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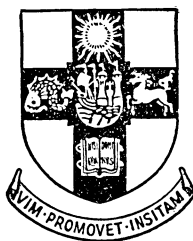
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*An Inquiry into reasons for  
'The Drift from the Land'*

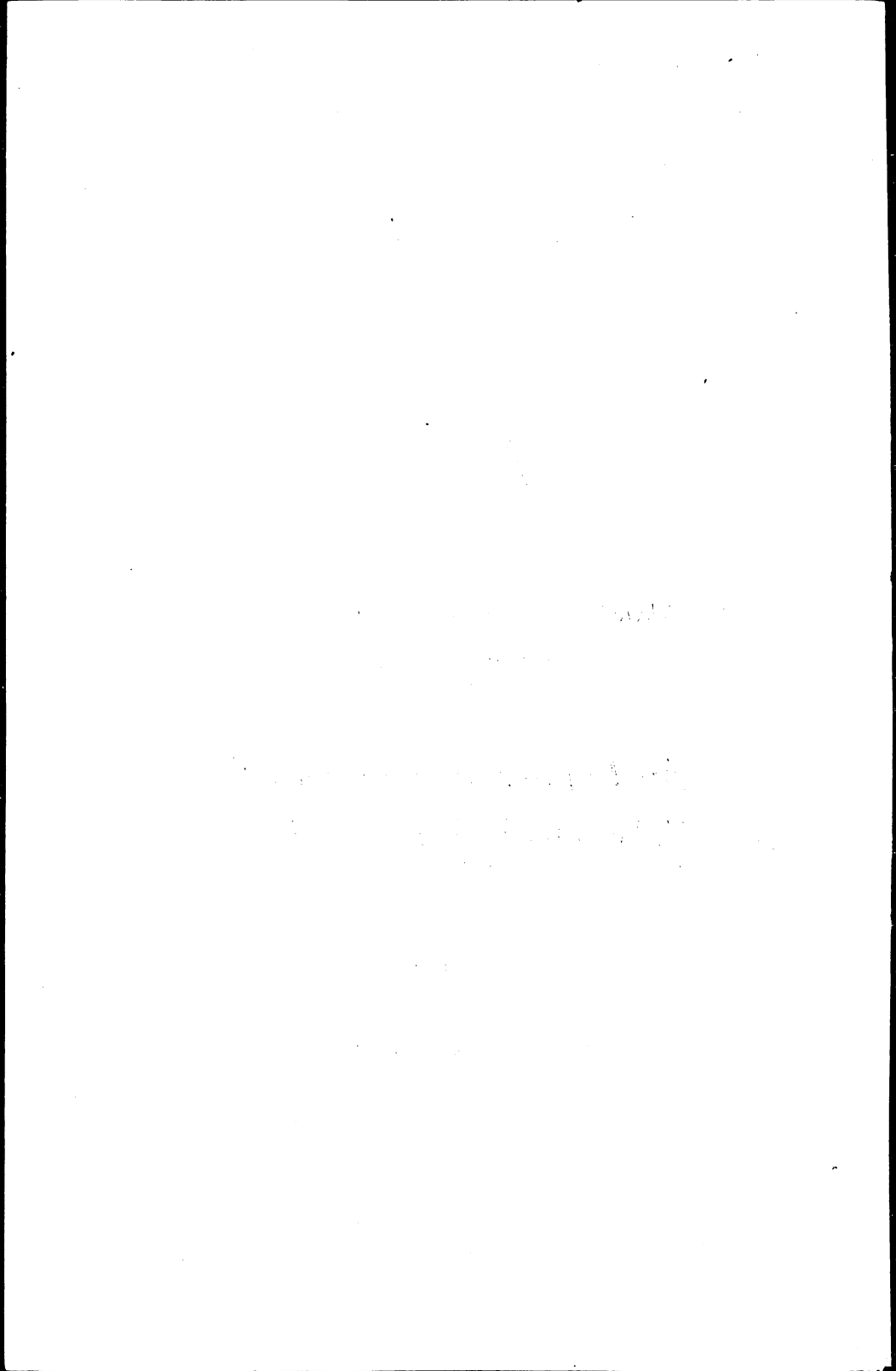
*by*

W. J. G. COWIE, M.A.

*and*

A. K. GILES, B.Sc. (Econ.)

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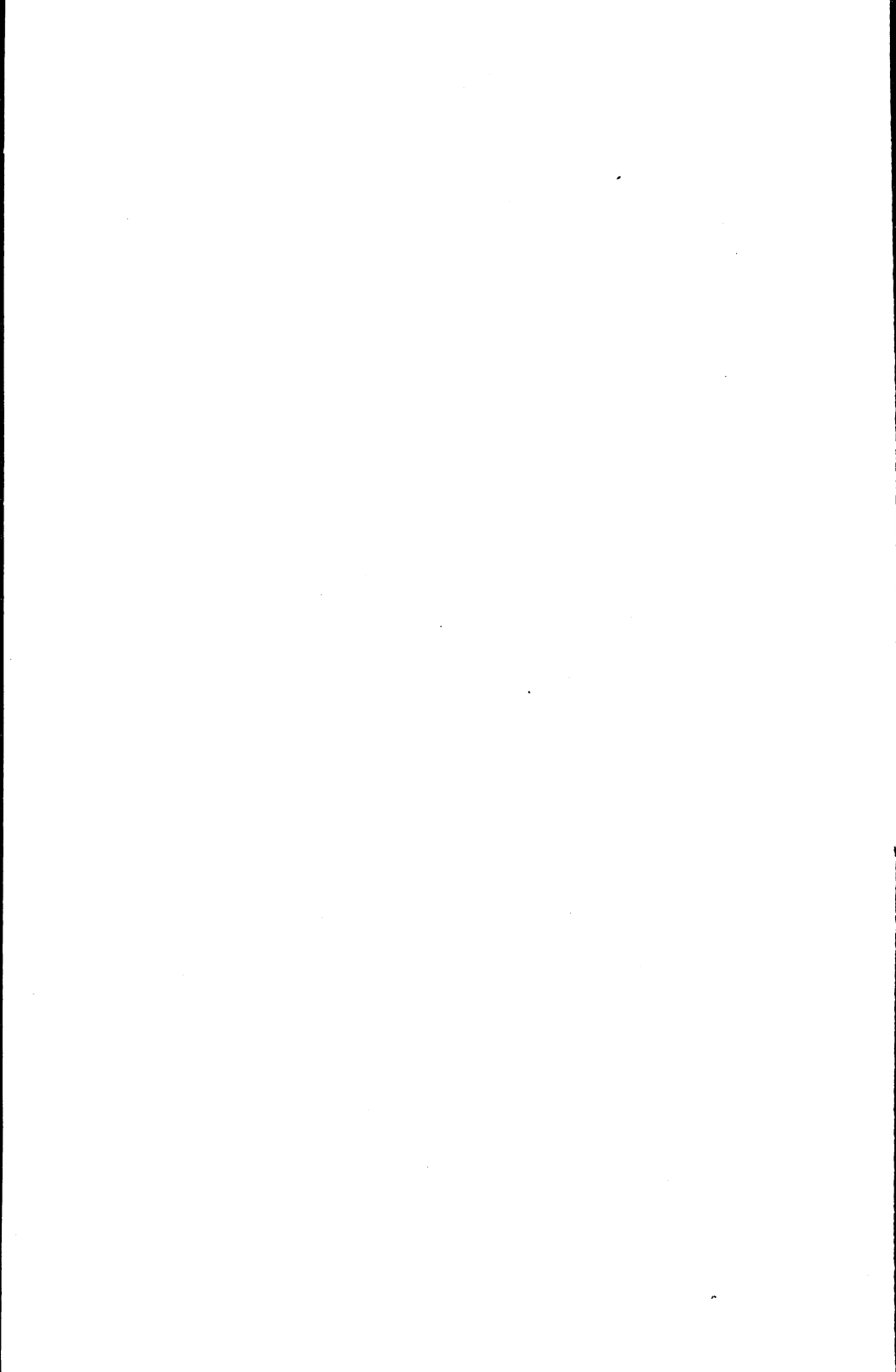
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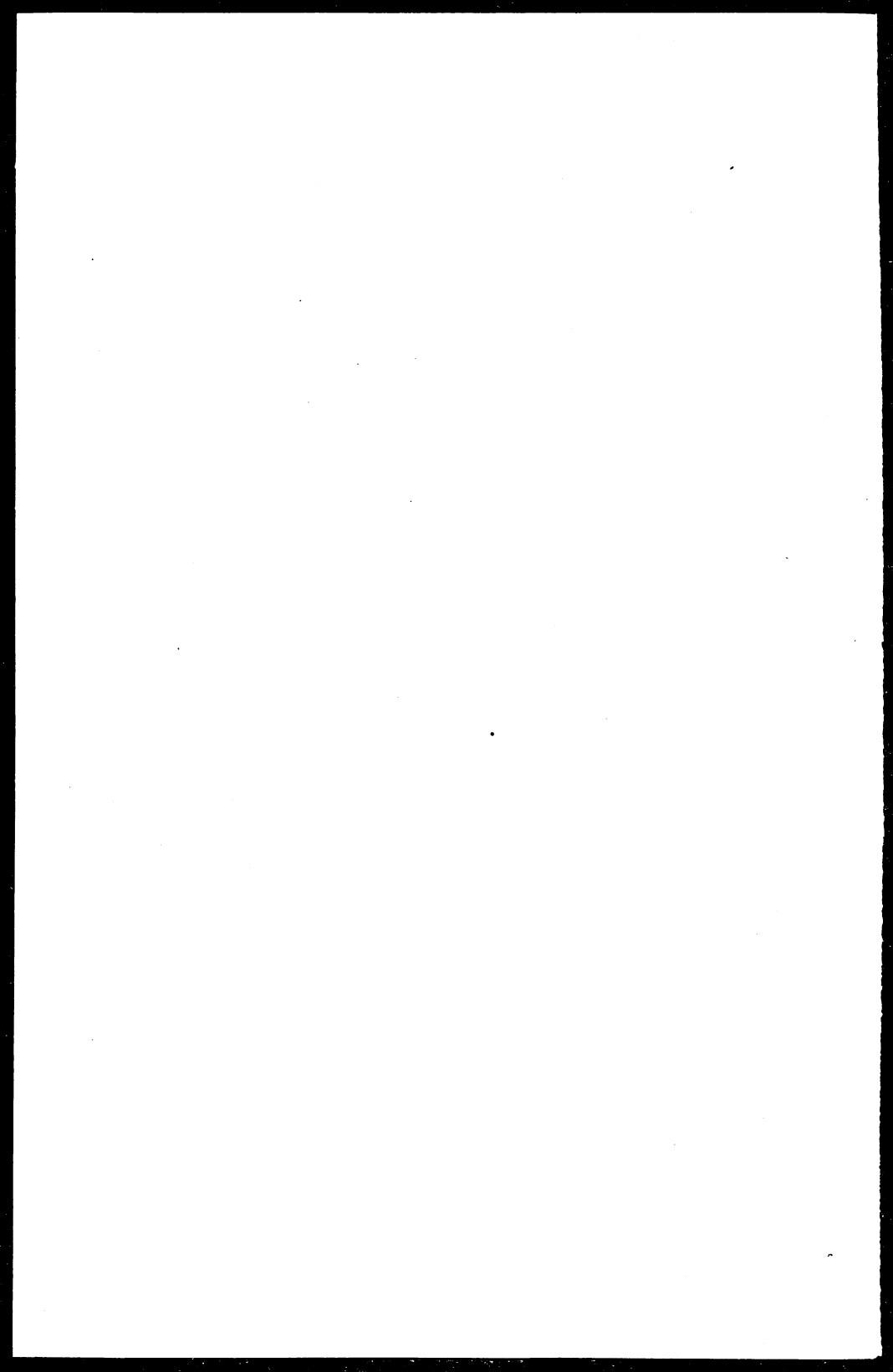
*December, 1957*



### **Acknowledgment**

The authors wish to express their thanks to all those who completed questionnaires and who therefore made this report possible. It is only regretted that much interesting detail and comment has of necessity been lost in the analysis.

