not good. In New Zealand a rather satisfactory round of work, filling up most of the year, has been established by transference of workers between rural occupations and the allied fruit-drying and meat-freezing works; such transference of workers is, however, in no sense organized.

The pursuit of trade union ideals and the successful organization of a small portion of the agricultural wage-earning proletariat constitutes a notable contrast to the situation in Canada or in the United States, where organization of agricultural wage-paid workers has only just started. Such agricultural trade unionism in Australasia is mostly confined to the pastoral industry, but is nevertheless of general importance; at the end of the nineteenth century the shearers' unions took a very considerable share in building up the trade union position in the two countries. There is some complaint that they have lately been hampered in their efforts to obtain good wages and conditions by undercutting from smaller owner-occupiers who are themselves very skilled at jobs like shearing and eager to supplement their incomes by seasonal work at the shearing-sheds. In general, in spite of the fact that a considerable portion of Australian and New Zealand farming is carried on by family labour, the employer-employed relationship plays a fundamental role.

The situation is crystallized in the proceedings before the various industrial arbitration courts. These courts have about forty years' history behind them, and the investigation of the efforts made by the Australian and New Zealand agricultural workers to secure notice from these courts constitutes one of the most instructive pieces of agricultural labour history on record.

In Australia there is separate and independent industrial arbitration legislation (*a*) for the whole Commonwealth, and (*b*) for each of the six States constituting the Commonwealth. The original Commonwealth industrial arbitration Act of 1904 excluded agriculture; subsequent amendments permitted an association of not less than 100 workers in any industry to register and apply for wages awards, but of agricultural workers only the pastoral and fruit-workers have ever done so. The first Commonwealth

pastoral award was made in 1907, and this has been varied, or fresh comprehensive awards made in 1911, 1916, 1922, 1923, 1926, 1927, 1930, and 1933. The Commonwealth awards have become increasingly influential, the question of the basic wage sufficient to support a worker and an average number of dependants in its application to agriculture being gradually taken into consideration, as well as such items as rise in productive skill, travelling time, &c.; the economic state of the industry has, of course, been a matter for argument throughout. All aspects have received lengthy consideration from the court, in addition to an enormous amount of discussion in the press and elsewhere. At first the Commonwealth pastoral awards applied only to the most skilled workers, shearers, &c.; in 1917 the so-called 'shed-hands' (men doing general and supplementary jobs), who had been very underpaid, were included and have worked under regulated conditions since. A fruit-workers' award was first made in 1912, and varied in 1920, 1923, 1925, 1930, amd 1931.

Awards in the separate States may supplement the Commonwealth awards on any point, but especially by the grant of higher wages (this occurs in the pastoral industry) or by bringing other groups of workers, especially the ordinary farm-worker, under wage rulings. On the latter point not much headway has been made. In South Australia, Victoria, and Tasmania agriculture is expressly excluded from the operation of the industrial arbitration system under the text of the Acts; in Western Australia, though agriculture is not formally excluded, the court has very rarely been asked to make awards in agriculture and never in one of the important agricultural occupations. Only in New South Wales and in Queensland has some progress been made. After years of struggle the decision to include agriculture was obtained for a short time. In New South Wales an interesting attempt was made between 1918 and 1922 to fix a rural standard of living and to make agricultural wages conform thereto, just as urban wages are made to conform to urban standards of living by the action of the courts; the attempt lapsed under amended legislation in 1922 before it had been properly worked out. In 1926 the court was once more empowered to deal with agriculture; a rural living wage of £4 4*s*. a week was declared on 20 July 1927, being the same as the declared urban living wage, but the court consented to open an inquiry on the point; this inquiry was still pending when agriculture was once more removed from the competence of the court in 1929, since when no further progress has been made. In the last-mentioned year also the competence of the Queensland court in agriculture was severely limited to dealing with workers in the sugar industry, in butter and cheese factories, and, of course, in shearing; the awards made in this State for general farm-workers in 1926 and 1927 thus fell to the ground.

In New Zealand the conciliation and arbitration Act has always, formally, covered agriculture, but not once in the course of its forty years' history has the court made an agricultural award except in the pastoral

industry or for such definitely industrialized agricultural occupations as the frozen-meat trade, &c. In 1908, 1919, and 1925 applications for an award were made on behalf of general agricultural workers, but were each time refused, on the last occasion without pronouncement against the merits of the claim. This slight weakening of the court's hitherto negative attitude roused that section of New Zealand opinion which has always been opposed to the inclusion of agriculture in the arbitration system. After the enactment of some interim legislation in 1927 and 1928, and after definite demands that agriculture should be wholly excluded from the scope of the Act (which would have had the effect of rendering void all the awards in the pastoral occupations), the matter was settled by an Act of 27 April 1932, which substituted voluntary conciliation for compulsory arbitration throughout the industries of the country; this was a reversal of the whole industrial history of New Zealand, but is at the present still maintained.

The upshot of all these movements taken together is to show agricultural workers in a very disadvantageous position over against all other workers in these two countries; their right to obtain regulated conditions is either denied or challenged or rescinded after having been for a short time established; in New Zealand the effort to include agriculture perhaps contributed to the temporary collapse of the whole principle of compulsion. The situation was more promising before the worst effects of the depression had appeared; it looked as though there were some chances for agricultural workers to obtain the much-desired position comparable to that of industrial workers.

In one way the agricultural workers in these countries have a big asset—they have created their own aristocracy. The shearers and in a lesser degree the other privileged workers in the pastoral occupations do, during a good season, earn considerable sums; an expert shearer may get 30 weeks' work and making £20 a week may earn £500–£600, which, of course, is not so much in a country of high cost of living like Australia as it would be elsewhere. The existence of such a permanent aristocracy of workers is of considerable interest from a social point of view, but the situation of the majority of the farm-hands is only superior to that in many other countries in so far as there are usually opportunities of change of employment such as are denied to the sessile agricultural proletariats of Europe and other older continents. This mobility of labour, which was noted above, prevents what may be described as the 'staleness' of the agricultural labour situation in these older continents, which no doubt is an important advantage.

All awards and pronouncements of the industrial arbitration courts are published in the official gazettes, and usually also in annual volumes, by the Federal and State governments of Australia and the government of New Zealand. Useful summaries of the main facts will be found in *I.L.R.*, vol. xxv, no. 6, pp. 765–86, 'Agricultural Wages in Australia', by D. B. Copland and O. de R. Foenander; ibid., vol. xxviii, no. 1, pp. 26–45, 'Agri-

cultural Labour in New Zealand', by H. Belshaw; statements of the court's reasons for rejecting regulation of ordinary farm-workers' wages in New Zealand in *Awards, Recommendations, and Decisions &c. under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act*, vol. ix, 1908, pp. 517–28 and vol. xxv*a*, 1925, pp. 771–2, Wellington.

II. FRANCE. France is perhaps the only modern nation convinced that industrial development should not be sought within her borders at the expense of agriculture. Every Frenchman, be he inhabitant of town or country, cherishes the idea that the peasant home and the land are ends in themselves and are worthy of the deepest respect. The agricultural policy of the country is to maintain rural economy on its present basis but at an increasingly high technical standard.

The land-tenure system has very definite features, namely, a mixture of large and small properties (the former mostly in the north or west) with considerable fragmentation in some parts (the result of the inheritance laws) or intermingling of small plots, the beginnings of farms, as it were. As explained in the text, the population is closely attached to the land, the desire for ownership of any scrap of land being extremely strong. Every sort of cultivation is practised, including forestry and perfected forms of horticulture, orchard or vineyard work, while animal husbandry is strong. The result is a very varied agricultural economy, though not quite so multiform as in Italy. Share-farming is much relied on and great attention is paid to it.

Population is stationary or declining. In addition, there is a strong rural exodus, which affects the peasantry as well as the wage-paid working force. The great impulse given to industrialization during the War, the reconstruction and modernizing of the mines, and the losses in the manhood of the nation inflicted by the War itself have made the situation worse—in some districts land is actually going out of cultivation. The predominant part played by women in agriculture is also noticeable, and is largely due to the fact that the woman is left behind while the man seeks industrial work (see *I.L.R.*, vol. xx, no. 1, 'Number of Women in Agriculture in Germany, France, and Czechoslovakia'). The wife and old mother do their full share of the farm-work and even perform some of the most burdensome tasks, such as the spreading of manure or the loading of hay. All this is a matter of deep pre-occupation. Yet the agricultural population is still equal to the two groups of industry and commerce taken together.

Various forces may tend to keep the situation stable: the greatly improved communications (the motor-bus now penetrates into remote Savoy villages), the very successful electrification of rural districts—on this large sums of public money have been spent. There is also the question of foreign immigration. Traditional streams of foreign agricultural workers have long arrived regularly for certain seasonal operations, more especially Belgians for the beet work in the north and Italians and Spaniards for the vineyard work in the south and south-west. Since about 1923 a much more

systematic labour recruitment for general agricultural purposes has been instituted; conditions are publicly controlled and often laid down by international negotiation, so that by 1927 no less than 200,000 workers had entered France to take up wage-paid work on French farms; the Polish recruitment is particularly noticeable, but a number also come from Czechoslovakia. The results may be said to be fairly successful, but the pull of the towns is so strong that even these workers often desert the farms quickly. The employers who have paid for this recruitment are thereby put to great expense for no purpose; the breach of contract on the part of the worker is difficult to deal with. Meanwhile, the older Italian and Spanish recruitment has partly taken the form of immigration for settlement, and by the same year, 1927, there were 95,000 immigrant owners, tenants, or share-farmers established on French soil in occupation of 150,000 hectares held outright and 437,000 hectares held on lease or share-contracts. These settlers are concentrated in certain areas in the south-east and south-west. Though Spanish or Italian, as the case may be, seems the native language in some country towns rather than French, assimilation is going on rapidly.

The classes of wage-paid workers include the bailiff (*régisseur*), but only on large estates, the foreman (*maître-valet*), a number of permanent workers on monthly or yearly contracts, usually performing specialized functions, e.g. shepherds, cowmen, ploughmen, &c. (these correspond with *deputatists* of central and east Europe), and ordinary farm-servants, men or women (*domestiques, valets de ferme, servantes de ferme*), on the smaller farms. There are reiterated complaints of the difficulty of obtaining good permanent farm-workers. There are also a large number of day workers (*journaliers*), whose ranks are in part recruited from members of the agricultural population enjoying a small measure of independence, a tiny holding, &c.; finally, there are piece-workers (*tâcherons*) especially in the vineyards, where work follows a traditional organization arranged on the gang system and well paid; these workers also are often smallholders, indeed, they may be vineyard proprietors themselves. Finally, there are forestry workers (*bûcherons*), with whom are associated the workers engaged in the occupation of cooperage (*feuillardiers*) for the wine trade, resin-collectors (*résiniers*, these mostly have also a small share-contract with their employer over an area of land on which they grow ordinary crops), and horticultural workers (*jardiniers*) concentrated in the flourishing market-garden areas round the large cities. Although some allowances are given, wages tend on the whole to be in cash.

Legal controversies in regard to the agricultural labour contract do not often arise (apart from the breach of contract arising out of desertion of immigrant workers mentioned above); no special disabilities exist in the case of agricultural workers, but neither was there until recently much definite legislation or other effort made to improve their position. On the other hand, the new system of family allowances in industry which started after

the War has from the outset included agriculture, while agricultural workers were originally brought under the new and comprehensive social insurance Act; unfortunately, this at once gave rise to heated controversy and separate terms had to be applied to them. The important system of industrial arbitration (*conseils de prud'hommes*) was extended to agriculture by an Act of 25 December 1932.

For the continual small strikes which are very characteristic of the French agricultural labour situation see Appendix No. 5.

