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JUVENILE LABOUR

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AGRICULTURE

Report on an Enquiry by

J. Carter and G. P. Hirsch

INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

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Juvenile Labour in Agriculture

Report on an Enquiry

by

J. Carter and G. P. Hirsch

Institute for Research in Agricultural Economics

University of Oxford

1952

Preface

On many occasions there have been general discussions about recruitment of juvenile workers. It was known that over the country as a whole recruitment tended to be in excess of the numbers required by the industry as adult workers and that a considerable proportion of young workers in the industry had to find opportunities for occupational transfer, often involving migration, when they reached adult years. Little, however, was known about conditions and methods of recruitment.

Consequently the Institute initiated an enquiry into sources of juvenile workers and related matters. The conditions of a national enquiry precluded any possibility of much direct investigation by the staff members of the Institute. We were fortunate enough to enlist the practical interest of the Labour Branch of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries whose Inspector rendered very valuable assistance. Officers of some County Agricultural Executive Committees also made valued contributions. Representatives of national organizations - National Farmers' Union, Young Farmers' Clubs, Women's Institutes, Women's Farm and Garden Association, National Union of Agricultural Workers, Transport and General Workers' Union - with a few personal correspondents of the Institute, contributed the greater number of local records from which this Report has been compiled.

The Enquiry elicited considerable interest and devoted service in many localities. We are grateful for the assistance so generously given and hope that this Report may yield some compensation for this service.

The Report was prepared by Miss Jean Carter, B.A., B.Litt., now Assistant Lecturer, Department of Geography, University of Manchester, under the guidance and with the collaboration of Mr. G.P. Hirsch, M.A., University Demonstrator in Rural Social Organization. We are indebted to Mrs. Peggy Evans, B.A., University of Manchester, and to Mr. K.R. Clark of this Institute for work on maps and charts respectively.

July 1952.

A. W. Ashby.

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I. The General Position

At the end of May 1950 in Great Britain, there were employed in agriculture and horticulture 63,500 juveniles, i.e. 53,000 boys and 10,500 girls from school leaving age up to the age of 18. In comparison, out of a total of twenty-four industrial orders (by Standard Industrial Classification) only eight contained a greater number of juveniles each in their employment returns. Of these only three orders, namely "Engineering, Shipbuilding and Electrical Goods", "Building and Contracting", and "Distributive Trades" can be seen to have a greater number of boys each in their labour force. Further, "Building", which provided work for 70,000 boys under 18, was the only single industry to employ more male juveniles than "Agriculture and Horticulture". The employment figures for girls in agriculture were, however, exceeded by those in fourteen other industrial orders. From this ¹ it can be seen that agriculture plays an important part in the market for juvenile male labour, but to a lesser one in that for juvenile female labour.

It is also interesting to compare the place of juvenile labour within the agricultural industry with its place within other industries. In agriculture and horticulture 7.8 per cent. of all employees were at that time under 18. Only seven industrial orders had a higher percentage of juveniles in their labour force. The highest percentage reached by juveniles in any industrial order was 13.9 per cent. in "Clothing", whilst the lowest was 2.2 per cent. in "Public Administration and Defence (excluding H.M. Forces)".

From Figure A it will be seen that the boys under 18 constituted a far larger percentage of the total labour force in agriculture and horticulture than of that in all other industries. Concerning the 18-19 years male age group it should be remembered that its very low percentage in "all other industries" is the result of compulsory military service, which did not affect agricultural workers until 1951. Despite the fact that the girls under 18 had a smaller share of the total female force in agriculture than they had in that of the other industries taken together, they formed nearly 10 per cent. of all female workers in agriculture. Juveniles, therefore, constitute a vital part of the labour force in agriculture.

As the recruitment of young learners to an industry and, equally important, their retention in that industry determine the later size of its skilled labour force, it is important to study the development of the juvenile group in agriculture over the years.

It is difficult to compare the size of the present total juvenile force with that