Thanks also are due to the General Secretary of the National Union of Agricultural Workers, Mr. H. Collison, for his kind co-operation and in particular to Mr. J. M. Wilson, District Organiser, Gloucestershire, for his interest and assistance at all stages of the survey.



## Introduction

DURING the last few years the decline in the number of workers on the land has attracted considerable attention. There has been some controversy about the seriousness of the social and economic effects of the so-called drift: some contending that these are harmful, others that they represent a necessary adjustment to changing economic conditions. This report, however, is not concerned directly with the effects of the undisputed fall in numbers, but rather with the causes of that fall. Whether the effects are desirable or undesirable appears at the moment to be a question on which much evidence can be produced to support either contention. For example, using the technique of comparing standard labour requirements with actual labour available it can be shown, for the County of Gloucestershire at least, that the fall in numbers since 1950 could have been even greater than it was without creating a shortage of man-power in the aggregate. Moreover, experience in the field supports the thesis that the drift has not caused a general shortage of labour. On the other hand, it may be asserted that it is not the overall decline in numbers that is vital but the way in which the decline is being accomplished. The important aspects of the problem may be two-fold; first, the qualitative element in the decline and, second, the change in the structure of the labour force. Are the causes of the drift such as to result in a falling-off in the quality of the labour force and/or a failure to attract and retain young recruits?

Table I illustrates both the fall in the numbers of workers in various categories and the tendency towards a changing structure in this smaller labour force. The table relates only to Gloucestershire since the survey on which this report is based was carried out in that county: both the index numbers and percentage figures are calculated from the June censuses published by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The index numbers have been based on 1951, the first year in which the returns showed no Women's Land Army or P.O.W. labour. The overall significance of the indices is the consistently similar downward trend of all categories, except for a slight recovery between 1952 and 1954, of the numbers of under 18's, and the much steeper downward trend of the 18-21 age group. The sudden check in the downward trend



TABLE I

## The Agricultural Working Population in Gloucestershire 1939/1956

Year	Index Numbers 1951 = 100						Total Regular	Total Workers	Under 18	18-21	21-65	65+	Total Regular Males as per cent of Total Regular	Total Regular Males as per cent of Total Workers	Total Regular as per cent of Total Workers
	Regular Male														
	Under 18	18-21	21-65	65+	Total										
1939	90	78	91	*	90	88	82	9	8	83	*	95	84	88	
1947	111	92	92	117	95	118	114	10	9	75	6	76	63	84	
1948	90	100	100	96	99	105	106	8	10	78	4	89	71	80	
1949	91	102	104	105	103	106	107	8	9	78	5	92	74	81	
1950	97	106	103	95	103	105	106	8	10	78	4	93	74	80	
1951	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	9	9	77	5	94	77	81	
1952	94	78	97	101	95	95	98	9	8	79	5	94	74	79	
1953	95	59	97	94	93	93	97	9	6	80	5	94	73	78	
1954	98	59	94	87	91	91	93	9	6	80	4	93	74	80	
1955	92	64	89	90	87	87	90	9	7	79	5	94	73	78	
1956	84	51†	84†	86	81	81	85	9	6†	80†	5	94	72	77	

\* N/a—included in 21-65 age-group.

† Not strictly comparable with previous figure for the 18-21 and 21-65 age-groups; the division being 18-20 and 20-65.

of the 18-21 category in 1954 would appear to be the result of the Deferment Order in January of that year, whereas the apparent resumption of the downward trend in 1956 is, in part at least, misleading since the figure refers to the 18-20 category only. For all other categories of regular males and for the total regular male labour force the decline since 1947 has been fairly substantial and in 1956 the figures are noticeably smaller than comparable figures for 1939. On the other hand, although the indices for total workers show a similar decline since 1947, in 1956 there were still more of all types of workers than there were in 1939. This was achieved by a relative increase in the utilisation of casual and part-time labour, these categories representing an increasingly larger proportion of the total labour force over the years: from 12 per cent in 1939 to 23 per cent in 1956. Conversely, the proportion of regular male labour in the total labour force had fallen from 84 per cent in 1939 to 72 per cent in 1956. It might be concluded from this trend alone that a decline in the quality of the labour force is inevitable assuming that the high degree of skill required for many jobs on the land now is unlikely to be acquired by casual or part-time labour.

Within the regular male labour force itself the only significant structural change evident from official figures so far is the decline in the proportion of the 18-21 age group, accounted for by National Service. The under 18's have remained steady at some 9 per cent and the 65+ group at around 5 per cent. Little can be gleaned from the figures of the major proportion of the regular male labour force except that it would seem to be rather smaller now than pre-war. The real nature of the change, if any, could only be seen from an extensive breakdown of the figures into smaller age groups over a number of years to show the relative change in the proportions within the 21-65 category of the younger and older workers. It has not been possible to provide this analysis but it is the feeling of many people closely connected with agricultural workers in Gloucestershire that such a breakdown would show that the drift was being achieved by a relative fall in the numbers of the younger workers within this category. Some indications to support this feeling have emerged from the survey under review, and a recent analysis of national figures points to the same conclusion.\*

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\* "A note on the decline in numbers of farm workers in Great Britain" by J. D. Hughes, *The Farm Economist*, Vol. VIII, No. 9, pp. 34-39.

## THE SURVEY

THE foregoing brief analysis of the drift from the land provides sufficient justification for suspecting that, although a fall in overall numbers may be desirable, the way in which it is being achieved might be highly damaging to the industry in the long run. If this interpretation is realistic then some attempt to discover the causes of the drift seems justified. The following is an outline of a fact-finding survey in this field.

To reduce the time required to handle the data, a restricted area, rather than the whole province, i.e. the counties of Gloucester, Hereford, Somerset, Wilts and Worcester, was decided on and Gloucestershire was chosen because contact with workers' organisations had been established previously. Briefly, the aim was to contact people who had left the industry and discover why they had done so (Group I) and to survey those still on the land to find out something about their working and living conditions as well as their views on these conditions in relation to the question of leaving (Group II). This second Group was intended to provide a means of checking the continued prevalence of certain working and living conditions given by those in Group I as their reasons for leaving. It was not considered feasible to ask too many detailed questions of Group I as some may have been out of agriculture too long to answer such questions reasonably accurately. Even within these limits it has been necessary to compromise between the two extremes, of acquiring as much information as might be of value, and of cutting the questionnaires to the minimum to encourage recipients to complete and return them. The questionnaires shown in Appendix I\* are the result of this compromise between brevity and comprehensiveness. To save time also, the data for this survey was collected by distributing the questionnaire by post rather than by using the admittedly more satisfactory method of personal interviews.

Distribution of both groups of questionnaires was facilitated by the assistance of the N.U.A.W. organisation in Gloucestershire. After other possible sources from which names of ex-agricultural workers might have been obtained

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\* For the reader's convenience, the questions have also been reproduced in footnotes where necessary.

had been explored without success, the Union was approached and, through its District Organiser and his branch secretaries, supplied 609 names for Group I. All these names were obtained by the branch secretaries from people currently engaged in agriculture, from any others they thought might help, and from their own records. Obviously no claim is made that this is in any way a random sample. The same applies to Group II, names for which were supplied from Union headquarters' current membership register. A random selection of names was picked out from the register, giving a total sample of 772, all Union members. Failing the personal interview technique no other practicable method was available to obtain a sample of workers. In Group II therefore, there may be a bias towards official Union policy but there is no reason to suppose that, in the factual part of the questionnaire, the facts elicited would differ in any way from those which might have been obtained from a group of non-Union workers: unless, of course, it is asserted that Union members are, on the average, better off materially (or worse off) than non-Union members. As for the opinion part of the questionnaire some Union bias is inevitable: were the N.U.A.W. in any way comparable with some of the stronger industrial unions this bias might be strong but, in the nature of its organisation, and in the individuality of its members, it is open to doubt whether view-points are strongly influenced by membership. Slavish following of the "party-line" is rare among N.U.A.W. members.

Of the total number of questionnaires sent out in each group, a response of 43 per cent was obtained from Group I and 50 per cent from Group II. However, in both groups rejections had to be made on various grounds, e.g. returned unanswered, incompletely answered, illegible, not strictly within the group definition, employed on horticultural holdings and so on. The final result was a total of 232 (38 per cent) suitable questionnaires in Group I and 313 (41 per cent) in Group II.

## SECTION I

### THE ANALYSIS OF GROUP I RETURNS— WORKERS WHO HAVE LEFT AGRICULTURE

#### General Summary

THE processing of the data collected by this survey, at least as far as this report is concerned, is restricted to a straightforward account of the facts. This for two reasons: in some ways it does not lend itself to refined statistical manipulation, and being non-random, the general validity of any results ensuing from such manipulation would be suspect. Hence the following is simply an attempt to portray in broad outline what has been learned about some of the people who have left the land and their own avowed reasons for doing so. Insofar as it does this, something concrete will have been contributed to the scant knowledge available on the general problem.

First then, a general picture of those results of the whole Group which highlight some aspects of the nature of the movement from agriculture.

The replies to question 1—"In what year did you leave agricultural employment?" show a steady increase in the numbers leaving annually since 1950. There were no replies given in 2 per cent of the questionnaires and of the remainder, 14 per cent left before 1950, 23 per cent between 1950 and 1952, 56 per cent between 1953 and 1955 and 5 per cent in the first half of 1956. Much of this result is probably a reflection of the way in which the names were collected and it is, therefore, not possible to draw any conclusions about the rate of leaving over the last few years. The following question, 2\*, was intended to provide some measure of the flow outwards of the "genuine" agricultural worker. Ninety-seven per cent replied to this question and 61 per cent had never been employed outside agriculture and only one-third of the total had, at one time, been engaged in some other work. Unfortunately, the second half of question 2, asking for details of previous non-agricultural work and period of employment, was not answered in sufficient detail in most cases to provide any useful

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\*2. Had you previously worked in any other industry? If so, give type of work and period of employment.

information. All that can be stated as regards the type of work done previously is that in the vast majority of cases it was unskilled labouring, driving or factory work of considerable variety, and there was a distinct tendency for similar work to be taken after leaving agriculture. As for the period of employment in previous occupations, again so many omitted to supply this information that little can be learned from the remainder. Question 4\* is obviously related to question 2, and it may be noted here that two-thirds of the sample had worked on the land 11 years or over, and among the remaining one-third, 33 per cent, being under 25, could not have worked more than 11 years on the land. Taking the results of replies to question 2 and question 4 in relation to the respondents' ages, more than two-thirds of the sample appear to have been "genuine" agricultural workers in that they had done no other work before leaving agriculture, having spent all the years since leaving school on the land.