There are a number of official sources (*Annuaire statistique, Journal officiel, Bulletin du Ministère du travail, statistique des grèves*, &c.) from which a great deal of information on agricultural labour may be obtained. The proceedings of the many annual conferences of agricultural bodies include frequent resolutions and discussions on such subjects as housing, social insurance, &c. Of the important general literature the following may be cited as particularly useful: J. Méline, *Le Retour à la terre et la surproduction industrielle*, Paris, 1905, 320 pp.; M. Augé-Laribé, *Le Problème agraire du socialisme. La viticulture du Midi de la France*, Paris, 1907, 362 pp. (principal source for the vineyard workers' movements in the south); A. Souchon, *La Crise de la main-d'œuvre agricole en France*, Paris, 1914, 552 pp. (an excellent source); V. Boret, *Pour et par la terre*, Paris, 1921, 318 pp.; G. Risler, *Le Travailleur agricole en France*, Paris, 1922, 281 pp.; P. Régnier, *L'Ouvrier agricole*, Paris, 1924, 280 pp.; Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Economic and Social History of the World War. Agriculture and Food-Supply during the War. I. Agriculture*, by M. Augé-Laribé, Newhaven and London, 1927, 328 pp. (see pp. 13–16, 'The Labour System', and pp. 39–45, 'The Labour Supply', and corresponding sections in the original French edition); the same author in *I.L.R.*, vol. xxv, no. 1, pp. 23–57, 'Labour Conditions in French Agriculture' (this article has a special analysis of the wages situation); *Les Cahiers du redressement français; L'Agriculture*, Paris, 1927, 105 pp. (pp. 59–92, 'La Main-d'œuvre agricole', by P. Garnier); also collections of the periodicals *La Main-d'œuvre agricole*, 1920–5, *Le Travailleur de la terre* (for some post-War years only), and *L'Agriculture pratique*.

III. HUNGARY. There is a good deal of legislation affecting the agricultural worker's contract in Hungary, mostly dating from the end of the nineteenth and first years of the twentieth centuries. The reason for this is clear. The wheat crop of the great plains was, and still to a large extent is, the economic basis of national prosperity, and any failure of the labour-supply during harvest threatened to be disastrous; consequently the public authority and the employers together at an early date ensured to themselves ample powers of holding agricultural workers to their engagements. The labour legislation to be referred to coincides with Hungary's entry on the world wheat-market.

In the course of insisting on complete performance by the worker and detailing his obligations, the law almost necessarily abolished customary or unpaid services surviving from an earlier date: such services were not

sufficiently effective. In this way contract came to be substituted for status, and almost automatically certain minimum workers' rights had to be established. It is interesting to trace the gradual advance of these rights under a régime which has admittedly been aristocratic. Good progress was made until about 1910, but after that the position has been a stalemate.

In 1876 Hungary proceeded to enact the first Master and Servant Act giving uniform conditions throughout the country to domestic and farm-servants and agricultural workers generally. The parts of this Act affecting agricultural workers not farm-servants were later replaced by Act No. II of 1898 respecting the Regulation of Legal Relations between Employers and Agricultural Workers, and the parts affecting farm-servants by Act No. XLV of 1907 respecting the Regulation of Legal Relations between Farmers and Farm-Servants. There exist in addition the following Acts: No. XLI of 1899 respecting Day Labourers and Workers employed on Hydraulic, Road, and Railway Works (this affects agricultural labour inasmuch as such work constitutes their winter employment, or alternative employment); No. XLII of 1899 respecting Agricultural Contractors and Assistants (deals mostly with threshing work); No. XXVII of 1900 respecting the Regulation of Legal Relations between Landowners and Estate Employees; No. XXVIII of 1900 respecting Forestry Workers; No. XXIX of 1900 respecting the Regulation of Legal Relations between Tobacco Producers and Tobacco Cultivators. There exist also two agricultural wages Acts of 1923 (Nos. XXIV and XXV).

Under this legislation the whole body of Hungarian agricultural workers, apart from salaried estate employees and workers on special share contracts like the tobacco workers, fall into two main divisions, the farm-servants and the day workers. The farm-servants must be considered first. Their position is most carefully defined under the 1876 and 1907 Acts. It should be borne in mind that the Hungarian farm-servant is not the young unmarried worker of the German and Scandinavian countries, but, as in Scotland, is an older married worker. The system in Hungary is to allot to such a worker quite a considerable amount of land and to permit him to keep animals, e.g. pigs and poultry (draught power is usually supplied by the estate). The result is that the farm-servant really carries on a miniature establishment of his own (he may himself have a young servant in his employ), every large estate being surrounded by a fringe of such establishments, which are more important than the corresponding *deputatist*'s holdings in Central Europe. The Hungarian farm-servant, in fact, is halfway between the *deputatist* and the Roumanian occupying peasant worker.

He resembles the *deputatist* in law inasmuch as his position is expressly defined (in both Acts) as that of a member of the employer's household and subject to the employer's 'household discipline'. Farm-servants' contracts arise whenever any person offers his services against remuneration for at least a month; this is to be noted as an extension of the servant system to persons serving for periods much shorter than a year. The abuse of the

indeterminate contract is not admitted; contracts must be concluded for a period which can be expressed in years, months, weeks, or days; failing this, the earlier Act states that they must be terminable on notice, but the later Act is more categorical in stating that a year is the utmost period of validity where no other is laid down. Taken in conjunction with the fact that some valuable consideration has to be returned for services rendered (this principle is re-stated in the opening words of Act No. XXV of 1923 on wages), it is clear that even the earlier Act was concerned to replace any lingering customary practices or any condition of status by enforceable or recognizable employment contracts; this in itself was perhaps the greatest reform. Such employment contracts are to be free contracts, oral or written; the terms of the 1907 Act tend to force the employer to give some form of written agreement.

Moreover, the farm-servant's contract must be an individual contract. The 1907 Act repudiates as void any obligation laid on a principal worker to furnish the services of a member of his family; if such services are required a separate and independent contract must be entered into. This abolition of the system of the *Hofgänger*, to use the German term (see under Germany), is another notable point in the 1907 Act. The same clause abolishes all unpaid statute labour or *corvées* (though not the definite and useful practice of allowing smallholder-labourers to pay for their occupation rights by days of work).

Equally advantageous to the worker are the clauses in the 1907 Act (they are not to be found in the earlier Act) which prohibit the employer from contracting with his servant to sell back to him or to any person indicated by him the surpluses of the servant's allowances in kind, to force the servant to buy any requirements from himself or from such a person or to receive any of his remuneration in the form of alcoholic liquors. The later Act also prohibits the employer from taking any interest on loans or advances to his servant.

The worker's wages are protected, in greater detail in the later Act. Wages must be paid regularly and punctually, according to the earlier Act at customary intervals, according to the later, perishable commodities like milk, &c., must be given daily and cash wages and all other permanent allowances at least once a quarter, the allowances in kind at the beginning, the cash wages at the end, of the quarter; there is a good deal of additional protection of wages in the later Act. Both Acts lay down that the food supplied to the servant and the allowances in kind must reach the customary standard, the later Act stating more definitely and minutely that board must be sufficient and of good quality, that grains supplied as an allowance must be 'clean grain of sifted and unexceptionable quality at least equal to the merchantable seed grain of the current year', that grain bought by the employer to make up allowances must be of first-class quality, other allowances of good quality, the allowance in land of a quality which equals the average land set aside for similar crops on the estate itself,

that the ploughing supplied by the employer must attain customary local standards, that carting must be supplied for the servant's harvest, also to and from the estate mill (though the servant is not obliged to use this mill, but loses his carting if he goes to another). Further clauses protect briefly the worker's health and strength, his free time on Sundays and holidays, and state that his accommodation must be sanitary. An important stipulation prohibits children under 12 from entering on a servant's contract and makes the employer liable for school fees where these are due.

The worker, for his part, is to conduct himself with 'moderation, thrift, and morality' (1876 Act only), is liable to perform his work punctually, faithfully, and to the best of his ability (1907 Act), is liable for damage caused by his neglect, though the later Act deprives the master of the power of retaining wages or fining on this account and leaves him only the power of reprimand.

But while the master was thus under this Act prohibited from inflicting his own penalties, little was done to interfere with his right of having punishment inflicted on his servant through the police authorities. Under the 1876 Act the master could apply to the local authorities to have his servant fined for failure to appear in fulfilment of his contract, for desertion, for various misdemeanours, for simple disobedience, and all these fines, if not paid, led to terms of imprisonment, the duration of which was laid down in detail (e.g. one day's imprisonment in lieu of 2 gulden, for farm-servants). Moreover, the police might use physical force to compel a servant to return to his duties, which, however, did not relieve him from the necessity of serving a term in prison to work out a fine as well. A few abuses (e.g. ill-treatment of children or positive ill-treatment of adults) were, indeed, guarded against, but, on the whole, the servant may be said to have been held to his bond under the threat of physical compulsion. These penalties were no dead letter. They have been slightly softened in the later Act by the stipulation that action must be initiated within eight days of the offence. The servant's right of bringing a civil action for damages is also expressly recognized in this Act, and alterations by agreement during the currency of the contract are allowed; the latter proviso was the basis of the 1923 legislation dealing with wages during the inflation period.

The regulation of the contracts of agricultural workers, other than farm-servants was, as has already been stated, dealt with first under part of the 1876 Act and then under a separate Act of 1898. The workers so covered fall into two classes, namely, the gangs or associated groups who contract jointly to carry out certain special operations (especially reaping) and the individual day labourers. The first may be closely compared to the *artels* of workers to whom the Russian Act of 1906 refers. Each member of the gang enters into a direct contract with the employer, for which he and his comrades are jointly responsible; there is therefore no true sub-contracting and the employer is legally cognisant of the situation of each worker. The labour envisaged is migratory, from the hills to the plains for

the summer season, and great care is taken to have the contracts on a regular basis. Contracts have to be written and have to be visèd by local authorities, the local notary having the duty of reading aloud and explaining the terms to the two parties in their mother tongue (the workers engaged are mostly Slovak). The terms of the contract are enforceable with great strictness on both parties. The master is held to the terms of his wage promises (indeed, something like minimum subsistence clauses are incorporated), and in many other respects has to be careful to abide by his contract. He has, however, the same right to apply to the police authority to force his workers to fulfil their tasks as accrues to him under the legislation defining his relations with his farm-servants, so that there is practically little to choose between the two kinds of contracts in this respect. Moreover, great nervousness is shown on the subject of combined action, any attempt at which is forbidden by far-reaching clauses carrying penal sanctions, namely, arrest and imprisonment. Contracts with individual day labourers follow analogous principles, and in this case, too, specific performance may be enforced by physical compulsion on the part of the police authorities.

The Acts of 1899 and 1900 on road work, threshing work, and forestry work are on the same lines as the 1898 Act, to which they are merely complements.

Since the War the rural situation in Hungary has been dominated not by legal but by economic considerations. The inflation made complete havoc of wages, for which the Acts of 1923 have provided only a very partial remedy. The poverty of the rural wage-earner is to be deduced from the fact that it is permissible to assume two wage-earners per family, the wages of the single principal worker not sufficing; there is one woman or younger wage-earner to every two men. Wages tend to be altogether in kind and are elaborately computed; the cash wages of day workers tend to be low; hours are long, and distances to the work-place considerable. The worst suffering arises out of the fact that, while the agriculture of the country is doing so badly, the day workers, of whom there are many thousands, can only reckon on 150, 100, or even 60–80 days' work a year, instead of the normal 200. Thus want of work is a worse hardship than small wages.

A large Hungarian literature of legal comment exists on the Hungarian agricultural labour contract. Besides the original text, an official translation of all Acts into German is issued under the title *Gesetzsammlung*. For general information cf. *I.L.R.*, vol. i, no. 1, pp. 137–47, 'The Agricultural Labourers of Hungary'; ibid., vol. viii, no. 5, pp. 645–71, 'Labour Legislation in Hungary', by D. Pap; ibid., vol. xxv, no. 5, pp. 673–8, 'The Agricultural Labour Situation in Hungary'; ibid., vol. xxviii, no. 4, pp. 518–30, 'Landless Agricultural Workers in Hungary', by M. Moricz.