¹ The Employed Population, 1948-1950, Ministry of Labour Gazette, February 1951

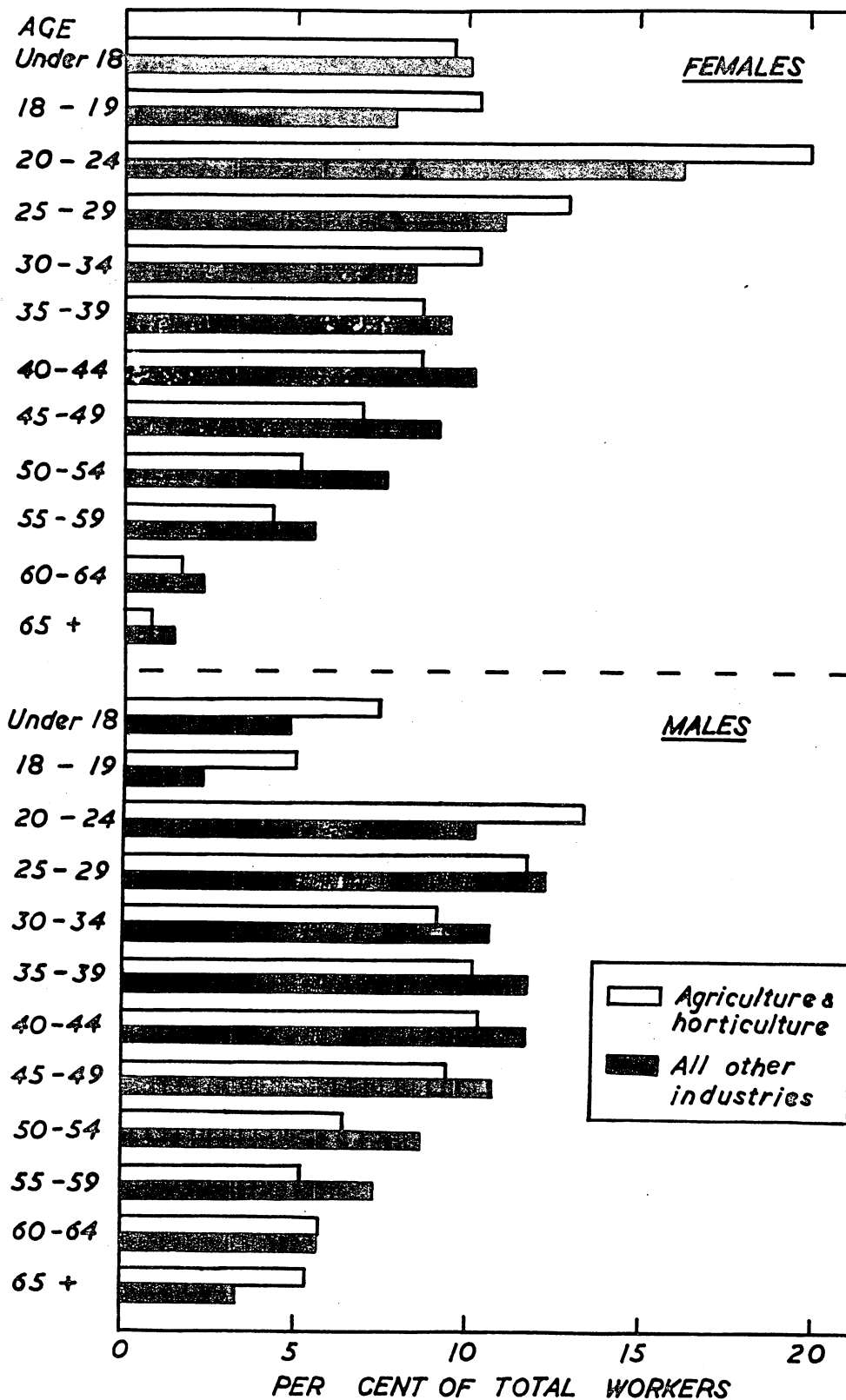


Figure A. Age distribution of male and female workers in agriculture and horticulture and in all other industries. Great Britain, May 1950.
 Source: Ministry of Labour Gazette, June 1951.

of former years as the occupation figures of the recent census are not yet available and as changes of definition have been made over the years in the official labour statistics. It can be stated, however, that in Great Britain the numbers of juveniles insured against unemployment have declined considerably since 1937.² Despite this overall decrease in juvenile labour since pre-war years ten of the "industrial orders" increased their share of juvenile labour. One of these was the order "agriculture, forestry and fishing". Here juveniles formed 3.2 per cent. of the total juvenile labour force in all industries and services in 1938, but 4.1 per cent. in 1947.³ Map No.1 (see Page 4) shows the regional distribution in England and Wales of juveniles in agriculture (and fishing) expressed as a percentage of the total insured juveniles in all industries for the year 1947.

Agriculture not only increased its share of juvenile labour, but also attracted a comparatively steady number of new entrants over these years, as the following comparison between 1937-38 and 1945-46 shows.

Table 1a. New Entrants in Agriculture, Great Britain,
1937-38 and 1945-46.

	Number of entrants '000		Numbers as percentage of entrants into all industries	
	1937-38	1945-46	1937-38	1945-46
Boys				
14 and 15	16.0	16.4	5	7
16 and 17	3.3	3.1	6	8
Girls				
14 and 15	2.5	2.4	1	1
16 and 17	1.3	1.2	2	3