The replies to question 6, asking for the number of employers in the last five years, established the fact that the sample did not contain a high proportion of either undesirable or difficult employees since 92 per cent of the respondents had no more than two employers in the last five years and some 80 per cent only one. As for the type of work done since leaving the land, again, due to the vagueness of so many of the replies, all that was learned was that over two-thirds went to unskilled work, 20 per cent to semi-skilled and the remainder into non-classifiable jobs. The vast majority agreed that their standard of living had increased since leaving agriculture, only 12 per cent, many of whom were in the older age groups and for various reasons unable to retain whole-time jobs, replied in the negative. Concerning the question of mobility it appears that work of the type which appealed to these people or work which they were capable of doing and willing to do was available on the spot in most cases. Sixty-two per cent and 81 per cent stayed in their houses and their villages or districts respectively, and, whilst 36 per cent left their houses mostly as a result of having to give up tied cottages, only 16 per cent were involved in moving out of their villages or districts.

The analysis of the reasons given for having left the land proved at once the most interesting and most complex aspect of the questionnaire. The possible methods of handling and presenting the facts are so numerous that this report could be

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\*4. How many years had you worked on the land?

extended considerably in this, its most important aspect. However, a brief summary of the overall results will suffice to present what appear to be the main causes of the movement of workers from agriculture.

To enable the numerous reasons to be presented in a manageable form the major problem to be tackled was that of classification. Some form of classification had to be adopted in which to mould the infinite variety of reasons. This involved a certain amount of simplification and interpretation in the course of which some of the qualitative element in the answers was bound to suffer. Interpretation of reasons in order to fit them into specific groups was avoided, leaving, as can be seen from Chart I, a fairly large number classified as "Other Reasons".

*Classification:*

By a lengthy process of empirical investigation, the following classification was adopted as the most appropriate for this study. Some explanation of the width of each group is called for because of the aforementioned difficulties of simplification.

1. *Pay*

This class includes all reasons, however worded, which imply that wages were so low as to induce the respondents to move into some other occupation.

2. *Long Hours*

This class includes all references to the length of the working day or week in agriculture whether referring to the time required to earn the basic wage or to earn what was considered a necessary amount over that basic.

3. *Uncertain Hours*

In essence this class comprises all reasons which can be briefly described as lamenting the lack of a five-day week: it includes references to the necessity for week-end work, early starts, late finishes, the broken working day and general instability of working hours.

4. *Health*

This class consists of all references to general or specific reasons of health; whether the result of the working conditions and/or industrial injury, and others not accounted for in this way.

5. *Redundant*

In addition to cases of economic redundancy, a variety of other cases is included in this category, such as leaving because of the retirement of an employer, because of the sale of a holding or being sacked as a result of illness.

#### 6. *Working Conditions*

A considerable variety of reasons is embraced by this classification. They range from complaints of the actual work itself to complaints against nature. The work is arduous and wearying (especially in comparison with their present employment); too much drudgery; lack of protective clothing (supplied); isolation from fellow men and having to work outdoors in all weather.

#### 7. *Tied Cottage*

Here are gathered all complaints against the system of tied cottages. The class includes complaints about the use of these either as a weapon or an enticement by employers, about the insecurity imparted to workers' lives, about loss of independence resulting from employment decisions being complicated by loss of house-room and so on.

#### 8. *Accommodation*

A more compact group of complaints, differentiated from the previous reason, in that they relate to the conditions of tied cottages as against the system itself. Within this definition, however, the criticisms of this accommodation are extremely varied from lack of elementary sanitary facilities to lack of "Lebensraum".

#### 9. *No Prospects*

An even more compact set of reasons alleging that agriculture holds no prospects of advancement whatever.

#### 10. *Change*

A simple statement of the desire for change of employment, sometimes with reasons, but mostly without, is the criterion for inclusion in this category.

#### 11. *Bad Employer*

A rather broad class in which are included all reasons arising from criticism of employers. These vary from the purely personal to the wide general statement. On the personal plane—meanness, harshness, arbitrariness, lack of appreciation and lack of good faith: on the general plane—inefficiency.

#### 12. *Other*

Any reasons given not allowed for in 1-11 are included here. A full discussion is not called for at this point but some such reasons are as follows:

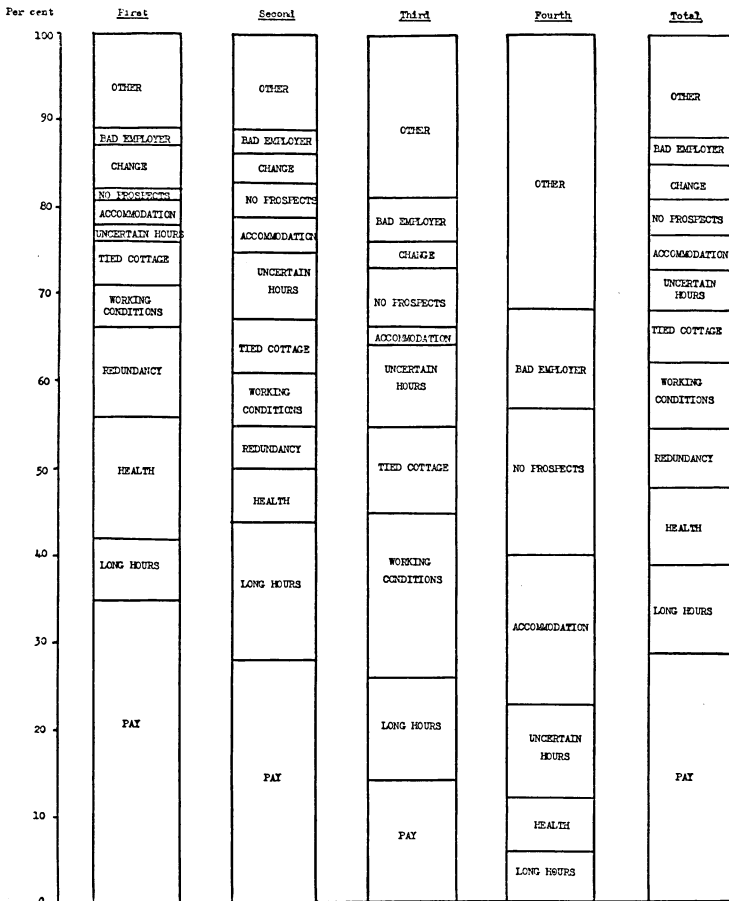
Lack of security; desire for independence; lack of interest; compulsion to take out-of-season holidays; desire for a better standard of living; disagreement with employer; no incentives; death of employer; no transport facilities.



Chart I illustrates the analysis of the total number of reasons in the sample, as well as the distribution of the reasons according to whether they were first, second, third or fourth reasons. As far as this general mathematical treatment allows conclusions to be drawn, it appears that outstanding amongst the causes providing the stimulus for workers to leave the land are low wages, long and uncertain hours, general working conditions, and both the system and state of tied cottages. Ill health, culminating in voluntary or forced withdrawal, must also be included here. Within this group of reasons, low wages

CHART I

Group I. Reasons for Leaving Agriculture Analysed by Order of Occurrence



alone accounts for almost 50 per cent of the total and is undoubtedly the most important single contributory cause of the drift from agriculture.

However, before accepting such a general conclusion as evidence of the fundamental problems behind the movement of workers from the land, some further light can be obtained from a more detailed study of these reasons in relation to their impact on the different age-groups of workers. In fact, since the major part of the whole question is the way in which the decline in regular workers is being achieved rather than the absolute decline itself, this approach to the analysis is much more important than the general approach outlined above.

### Age-Group Analysis

The ensuing discussion of the survey is based on a breakdown of the returned questionnaires by age-groups. It was decided to use a ten-year period giving this age-group breakdown—16-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65 and 66 plus. The respective numbers of questionnaires in each of these groups were 25, 42, 56, 65, 37 and 7 of the total of 232.

Table II and Chart II illustrate the results achieved by this breakdown: Table II being a comprehensive summary of the questionnaire, excluding *Question 10\**, and Chart II a similar summary of question 10.

Several interesting points emerge for Table II†. The information on acreage of farm shows that equal proportions have left the 76-150, 151-300 and over 300 acreage groups and only 8 per cent the 0-75 acreage group. However, of the total number of respondents in the 0-75 group, all but two were employed on farms between 50 and 75 acres. In 1951, before the rapid decline in the numbers of regular male workers, the distribution of these workers in the various acreage groups in Gloucestershire was 7 per cent in the 50-75 group, 21 per cent in the 76-150 group, 27 per cent in the 151-300 group and 27 per cent in the 300+ group. The close similarity between these proportions and those shown in Table II provides some grounds for concluding that no particular size group of farms is suffering more from the drift than others.

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\*10. (a) What main reason or reasons caused you to leave the land?  
(b) In order of importance, what other reasons, if any, influenced your decision?

†The 66+ group is omitted from this discussion as it contains only seven returns.

TABLE II  
Summary of Group I Replies to Questions 1-9  
Analysed by Age-Groups

Numbers of questionnaires .. .. .		25	42	56	65	37	7	232
		16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66+	All Age-groups
		Per cent (a)						
Married .. .. .		28	76	89	97	97	57	83
Single .. .. .		72	24	11	3	3	43	17
Numbers of children ..	0	57	28	8	16	25	0	19
	1-3	43	62	76	56	64	25	63
	4-6	0	10	14	16	6	50	13
	7+	0	0	2	10	6	25	5
Acreage of Farm on which last employed	0-75	16	7	11	8	3	0	8
	76-150	28	33	27	29	27	14	28
	151-300	28	40	21	20	35	43	28
	300+	8	17	34	35	27	43	28
Year groups in which left agriculture	Pre-1950	0	7	14	18	22	29	14
	1950-1952	8	21	23	29	19	43	23
	1953-1955	80	67	52	45	59	29	56
	1956	12	5	7	5	0	0	5
Any previous work ..	Yes	48	26	43	34	32	29	36
	No	48	71	57	63	59	71	61
Service in H.M. Forces	Yes	56	38	34	18	84	57	41
	No	40	62	66	82	16	43	59
Employment in agriculture by year groups	1-10	92	40	36	11	11	0	31
	11-20	8	60	20	12	0	20	21
	21-30	0	0	43	35	14	0	22
	30+	0	0	0	42	73	71	25
Type of work on the land	General	64	69	45	52	68	86	58
	Tractorman	20	17	32	15	8	0	19
	Stockman	12	14	21	26	19	0	19
	Managerial	0	0	2	5	3	0	2
	Other	4	0	0	2	3	14	2
Number of employers during last five years	Two or less	64	93	93	98	97	100	92
	More than two	20	7	7	2	3	0	6
Type of work done since leaving the land	Unskilled	60	74	64	63	78	57	67
	Semi-skilled	32	21	27	17	14	0	21
	Other	8	5	9	20	8	0	11
Increase in standard of living since leaving land	Yes	88	91	84	88	78	29	84
	No	4	2	16	9	19	57	12
Left (1) house ..	{ Yes	12	21	41	46	40	43	36
	{ No	80	74	59	52	60	57	62
(2) village or district	{ Yes	12	5	16	23	14	29	16
	{ No	80	90	82	72	86	71	81