IV. OTHER COUNTRIES. *Algeria*. *I.L.R.*, vol. xxii, no. 4, pp. 483–502, 'The Problem of Agricultural Labour in Algeria', by G. F. Stotz, is an interesting account of rather unusual forms of labour contract in agriculture.

Austria. The provincial agricultural labour codes, to which reference is

made in Chapter V, are as follows: *Upper Austria*, Domestic and Agricultural Labour Code, 10 March 1921; *Lower Austria*, Agricultural Labour Code, 22 March 1921; *Carinthia*, Agricultural and Domestic Servants' Code, 1 June 1921; *Styria*, Act respecting the Regulation of Employment in Domestic Service, Agriculture and Forestry, 29 October 1921; *Salzburg*, Agricultural Labour Code, 20 January 1922; *Tyrol*, Domestic Servants' and Agricultural Workers' Code, 29 May 1922; *Vorarlberg*, Domestic Servants' and Agricultural Workers' Code, 10 August 1923; *Burgenland*, Agricultural Labour Code, 14 January 1926. German texts of these, of an old Vintners' Order in Styria not formally abrogated after the War, and of the Federal Estate Employees' Act of 26 September 1923 in *Das oesterreichische Agrarrecht*, I. *Teil*: *Landwirtschaftsrecht*, ed. by Karl Haager, Vienna, 1929. A detailed analysis, together with bibliography of Austrian sources, will be found in International Labour Office, *Studies and Reports*, Series K, No. 10, *The Law on the Contract of Employment of Agricultural Workers in Austria, Germany, and Hungary*, Geneva, 1930, 63 pp.

Belgium. The texts of Acts affecting agricultural labour will be found included in A. Henry, *Code de l'agriculteur et du forestier*, Lierre, 1909, 1062+xxxviii pp.; Ministère de l'Agriculture, *Enquête sur le travail agricole*, Brussels, 1920, xxxi, 880 pp., is a detailed official description, region by region, of agricultural labour conditions.

Czechoslovakia. There were five Master and Servant Ordinances governing the agricultural labour contract before the War in the districts which now constitute Czechoslovakia, one in Bohemia of 1866, one in Moravia of 1886, and three in Silesia of 1867, 1899, and 1908; in Slovakia and Sub-Carpathian Russia Hungarian and Russian legislation applied respectively. The Austro-Hungarian Estate Employees' Act of 1914, which became law just before the War broke out, still governs the contracts of salaried staff. The Ordinances include interesting clauses on the payment of wages, which were an attempt to protect the worker. Their penal stipulations were swept away by a Decree of 17 October 1919, but the Ordinances as a whole have not yet been replaced by a comprehensive Act on the contract of resident agricultural workers. A useful sketch of legislation accessible to readers of German is *Zeitschrift fur Ostrecht*, March 1929, pp. 388–414, 'Das tzechoslovakische Arbeitsrecht', by R. Dominik (pp. 389 and 393–4 for legislation affecting agricultural workers). There are full sources of information in the Czech language. In 1926 an inquiry into movements of agricultural working population and agricultural labour conditions was carried out by the Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture; this will be found analysed in *I.L.R.*, vol. xx, no. 1, pp. 84–95, 'An Enquiry into the Conditions of Work and Wages of Agricultural Workers in Czechoslovakia.'

Estonia. Before the War agricultural labour contracts were governed by some labour clauses in an Estonian Peasants' Ordinance of 1856, but nothing except a year's contract was recognized; shorter engagements were no doubt controlled by custom and the administrative discipline of local

authorities under the Tsarist government. A Republican Act of 13 September 1919, replaced by a revised Act of 21 October 1921, set up an elaborate series of committees to deal with every phase of the agricultural labour contract. These arrangements broke down owing to the absence of any powers to enforce election to the committees, and the situation has since altered, so that the chances of re-introducing or once again attempting to enforce such legislation are not great. *I.L.R.*, vol. v, no. 5, pp. 731–8, 'The Position of the Agricultural Labourer in Estonia', by M. Martna, and ibid., vol. xiii, no. 1, pp. 21–47, 'Social Aspects of Land Reform in Estonia' (last half of this article), by the same author, give a description of the in tentions of this legislation.

Germany. There has been a great deal of comment on the agricultural labour contract both before and after the War; references will be found in *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften*, 4th ed., 1925, vol. vi, s.v. *Landarbeiter*. The text of the Provisional Agricultural Labour Code, of which mention is made in Chapters V and VI, is available in *L.S.*, 1919—Ger. 3, and an analysis of its terms, together with mention of authorities, will be found in the International Labour Office *Study and Report* referred to under Austria above. The *Hofgänger* contract, to which reference is made in more than one Chapter of the present book. is a contract which obliges the principal worker (the head of the family) to bring along with him an adult son or other adult relative as a second worker; the allowances in kind are reckoned to provide for the maintenance of this second worker, who, however, receives a separate cash wage. This rather curious survival of an old sub-contract is due to the great difficulty of getting adult male labour in the thinly populated parts of eastern or northern Germany. The workers strongly object to it, on the ground that the lodging of an adult stranger—substitutes usually have to be found for the sons, who refuse to stay in rural employment and make their way to the cities—puts an impossible pressure on the accommodation provided.

Great Britain. In this country also there has been much comment on agricultural labour relations, though perhaps with rather more insistence on the social, and rather less on the legal, side of the labour contract than is found e.g. in Germany. A number of reports of Royal Commissions during the nineteenth century provide a most illuminating picture of the effects of the rapid rise of a rich industrialism on an agriculture which has been unable to keep pace with urban progress. Among recent literature may be mentioned: F. E. Green, *A History of the English Agricultural Labourer 1870–1920*, London, 1920, 356 pp.; W. Hasbach, *A History of the English Agricultural Labourer*, London, 2nd ed., 1920, 360 pp.; A. Venn, *Foundations of Agricultural Economics*, Cambridge, 1923, 397 pp. (Chs. IX and X, 'Agricultural Labour').

Italy. A good recent short account of agricultural labour relations will be found in C. Dragoni, *Economia agraria*, Milan, 1932, 794 pp. (Ch. IV, 'Le varie categorie di lavoratori agricoli e i loro salari').

Latvia. Three different legal texts governing the agricultural labour contract were current before the War in the territory now constituting Latvia, the Courland Peasants' Ordinance of 1819, the Livonian Peasants' Ordinance of 1860, and in Latgale the Russian Act of 1906 on the Engagement of Agricultural Workers. These all established the usual Master and Servant obligations, the two first contemplating contracts which lasted longer than a year. These Ordinances have not been abrogated, but are hardly effective at the present time. In 1927 accident compensation was extended to agricultural workers, and on 13 June of the same year a special Act was adopted on agricultural workers' housing. A model employment contract drawn up by the Central Agricultural Association even included such points as the weekly rest and paid holidays. There is a shortage of workers, partly made good by immigration of alien workers from Lithuania who take six to eight months' summer employment as farm-servants. Some information willl be found in *I.L.R.*, vol. xx, no. 1, pp. 35–66, 'Social Aspects of Agrarian Reform in Latvia', by F. W. v. Bülow (pp. 57 sqq. on agricultural wage-paid labour).

Lithuania. Before the War the Russian Act of 1906 on the Engagement of Agricultural Workers governed all permanent contracts; temporary employment was much less strictly regulated and fell under various types of enactment according to the district. There was a good deal of legislation after the War, though up to 1929 farm-servants' contracts continued to be controlled by the Russian 1906 Act. The principal purpose of the eight Acts passed between 1919 and 1924 was to ensure that the large estates did not turn their domiciled workers (*deputatists* or 'cottars') adrift; some of the clauses are almost 'squatters' clauses, but mixed with these are stipulations on labour relations, certain of which are frankly borrowed from more advanced countries. An Act of 12 August 1929 replaced all this legislation as well as the Russian 1906 Act; a model contract of employment was published on 16 April 1930 and new Regulations issued on 23 March 1932. A brief account is to be found in *Zeitschrift fur Ostrecht*, vol. ii, no. 7, 'Arbeitsrecht in Litauen', by A. Abramson (§ 2, 'Der Arbeitsvertrag in der Landwirtschaft').

Poland. The Presidential Order of 16 March 1928 on labour contract expressly excluded (§ 2) agriculture, the conditions in which industry were already being regulated by collective agreements; in so far as these fail to apply (they do not take much notice of the resident farm-servant), the most varied kinds of law are still in force according to the particular authority under which the districts in question fell before the War; e.g. in Galicia a Farm-Servants' Ordinance of 1857 might still be cited, though it is held that the penal clauses would be overridden by the principles of free contract laid down in the new constitution of Poland. On the large estates the grading of agricultural workers is elaborate, as in Hungary. There has been organized emigration of agricultural workers to Germany and France, the latter only since the War. The following are a few references: *I.L.R.*,

vol. xviii, no. 3, pp. 307–38, 'Agricultural Workers and Agrarian Reform in Central Europe' (refers to other countries also), by Adam Rose; ibid., vol. xxvii, no. 1, pp. 66–73, 'The Conditions of Agricultural Workers in Poland', by J. Gnoinski; ibid., 'The Seasonal Emigration of Polish Agricultural Workers to Germany', by G. S. Rabinovitch; further, *Zeitschrift für Ostrecht*, vol. ii, no. 7, pp. 941–88, 'Das Arbeitsrecht in Polen', by Th. Brzeski (pp. 949–52, 'Der Arbeitsvertrag der landwirtschaftlichen Arbeiter').

Roumania. Agricultural labour relations have been dominated by the demands of noble landlords for centuries past for services to be rendered as a return for rights of land occupation; the history of the sufferings of the peasants on this count are set forth in some detail for English readers in D. Mitrany, *The Land and the Peasant in Roumania*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Economic and Social History of the War*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1930, 627 pp. However, the wage contract has for long been quite well known in rural districts and was regulated for a number of years before the War, although a large class of wage-paid agricultural workers cannot be said to exist. After the great uprising of 1907 the Act on Agricultural Contracts of December of that year was conceived in a spirit of reform, and a practicable separation was at least made between the leasing of land and the rendering of services; Chapter IV of that Act applied to labour contracts in the strict sense, but principally of day workers; resident farm-servants, even those on monthly contracts, were left under an Act of 1892, which was on Master and Servant principles. A new Act on labour contracts generally of 28 March 1929 covers all agricultural workers and controls such contracts on modern principles.

Spain. Descriptions of agrarian conditions and of the circumstances attending the life of the agricultural worker will be found in *I.L.R.*, vol. xi, no. 6, pp. 173–90, 'The Agrarian Problem in Spain', by F. de los Rios, and ibid., vol. xix, No. 6, pp. 868–71, 'Conditions of Agricultural Workers in Spain'.

Switzerland. See reports issued from time to time by the Secrétariat des Paysans Suisses, of which the most recent is analysed in *I.L.R.*, vol. xxiv, nos. 2–3, pp. 258–66, 'Working Conditions of Agricultural Wage-Earners in Switzerland'. Article 349 of the *Code des obligations 1911* is peculiar to agriculture and insists on special notice of termination of contract on either side at certain seasons of the year, with a view to protecting both employer and worker against unfair treatment.

APPENDIX No. 3

AGRICULTURAL LABOUR IN TROPICAL AND SUB-TROPICAL COUNTRIES.[1]

THE forms of agricultural labour in tropical and sub-tropical countries present such a bewildering variety that a bare enumeration would exceed the limits of this Note, in which only the briefest outline of some of these forms can be given.