Source: Ministry of Labour Gazette, October 1946

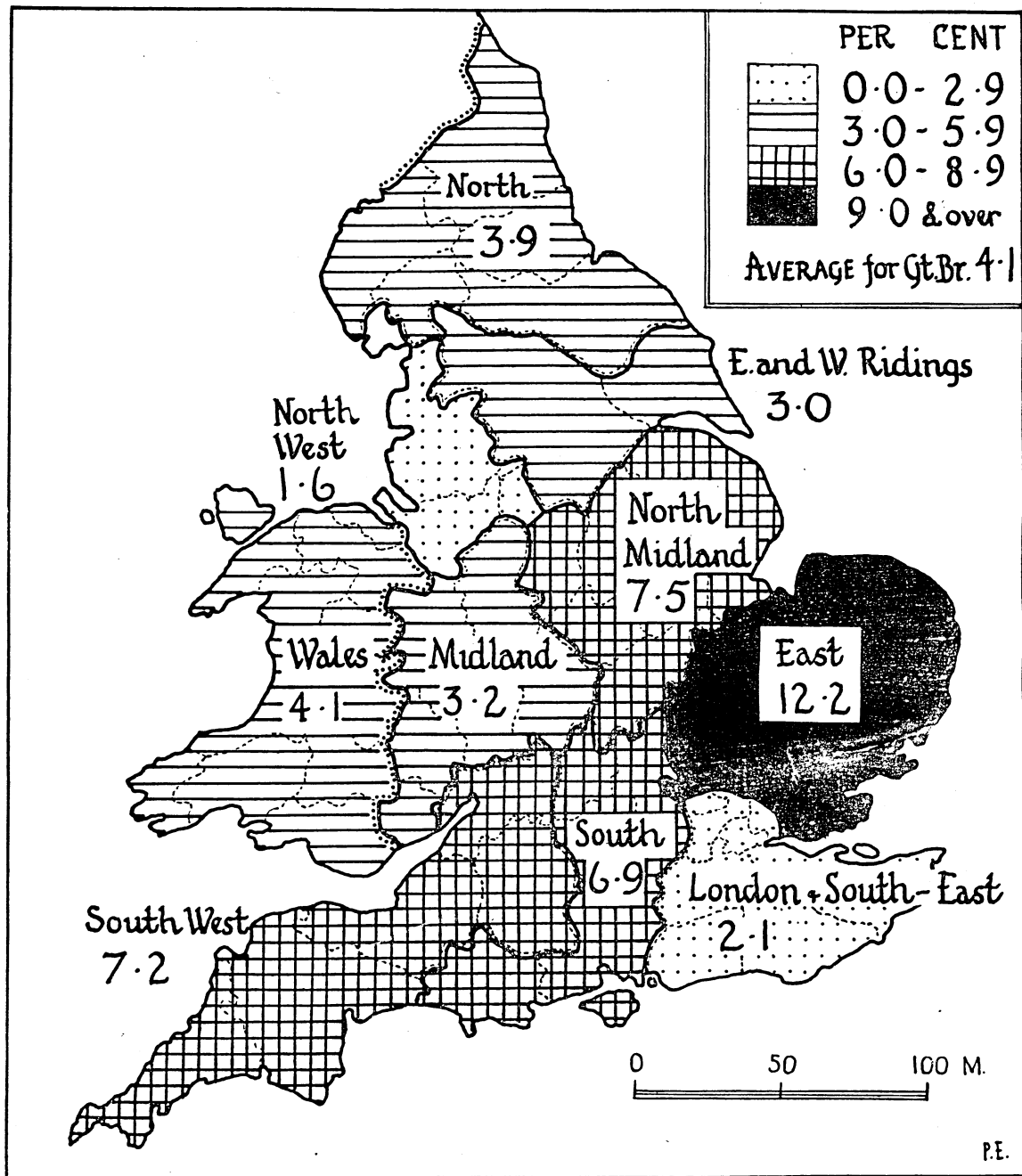
The numbers of new entrants to insurable employment in agriculture and fishing as their first job from February to December 1950 are given in Table 1b.

Table 1b. New Entrants in Agriculture, Great Britain,
February to December 1950

	Number of entrants '000		Numbers as percentage of entrants into all industries	
Boys				
15	18.3		9.5	
16 and 17	3.7		8.4	
Girls				
15	2.4		1.3	
16 and 17	0.9		2.1	

Source: PEP: Manpower - a series of studies of the composition and distribution of Britain's labour force.

- 2 R. Godson, Juvenile Labour Supply, Bulletin of the Institute of Statistics, Vol.11, Nos. 2 and 3, February and March 1949
- 3 R. Godson, The Industrial Distribution of Juvenile Labour, Bulletin of the Institute of Statistics, Vol.11, No.11, November 1949



MAP 1

Juvenile Employees in "Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing" as a percentage of total insured juveniles in all industries. July 1947.

Source: R. Godson, Regional Distribution of Juvenile Labour, Bulletin of the Institute of Statistics, Vol. 11, No. 9. September 1949.

The figures in Table 1b. are not directly comparable with those given in Table 1a. owing to changes in industrial classification and coverage, but they indicate again the size of recruitment to agriculture as compared with that into other industries. Only Distributive Trades, Building and Contracting and Engineering, Shipbuilding, etc., attracted more boys aged 15, namely 14.9, 12.0, and 11.9 per cent. respectively of the total of new entrants of that age.

For England and Wales details can only be given for the young male workers as the Agricultural Returns do not provide for any age grouping of female labour. Any attempt to show the exact long-range changes in the male juvenile group under 18 years is also defeated by the absence of separate annual statistics for this group before 1939. Thus the wider age group - under 21 years - has to be used prior to that date.

Figure B illustrates that the under 21 group shows, as the over 21 group, a declining trend until 1938. Since then, the numbers in the younger age group have been much steadier, showing neither the continued decrease up to 1945, nor the rapid rise since that date of the over 21 group.

The development of the under 18 group can, however, be given in detail for the years 1939-1943 and from 1947 onwards.

Table 2. Age distribution of regular male workers in agriculture, England and Wales, 4th June, 1939-1951. (thousands)

Year	- 18	18-21	21 +
1939	51	45	375
1940	52	43	363
1941	54	40	363
1942	56	39	361
1943	56	35	351
1944		92	355
1945		94	354
1946		96	382
1947	51	45	396
1948	40	47	419
1949	42	48	438
1950	42	50	431
1951	43	48	418

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Agricultural Statistics.

The only serious drop in the numbers in the under 18 group, which occurred from 1947 to 1948, was due to the raising of the school leaving age. Since this time, however, there has been a steady but small increase in this age group. Thus all the above figures show a relatively constant recruitment into agriculture, at least over the past twelve years.