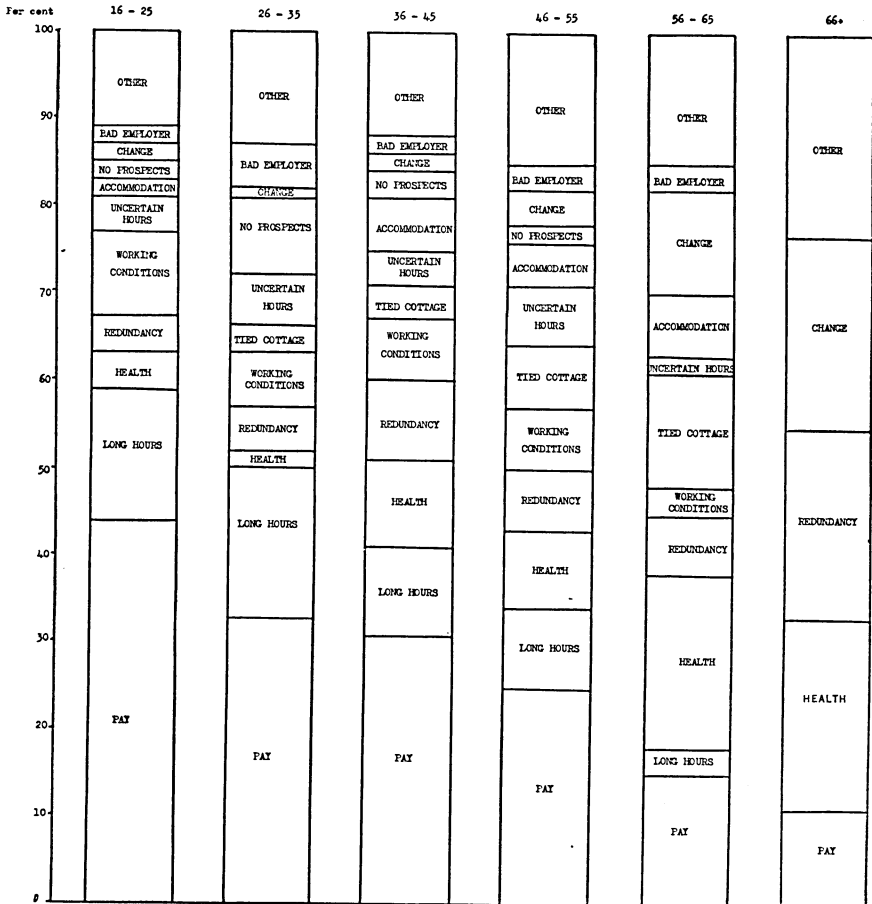
(a) Totals of less than 100 per cent are accounted for by "No replies": in case of "numbers of children" the percentage relates to married persons only.

In all except the youngest age-group, where the division was half and half, approximately two-thirds of the respondents had had no experience of work outside agriculture. This, together with the fact that the proportion of the 16-25 age-

group which had more than two employers in the last five years on the land was considerably higher than in any other age-group, reflects the instability of the younger workers. The details given of the length of time spent in agricultural employment by each age-group also highlight the contention drawn from the general analysis that the great bulk of the respondents were genuine agricultural workers. Specialisation in the type of work done was more common in the 36-45 age-group in

CHART II

Group I. Reasons for Leaving Agriculture Analysed by Age-Groups



which over half the respondents were either tractor-men or stockmen, compared with 41 per cent in the 46-55 age-group and approximately 30 per cent in the two youngest age-groups. In the two oldest age-groups, specialisation was far less prevalent. These figures support the conclusion that it is not only general workers who are leaving the land, although comparison with Group II proportions suggests that specialisation, especially in the youngest age-groups, may well help to retain workers. Similarly, more of those who left in the younger age-groups were attracted by or able to obtain semi-skilled or other specialised work compared with the older age-groups. There can be little doubt about the general ability to raise the standard of living on quitting agriculture except for those at or over retiring age. The decision to leave the land, for about 40 per cent of all those over 36, also involved a change of accommodation, voluntary or involuntary. Movement between districts, however, was rather less uniform. Of those who moved from their houses, all in the 16-25 group also left their district, and in the succeeding age-groups 22 per cent, 39 per cent, 50 per cent and 33 per cent did likewise.

Using the same classification of reasons supplied for leaving the land as in Chart I, Chart II provides an analysis of these by age-groups. No account is taken of the order of reasons in Chart II however: here the percentages are based simply on the number of times any one reason is mentioned in relation to the total number of reasons given in each age group. Except in the 56-65 age-group low wages is the most important single reason for leaving the land: its relative importance varies directly with age, i.e., it forms 44 per cent of the total number of reasons in the 16-25 age-group and falls progressively to 15 per cent in the 56-65 age-group. Long working hours shows exactly the same trend, falling from 15 per cent in the youngest age-group to 3 per cent in the 56-65 group. In the case of working conditions the same relationship between age and the number of times these are mentioned persists, though less consistently. Health, on the other hand, shows a definite reversal of this trend, rising from 4 per cent in the youngest age-group to 20 per cent in the 56-65 group, while redundancy at a peak in the middle age-group, falls away on either side. The trend of complaints against the system of tied cottages is similar to that of health reasons: none occur in the replies of the youngest age-group (of whom only 28 per cent were married) but such complaints rise from 3 per cent of the total reasons in the 26-35 to 13 per cent in the 56-65 age-

groups. On the other hand, complaints about the state of the tied cottages account for around 6 per cent of all reasons given in the groups between 36 and 65, are not mentioned in the 26-35 age-group and comprise 2 per cent in the 16-25 age-group. Their relative importance within the youngest age-group is more significant than the 2 per cent would suggest owing to the much smaller proportion of married men in this group than in any of the others. The uncertainty of working hours, as against the length of them, seems to carry about the same weight in all the age-groups except the 56-65 one, where it is of relatively little significance. The fact that there are no prospects of advancement, either in status or reward, however, seems to weigh far more heavily with the 26-35 age-group than any other, and is of no importance for the over 56's. A rather odd feature of the desire for a change of employment as a reason for leaving is that, after the normal age when most people have come to accept a given occupation, in this instance this desire is strongest in the two oldest age-groups. It may be that men in these age-groups are beginning to find the work too arduous. On the other hand, a fairly steady and small proportion, 2 to 3 per cent of the total number of reasons in each group, except the 26-35 one, when it rises to 5 per cent, occurs under the heading of bad employers. The numbers of "other reasons" given again tend to increase with age as does the variety within this classification. However, there is a noticeable change in emphasis and recurrence of some of the reasons within the age-groups themselves. In the 16-25 and 56-65 age-groups, of the "other reasons" specified the greater proportion are given as first reasons, whereas in the three intervening age-groups "other reasons" tend to be secondary and are often merely amplifications of some more strongly-felt aspect of the individual's situation. Within the 16-25 age-group these other reasons are related either to a change in conditions or in a person's attitude to conditions existing prior to service in the Forces, while amongst the 56-65 group they are more varied and include a number of criticisms of farmers in general. Few "other reasons" are given as first reasons in the 26-35 age-group and no single "other reason" occurs more than once. In the 36-55 groups several "other reasons" are mentioned more than once as first reasons: lack of interest, insecurity, too much dependence on the whims of employers, serious differences of opinion with employers, and a more general criticism of the relationship between employers and employees in agriculture.

## The Association of Reasons for Leaving the Land by Age-Groups

Since many respondents supplied more than one reason for having left the land, it is appropriate to discuss the association of reasons, if any, by the respondents. For example, it is of some importance in weighing the significance of the various reasons to know whether complaints as to low wages are associated with complaints concerning hours and conditions; whether complaints about the system and/or condition of tied cottages are associated with any one other or group of other reasons and so on.

The approach to this analysis adopted here was to widen the reason classification into two major divisions with the second sub-divided into three sections. The major division rests on an interpretation of all the reasons given into those which are embraced by a narrow interpretation of industrial relations, i.e. wages, hours and conditions of employment, and secondly, the wider interpretation of that field including all other employer-employee relationships. This second division is broken down into three sections to highlight the relative importance of health and redundancy, tied cottages, and "other reasons" taken together. Within this framework the analysis rests on the examination of reasons given as the main cause in relation to these others mentioned as secondary to them. Within each age-group, first reasons are analysed in the way described above and associated secondary reasons in the same way. The percentage figures quoted in Table III are derived from the total number of reasons given in each age-group: that is, for example, of all the reasons quoted in the 16-25 age-group for leaving agriculture, 39 per cent were concerned with pay, hours or conditions of employment and were mentioned as main reasons.

There is little room for speculation about the results of this analysis in the two youngest age-groups: pay, hours and working conditions are of great importance as major reasons for leaving the land, and this appears even more clearly when the number of times they are mentioned as secondary reasons is considered. In the case of the 16-25 age-group "other reasons" are of some importance, but, as explained earlier, these tend to be imponderables, and anyhow, were aggravated by dissatisfaction with pay, hours and working conditions. The 26-35 age-group presents a similar picture since, even though health and redundancy, and the tied cottage become

TABLE III  
The Association of Various Reasons Analysed by Age-Groups.  
Percentages of total reasons in each age-group.

Age-Group	Pay, Hours and Working Conditions							Health and Redundancy				The Tied Cottage				Other				Pay, hours and working conditions as proportion of total number of reasons stated
	Reason One			Associated Reasons				Reason One	Associated Reasons			Reason One	Associated Reasons			Reason One	Associated Reasons			
	Pay	H. & W.C.	Pay, H. & W.C.	Pay, H. & W.C.	H. & R.	T.C.	Other	H. & R.	Pay, H. & W.C.	T.C.	Other	T.C.	Pay, H. & W.C.	H. & R.	Other	Other	Pay, H. & W.C.	H. & R.	T.C.	
16-25	28	11	39	22	2	2	7	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	11	0	0	74
26-35	22	11	33	20	0	1	10	8	4	0	7	2	2	0	1	6	6	0	0	65
36-45	22	4	26	16	2	3	8	15	4	2	1	5	4	1	1	7	3	0	2	53
46-55	16	11	27	15	2	6	10	14	4	1	0	5	3	1	2	8	1	0	1	50
56-65	7	4	11	4	2	4	2	20	2	2	0	11	6	2	4	24	2	0	4	25



important primary reasons again these are heightened by resentment with pay, hours and conditions. Under the classification "health and redundant", redundancy in the sense that employers were cutting their labour force was prominent. The association pattern in the 36-45 and 46-55 age-groups is somewhat the same as in the two youngest age-groups, but dissatisfaction with pay, hours and conditions becomes relatively less important, although still outstanding, and more attention is concentrated on health, redundancy and the tied cottage. Quite a number of respondents in these groups suffered from ill-health as a result of the type of work they did on the land, e.g. eczema contracted from working with cows, milk festers, etc. and had to leave because other farm work was not available, or suffered some illness which unsuited them for the hard work entailed in their agricultural occupation. Of those who were redundant, many gave no explanation of why this was so but several lost their jobs when their employers moved, retired or died, and quite a few were displaced by a farmer's son leaving school and coming to work on the farm. In the few instances where the main reason of either ill-health or redundancy was elaborated, the feeling is that these secondary reasons would not in themselves have motivated the move from agriculture. As for the complaints about the "tied cottage", these were mostly levelled at the state of the accommodation and the association with pay in these cases may be a reflection of the desire to secure enough wages to pay for decent accommodation.