Agricultural labour in tropical and sub-tropical areas includes, indeed, such widely different forms as communal farming, labour for the family or tribe in stock-farming or cultivation, labour services of free tribesmen in cultivating the lands or tending the stock of chiefs, labour of slave tribes, labour of domestic slaves, labour of serfs or semi-serfs, labour of share-farmers, *métayers*, labour-tenants, and squatters, labour under long, medium, or short-term contracts, with or without criminal penalties for breach of contract, and regulated or unregulated casual labour. Except in the case of contract and casual labour, usually for alien employers, and some forms of share-farming, *métayage*, labour-tenancy, and squatting, the conditions of this labour are governed by indigenous laws and customs, the nature of which is often inadequately known, if it is known at all, to any one other than the people immediately concerned.

It is proposed, therefore, to confine the present Note to those agricultural workers in tropical and sub-tropical countries whose conditions of labour are regulated in various ways by statute law, or are susceptible of regulation by statute law, in accordance with the principles of modern social legislation, without cutting into the tangled mass of usages that have grown up within traditional economic and social systems. These workers are generally, though not always, in the service of alien employers whose undertakings are operated more or less by modern technical and industrial methods. They may most conveniently be classified in accordance with the criterion adopted in the preceding Chapters, i.e. by the form of their employment contracts, into long and medium-term contract labour, short-term contract labour, and casual labour.

Before saying more of these forms of employment, it is necessary, however, to make some reference to the special problem of obtaining labour in tropical and sub-tropical areas, both because of its intrinsic importance and of its influence on the evolution of the contract of employment.

For a correct understanding of the conditions of employment of the labour which is the subject of this Note, it is essential to realize that this labour does not completely correspond in all cases to the definition of agricultural employed workers given in Chapter IV above. An agricultural employed worker is there defined as 'a person whose time not being occu-

[1] Contributed by Mr. C. W. H. Weaver, Chief of the Special Problems Section, International Labour Office, Geneva.

pied, or not wholly occupied, in cultivating land of his own, is willing to work on the land of another for some form of remuneration'. In regard to many workers in the tropical and sub-tropical zones, this definition should be amended to read, 'is *induced* to work', &c. Moreover, in some cases, the idea that the worker's time is not occupied, or not wholly occupied, in cultivating land of his own is not applicable, as he is not infrequently induced by the propaganda of recruiters or the pressure of indigenous or other authorities, economic circumstances, or taxation to abandon the necessary cultivation of his own land in order to enter wage-earning employment.

The characteristic situation with which the alien promoters of agricultural undertakings in tropical and sub-tropical areas are confronted is the absence of populations accustomed to, or desirous of entering, wage-earning employment, or the presence of persons accustomed to wage labour in numbers insufficient to meet the demand. The indigenous inhabitants of these areas may be occupied in the processes of their traditional economy or other traditional pursuits (collecting natural products, hunting, fishing, stock-farming, primitive cultivation, or war, head-hunting, &c.) They may have preferred to enter the Western economic system as independent agriculturalists. They may simply be so few in numbers as to be unable to supply the necessary wage labour for alien agricultural undertakings. Until, therefore, the stage is reached when a wage-earning class has been formed or sufficient numbers of the indigenous inhabitants have become accustomed to seeking wage-earning employment spontaneously as a subsidiary source of income, it has been necessary to use various active methods of obtaining labour either in the territory of employment or in other countries.

It is unnecessary here to do more than mention such active methods of obtaining labour as slave-raiding and legal or illegal compulsion; the use of such methods seems to have almost entirely disappeared in connexion with the forms of employment to which this Note is limited. Most common in these days, and in those areas where the spontaneous offer of labour is insufficient to meet the demand, is the active recruiting of labour by the agents of employers, by professional recruiters, or by workers on leave of absence or whose contracts have expired. These methods of obtaining labour are usually regulated by law; the tendency of the evolution of recruiting is towards the elimination of the professional recruiter, and the concentration of recruiting either in the hands of organizations of employers operating through salaried agents or agents remunerated on a *per capita* basis, or in the hands of bona-fide workers of the undertaking seeking labour. The question of laying down international standards for the regulation of recruiting will be discussed at the International Labour Conference in 1935 with a view to the adoption of an international Convention in 1936; (cf. *The Recruiting of Labour in Colonies and in Other Territories with Analogous Labour Conditions*, published by the International Labour Office, Geneva, 1935).

Important as is the question of recruiting in itself as one of the main problems of agricultural labour in tropical and sub-tropical countries, it is even more important, from the special point of view of this Note, in its influence on the evolution of the agricultural labour contract. For the recruiting of labour, especially if it takes place in another territory and necessitates a long journey by land or sea to the place of employment, is a costly process. From the outset of the employment of recruited labour, therefore, the law empowered employers to require recruited workers to enter into a long-term contract or indenture, the breach of which rendered them liable to criminal penalties, in order to guarantee employers against the loss of the sums disbursed for recruiters' commissions, gratuities to indigenous authorities, travelling expenses, advances of wages, &c.

The result was that the first typical form of agricultural employment contract of indigenous or immigrant workers of the unskilled or semi-skilled classes, in the service of alien employers, was the long-term contract with penal sanctions for breach of contract. And as the contract was made to protect the employer against the loss of the expenses of recruiting by ensuring to him the services of the recruited workers for a long period (e.g. five years), the obligations stipulated in the contract were almost entirely those of the worker, the employer being rarely required to subscribe to other obligations than those of feeding and housing his workers.

Under the combined influences of enlightened opinion, which has seen in the long-term contract sanctioned by criminal penalties a survival of servitude, of the improved organization of recruiting, and of the increased supply of labour accustomed to and spontaneously seeking wage-earning employment, the evolution of the agricultural labour contract, especially during the present century, has been towards the shortening of the duration of contracts or their entire replacement by short-term agreements, the removal or attenuation of the penal clauses, and the transformation of contracts into genuine reciprocal agreements in which the employer's obligations towards the worker are as fully set forth as are those of the worker towards the employer.

While long contracts of five, three, or two years are still permitted by law in many territories, practice tends to be in advance of the law except where the workers are recruited or engaged at a considerable distance from the place of employment. Thus, for example, contracts of five years are worked by Indo-Chinese and Javanese labour in New Caledonia, and by Javanese labour in Dutch Guiana; five-year contracts are also legal in South Africa in the Cape Province and the Transvaal and in South-West Africa. Contracts of three years are provided for in the laws of the Belgian Congo, the Gold Coast, Kenya (the maximum duration of squatters' contracts, the minimum being one year), Natal (the South African Native Service Contract Act fixes a maximum of three years for labour tenant contracts in Natal and the Transvaal), Gilbert and Ellice Islands, New Guinea, Papua, French Indo-China, Portugese colonies (for immigrants),

and the Netherlands Indies (penal sanction contracts for employment outside the province of origin). Two-year contracts are permitted in Nigeria and the British East African Dependencies in the Solomon Islands, in the New Hebrides (minimum: six months), in the French African colonies and in the Portuguese colonies (employment within the territory). One-year contracts are provided for in Tanganyika (employment outside the recruiting area), in British North Borneo, Sarawak, and Fiji.

In practice, long-term contracts, except for employment outside the territory, are no longer found in British West Africa, the usual system being that of monthly agreements; in Kenya the ordinary contract is for a period of eight to ten months; and in Tanganyika most contracts are for 180 days. As regards South Africa, it should be noted that long contracts are usually those which include some element of land-tenancy, or do not involve the separation of the worker from his home and family. Short-term agreements which, if no definite period is stipulated, are deemed to be made for three months, are recognized in the Belgian Congo. In territories dependent upon Indian labour, such as Ceylon and Malaya, the long-term contract system has been entirely abolished in consequence of the prohibition by the Indian emigration laws of all long-term contracting of Indians, and the prevalent system is that of the monthly agreement. It should be added that the laws of some territories provide for shorter periods in the case of re-engagement contracts.

The tendency towards the abolition or attenuation of the provisions of contracts relating to criminal penalties for breach of contract is most strikingly exemplified in the Netherlands Indies and in British West Africa. In the Netherlands Indies the Coolie Ordinance of 1931 requires employers to employ increasing percentages of 'free workers', i.e. workers who have not signed a penal sanction contract, and in practice the number of workers serving under penal sanction contracts is not at present more than 5 per cent. of the labour force; the contracts of 'free workers' contain no stipulation concerning their duration, and the workers are free to change their employment. In British West Africa criminal penalties have been attenuated practically to the point of abolition; some territories, however, have reserved the possibility for the courts to direct the performance of the contract and to order the party responsible for the breach of contract to furnish security, failure to furnish such security rendering the party liable to imprisonment not exceeding three months.

The development of the provisions of contracts which afford protection to the worker is one of the most satisfactory features of the evolution of the agricultural labour contract in tropical and sub-tropical areas. These provisions relate to such matters as rations, the supply of clothing, housing, the nature of employment, the rate of wages, and manner of payment, the daily task, hours of work, periods of rest, medical attention, repatriation on the expiry of the contract, &c. Moreover, the due fulfilment of the obligations of the contract by the employer was being increasingly secured,

before the economic crisis imposed drastic and in some cases disastrous cuts in colonial public services, by special inspection services.

It is a point of considerable importance in connexion with the evolution of the agricultural labour contract that the most complete systems of protection for the worker have usually been associated with the long-term contract guaranteed by penal sanctions. The colonial legislator has always been unwilling to impose on the employer the same obligations in respect of short-term contract and casual labour. The paradoxical situation has therefore arisen that, with the increasing abandonment of long contracts—a development which is in the worker's interest inasmuch as it increases the amount of personal freedom he enjoys—the worker loses the positive protection ensured to him by contract legislation. In few colonies, indeed, does there exist legislation regulating the working conditions of agricultural workers who are not bound by long-term labour contracts. The introduction of suitable protective social legislation for 'free' workers will thus be one of the most important tasks of colonial legislators in the future; it is the more necessary as the stage of collective bargaining is not even within sight.

To sum up, the tendency of the development of the conditions of agricultural labour in the service of alien employers (and in some territories in the service of indigenous employers also) is towards the substitution of free currents of migration and the creation of stable wage-earning populations for recruited labour, and the abandonment of the long-term contract with criminal penalties for breach of contract in favour of short-term agreements. This development, while it has obvious advantages for the workers concerned, has a dark side in that the positive protective provisions of contract legislation rarely apply to non-contract labour. The conditions of the unprotected agricultural worker of the tropics come, therefore, nearer to those of the inadequately protected agricultural worker in Europe. In some territories, however, the traditions created under the contract labour system remain alive, and in the Netherlands Indies, for instance, it is claimed that the employers voluntarily accord to 'free workers' many of the benefits ensured by law to the contract workers. The development of modern social legislation applicable to agricultural wage-earners generally is as important in the tropical and sub-tropical regions of the world as in the countries of temperate climate.

APPENDIX No. 4

HOURS OF WORK IN AGRICULTURE: JOURNEY TIME, PAID HOLIDAYS, PREPARATORY WORK, ETC.

THE regulation of the working hours of agricultural workers must inevitably be complicated by certain issues which bear on the main problem. The question of *journey time* ought to be settled. There may be journeys from the worker's home to the farm and also from the farm to the place of work; there are the respective return journeys and, further, the question of where the worker is to take his midday meal. There must be an agreement as to whether any or all of these journeys are to count as working time. A certain number of arrangements exist, but there is absolutely no uniformity of practice even within the same country. The German Provisional Code lays down in principle that journey time from farm to place of work counts as working time; this is followed in collective agreements, but with variations; at least in one case some very complete stipulations are laid down, but this is exceptional. In Poland also journeys between farm and place of work count as working time; the reverse is the case in Denmark; for Austria and Italy see International Labour Office, *Studies and Reports*, Series K, No. 11, pp. 81–2. The journey time which is consumed by the Australian and New Zealand shearer in passing from one sheep-station to another may constitute anything from 6 to 25 per cent. of the whole 'expedition'; this time, as well as that taken in travelling from and back to the worker's home, should, in the view of the courts, be taken into account in fixing rates for shearing, which must be arranged so as to cover the loss of this time; see *Australian Commonwealth Arbitration Reports*, vol. xxv, 1927, pp. 626–741.