The curve on Figure B showing the over 21 age group on the other hand suggests that the position as regards the retention of the male juveniles in agriculture was much

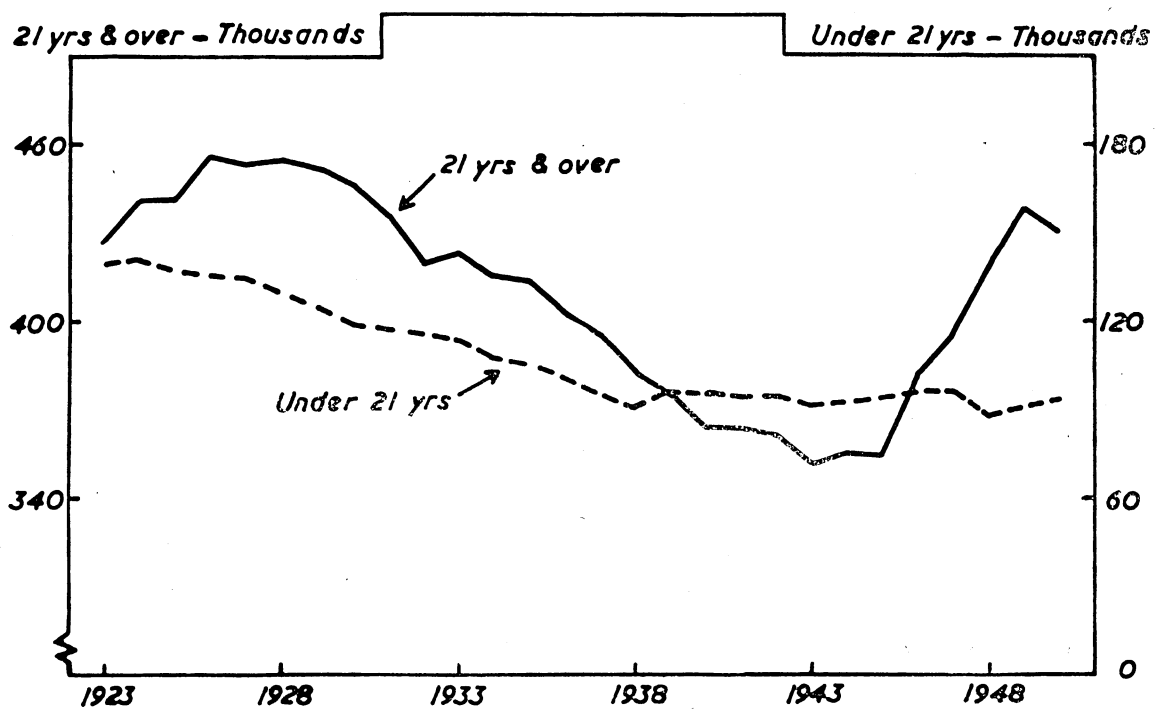


Figure B. Regular male agricultural workers under and over 21 years, England and Wales, 4th June 1923-1950.

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
Agricultural Statistics.

more doubtful until after 1943, since the numbers in the over 21 group continued to decline whilst those in the under 21 remained comparatively stable. Table 2 makes the position still clearer by showing that the numbers in the 18-21 age group declined steadily over the years 1939-1943 as well as in the over 21 group. This question has been examined by D. K. Britton and J. H. Smith when studying the age composition of the farm labour force in 1931.⁴ They suggested that the age composition was due to a good intake of youths up to the age of 18, but thereafter a loss of men between 18 and 45. The reason put forward was that a boy on leaving school might drift into local work in rural areas until he was old enough to fend for himself at about 18 to 19, when he moved elsewhere to look for a job with either better pay, or better prospects or better living conditions. Such forces seem to have operated at least till 1943. Since 1947, however, as Table 2 shows, the losses in the 18-21 age group did not continue, thus suggesting that since that time more of the original juvenile male entrants into agriculture were retained by the industry.

⁴ Farm Labour: Problems of Age-composition and Recruitment, Farm Economist, Vol.V, Nos. 11 and 12, July-December 1947.

II. The Enquiry

A. The Sources of Information

With the assistance of organizations and persons concerned with agriculture and its labour supply a pilot survey was conducted from the Institute with a view to obtaining answers to two questions, one concerning supply and the other types of work of juveniles in agriculture:

- (1) What is the supply of juveniles in relation to the demand and where do the recruits come from ?
- (2) What kind of work is performed by these juveniles ? Has it changed in the last ten years, and is there any progression in work, or supervision according to age and experience ?

Information was only sought for regular workers, male and female, under 18. Members of the farmer's family, of the Women's Land Army, and casual workers were not taken into consideration.

The survey was conducted by means of a questionnaire, copies of which were sent, with sheets of instructions, to organizations connected with agriculture in England and Wales. The organizations distributed the forms to their members, collected those completed and returned them to the Institute. The enquiry was entirely dependent upon the interest and goodwill of correspondents. No formal sampling was, therefore, practicable, and there was no opportunity of asking supplementary questions or examining the informants. Some informants failed to show interest in certain questions, and it must be recognized that questions would vary in importance according to local conditions.