A pronounced difference in the association pattern is discernible in the 56-65 age-group where there is evidence of more single-mindedness than in any other age-group. There is less tendency to give secondary reasons in connection with any one primary reason and, of course, there is a substantial change in emphasis of primary reasons. Here the "other reasons" are the most important primary reasons, and they are generally not associated with any other reasons. Desire for a change of employment, inability to adjust oneself to working with younger farmers on the retirement or death of an employer, and farmers' bad faith, inefficiency and unappreciativeness are each quoted as the sole reason for leaving by many of those giving "other reasons" as their primary one. Again, few secondary complaints are associated with the next most important primary reason, "health and redundancy". This largely because in the majority of instances ill-health required the adoption of lighter work irrespective of other considerations.

However, several respondents here were, it is felt, victims of the two-fold circumstance of being ill and old. After a spell of illness they were sacked on returning to work and it is fairly certain that their age was a big factor in their losing employment. They give no secondary reasons since they were obviously filled with a strong sense of grievance at their treatment. Pay, hours and working conditions are of third-rate importance in this group and again little associated with other reasons.

Finally, the question of the tied cottage appears to be much more in the forefront in this age-group, not so much on the question of the condition of these dwellings as the system itself. Only one respondent appears to have been ejected by court order from a tied cottage, but the element of fear and insecurity about the future is evident from all the other respondents. Again the question of pay as a secondary reason is associated with this fear and the need to rent or buy alternative accommodation before retiring or, worse, being sacked.

## SECTION II

### ANALYSIS OF GROUP II RETURNS FROM CURRENT AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

It will be recalled that 313 completed questionnaires provided the data for the Group II analysis. The distribution of these respondents, according to age-groups, was as follows:

Total	16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66+
313	31	72	81	77	41	11

It has already been stated that the main purpose of this particular questionnaire was to attempt to provide a check on "the prevalence of certain working and living conditions given by those in Group I as their reasons for leaving". To what extent, in fact, do these conditions apply to the current agricultural labour force, and to what extent are they likely, if at all, to perpetuate the drift? While the Group I survey gives the reasons why specific workers have actually left the land, and consequently forms the basis of this report, the Group II survey has an importance of its own in that, so far as its members are concerned, the "damage", if you like, has not yet been

done. Those still working on the land may or may not have considered leaving and will be influenced in any such consideration by future changes in their status and conditions.

Some difficulty was experienced here in wording particular questions, which, by the nature of things, could not be as objective as those asked of Group I. Questions asking for value judgements, or opinions, could hardly be avoided. The phrase "seriously considered leaving the land" would no doubt be interpreted differently by different people. Accepting these and similar shortcomings, however, it was hoped that the final version of the questionnaire would throw further light on the main topic, and in particular on the information obtained from Group I.

A copy of the questionnaire appears in Appendix I and a summary of all replies is shown in Table IV\*, Appendix II. The order of questions was arranged so that those requiring the more factual answers preceded those asking for opinion and comment. Where appropriate, the answers to these questions are related to the information already obtained from Group I.

If the essence of this report has been to discover what factors have combined to "push" or "pull" agricultural workers from the land to other forms of industry then *Question 1* attempts to discover just the opposite: namely, "Have you done any non-agricultural work?" and "If so, why did you move into agricultural work?" Only two respondents failed to answer this question. Sixty-two per cent of the sample had never had experience in any other industry compared with 37 per cent who had. This latter figure compares with 36 per cent in Group I, but the distribution within the six age-groups differs between the two samples as follows:

Percentage of Workers with Previous Non-Agricultural Experience

Age (Years)	16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66+
Group I .. ..	% 48	% 26	% 43	% 34	% 32	% 29
Group II .. ..	19	36	49	39	34	18

\* Some information concerning size and location of farms has been omitted from this analysis.

Little significance, it is felt, can be attached to the figures for the 66+ age-group, in view of the small number of useable replies in both samples. In fact, the only large difference between the two groups occurs in the youngest age-groups. This difference at once suggests that where young men have not had early experience of other industries they are least likely to leave farming after a comparatively short spell. This would seem to emphasise the importance to the industry of obtaining young entrants at the school-leaving age. On the other hand, it is appreciated that in rural areas many young people will try various types of employment for a while including agriculture, and the 48 per cent between 16 and 25 in Group I may merely reflect this fact.

In view of the emphasis often placed on the tied cottage system as a cause of dissatisfaction, it is interesting to note that the most frequently occurring reason given for returning to agriculture from other jobs was "to get accommodation" (30 per cent). Other frequently occurring reasons given were "the appeal of the job" (19 per cent), "health consideration" (11 per cent), "to obtain a job" (9 per cent), and "for a fresh-air life", in several instances after service in the Forces (7 per cent).

Both groups were asked whether or not they had served in H.M. Forces, but the authors are reluctant to draw any detailed conclusions from the replies since they are obviously influenced by national conscription policy at any particular time. In comparing the two samples, however, there again seems to be a wide difference between the distribution of answers in the youngest age-group, indicating that those who have experienced National Service are less liable to resettle permanently in agriculture than those who have not. How far this would be the case in the majority of industries is impossible to say here. In total, a slightly higher proportion of Group I had served than in Group II (41 per cent and 34 per cent respectively).

*Question 3\** has thrown some interesting light on the degree of specialisation in farm work, which can be compared with the replies to a similar question (5) put to Group I. Throughout all age-groups in both samples specialisation, as opposed to general farm work, has been a little higher amongst existing farm workers than it was amongst those who have departed. Again, however, the largest difference occurs in the youngest age-groups, as is illustrated by the following figures:

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\*3. What is your main job on the land (e.g. tractor driver, cowman, general worker)?

Per cent of General Workers

	16-25	26-35	Total Sample
Group I ..	64	69	58
Group II ..	45	50	51

The fact that larger proportions of Group II men are all either stockmen or tractor drivers is possibly related to the comparatively high numbers of men in these age-groups who have not served in the Forces, and in the case of the 16-25 groups, who have not had previous experience in other industries. Certainly early entrance, uninterrupted farm work and specialisation seem to be features of the youngest age-group still employed on the land. Reference to Tables II and IV, will show also that specialisation is considerably higher in the older age-groups in Group II than it is in those of Group I.

A number of the questions put to Group II were framed in anticipation of certain reasons Group I might supply for leaving agriculture. *Question 4\** falls into this category, in seeking the farm worker's attitude to "opportunities for advancement". It will be remembered from the Group I analysis that the "no prospect" reason for leaving the land was relatively insignificant. It appeared very little as a first reason and in the age-group analysis only occurred at all frequently within the 26-35 limits. Now, in Group II we find that two-thirds of the sample do not consider that agriculture "offers reasonable opportunities for advancement". Of these two-thirds, however, only 42 per cent consider that this fact alone is likely to cause them to seek other work. One conclusion in particular seems fairly obvious from this question, namely its importance to the 26-35 age-groups in both samples. Clearly at this age, marriage and the growth of a family, cause, in many cases, the first and perhaps the most serious consideration of "prospects". Its relevance to this age-group in Group I has already been noted and the following figures provide further evidence in this respect from Group II.

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- \*4. (a) Do you consider that agriculture offers you reasonable opportunities for advancement?  
 (b) If not, is this fact alone likely to cause you to seek other work?

Percentage of those who feel that agriculture offers no advancement, who have considered leaving for this reason alone

Total	16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	66+
42	36	65	37	33	37	33

In a similar manner, *Question 5\** attempts to provide information on the possibility of redundancy giving further impetus to the "drift". The figure of about 6 per cent for all ages in Group I, probably gives a slightly exaggerated importance to this reason in the economic sense. This is supported by the replies to *Question 5* of Group II. Ninety-six per cent admitted to no difficulty at all in obtaining employment, 2 per cent failed to answer this question, leaving in fact a mere five people who had experienced such difficulties. In no case was this difficulty due to lack of opportunity except for a self-imposed limiting of choice due to personal preferences or circumstances.

Thus while redundancy may have occurred on this or that farm, there is little indication from this survey that in the County generally it has limited employment opportunities. Furthermore, the replies to *Question 6†* indicate that 93 per cent of the sample have had two or less employers during the last five years. In no age-group was this figure lower than 90 per cent. In fact, the vast majority of workers had only one employer during this period, particularly in the senior age-groups. The only substantial difference between Group I and Group II in this respect occurred again in the 16-25 age-group; and reference has already been made to the apparent instability here in Group I.

*Question 7‡* asked for details of each worker's accommodation; whether or not it tied him to agricultural employment; and if so, why? By contrast with Group I where probably no

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- \*5. (a) Have you, during the last five years, had any difficulty in obtaining farm work?  
 (b) If "yes" give brief details.

†6. How many different employers have you had during the last five years?

- ‡7. (a) Please give details of your accommodation (e.g. tied cottage, board lodgings, other rented premises, etc.).  
 (b) Do you consider that your present accommodation ties you to agricultural employment?  
 (c) If your answer to (b) is "yes", why?

more than 36 per cent\* of the sample could have been living in tied cottages, 64 per cent of the Group II sample live in this form of accommodation and it is interesting to note that only a very few of this number do not feel that this fact binds them to their present employment.

As might be expected, the proportion of tied cottagedwellers and of those who feel tied by their accommodation are greatest between 26 and 55 years of age; of the vast majority who feel so tied about one-half give as their reason the lack of alternative accommodation and half, the fact that the cottage or dwelling goes with the job. In the former case, clearly, accommodation is needed and cannot be had without accepting a farm job. In the latter, however, it seems likely that respondents were thinking in terms of their particular job at the time rather than agricultural work generally. However, all the evidence points to a greater incidence and influence of the tied cottage in the Group II than in the Group I sample.

The second aspect of the general housing problem relates to housing conditions rather than to housing systems and several interesting facts emerged from the replies to Question 8.† The second part of the question asks "If you are without one or more of the three services (running water, electricity and main drainage) has that fact ever caused you seriously to consider leaving agriculture"? Seventeen per cent admitted to being without running water, 16 per cent were without electricity and 46 per cent without main drainage. Of the total sample, 52 per cent were without one or more of these services, and of these, rather less than half had considered a move for this reason. It is felt that in this, as in other questions, the questionnaire itself may have been guilty of some degree of suggestion; and that on the evidence of replies from both Groups, conditions of accommodation play a subsidiary, if by no means negligible, role. As one respondent replied to Question 8(b), "No, but we would like them all the same."

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\* The percentage that left houses for voluntary or involuntary reasons when they left agriculture.

- †8. (a) Does your accommodation have: (i) running water; (ii) electricity; (iii) main drainage.  
(b) If you are without one of these services, has that fact ever caused you to seriously consider leaving agriculture?