The question of *holidays*, i.e. of regularized holidays for which the worker receives wages, also arises. The continuous nature of many agricultural labour contracts makes such holidays a necessity. The difficulty can be solved by the observance of saints' or feast days, local or national, and another difficulty created when there are too many of these! Definite arrangements for uninterrupted free time are better, and by no means uncommon. Over a dozen countries secure annual paid holidays for some or all of their agricultural workers, either by means of legislation or collective agreements or both; the arrangements apply to staff on long-term contracts only. In Czechoslovakia, Finland, Italy, Mexico, Peru, and Spain general Acts on the subject cover agricultural workers coming under the conditions mentioned, although in Mexico the protection afforded to such workers is slight; in Denmark the Master and Assistant Act applies to resident agricultural farm-servants; in the Austrian Provinces seven out of the eight agricultural labour codes secure holidays for ordinary farm-workers and also lay down rather elaborate arrangements for salaried staff on agricultural estates (cf. International Labour Office, *Studies and*

Reports, Series K, No. 10, pp. 35–7). Collective agreements supplement the terms of the legislation in this country, as also in Czechoslovakia and Italy, and, moreover, secure holidays for workers in the absence of Acts in Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, and Sweden (cf. International Labour Office, *Studies and Reports*, Series K, No. 11, pp. 89–92). The length of the holidays given in these countries varies from three days to three weeks and in Austria and Czechoslovakia is reckoned on a sliding scale according to number of years of service. Finally, the awards of the arbitration courts in Australia and New Zealand secure annual paid holidays lasting from two to three weeks, to be taken in the off-season, to sheep-station hands (not shearers) and to workers in butter and cheese factories (cf. *inter alia* Australian Commonwealth Pastoral Award of 14 September 1927 and New Zealand awards in the butter and cheese industries 1930 to 1932). As an interesting Memorandum of the New Zealand court explains, such holidays are extended as compensation for the arduous hours worked in the rush season (Department of Labour, *Awards, Recommendations, Agreements, Orders, &c., made under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1925, &c.*, vol. xxx, p. 152, Memorandum of 7 April 1930). When agreed to by the employer, such holidays become a matter of contract and can be enforced.

As regards the *preparatory work*, e.g. stable cleaning, &c., which has to be done before and after the regular work, the usual arrangement is to assume that such work will be done outside regular hours without additional payment; it must be remembered that such work normally falls to permanent workers whose allowances in kind are partly in compensation precisely for this sort of duty. Thus the German Provisional Code states that such work does not count in the hours laid down. However, occasionally arrangements are found to prevent such work from becoming too onerous, either by limiting the time which can be required by the employer in this way (half an hour before working hours, Danish collective agreement) or by stating the maximum number of animals to be cared for by each worker (three draught animals per worker before working hours, Swedish collective agreement); arrangements can be elaborate (cf. *Studies and Reports* mentioned above, No. 11, pp. 79, 84).

The *hours of forestry workers* are different from those of other agricultural workers. Industrial hours are apt to be copied (there is the question of the light in winter); thus six out of the eight Austrian agricultural labour codes state that industrial hours are to be worked unless other arrangements are expressly agreed; this is probably typical.

Further details on hours of work in agriculture, whether regulated hours or unrestricted hours, will be available when the International Labour Office inquiry, called for by the Resolution adopted by the Conference in 1933 (see Appendix No. 7), has been completed. A rough estimate of actual hours worked in a few countries was made in 1926 by the Fourth Congress of the International Landworkers' Federation held at Geneva,

as follows: Denmark, 2,800 per year; Finland, 2,650; Germany, 2,900 (maximum, the average would be less); Lithuania, 3,000 (maximum, average less); Netherlands, 2,600–4,100. In Switzerland, according to the Swiss Peasants' Secretariat, the ordinary working day in agriculture in 1930 was, without meals but including journey time, 12 hours 15 minutes for staff engaged on the care of animals, and 11 hours 25 minutes for other staff (cf. *I.L.R.*, vol. xxiv, nos. 2–3, pp. 264–5). There is no doubt that, before the War, the excessively long working day, even during certain times of the year the day of 18 or 20 hours, was all too common in some European countries (and the harvest working day of Canada might be compared); but in France, at any rate, a material cutting down is vouched for; workers not engaged with animals now seldom do more than 2,400 hours in the year, though workers caring for animals may still do from 3,650 to 4,000, while women farm-servants do at least 15 hours a day (M. Augé-Laribé in *I.L.R.*, vol. xxv, no. 1, p. 33; cf. Javal, *La Confession d'un agriculteur*, pp. 78–9, 'not so far off the 8-hour day after all'). Information exists on hours of work in the Scandinavian countries (cf. *I.L.R.*, vol. xvi, no. 6, pp. 841–9, 'Hours of Work in Swedish Agriculture', for some typical facts).

APPENDIX No. 5

THE STRIKE AND OTHER MOVEMENTS OF PROTEST BY AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

IT is sometimes thought that the strike has no place in agriculture. The facts contradict this assumption, for strikes of agricultural workers have taken place in a number of countries at one time and another and have sometimes been both severe and prolonged. The most remarkable have been: in England, in 1874 (the Joseph Arch movement); in Australia, in 1891 and 1894 (shearers' strikes); in France, in 1904 and other years (see below); in Poland, in 1918, 1921, 1925; in Sweden, in 1919, 1920, 1924–5, 1929–30 (a strike lasting nearly two years); in Denmark, in 1921 and 1930; in Germany, in 1923 (Silesia) and 1924 (East Prussia); in the Netherlands, in 1930.

It is seldom that the incidence and course of smaller movements not amounting to regular strikes are recorded, but occasionally the agricultural trade unions keep note of all protests of whatever kind over a certain period. Thus the German Social Democratic Union noted, in 1923, over 3,000 'wage movements' not involving cessation of work and 12 strikes involving such cessation, the strikes affecting 37,000 enterprises and 280,000 workers; in 1924 they noted 500 'wage movements' and 9 strikes, these affecting 2,200 enterprises and 24,000 workers; these two years were the years of greatest unrest among German agricultural workers (see *I.L.R.*, vol. xv, no. 5, pp. 746–9, 'Agricultural "Wage Movements" and Strikes in Germany'). In Austria between 1 January 1928 and 31 December 1930 there were 296 wage or other protest movements and 20 strikes, together affecting 68,357 persons (1,441 actual strikers) and involving the loss of 6,556 days' work; of these movements and strikes 132 were successful from the workers' point of view, 104 were compromised, and 17 were unsuccessful; further, there were 6 lock-outs affecting 144 persons and involving the loss of 1,434 days' work; about one-half of all these movements were in the forestry industry (*Bericht des Vorstandes des oesterr. Land- u. Forstarbeiterverbandes an dem sechsten ordentlichen Verbandstag*, Vienna, 1931, p. 34).

As typical of what can happen in agriculture some description may be given of movements of unrest among agricultural workers in France. These movements constitute almost a continuous history since 1890 or even earlier. They are largely local; the nearest approach to a national movement was in 1904, when the official statistics record 198 strikes affecting 10,043 enterprises with a maximum of 43,067 men out at one moment and an aggregate loss of 198,837 days' work (other figures yearly in Ministère du Travail, *Statistique du Travail: Statistique des grèves*). But even in this year the unrest was rather a combination of local strikes than one general movement. Strikes appear to arise very quickly out of an

alteration in the economic circumstances of the agricultural industry, and have not infrequently been caused by a *rise* in prices, when the workers have considered themselves unfairly treated by the failure of employers to share with them any of the resulting suddenly accruing profits; this was the case with the resin-workers both in 1860–4 and in 1903; the cutting off of foreign supplies of resin during the American Civil War caused a sudden increase in values, while in 1903 and following years prices quadrupled; those working on a share-profit system benefited, but piece-wages remained fixed; the result was a long series of small disputes. On other occasions also and in other branches of agriculture the intimate knowledge which every person working in the particular occupation has of the market outlook for the special product which is being handled makes the fixing of wages a sort of to and fro of continuous bargaining, with much temptation to unrest. Or a disastrous fall in prices, on the other hand, will also cause difficulty in those important occupations which deal in special products like wine.

Thus the earliest important vineyard workers' strikes of 1891 were the direct consequence of the complete disorganization of the vineyards due to the ravages of the phylloxera followed by the general agricultural depression of the 1880's; the 'proletarization' of the vineyard peasant population is reckoned to have taken place during these years; there was also an influx of Spanish and Italian immigrant workers, so that wages fell to starvation level. Again, in 1900 the destruction of the grapes by a severe frost was one of the contributing causes to the strikes which culminated in 1904. But the subsequent strikes of 1909–11 were caused by advances in the price of wine (see throughout M. Augé-Laribé, *Le Problème agraire du socialisme. La viticulture industrielle du Midi de la France*, Paris, 1907, 362 pp., especially *Troisième partie: Le Prolétariat agricole*).

Certain movements, on the other hand, appear to have arisen definitely out of unsatisfactory conditions of work, in the usual manner. At one time the lessees of the State forestry concessions followed the old unsystematized custom of the 'open hew', which meant that all who presented themselves, even women and children, for the wages announced could work; with such unregulated work wages were a pittance and accidents frequent. In 1891 a three months' strike took place; in 1892 another; by these two strikes wages were easily doubled or trebled, an interesting instance of accretion of bargaining power to workers by means of ordinary organization. Ten years later fresh strikes occurred; a fresh discipline was established and the workers formed a federation. Compulsory accident compensation insurance was finally imposed in 1914. The coopers, whose occupation is allied to forestry work, went on strike in 1892, again in 1899, 1907–8, and 1912. These strikes caused wages to advance, but there were never more than 2,500 coopers, and the occupation threatens to die out as iron coops are used. The nearest approach to a strike of ordinary farm-

workers, namely, the movement among the staff of the big farms in the north of France starting in 1906, is also to be attributed to bad conditions, e.g. long hours, bad food and lodging, and low wages. The unrest died down between 1908 and 1912 and has not been renewed. Good farm-workers of either sex are now at a premium, and conditions have unquestionably improved. Small strikes of share-farmers in the Bourbonnais between 1904 and 1912 were unconnected with other movements, and were more in the nature of tenant strikes against exactions of landlords' agents.

Finally, there have been the strikes among the horticultural workers who work under semi-industrialized conditions in the vicinity of the big towns. These strikes date back a long way; the question of hours has been a great cause of complaint. It is asserted that between 1874 and 1921 there were 69 such strikes involving 1,449 enterprises and nearly 30,000 workers in 75 unions; 250,745 days' work was lost and 182 days served in prison (A. Hodée, *Les jardiniers et les jardins*, Paris, 1928, p. 325).

There have been strikes since the War, 1919 to 1922 and 1924 to 1927, but they have not attained the dimensions of the unrest of 1904. The situation is not really satisfactory. This is partly owing to the state of French trade unionism and partly owing to the state of the law. The C.G.T. (*Confédération Générale du Travail*) inclines to spasmodic organization of agricultural workers without any proper sustained attempt to keep the rural workers in stable unions. The law rather lends itself to this, for, while great freedom of combined action is permitted, the bargains made in this way are not enforceable contracts. The curious sight is therefore seen of arrangements which have been concluded before the local Prefect, and perhaps with his direct encouragement, flouted almost within a few weeks; thus the same unrest flares up again and again in the same place (cf. M. Augé-Laribé in *I.L.R.*, vol. xxv, no. 1, pp. 55–6; and for general details of French agricultural trade unions, International Labour Office, *Studies and Reports*, Series K, No. 8, *The Representation and Organisation of Agricultural Workers*, Geneva, 1928, pp. 124–6).