Records straggled back throughout the year 1948 and some arrived as late as March 1950 but they refer mainly to the year 1948. Some had to be discarded as the answers were about persons whom the survey was not intended to cover; some others did not provide answers for all the questions, so the amount of information available on any one question varies. Two main types of records were found to be present - those completed by the Wages Inspectors and by a number of farmers speaking generally for a whole county, and those completed by a farmer or worker speaking only for his own farm, or immediate parish. Finally, 262 boys' and 266 girls' records were used for analysis, which came through the following sources:

Table 3. Sources of Information

	Forms
Wages Inspectors	96
National Farmers' Union	242
County Agricultural Executive Committees	32
Young Farmers' Clubs	89
Women's Institutes	16
Women's Farm and Garden Association	8
National Union of Agricultural Workers	34
Transport and General Workers' Union	3
Miscellaneous	8
	528

Several of the organizations distributed the forms through their county branches, so all forms were labelled according to the county in which the return was made. Some idea of the number of records received from each county is given on Map 2 (see Page 10). It is apparent that, although some counties like Somerset and Berkshire, which returned 24 and 29 records respectively, were adequately covered, a large proportion returned fewer than 12 records (6 male and 6 female) which may be considered inadequate. The only source which completely covered the country was provided by the Wages Inspectors, and for 14 counties this was our only source of records, (1 male and 1 female). It was impossible, therefore, to attempt any strict analysis on a county basis in this pilot survey; all that could be done was to attribute any interesting features to the particular counties.

B. The Supply of Juveniles

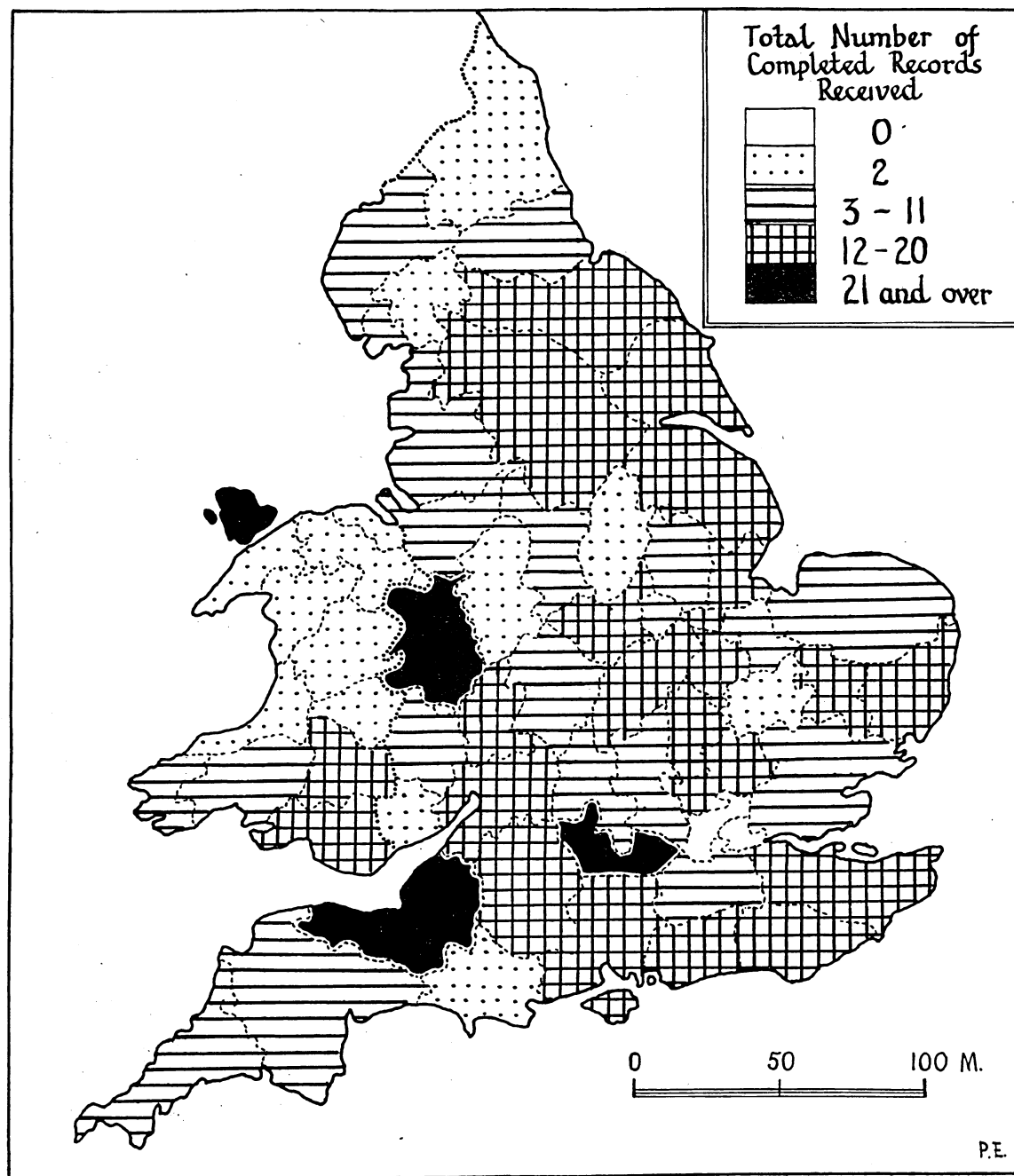
1. Adequacy of Supply

Answers "on Supply in respect of numbers" were not all comparable; some referred to actual numbers in the area, others to new recruits coming forward, and the great majority made a statement comparing supply with local demand. A census of opinion (and it must be stressed that this is a sample of expressed opinions only) in the 528 records gave the following results:

Table 4. Opinions on Adequacy of Supply of Juveniles

		Male		Female		Total
No answer		93		185		278
Very few	60)		40)		100)	
Inadequate	49)	109	19)	59	68)	168
Adequate	49)		17)		66)	
Good	11)	60	5)	22	16)	82

The general opinion of those engaged in the industry appears to be that the supply is inadequate or worse. The most strongly expressed comment came in a letter from Worcestershire - "The position is so difficult and so series that I feel it is useless to make any attempt to fill in these forms. For the period since the commencement of war we



MAP 2

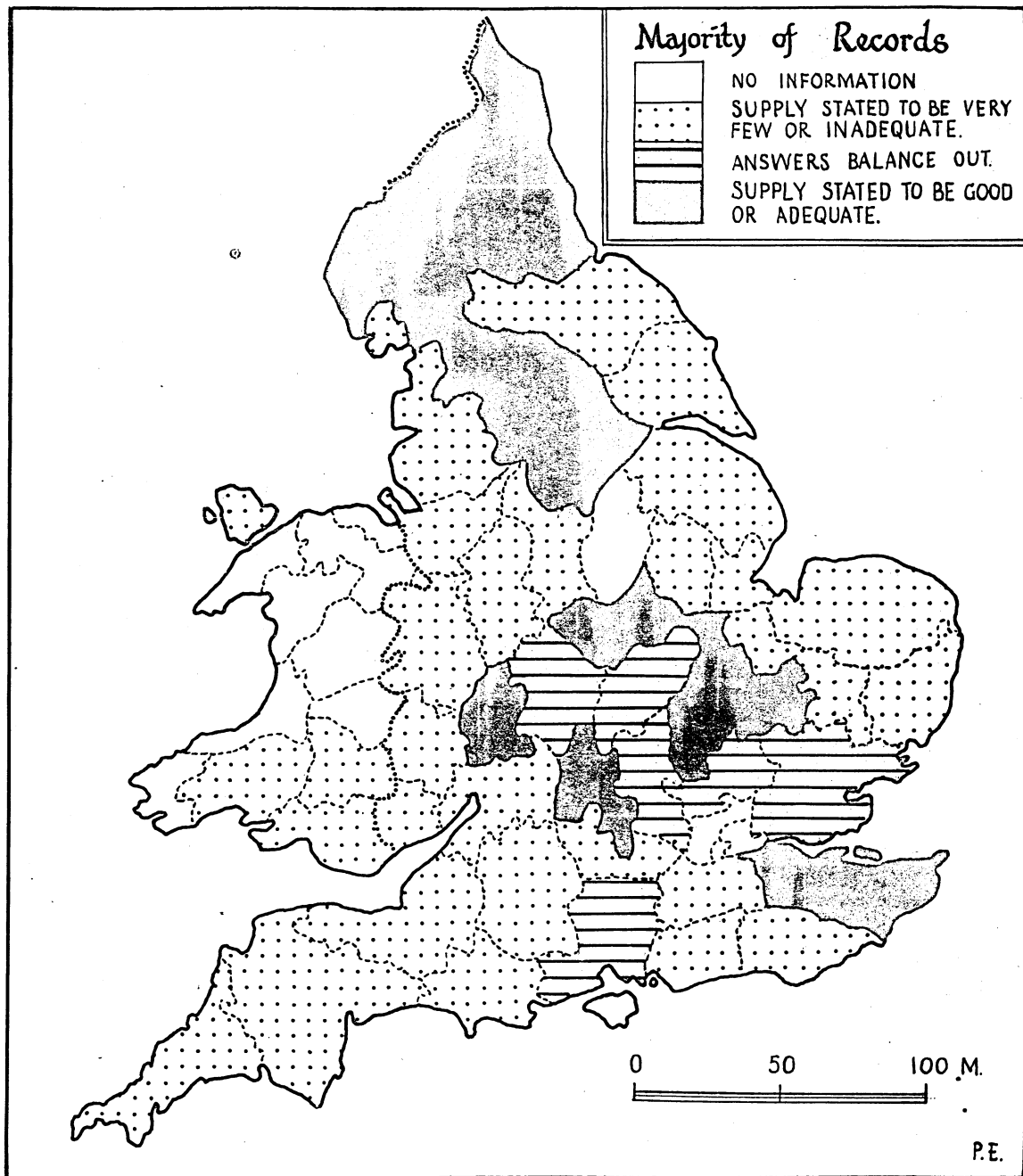
Geographical origin of records.

have only had one lad that would come under your age group. While there are a number coming into horticulture in this area they are mainly sons of smallholders; the large growers have to depend upon young men and middle-aged people who can be attracted by high piece-work rates. During the war this was possible but the time is now approaching when it will be impossible for these rates to be maintained."