*Question 9\** is entirely concerned with certain domestic circumstances which are bound to affect the mobility and immobility of the individual. Unfortunately, some parts of the question (notably part (d)) were subject to misinterpretation, with the result that no firm conclusion can be drawn from the replies. However, several interesting features emerge from parts of the question.

A comparison of the proportion of married to single men in the two Groups shows, once more, a significant difference only in the youngest age-group, where 28 per cent and 71 per cent of Group I and Group II respectively are married. It is not within the scope of this study however to say whether type, or more probably, length of employment has influenced the marriage age, or vice versa.

Details were asked (9(b)) of the careers or intended careers (where known) of all sons over the age of eleven; and the replies obtained suggest that the industry cannot be complacent in the belief that son will necessarily follow father in continuance of family tradition. Of those sons of working age (111 in number) one-third are farm workers. The remainder are spread between trade, factory, labouring or clerical work, the Forces and apprenticeships. Most of the one-third mentioned above have parents in the age-groups above 46 years of age. Our total sample in the three age-groups concerned is 129 workers, and, so far, they have in fact provided between them 33 sons working on the land, and 65 in other work. These facts merely substantiate the statement that son will not at all necessarily follow father. One would not however claim that this was in any way necessary or desirable bearing in mind any labour intake from other sources and the increasing use of farm machinery. Of those sons still at school, 88 per cent are at either a secondary modern or a grammar school. Because of the large number of cases however in which intended careers were unknown (or the question, for another reason, was unanswered) it has unfortunately been impossible to relate type of school to choice of career. In fact, 68 per cent of those concerned offered no reply. Some of these of course may well take up farm work, although a few stated firmly that they

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\*9. (a) Are you married or single?

(b) Please give details of male children over 11 years of age: i.e., age, type of school or employment, intended career—if known.

(c) If you have sons of working age who are not working on the land, can you give any specific reasons for this?



would not. Eleven per cent only, definitely intend, at this stage, to work on the land. The two main reasons given for adult sons not working in agriculture were the low wages and lack of prospects in the industry. These accounted for 54 per cent of all reasons offered, which included also such reasons as "lack of interest", "long hours", "the tied cottage", "the low status of the farm worker" and "health considerations".

In reply to Question 9(e),\* 21 per cent of the whole sample said "yes" they might move from agriculture in order to provide their children with the prospects of town schooling or employment. Forty-one per cent, however, of the parents of schoolboys replied "yes" to this question, suggesting, perhaps, a greater readiness to consider moving for a child's prospects when the importance of those prospects is most pressing.

The replies to 9(d)† are included in Table IV although it unfortunately proved impossible to separate those who do not need the "services" mentioned (and who rightly ignored the question for this reason) from those who misunderstood it. Twenty-five per cent, 10 per cent and 14 per cent respectively, however, replied specifically that "reasonable transport services" do not exist to the nearest general stores, school and shopping centre, and these must be regarded as minimum figures.

Some interesting opinion on the subject of urban entertainment and general social activities was learned from Question 10.‡ It was asked first, "Do you feel that your local social activities compensate for the lack of town entertainment"? Over half of the sample replied "No" to this question. A further 30 per cent replied "Yes" and 15 per cent offered no reply. Reference to Table IV will show that the distribution of answers through the age-groups was fairly even, and it was perhaps surprising that the lowest proportion of negative replies occurred in the youngest age-group.

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\*9. (e) Are you ever likely to move from agriculture in order to provide your children with prospects of town schooling or employment?

†9. (d) *If required*, are there reasonable bus and/or train services to:  
The nearest general stores?  
The nearest school suitable for your children?  
The nearest main shopping centre?

‡10. It is commonly agreed that in addition to normal social life, the town offers a wide range of entertainments not available in country districts.

(a) Do you feel that your local social activities compensate for the lack of town entertainment?

(b) Do you think that, generally speaking, country youth is influenced by this lack of town entertainment when choosing a career?

This feature of the replies (together with a substantial number of "no replies") is again evident in the second part of the question. Of the whole sample, 65 per cent thought that "Youth is influenced by this lack of town entertainment when choosing a career". In this case, however, there were actually fewer (52 per cent) in the youngest age-group, who felt that youth is so influenced, than there were in each of the succeeding age groups. One can, it is felt, only conclude that numerically the questionnaire brought to the surface an expression of opinion on this question which in the case of those who have actually left the land was not strong enough to have any significant influence on their decision.

An attempt was made in *Question 11(a)\** to get some idea of what aspects of country life generally, and farm work in particular, appeal to those who undertake it. The replies here, might, after all, be the antidote to the reasons forwarded by Group I for leaving the land. They might also form an interesting comparison with the reasons given in *Question 1(b)†* by those turning or returning to agriculture after other work.

The answers given to this question have been grouped into the following six categories:

1. *Fresh Air:*

All references to the healthiness of country life and work.

2. *Nature of Work:*

This category contains all the references to the appeal of farm work itself.

3. *Mechanisation:*

This group contains any references that were made to the appeal of mechanisation in agriculture, notably to the appeal of tractor driving.

4. *Love of Nature:*

Including all references to the pleasure to be had from close contact and working with nature.

5. *Freedom:*

Containing any references to the comparative freedom associated with farm work.

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\*11. (a) What particular aspects of country life and farm work do you think contribute most to its appeal?

†1. (b) If so, why did you return to, or move into agricultural work?

6. *Other:*

This group contains all other answers that were given, but which did not occur frequently enough to justify separate categories by themselves. They ranged for example, from "the national importance of agricultural work" to "the friendliness of country folk".

A total of 37 per cent of the sample did not answer this question. What significance can be attached to this fact it is difficult to say. Generally, however, the number of "no replies" tended to increase towards the end of the questionnaire, and possibly this fact, rather than an absence of any appeal of country life and farming, explains the 37 per cent. There remained 196 people who between them offered 315 answers to the question. Of these 196, 48 per cent, gave as their first answer, some aspects of the appeal of "fresh air". The question did not ask, however, for the answers (where more than one) to appear in any order of importance and Chart III shows the percentage that each of the six reply categories occupied of the total replies and of those within each age-group. Except for the small 66+ age-group, it will be seen how very similar is the frequency of replies within these groups. The "fresh air and healthiness of country life" ranges from 34 to 42 per cent and accounts for 37 per cent of the replies from all groups. The nature of the work, mechanisation and the appeal of nature follow, accounting for 17 per cent, 13 per cent and 11 per cent respectively of all answers from all groups. The small fifth category (freedom) is followed by the numerous "other" answers occupying 18 per cent of the total.

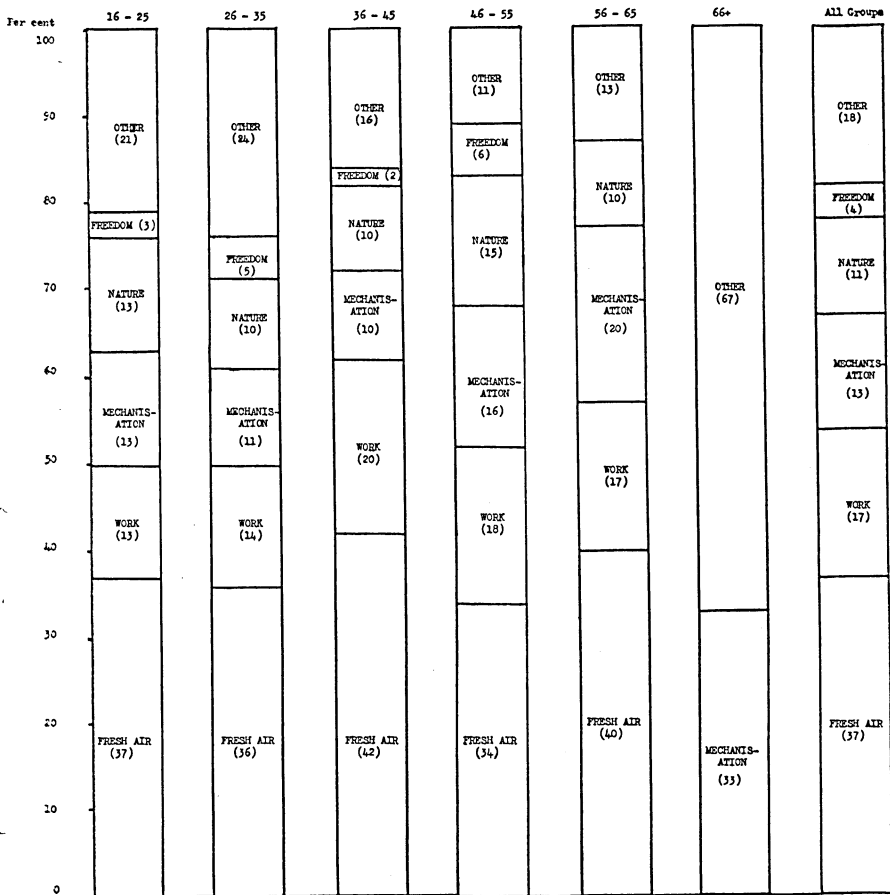
It will be recalled from Question 1 that 37 per cent of the Group II sample had had previous non-agricultural experience. It is interesting to compare the reasons why those workers entered farming with the main reasons for the appeal of farm work discussed above. "Fresh air" and "health" reasons together accounted for 18 per cent, and the "appeal of the work" for another 19 per cent of the reasons. The fact, however, that 29 per cent took to farming simply either to get accommodation or a job, stresses, as did the whole Group I analysis, the over-riding importance of materialistic influences generally in the actual movement of workers between industries. Indeed it is hardly surprising to find in answer to *Question 11(b)\** that 50 per cent of the entire Group II sample

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\*11. (b) Is the appeal of farm work so strong that, as far as you can see, you are unlikely ever to leave it?

### CHART III

Summary of Group II Replies to Question 11(a) Analysed by Age-Groups



do not find the appeal of farm work so strong that, as far as they can see, they are unlikely ever to leave it. Perhaps the fact that 38 per cent replied "Yes" to this question calls for more surprise.

Finally, *Question 12\** asks "Is there anything not already mentioned that has ever made you think seriously of leaving the land?" Again, no order of priority was asked for in the

\*12. Is there anything not already mentioned, that has ever made you think seriously of leaving the land?

replies. Little significance, it was thought, could be attached to such an order, since it would be impossible to blend the factors mentioned here with those already referred to and answered earlier in the questionnaire. To digress a little, it is appreciated that certain topics such, perhaps, as "the prospects of town schooling and employment for children" may not have received or deserved any great comment had it not been invited by the questionnaire. Other topics also, perhaps of considerable importance, might have been overlooked but for their appearance in a specific question. Comment, however, was deliberately not invited earlier in the questionnaire on certain subjects such as wages and working hours, and so Question 12 was inserted to invite comment on these topics about which respondents would need no prompting.