APPENDIX No. 6

THE COMPOSITE NATURE OF THE AGRICULTURAL WAGE-PAID WORKER'S INCOME

In the last section of Chapter XI reference was made to the fact that the agricultural worker's income was frequently constituted as a family income, made up of the resources of the whole family; mention was made of two German inquiries illustrating this point. These two inquiries were conducted with much care by the Social Democratic German Agricultural Workers' Union and the Christian Central Union of Agricultural Workers. The first referred to 145 typical agricultural wage-earning families for the year 1 July 1929 to 30 June 1930 and the second to 130 families for the year 1 January to 31 December 1927. Unless otherwise stated the remarks in this appendix refer to the first inquiry, but it may throughout be assumed that the results of the second inquiry back up those of the first; indeed, the close similarity of the facts elicited by the two organizations is striking.

The 145 households selected for the inquiry were preponderantly representative of the ordinary agricultural wage-earners' grade of income with a sprinkling both of higher and lower incomes. The families were constituted, on an average, of 5·11 persons, namely, husband, wife (households including one living partner in marriage were not selected), 2·26 children under 14 and 0·84 others; of these 2·6 persons were earners. *This high proportion of earners in each family is the first point to notice.* Actually 111 out of 145 wives earned (only 4 in industries other than agriculture); this means 3 out of every 4—a significant social fact when the number of young children is considered. Of children or other relatives, 96 out of 123 over 14 and 29 out of 328 under 14 (outside school hours) were also earners; of the 96, 18 were *Hofganger* (i.e. ranking as adult agricultural workers), another 53 were also occupied in agriculture, and only 25 in other industries; of these last only 14 were really in receipt of wages, 11 being apprentices, mostly to some country craft. The whole analysis shows (1) that practically every person past the age of childhood (and a few still in that age) were earners and (2) that practically all of them were earners in agriculture.

Apart from the *Hofgänger*, the additional earners were not, of course, necessarily whole-time workers. But the composition of the family income shows how essential were their contributions to the family living. *The husband's earnings (cash and allowances) represented only 54·1 per cent. of that income* (in the inquiry of the *Reichsverband landlicher Arbeitnehmer*, 60·38 per cent.). The balance was made up as follows: wife's wages, 10 per cent., wages of other members of the family, 7·6 per cent. (*R.L.A.* inquiry 8·03 and 11·4 per cent. respectively), occasional earnings, 2·0 per cent. (*R.L.A.* inquiry 1·03 per cent.); then comes the comparatively important item of

sale of allowances or produce off own plot of ground, 14·5 per cent. (*R.L.A.* inquiry, 13·33 per cent.); the remaining income was made up from miscellaneous sources, such as social insurance benefits, presents or help from relatives, &c. The gross annual income averaged 2,418 RM. (*R.L.A.* inquiry, 2,036 RM., but with deduction of expenditure on own plot of ground the net income was calculated on this inquiry as only 1,963 RM.).

This average conceals some further interesting facts. A table can be constructed, based on income gradations, which is distinctly illuminating.

Income group (RM. per year)	*No. of households*	*Proportion of wages of head of family to total income (percentage)*	*No. of persons in household*	*No. of persons earning*
Under 1,500 . .	3	87·2	6·0	2
1,500–2,000 . .	37	68·1	5·0	2
2,000–2,500 . .	53	58·4	4·6	2·4
2,500–3,000 . .	30	47·6	5·2	2·9
3,000–3,600 . .	14	47·2	5·3	3·3
3,600–4,300 . .	4	40·0	7·5	4·2
Over 4,300 . .	4	29·2	8·5	5·5
Total or average .	145	54·1	5·11	2·6

While there are only three households below the extreme limit of 1,500 RM. income per year (but in the *R.L.A.* inquiry as many as 21, so that evidently such an income limit must not be considered wholly exceptional), the chief interest of the table lies not in the number of households in each income grade but in the relations between the first, third, and last columns. Where the children are still young (the family may be large) husband and wife are the sole earners and the income remains small; it only rises *as the number of earners increases* up to the point when, in exceptional cases, there was a labour force of 5·5 persons and something like a small family holding could be run with a trebling of income (the *R.L.A.* figures confirm these facts).

The German agricultural wage-paid worker does not support his family out of his wages alone. He looks round for some additional income, however small. He asks his wife and, as far as available, his children to find what work they can and earn what they can. Comfort is attained only by putting together all the sources of the family income.

The total income was already in this year (1929–30) affected by *want of employment.* Though the principal workers were on permanent contracts, nowhere was the full number of hours allowed to be worked under collective agreements attained; in some cases nearly 10 per cent. of agreed possible hours were not worked by the principal breadwinner, while in the case of wives the shortage of expected employment was much more

serious, so that in some cases the woman's contribution to the family income was only a fifth of what it might have been (in no case were women paid at rates at all equal to those which they would have earned in industrial employment). The special hardship involved was that the husband's contract obliged the wife to be at the employer's disposal all the year round—this is the old system of keeping a *corps* of workers always at command. However, there was a tendency to terminate these old *deputat* contracts and to substitute the more modern 'free' worker's contract. It is evident that the German Landworkers' inquiry has given us a cross-sectional view of German agricultural labour just at the point when it is beginning to turn away from the older system to the newer one of only paying for work as strictly needed and as performed. This stage is particularly hard for the worker, for he is being paid at the rates evolved under the old maintenance ideas but without the security which the old arrangements offered.

The income when earned was expended as follows (amounts in *Reichsmarks* between parentheses): food and drink, 29 per cent. (683 RM.), to which must be added much of the allowances consumed in the household, namely, 24 per cent. (550 RM.); clothing and boots, 13 per cent. (302 RM.); rent and repairs, 6 per cent. (130 RM., but of course the 'allowances' also cover rent); heating, light, and cleaning, 4 per cent. (90 RM.); doctor, chemist, education, 2 per cent. (51 RM.); amusements, family reunions, &c., 3 per cent. (70 RM.); social insurance, subscriptions, and taxes, 9 per cent. (212 RM.); finally, cash additions to allowances spent on the feeding and care of stock or on cultivation of small crops, 8 per cent. (191 RM.); the last item should, of course, really be deducted from the gross income and would produce a net income lower by this amount; the small remaining balance of income is accounted for by miscellaneous expenditure (fares, &c.) (*R.L.A.* figures very similar throughout).

See throughout: *Die Lebenshaltung, Lohn- und Arbeitsverhältnisse von 145 deutschen Landarbeiterfamilien, Schriften des deutschen Landarbeiterverbandes Nr. 32*, by W. Bernier, Berlin, 1931, 120 pp., and *Die Lebenshaltung des Landarbeiters: Wirtschaftsrechnungen von 130 Landarbeiterfamilien, Eine Erhebung des Reichsverbandes ländlicher Arbeitnehmer*, by M. Hofer, Berlin, 1930, 245 pp.

APPENDIX No. 7

CONVENTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

REFERENCE has been made throughout this book to the work of the International Labour Organisation. The Organisation is part of the League of Nations and is governed by Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles. The following details may be useful in assisting the reader to understand the work of the International Labour Conference, which is the most important body in the Organisation.

I. *Conventions and Recommendations on agricultural labour.* The Conference has adopted Conventions and Recommendations referring specifically to agricultural labour; both types of decision are formal decisions adopted, after much preparation and discussion, by the delegates annually assembled in the Conference, and both require a two-thirds' majority. A Convention, to become effective, must be 'ratified' by the 'competent authority' (usually the parliament) in each country and then becomes binding on that country for the period mentioned in the text (usually ten years); countries are free not to ratify and not to be bound, and many Conventions have been ratified by a few countries only. Between the countries which do ratify there may be said to exist a compact, or sort of international treaty, concerning the observance of definite standards for the treatment of labour. A Recommendation is less strict; it embodies the considered suggestions of the Conference, but imposes no obligations on the countries accepting it except the moral obligation of trying to apply it and the specific one of reporting the degree of their success herein to the Director of the International Labour Office year by year; the substance of these reports is communicated by the Director to the Conference. The sanctions backing up a Convention are much more severe.

Besides the Conventions and Recommendations having special reference to agricultural labour, a certain number of other Conventions and Recommendations cover agricultural workers in common with workers in industry, &c. These are not referred to in the present book.

Of the decisions earmarked for agriculture, three Conventions and seven Recommendations date from 1921, the year in which agriculture was most fully discussed by the Conference. The effort to deal with agricultural topics already at the Third Session of the Conference arose out of a desire to do the right thing by the agricultural workers, their claims having been raised at an early date during the setting up of the Organisation. An unforeseen result was that important ground was covered in rather a hasty way, before the Conference had had much experience of its duties; some of these early decisions in the agricultural field now appear rather insufficient.

The seven Conventions referring to agricultural workers deal with the

minimum age at which children should be admitted to agricultural employment (1921, 17 ratifications), the rights of association and combination of agricultural workers (see p. 173 of the present book) (1921, 27 ratifications), the levelling up of workmen's compensation for accidents in agriculture to the standards observed in industry (1921, 19 ratifications), and sickness, old age, invalidity, and survivors' insurance (the first adopted in 1926 and the other three in 1933, the first at present ratified by eleven States, the other three still awaiting ratification, the period laid down for this purpose not yet having expired). The seven Recommendations deal with the prevention of unemployment in agriculture, maternity protection, night rest for women, night rest for children and young persons working in agriculture, agricultural vocational education, living-in conditions (i.e. accommodation), and social insurance (all 1921).

The labour delegates at the Conferences have always advocated the policy of giving to agricultural workers treatment identical with that given to all other workers. This equality of treatment is far from having been obtained. In three respects the agricultural workers have been less well cared for at Geneva than their fellow workers in industry, &c. In the first place, the terms of the 1921 decisions are inferior, from the point of view of their interests, to those adopted on behalf of other workers; in the second place, in certain fields, notably hours of work, no decisions have been adopted on their behalf or they have been formally excluded from the scope of a general decision (e.g. from the decisions on unemployment insurance); in the third place, if they have been included, separate texts have been voted for them; these texts, though verbally identical with the texts adopted for other workers, require independent ratification, which may very likely be deferred until after ratification has been received of the text applying to such other workers.

In this way international headquarters have perpetuated the principle of unequal treatment for agricultural workers. Whether anything more would have been practical politics is a question which might evoke endless discussion. Want of organization among agricultural workers themselves, combined with some rather formidable difficulties surrounding their representation in the Organisation, has contributed to this unsatisfactory state of affairs.

II. *Resolutions of the International Labour Conference referring to agricultural labour.* The Conference has also from time to time adopted a few Resolutions referring to agricultural workers. The importance of Resolutions adopted by the Conference varies with the topic dealt with, the circumstances in which the Resolution was formulated, and the sequence given to the ideas expressed in it. A Resolution of 1928 on collective agreements in agriculture called for an investigation by the International Labour Office on the scope and advantages of this method of dealing with working conditions of agricultural labour. The resulting report (*Studies and Reports*, Series K, No. 11, *Collective Agreeements in Agriculture*, Geneva,

1933, 122 pp.) was placed before a Commission of the Conference in 1933. The Commission was of opinion that the idea might be pursued, and referred its recommendations to the Governing Body of the International Labour Office. It appears probable that the matter will be discussed by the Conference in the near future.

An important Resolution on hours of work in agriculture, adopted by the Tripartite Preparatory Conference on the Reduction of Hours of Work in 1933 and referred to in Chapter VII of this book, arose out of protests voiced by the workers against the total exclusion of agriculture from the discussions at this crucial point in the history of the Organisation. The Conference, however, found that hours of work in agriculture were not within the terms of reference of the Session then in being, and it is true that notice had not been given to governments of any intention to discuss the item within the agricultural field. A compromise was found. The substance of the workers' Resolution was not endorsed by the Conference, but by 33 votes to 19 was referred to the Governing Body of the International Labour Office. By direction of the Governing Body the inquiry into agricultural hours asked for in the Resolution is now in the course of being carried out by the International Labour Office; only after the results of this inquiry have been placed before the Governing Body will a decision as to any further action be taken. The text of the workers' Resolution will be found in International Labour Conference, Seventeenth Session, Geneva, 1933, *Reduction of Hours of Work—Report of the Tripartite Preparatory Conference*, Geneva, 1933, 212 pp.; see pp. 21–2.