The apparent shortage is attributed to lack of accommodation in counties as far apart as Berkshire, Hertfordshire and the North Riding of Yorkshire. A letter from North Yorkshire gives an insight into local conditions - "Lodgers are very unpopular with farmers, foremen and workers. It is still the custom, however, in some parts of this county, for the boarding of a specified number of workers to be an agreed condition of employment between farmer and foreman, hind or horseman. Youths have notoriously large appetites and tend to eat more than their own share of rations ... They are, therefore, often deliberately made so uncomfortable and hungry that they are driven to leave, the foreman thus being relieved of his obligation. Bearing in mind that rationing has been in existence for over eight years, one realizes the number of occurrences such as the above and the length of time for which they have been happening, and it is quite reasonable to suppose that what one might almost call a tradition has already grown up round the treatment of youths in agriculture. I suggest that this is an important factor in influencing rural youths to take jobs anywhere but on farms."

An attempt was made to find out if there were any marked regional differences, but on the records available no such tendency could be discerned. This is not surprising in view of the fact that conditions vary from one parish to another and even from farm to farm. Some farms are relatively inaccessible and not all farms or employers offer the same attractions to youths. Map 3 (see Page 12) shows the opinions of the majority of recorders in each county concerning the numerical adequacy of the supply of boys. Replies indicating satisfaction of the majority are limited roughly to counties lying in a central band stretching from the southeast to the Scottish border.

Answers on the supply of girls reflect the much smaller number employed and the relative lack of interest in the subject. Out of the total 266 records, 185 either gave no information or stated that there were none working in the area. One reply from Holland, Lincolnshire, stated "I do not employ females if I can possibly help it; their place is in the home." Other recorders incline to the same opinion and where girls are employed they seem to be regarded as a convenient source of gang labour, either casual for busy seasons or more permanent in market gardening. They do not appear to be considered seriously as regular works, except in dairying. The fact that they are often merely stopgaps is



MAP 3

Opinions on the supply of male juveniles in agriculture.

reflected in one reply from Wiltshire which claims that the area is a good one agriculturally and the farmers can afford to employ men.

2. Sources of Supply

The answers to the question: "on sources of supply, e.g. farm workers' sons, village youths, and other sources" were not easy to classify, as some referred to locality, others to occupation, and there were great variations in the amount of detailed information volunteered. After careful scrutiny the answers were finally classified as in Table 5.

Table 5. Sources of Recruits

MALE Sources	Only Source	Equal Source	Main Source	Subsidiary Source	Total
A Rural Areas	5	-	3	-	8
1 Village Families	24	50	8	22	104
2 Farmers' Families	1	9	2	4	16
3 Farmworkers' Families	48	58	35	7	148
B Towns	9	16	6	18	49
C Industry	4	2	2	4	12
D Organizations	4	20	1	5	30
E Miscellaneous	2	2	1	3	8
Total Rural Sources	78	117	48	33	275
Total Other Sources	19	40	10	30	99
FEMALE Sources	Only Source	Equal Source	Main Source	Subsidiary Source	Total
a Rural Areas	14	-	2	-	16
1 Village Families	5	11	-	1	17
2 Farmers' Families	4	4	2	1	11
3 Farmworkers' Families	34	23	8	1	66
B Towns	8	8	1	1	18
C Industry	-	3	-	1	4
D Organizations	1	1	-	-	2
E Miscellaneous	1	2	-	7	10
Total Rural Sources	57	38	12	3	110
Total Other Sources	10	14	1	9	34

N.B. Figures refer to number of times mentioned. As one record may quote several sources, this must not be confused with number of records.

The general category "rural areas" was often expressed by the informants as "local", "rural workers", "country-bred", or "in villages and on farms". Where further distinction was possible, a subdivision has been made into village families, farmers' families and farmworkers' families. The statement "village families" may have been intended to include farmers' and farmworkers' families but differentiation was impossible. Further, the category "farmers' families" may include juveniles working on their fathers' farms but again it was impossible to differentiate. The category "towns" was made to include evacuees and people described as "from industrial centres"; in many cases the size or location of the towns concerned was not made known. The category "industry"