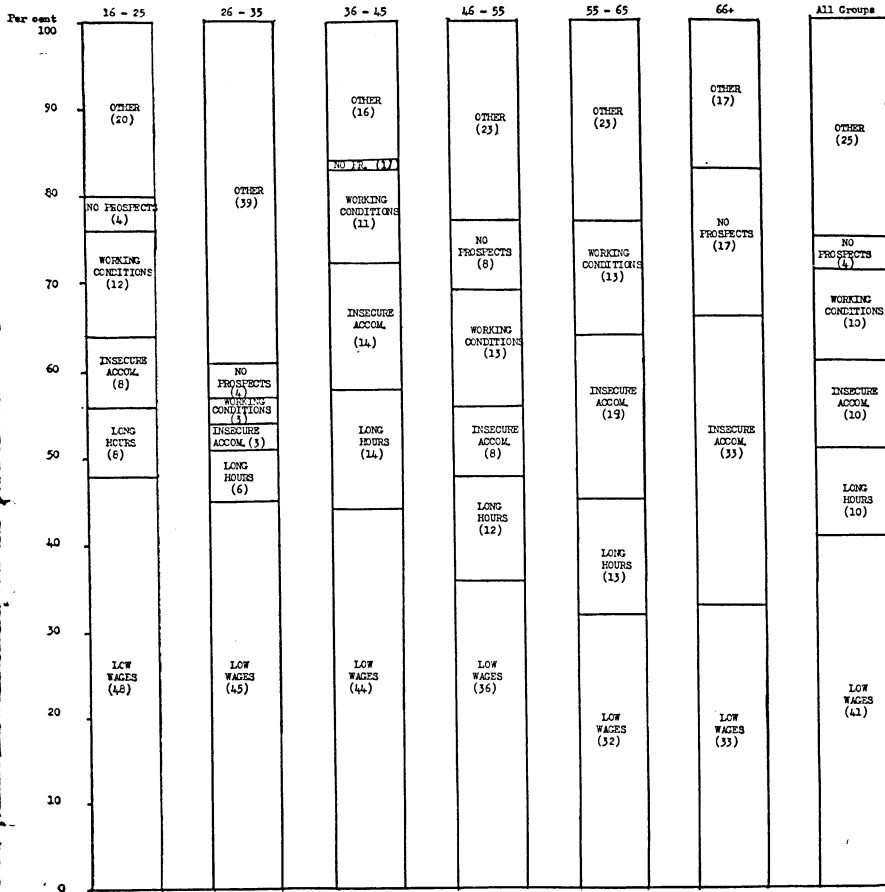
There was a large number of "no replies" to this question accounting for 46 per cent of the sample. It was quite clear from some of the returns that a number of people did not reach this stage of the questionnaire with their replies. However, it is interesting to note how this 46 per cent had answered the question about the appeal of farm work: 18 per cent had offered no reply. Almost half replied that the appeal of farm work was in fact so strong that as far as they could see they are unlikely ever to leave it. From these respondents it is not surprising therefore that there was no reply to Question 12. The remainder, however, replied "no" to 11(b) and offered no reply to the final question.

Returning to those who answered this question, one finds that over 70 per cent of the total reasons provided referred to low wages, long hours, insecure accommodation and working conditions. Indeed low wages alone accounted for 41 per cent of the reasons, and 54 per cent of all respondents to this particular question headed their reply with some reference to this matter. The actual distribution of replies is shown in total and in age-groups in Chart IV where the answers given have been grouped into the following six categories: low wages, long hours, insecure accommodation, working conditions, lack of prospects and others. The "others" category corresponds to that used in the Group I analysis.

A direct comparison between Chart II (Group I) and Chart IV (Group II) is not possible in any detail. Chart IV, for instance, is less complex than Chart II since it refers only to items not already mentioned earlier in the questionnaire. Furthermore, Chart II contains the reasons given by the whole Group I sample for leaving the land. Chart IV, however, does

## CHART IV

### Summary of Group II Replies to Question 12 Analysed by Age-Groups



not illustrate the fact, already mentioned, that 143 people did not answer Question 12 at all.

It will, however, be seen that the two charts bear some distinct similarity of pattern. The four main "grumbles" that accounted for 71 per cent of the total in Chart IV compare with "pay", "long hours", "tied cottage", and "working conditions" which together account for 52 per cent of all reasons in Chart II. In each case "low wages" or some similar reference to pay, is the predominant single reason given, and in each case, also, it forms a declining proportion of all reasons

as age increases. The Group I analysis established low wages as "the predominant cause of workers leaving agriculture". In the Group II analysis, 116 of the 170 people who answered Question 12 gave low wages as the reason, or one of the reasons, why they had ever seriously considered leaving agriculture; "long hours" occupied second place in both sets of reasons. With Group II, "insecure accommodation" was, like the tied cottage with Group I, of increasing importance in the advanced age-groups, while "working conditions" has in each case a fairly constant and comparable frequency.

## CONCLUSION

Outstanding among the causes of the movement of workers from agriculture is the level of wages. In a different economic situation from that prevailing in this country in post-war years, the greater rewards attainable in many other occupations open to agricultural workers might not have induced the fairly large exodus it has done. However, with alternative employment (as secure as agricultural work) readily available and providing the means to counteract more effectively the effects of inflation, the relatively poor income earned by agricultural workers has undoubtedly driven many off the land. In combination with the length of the working week and the uncertainty and variability of hours worked within that week, this can be said to be the cause of some two-thirds of the workers surveyed, leaving the land. Moreover, for those who are still engaged in agriculture, these factors appear to be the ones which would weigh most heavily in future decisions whether to continue in farm work. In spite of the existence of many other motivating factors connected with conditions of employment in agriculture, the preponderance of these three basic elements as causes of the general movement is unchallenged.

This being so, it does not seem politic to be complacent about the drift. It may well be that the low level of wages is simply a reflection of relative productivity and is accomplishing a desirable economic objective in moving workers to industries where their marginal product would be greater. But, although in the broad view this may be so, it does not necessarily follow that the industry can rest easy on this score. There appears to be little movement due to simple redundancy; the great majority of Group I left agriculture voluntarily.

On the evidence of this survey there is no reason to assume that it is the less efficient, the less desirable workers who have left, or who would consider leaving if current conditions continue to prevail. On the contrary, it seems reasonable to suggest that it may be the more enterprising and ambitious individuals who are being induced to leave the land. The prevalence of low wages might well be securing a desirable contraction of the labour force, but doing so by skimming off the cream. It would be somewhat idealistic, and unjustifiable in the face of the evidence of this survey, to contend that such material concerns would weigh heavily only with those less suited to, and less capable of coping with the ever-increasing demands on the skill and adaptability of the general farm worker. The intangible benefits associated with living and working in the countryside, though by no means insignificant, appear to pall readily in face of adverse material circumstances.

Higher wages throughout the industry could ensure that any necessary contraction of the labour force was not achieved at the expense of the quality of that force. Such a policy would tend to induce workers to remain in or move into agriculture. The effect on wages bills however, could ensure, not only that the minimum number were employed on the land, but also that they were the most efficient workers.

Not only can agricultural workers secure better wages outside the industry, but they can do so by working less hours in a fixed and invariable five-day week. Of course, the longer working week, variable hours per day, week end, and heavy seasonal work are nothing new in agriculture. The novelty could be said to lie in an intensification of the desire for conditions of employment similar to those in other industries in the post-war economic and social milieu. What was tolerated in pre-war circumstances is no longer acceptable. The necessity for such amenities as free week-ends alone is enough to sway the balance in favour of deserting agriculture. Overall, although it is recognised that the question of uncertain hours may be particularly intractable, shorter and more certain working hours are felt to be feasible objectives. The whole gamut of technological innovation in the industry during the last fifteen years makes these demands seem not unreasonable. Similar feelings prevail about the conditions under which much agricultural work has to be undertaken compared with the comparative comfort of factory work, transport work and even general labouring. The failure of employers to supply protective clothing occurs in this connection as a minor, but



easily and cheaply remediable, cause of grievance. Even the problem of all-weather outdoor work, it is felt, could be alleviated somewhat by a more considerate treatment of employees engaged on such work.

There can be no doubt that improvements in pay, hours and conditions of work would go more than half way to stemming the indiscriminate flow of workers from the industry and enable it to tackle its man-power problems more rationally. In addition, however, it is equally obvious that some steps would have to be taken to ameliorate the problems of accommodation associated with tied cottages. In spite of the obvious benefits of the system in providing living quarters in a period of overall shortage of accommodation, the long-term insecurity, the work-cottage tie, and the lack of space and amenities of many cottages appear to counteract these benefits in many cases. The impact of these factors on the newly-married, amenity-conscious young workers and their wives and, of the security factor in particular, on the older married workers, is considerable. The existence of these cottages as an enticement at one time, as a threat to security and independence at another, provides a bone of contention to complicate the relations between employers and employees. More generally, it would appear that the system of tied cottages, certainly from the workers' viewpoint, is out of harmony with the current economic and social atmosphere.

Some of the other causes mentioned, such as inability to carry on due to ill-health and genuine desire for a change of work, are of no moment as far as this study is concerned. Although it is not possible to evaluate at all accurately many of the others they are obviously of importance in aggravating the principal causes. The lack of future prospects and of promotion ladders, for example, contribute to the failure of the industry to retain its younger members and help to drive away the sons of workers who see their fathers stuck at the minimum wage indefinitely. Even the ability to specialise and thus earn higher wages does not offset this factor entirely. Amongst both those who have left and those who would consider leaving there were considerable numbers of specialists. Insecurity of tenure of a job in the face of even short illnesses, complicated again by insecurity of tenure of the tied cottage, imparts an ever-present fear to the older workers. The existence of direct employer-employee relationships is not an un-mixed benefit: although vast concentrations of workers in industry give rise to difficult problems in this field, the agri-

cultural employer-employee relationship contains its own peculiar problems. The very closeness of the relationship, which extends outside working hours, necessitates a degree of tolerance, tact and understanding obviously lacking in quite a few instances.

To attempt to offer solutions on the basis of such a narrow, imperfect survey is no part of this study. If, however, the industry wishes to avoid the ill-effects on its labour force of a haphazard reduction, or if it desires to stop the flow at some particular point in the face of the continuance of current economic conditions, both sides will have to address themselves to the task of finding remedies, not only for the major causes listed here but also for some of the minor ones. This is not to suggest that individual employers cannot take or in some cases have not taken the appropriate measures; but the fact remains that the drift continues.

**APPENDIX I**  
**GROUP I QUESTIONNAIRE**

Strictly Confidential

Code No. ....

**UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL**  
**AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT**

Name ..... Age .....

Married/Single ..... Number of children .....

Approximate acreage of FARM on which last employed .....

Number of *other* regular workers employed .....