INDEX

NOTE. *The information in the Tables to Chs. III and XI, and on page* 206 *(numbers of agricultural population, salaried and wage-paid agricultural workers, figures of agricultural wages), together with that in the Notes to these Tables, is* not *indexed separately under the names of countries.*
ABBREVIATIONS: *agric.* = *agriculture, agricultural*; *ind.* = *industry, industrial.*

Abramson, A., 313.
Agriculture:
  dynamic character, 20, 245, 249, 276; intensity, intensive, 18, 228, 253, *et seq.*, variety of world agric., 17–26, 229, 248; conservatism, 276; profitability, profits, 10, 213, 238, 274–5; reserve powers, 276; subsistence agric., 20, 237, 249, 285; surplus agric., 22; 'mixed farming', 111; 'diversification', 254 *et seq.*
  See also Nature and natural law.
Agric. industry, the:
  definition, 17, 275; age of, vii, 275; size of, 29, 291, Table I to Ch. III; function, responsibilities, 267–9; 'Cinderella of the industries', 41; general international aspects, 24, 70, 285 *et seq.*; changing technical conditions, 182; possibilities of development, 287.
  See also Industry, contrast between and agric.
Agric. labour:
  importance, 168, 294; conditions under which carried on, 40 *et seq.*; difficulty of collecting information on, vii.
  Amount of labour, 223, 286, 289; on individual farm, 237; cost of labour, 70, 229, 278, 284; 'labour-intensity', 259 *et seq.*
  Wage-paid: general position, ix, 27, 32, 273; definition of employed worker, 58, 315–16; classes of, 59 *et seq.*; numbers, Table II to Ch. III.
  Agric. labour situation part of a general situation, 274; improvement after War, 273; not sweated, 280; suggested measures for improving position of, 277 *et seq.*; claim to equality of treatment with ind. labour, 330.
  See also Agric. labour contract, Employment situation, Employers.
Agric. labour contract:
  Part of all labour contract, 55 *et seq.*; recent improvement in, 282; omitted from purview of labour legislation, 57 *et seq.*, 66 *et seq.*, 71; deliberately excluded (the 'exceptional position'), 92, cf. 172; defined by special legislation, 73; by Master and Servant right, 87 *et seq.*, 100, 299, 307 *et seq.* (Hungary), 311 (Czechoslovakia), and Chs. V and VI *passim.*
  Penal clauses, use of compulsion, 99 *et seq.*, 309, and 310 (Hungary), 318 *et seq.* (tropical and subtropical countries); 'desertion', 102.
  Written or verbal contracts, 89; long contracts, 96 *et seq.*, 317 (tropical countries).
  Contracts in Australia and New Zealand, 299–304, France, 304–6, Hungary, 306–10, various countries, 310–14, tropical and subtropical countries, 315–19.
'Agric. ladder', 34, 67, 297–8.
Agric. population: size, 27 *et seq.*, Table I to Ch. III; social structure, 32 *et seq.*; shrinkage, 37, 246, *cf.* 266–7, 'rural exodus', 39 *et seq.*; effects on agric. trade unionism, 183–4; mobility or immobility, 51, 264; international comparisons, 52.
Agric. wages:
  Gaps in information, 189–91; types, 210; periods of payment, 195; local variations, 197; seasonal fluctuations, 198, *cf.* 255; international comparisons, 190 *et seq.*, 195 (gold basis), 279–80.
  Fundamental influences on, 209 *et seq.*; low level, 204 *et seq.*, 211, 256, 280; bargaining power of workers, 207, cf. 62, 280; stability,

Agric. wages (*cont.*):
210; family earning, 211, *cf.* Appendix No. 6.
Legislation, 220–1, 280, 308 (Hungary).
Table of, 214–21; real wages, 206, 220.
Allowances, wages in kind, 60, 90, 200 *et seq.*, 255; Truck Acts, 108, 203, 281, 308 (Hungary); piece-wages, 234; long-service bonuses, 108.
Algeria, 310.
Animals, care of, 18, 226, 253.
Arbeitgeberverband fur die Provinz Schlesien (publication of), 211 *note*.
Arch, Joseph, 184, 323.
Argentina, 25, 59, 241, 248.
Ashby, A. W., 298.
Augé-Laribé, M., 25 *note*, 50, 208 *note*, 306, 322, 324, 325.
Australia, 25, 28–9, 31, 37, 64 *et seq.*, 167, 172, 241, 248, 299 *et seq.*; ind. arbitration and shearing ind. generally, 128–9, 174, 178, 184, 258, 301–2, 320–1, 323; wages, 191, 196, 204 *et seq.*; accommodation, 148, 152; use of word 'agriculture', 31 *note*; Commonwealth Statistician, figs. supplied by, 246–7.
Austria, viii, 31, 39 *note*, 81, *passim* Ch. VI, 125–6, 310–11, 320, 321, 323; Soc.-Dem. Party Programme of 1925, 116.

Baade, Dr. Fritz, 186 *note*.
Belgium, 31, 56, 75, and *passim* Chs. VIII—XI, 311; Belgian Congo, 317, 318.
Belshaw, H., 298, 304.
Bernier, W., 328.
Bizzell, W. B., 297.
Brazil, 23.
Brentano, L., 21 *note*.
British Assoc. for the Advancement of Science, 19 *note*.
Brzeski, Th., 314.
Bulgaria, 30, 84, 190.
Bulow, Mr. F. W. von, ix, 313.
Bunyard, Miss K. M., ix.

Canada, 25, 31, 34, 37, 64 *et seq.*, 68 (no. of wage-paid workers), 148, 167, 168, 183 (absence of organizations of workers), 288, 297, 322; wages, 191, 193, 205; efficiency, 245 and *passim* Ch. XII; Threshers Wages Lien Acts, 66.
Children in agric., 61, 155, 180, 257, 263, 309 (Hungary), 326 (Germany). *See also* Education.
China, 27.
Climate and latitude, 132, 136, and 146 (effects on housing).
Code Napoleon, 56, 74, Ch. V *passim*.
'Closer settlement', 299.
Collective action:
definition, 171, importance to workers, 281–2, *cf.* 186; collective bargaining, spread after the War, 173, *cf.* 273, national agreements, 175, renewal, 175, part played by governments, 176 *et seq.*, results, 179 *et seq.*; international Resolution, 330.
Trade unionism, conditions governing, 182–3, origins in various countries, 184–5, international aspects, 185.
See also Strikes.
Combine, 241–2, 244, 260.
Copland, D. B., 303.
Cuba, 172.
Custom and tradition, 55, 164, 236; customary element in wage-payments, 189, 208, 209.
Czechoslovak Academy of Agriculture, *title page*, 49, 311.
Czechoslovakia, 31, 39 *note*, 61 *note*, 84–5, *passim* Ch. VI, 118, 120–1, *passim* Chs. VIII—XI, 243, 311, 320, 321; Slovakia, 85, 177, 221.

Darling, M. L., 9 *note*.
Davies, Llefelys, 298.
Denmark, 37, 58, 79–80, 126–8, and *passim* Chs. VIII—XI, 320–2, 323.
Derlitski, Dr., 230 *note*, 233.
Dominik, R., 311.
Dragoni, C., 312.
Duncan, J. F., ix, 79, 182, 186 *notes*.

Economic depression, effects of the, 180, 199, 205 *note*, 310 (Hungary), 319.
Education:
definition, 154; types of vocational, 156; idealist element, 168; continuation, 156, 159; extension, 166; influence of scient. research, 167 *et seq.*, 282.

Education (*cont.*):
School-leaving age earlier in rural than in urban schools, 158–9, *cf.* 283; rural bias, 164 *et seq.*, 283; scholarships, 156, 162, 283; certificates, 169; consolidated or central schools, 167, 283; village college, 167.
Efficiency of agric. labour:
conditions governing, 223 *et seq.*; increase of efficiency, 246 *et seq.*; enlargement of areas as result, 228, 243; non-adoption of improvements leading to, 223; hand-tools, 227; power or draft, 227; motor power or mechanization, 227 *et seq.*, 239 *et seq.*, 260; displacement of human workers caused by, 244 *et seq.*, *cf.* 263; individual performance, 230, 247, *cf.* 268; selection of workers, 232; fatigue, 232 *et seq.*, 282; lay-out, 235 *et seq.*; routing of jobs, 238; routine work in agric., 163, 230; skill in agric. operations, 58, 234, 300.
Electricity, 243, 279, 304 (France).
Employment situation:
general conditions governing, 250 *et seq.*, availability of workers, 235, 264 *et seq.*; history of, in Europe, 251 *et seq.*; effects of seasonal law on, 254 *et seq.*; lack of alternative jobs affects wages, 198, 212–13; labour peak, 263; unemployment, 213, *cf.* 268, 279; lack of full-time employment, 76 (Spain), 327–8 (Germany); migration part of modern employment system, 257, 259.
Employers: employer-employed relationship, 32, 301 (Australia); organized and unorganized, 209; position on housing, 140, attitude to collective bargaining, 182, to wages, 210 *cf.* 280, employers and management of labour, 232, 235; relations with temporary labour, 261; affected by same conditions as labour, 273.
England and Wales, England, 56, 78–9, 126, *passim* Chs. VIII—XI, 231, 235; Gangs Acts, 73. *See also* Great Britain.
Estonia, viii, 30, 83, and *passim* Chs. V and VI, 118–19, 163, 199, 311–12.
Felton, B. I., 212 *note*.
Finland, 37, 83, 119, 162 *note*, 197, 320, 322.
Foenander, O. de R., 129 *note*, 303.
Fragmentation, 237.
France, 24, 31, 37, 39 *note*, 56, 74–5, *passim* Chs. VIII—XI, 235, 243, 252, 288, 304–6, 322, 323–5; French Empire, various territories, 317, 318; French Government of 1921 on the eight-hour day in agric., 132.
Fraser, *Master and Servant*, 88.
'Free workers', 60, 197 *note* (Germany), 319.

Garnier, P., 306.
Garzone, 255.
General Confederation of Labour (*C.G.T.*) (France), 116, 325.
Germany, viii, 29, 31, 39 *note*, 81–2, *passim* Ch. VI, 118, 123–4, *passim* Chs. VIII—XI, 230 *et seq.*, 312, 320 *et seq.*, 323, 326–8; German Civil Code of 1900, 56, 80; Soc.-Dem. Party Programme of 1927, 116.
Gnoinski, J., 314.
Gorni, Dr. Olindo, ix.
Great Britain, 31, 37, 312; British Empire, various territories, 317–18. *See also* England and Wales, Wales, Scotland.
Green, F. E., 312.
Guatemala, 172.

Haager, Karl, 311.
Hall, Sir A. Daniel, ix, 19 *note*.
Handworterbuch der Staatswissenschaften, 312.
Hasbach, W., 126 *note*, 312.
Henry, A., 311.
Hinton Smith, Miss E. M., ix.
Hodée, A., 325.
Hofer, M., 328.
Hosier system of milk-farming, 236.
Hours of work:
nature of problem, 110 *et seq.*; advantage to workers of regulation, 132, *cf.* 278; need for shortening hours, 277–8, *cf.* 294; results of collective bargaining, 180–1; international action, 112 *et seq.*, 321, 331; regulation of hours or hours in Spain, 118,

Hours of work (*cont.*):
128, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, 119, Czechoslovakia, 120–1, Italy, 121–3, Germany, 123–4, Hungary, Austria, 125, England and Wales, 126, Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden, Poland, 127 Australia and New Zealand, 128; eight-hour day in agric., 112, 115, 118, 120, 128, 132, 322; not actually an average at present, 278; overtime, 131, 133, 278; changing time-tables, 127, 278; supplementary time, time lost on job, 232; journey time, 320; preparatory work, 321; hours of forestry workers, 321; holidays, 320–1; Sundays and Sat. half-holiday, 117, 126 *note*, 129, 130, 133, 163, 179 *note*, 294.
Housing:
general state of the question, 134–5, 283; causes of bad housing, 135; age of dwellings, 136; not adapted to population conditions, 137; finance, 137; legislation, 138, 141 *et seq.*, 153; special legislation, 143 *note*; collective bargaining insufficient to control, 142, *cf.* 180; ownership, 138, 'tied cottage', 139 *note*, 203; parlour, 145, annexes, 147, barrack dwellings, 147, housing in sheds or stables, 149 *et seq.*, size of dwellings, drainage, water-supply, heating, lighting, &c., 143–52; Recommendation of 1921 on Living-in Conditions, 144, 149, 294; effect of residence on labour relations, 148.
Howard, A. (Sir Albert Howard), ix, 25 *note*, 169.
Howard, G. L. C. (Mrs. Albert Howard), 25 *note*.
Hungary, 31, 81, 82, *passim* Ch. VI (*cf.* esp. 104–5), 125, *passim* Chs. VIII—XI, 257, 306–10.

Indebtedness of agric. working populations or workers, ix, 9, 41, 99, 283–4.
India, 25, 28, 30, 169.
Indore Institute of Plant Industry, ix, 169.
Industrial crop, 23.
Industrial Revolution, 10, 204.
Industry, contrast between and agric., 10, 38, 209, 247, 262–3, 269; differences in labour legislation, 114; ind. and agric. wages, 198, 204–5; balance between ind. and agric. populations, 37, competition for labour, 265 *et seq.*; output of ind. and of agric. worker in Europe, 268.
International Commission of Agric., 52.
International Conference of Agric. Economists, 182 *note*.
International Federation of Christian Landworkers' Trade Unions, 185.
International Institute of Agric., 52.
International Labour Conference, 113, 144, 172 *note* (report to), 173, 174 *note* (Commission of), 291 *et seq.*, 316, 329; Director's Report to, 220, 299; Tripartite Preparatory Conf. on Reduction of Hours of Work, 116, 331.
Conventions, 113, 173 (rights of association of agric. workers), 290 *et seq.*, 293 (Admission of Children to Agric. Employment), 329.
Recommendations, 144, 146, and 149 (Living-in Conditions of Agric. Workers), 279 (social insurance), 291 *et seq.*, 329.
Resolutions, 330; on hours of work in agric., 116, 321, 331.
International Labour Office, vii, 52, 114, 117; Governing Body of, 113, 115, 116, 331; late Director of, 200 *note*.
Publications:
Annual Review (*Yearbook*), 299.
Industrial and Labour Information, x, 52, 116 *note*, 165 *note*, 268 *note*.
International Labour Review, ix, 299; references to articles, 52, 219, 220, 298, 303, 304, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 322, 323, 325, and in the *notes* to 117, 129, 134, 136, 139, 144, 150, 156, 162, 163, 169, 182, 186, 200, 201, 202, 205, 208, 222, 238, 239, 246.
Legislative Series, x, 221, 299, 312.
Official Bulletin, 17 *note*, 112 *note*, 113 *note*.

International Labour Office, Publications (*cont.*):
Studies and Reports, Series K (Agric.), 298, 311, 312, 320, 321, 325, 330, and in the *notes* to 31, 117, 120, 134, 156, 174, 182; Series (Migration, &c.), 151 *note*; Series D (Wages Statistics, &c.), 205 *note*.
Report of 1921 on hours of work, 132 *note*.
Report of 1935 on recruiting of labour in colonies, &c., 316.
Technical Survey of Agric. Questions, 1921, 150 *note*.
Questionnaire to governments on agric. education, 1924, 163, 165.
International Labour Organisation, 113, 173, 185, 273 (recognition of agric. labour claims), 279, 290 *et seq.* (present and future work in the agric. field), 329. *See also* International Labour Conference, International Labour Office.
International Landworkers' Federation, ix, 39 *note*, 115, 140 *note*, 185, 321.
Irish Free State, 30, 61, 79, 196.
Italy, 31, 76–8, 118, 121–3, and *passim* Chs. VIII—XI, 247, 257, 312, 320, 321; Italian delegates to the Peace Conference, 112.

Japan, 178.
Javal, A., 235, 240–1 *note*, 322.
Jouhaux, Mr., 115 *note*.
Journal officiel (France), 149 *note*, 306.
Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics (U.S.A.), 297.
Justinian, Edicts of, 56.

Komorniky, 255.

Large-scale farms, 85 (Europe), 99, 236, 283; maintenance of old workers, 211 *note*.
Latifundium, 259.
Latvia, 83 and *passim* Chs. V and VI, 119, 134, 163, 199, 207, 313.
League of Nations, 27, 291, 329; publications of, 29 *note*, 49, 230 *note*, 233 *note*; Second Conference for Concerted Economic Action, 268 *note*.
Liebig, 245.
Lithuania, viii, 30, 83, and *passim* Chs. V and VI, 119, 313, 322.

Malden, W. J., 231 *note*.
Management, managerial problems, foremen, 33, 36, 170, 228, 234, 235 *et seq.*, 282.
Maniloisco, Mr., 268 *note*.
Martna, M., 312.
Matthaei, Miss L. E. (L. E. Howard), x, 156, 205, 239 *notes*.
Melchett, Lord, 231 *note*.
Méline, J., 306.
Mexico, 201 *note*, 320.
Middleman, the, 11.
Min. of Agric., &c. (England and Wales), 139 *note*, 152 *note* (Journal).
Mitrany, D., 314.
Money crop, 23, 25.
Moricz, M., 310.
Musée social, le, 150 *note*.

National Farmers' Union (England and Wales), 139 *note*.
National Union of Agric. Workers of England and Wales, 115, 139 *note*, 211 *note* (*Landworker*).
Nature and natural law, 3 *et seq.*, 100, 223 *et seq.*, 233, 236, 275, 292–3. *See also* Climate and Latitude, Seasons, Weather.
Netherlands, 31, 37, 80, 107 *note*, 126–8, and *passim* Chs. VIII—XI, 321, 322, 323; Netherlands Indies, Guiana, 317, 318, 319.
New Zealand, 25, 31, 64 *et seq.*, 172, 248, 263, 299 *et seq*; ind. arbitration and shearing ind. generally, 129–30, 174, 178, 258, 302–4, 320–1; wages, 191, 196, 204 *et seq.*; accommodation, 148, 152; use of word 'agriculture', 31 *note*; share-farming, 34, 67 *note*, 298, 299.
New Zealand Worker, 130 *note*.
Norway, 37, 80, 151, 162, 199.

Oesterreichischer Land- u. Forstarbeiterverband (publication of), 220.
'Open hew', 324.
Orramen, 255.
Orwin, C. S., 212, 236 *notes*.
Oxford School of Agric. Economics, 235; Oxford Agric. Economics Research Institute, 236 *note*.

Palestine, 182 *note*.
Pap, D., 310.
Peasant farming, ix, 29, 41, 85, 118, 148, 237, 251 *et seq.*, 286, 288; no p. f. in Australasia, 299.
Permanent Court of International Justice, 17 *note*, 113, 291.
Peru, 320.
Peuple, le, 116 *note*.
Poland, 84–5 and *passim* Ch. VI, 126–8 and *passim* Chs. VIII—XI, 313–14, 320–1.
Pommritz experimental institute, 168, 222 *note*; *Berichte uber Landarbeit*, 230 *note*, 233 *note*.
Populations of the world, 27 *et seq.*, 265.
Portugal, 56, 76; Portuguese colonies, 317, 318.
Preuss, Dr. Walter, 182 *note*.
Primo de Riveira, 76.

Rabinovitch, G. S., 314.
Recruiting for agric. employment, 317.
Régnier, P., 306.
Reich, Dr. Ed., 162 *note*.
'Retreat from the land', 298.
Riddell, Dr. W. A., vii, ix, 239 *note*.
Rios, F. de los, 314.
Risler, G., 306.
Rivers, W. H. R., 21 *note*.
Roman law, Reception of, 56.
Rose, Adam, 314.
Roumania, 84, 94, and *passim* Ch. VI, 207, 252, 268 *note*, 314.
Royal Agric. Society of England (journal), 212 *note*.
Royal Institute of International Affairs, *title page*, x, 29 *note*.

Scotland, 56, 61, 79; *passim* Chs. VIII—XI, 301. *See also* Great Britain.
Scottish Farm Servant, 126 *note*, 147 *note*.
Scottish Journal of Agric., 79 *note*.
Seasons, effects of, 35, 51–2 (size of agric. population), 111, 132 and 133 (summer work), 151 *note*, 176 (collective bargaining), 198 and 255 (wages), 251 *et seq.* (employment), 275.
Share-farming, sharing-out systems, 202, 234 *note*, 255, 298, 299 (Australia, New Zealand), 304, 305, 325 (France), 315.
Slavery, 64, 88 (servant and slave; *cf.* 103), 315, 316 (slave-raiding).
Small farms, smallholding, 33–5, 160, 162 (schools), 195 (income), 236, 261, 278 (working day), 282 (management), 301 (Australia); retreat for unemployed agric. workers, 279; 'dwarf' holdings, 34.
Souchon, A., 306.
South Africa, 28 *note*, 56 *note*, 202, 317, 318.
South America, 21, 29, 172, 293, 294; difficulty of collecting information on, viii, *cf.* 189–90 (wages).
Spain, 76, 94, 174, 185, 314, 320; hours of work, 118, 128, 131.
Spirits, sale of, to agric. workers, prohibited, 107, 308.
Statare, 255.
Stotz, G. F., 310.
Strikes, 68, 183 ('black strike'), 323–5.
Suez Canal, opening of, 25.
Sweden, 37, 80, 126–8, 144 *note* and *passim* Chs. VIII—XI, 321, 323.
Swiss Peasants' Association, 220, 314 (Secretariat).
Switzerland, 25, 29, 30, 37, 39 *note*, 76, 162, 288, 314, 322.

Tariffs, 288 *et seq.*; in Australia and New Zealand, 300.
Taylor principles, 230.
Tawney, *The Acquisitive Society*, v.
The Times, London, 23 *note*.
Tractor, 242.
Transport, effects of, 23–4.
Tropical and Oriental agric., viii, ix, 31, 34, 202, *cf.* 281 (backward countries), 315–19 (labour contract).
Twelve Tables at Rome, 55.

Uhrinóvès experimental institute, 168, 222 *note*.
Unemployed, placing of urban on land, 279.
United States of America, 25, 31, 34, 37, 56, 64 *et seq.*, 68 (no. of wage-paid workers), 148, 167, 168, 183 (absence of organizations of workers), 288; wages, 191, 193, 201, 206; efficiency, 228 and *passim* Ch. XII; Southern States, 198, 202, 248, 276; Children's Bureau, 66; *Yearbook of*

Agric., 242 *note*, 243 *note*, 248 *note*, 297. *See also* 'Agric. ladder'.
Uruguay, 221.

Valets de ferme, 255.
Venn, A., 312.

Wales, smallholding population of, 298.
Warming, *Handbok i Danmarks Statistik*, 50.
Weather, 68, 151 (housing), 237, 282.
Weaver, Mr. C. W. H., ix, 315 *et seq.*
Wehrwein, G. S., 297.
Welsh Journal of Agric., 298.
Wickham, Sir Henry, 23.
Women in agric., 52, 100 (female farm-servant's marriage), 180, 231, 300 (absence of paid women. Australasia), 304 (France); wives of workers, 61, 257, 326 *et seq.*
Women's institutes, 158, 283.
Woytinski, W., 268 *note*.

Young farmers' clubs, 167, 283.
Yugoslavia, 84, 190, 207.

Zeitschrift fur Ostrecht, 311, 313, 314.

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