1. In what year did you leave agricultural employment? .....
2. Had you previously worked in any other industry? .....
- If so, give type of work and period of employment .....
3. Have you at any time served in H.M. Forces? .....
4. How many years had you worked on the land? .....
5. What was your main job on the land when you left? (e.g. cowman, tractor driver, general, etc.) .....
6. How many employers did you have during your last five years on the land? .....
7. Please give brief details of the type of work you have done since leaving the land. ....  
.....  
.....
8. Do you think you have increased your standard of living since leaving the land? .....
9. When you left the land, did you also leave:
  - (a) Your house .....
  - (b) Your village or district .....
10. (a) What main reason or reasons caused you to leave the land? .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....
- (b) In order of importance, what other reasons, if any, influenced your decision? .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

9. (a) Are you married or single?.....  
 (b) Please give details of male children over 11 years of age:

Age	Type of school or employment	Intended career— if known

- (c) If you have sons of working age who are not working on the land, can you give any specific reasons for this?.....  
 (d) *If required*, are there reasonable bus and/or train services to:  
     The nearest general store?.....  
     The nearest school suitable for your children?.....  
     The nearest main shopping centre?.....  
 (e) Are you ever likely to move from agriculture in order to provide your children with prospects of town schooling or employment?  
 .....
10. It is commonly agreed that in addition to normal social life the town offers a wide range of entertainments not available in country districts.  
 (a) Do you feel that your local social activities compensate for the lack of town entertainment?.....  
 (b) Do you think that, generally speaking, country youth is influenced by this lack of town entertainment when choosing a career?  
 .....
11. (a) What particular aspects of country life and farm work do you think contribute most to its appeal?.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 (b) Is the appeal of farm work so strong that, as far as you can see, you are unlikely ever to leave it?.....
12. Is there *anything not already mentioned*, that has ever made you think seriously of leaving the land?.....  
 .....  
 .....

## GROUP II QUESTIONNAIRE

Strictly Confidential

Code No.....

### UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS DEPARTMENT

NAME..... AGE.....

NEAREST TOWN OR CITY and APPROXIMATE DISTANCE..... (.....)

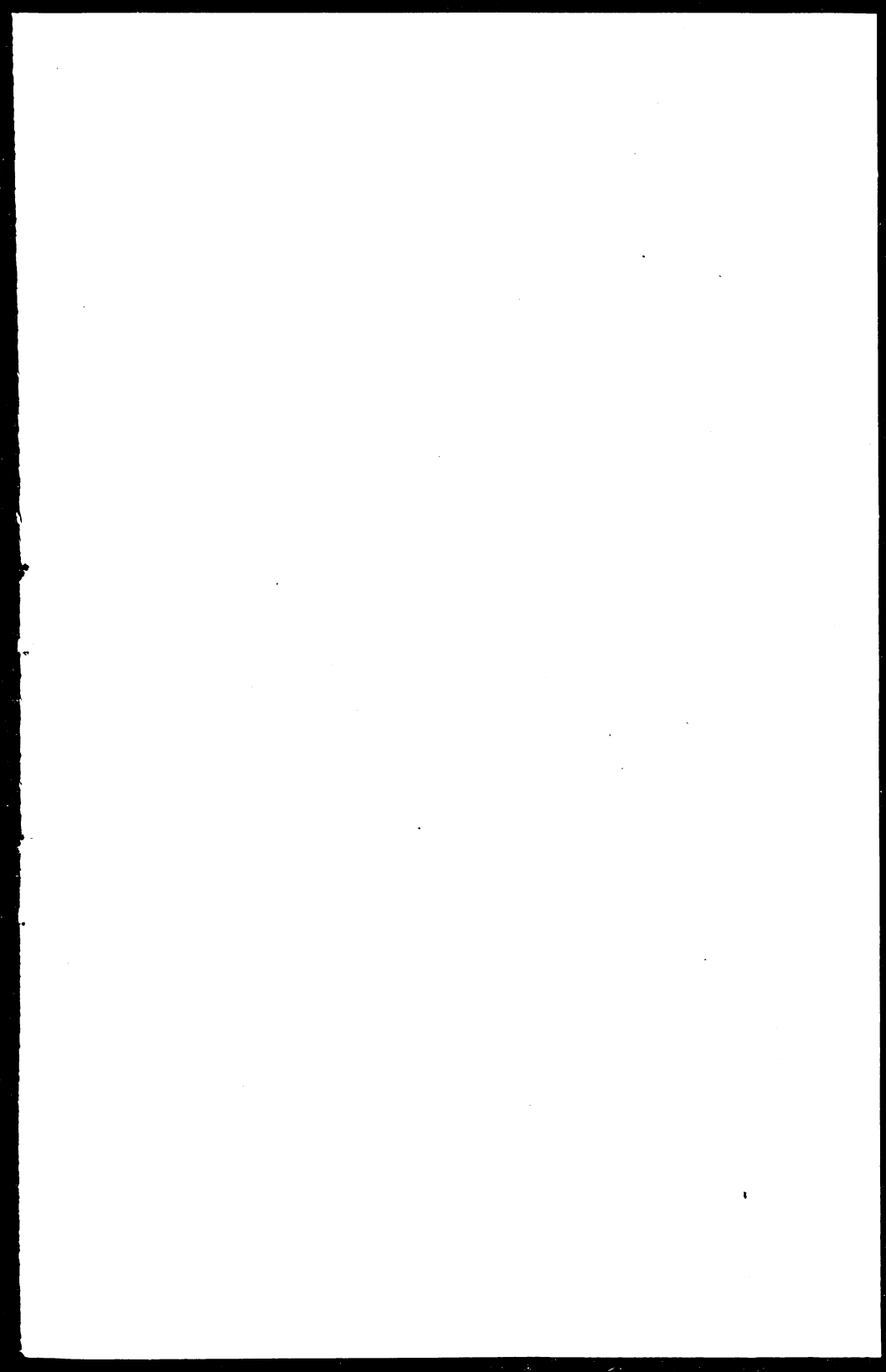
NEAREST VILLAGE and APPROXIMATE DISTANCE..... (.....)

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF FARM ON WHICH EMPLOYED.....

NUMBER OF OTHER REGULAR WORKERS EMPLOYED.....

Please answer the questions either YES or NO unless otherwise asked:

1. (a) Have you at any time done any non-agricultural work?.....  
(b) If so, why did you return to, or move into agricultural work?  
.....  
.....
2. Have you at any time served in H.M. Forces?.....
3. What is your main job on the land (e.g. tractor driver, cowman,  
general worker)?.....
4. (a) Do you consider that agriculture offers you reasonable oppor-  
tunities for advancement?.....  
(b) If not, is this fact alone likely to cause you to seek other work?  
.....  
.....
5. (a) Have you, during the last five years, had any difficulty in obtaining  
farm work?.....  
(b) If "yes", please give brief details.....  
.....
6. How many different employers have you had during the last  
five years?.....
7. (a) Please give details of your accommodation (e.g. tied cottage,  
board lodgings, other rented premises, etc.).....  
(b) Do you consider that your present accommodation ties you to  
agricultural employment?.....  
(c) If your answer to (b) is "yes", why?.....  
.....
8. (a) Does your accommodation have: (i) running water.....  
(ii) electricity.....  
(iii) main drainage.....  
(b) If you are without one of these services, has that fact ever caused  
you to seriously consider leaving agriculture?.....



## APPENDIX II

### TABLE IV

Group II: Present Agricultural Workers: Summary of Answers

QUESTION	Age Group	Total	16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	Over 66
	No. of Used Replies	313	31	72	81	77	41	11
	Answer	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1 (a) Have you at any time done any non-agricultural work?	No Reply	1	0	0	1	0	0	9
	Yes	37	19	36	49	39	34	18
	No	62	81	64	50	61	66	73
2 Have you at any time served in H.M. Forces? . .	No Reply	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
	Yes	34	16	26	40	19	63	73
	No	66	84	74	60	80	37	27
3 What is your main job on the land? . . . .	No Reply	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
	General	51	45	50	40	57	63	64
	Tractor	21	32	33	16	17	12	9
	Stockman	22	23	15	34	20	15	0
	Manager	3	0	2	4	5	5	0
	Other	3	0	0	5	1	5	27
4 (a) Do you consider that agriculture offers you reasonable opportunities for advancement?	No Reply	5	3	3	2	4	7	37
	Yes	32	52	33	31	25	27	36
	No	63	45	64	67	71	66	27
4 (b) If not, is this fact alone likely to cause you to seek other work?	No Reply	7	0	7	6	7	11	0
	Yes	42	36	65	37	33	37	33
	No	51	64	28	57	60	52	67
5 (a) Have you, during the last five years, had any difficulty in obtaining farm work?	No Reply	2	0	0	1	4	0	9
	Yes	2	0	1	2	3	0	0
	No	96	100	99	97	93	100	91
6 How many different employers have you had during the last five years?	No Reply	2	0	0	2	1	1	27
	More than two	5	10	10	5	0	2	0
	Two or less	93	90	90	93	99	98	73
7 (a) Please give details of your accommodation . .	No Reply	3	0	2	2	3	0	27
	Tied Cottage	64	39	61	77	69	56	55
	Council House	11	13	12	7	13	12	9
	Other Rented Property	8	3	11	2	9	15	0
	Private House	4	0	4	3	5	10	0
	Other	10	45	10	9	1	7	9
7 (b) Do you consider that your present accommodation ties you to agricultural employment?	No Reply	4	3	2	4	4	0	37
	Yes	58	26	60	67	64	51	54
	No	38	71	38	29	32	49	9

QUESTION	Age-Group		Total	16-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	Over 66	
	No. of Used Replies		313	31	72	81	77	41	11	
	Answer		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
8 (a)	Does your accommodation have:	(i) Running Water?	No Reply Yes No	1 82 17	0 94 6	1 74 25	1 84 15	0 84 16	0 88 12	0 54 46
		(ii) Electricity?	No Reply Yes No	0 84 16	0 90 10	0 81 19	1 84 15	0 80 20	0 95 5	0 73 27
		(iii) Main Drainage?	No Reply Yes No	0 54 46	0 65 35	0 44 56	0 51 49	0 58 42	0 63 37	0 37 63
8 (b)	If you are without one of these services, has that fact ever caused you to seriously consider leaving agriculture?		No Reply Yes No	10 39 51	9 27 64	11 38 51	10 46 44	5 39 56	12 44 44	37 13 50
9 (a)	Are you married or single?		No Reply Single Married	1 18 81	3 26 71	0 29 71	0 15 85	4 10 86	0 12 88	0 9 91
9 (b)	Have you sons over 11 years of age? ..		Yes	30	0	4	36	51	41	64
9 (d)	If required are there reasonable bus and/or train services to:	(i) The nearest general store?	No Reply Yes No	35 40 25	55 19 26	29 43 28	31 43 26	34 38 28	27 56 17	82 18 0
		(ii) The nearest School suitable for your children?	No Reply Yes No	53 37 10	61 26 13	44 41 15	46 46 8	53 39 8	71 22 7	82 18 0
		(iii) The nearest main shopping centre?	No Reply Yes No	49 37 14	52 29 19	39 46 15	41 43 16	57 30 13	61 32 7	82 18 0
9 (e)	Are you ever likely to move from agriculture in order to provide your children with prospects of town schooling or employment?		No Reply Yes No	36 21 43	61 16 23	29 30 41	26 27 47	35 20 45	49 5 46	36 0 64
10 (a)	Do you feel that your local social activities compensate for the lack of town entertainment?		No Reply Yes No	15 30 55	23 29 48	7 36 57	11 31 58	21 29 50	17 25 58	36 18 46
10 (b)	Do you think that, generally speaking, country youth is influenced by this lack of town entertainment when choosing a career?		No Reply Yes No	10 65 25	19 52 29	4 68 28	4 68 28	9 64 27	17 68 15	36 55 9
11 (b)	Is the appeal of farm work so strong that, as far as you can see, you are unlikely ever to leave it?		No Reply Yes No	12 38 50	16 42 42	8 35 57	4 40 56	10 36 54	29 42 29	27 27 46