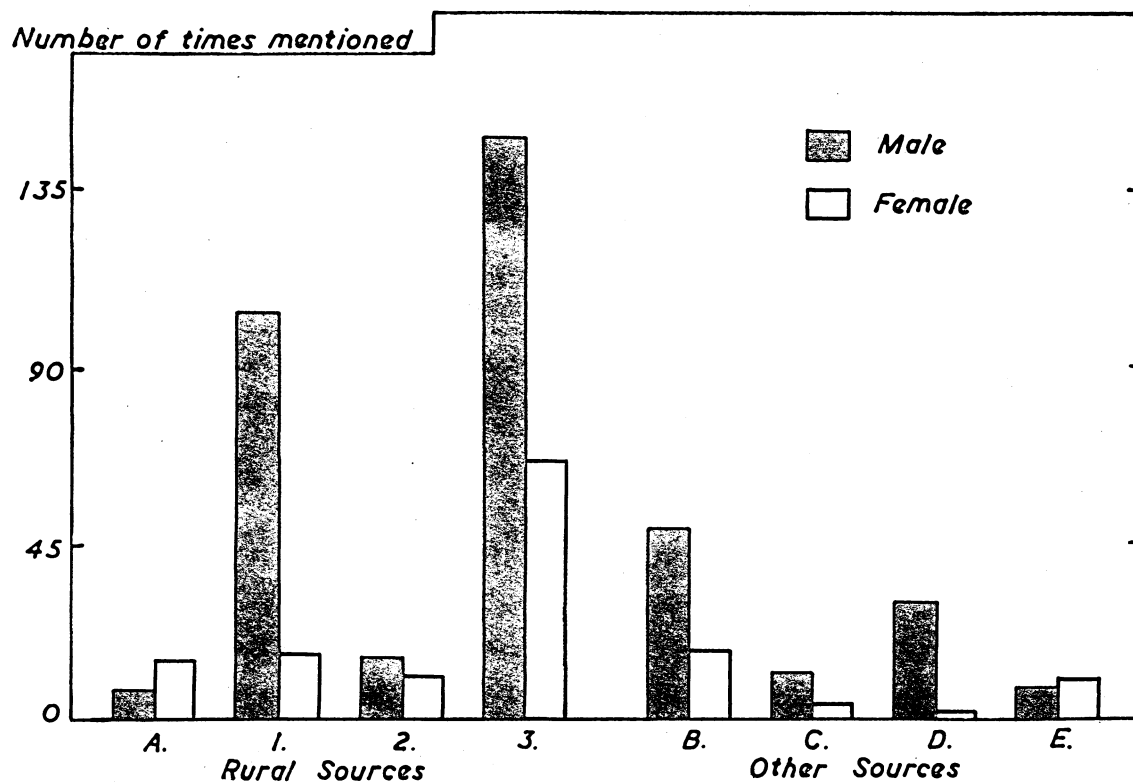


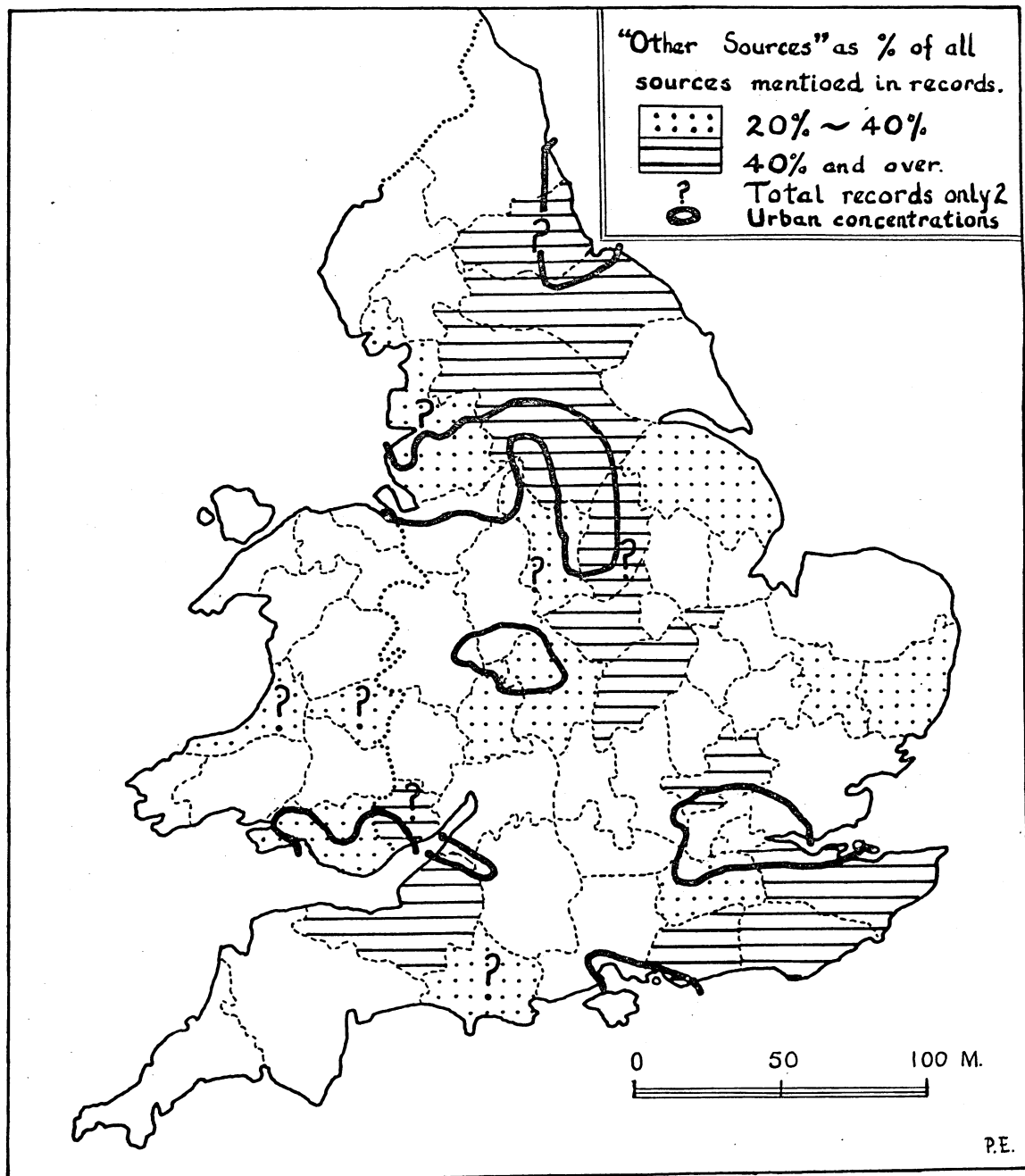
Figure C. Sources of supply of juvenile workers.
A = Rural Areas B = Towns
1 = Village Families C = Industry
2 = Farmers' Families D = Organizations
3 = Farmworkers' Families E = Miscellaneous

covers workers from mining districts and railways as well as from factories. Where juveniles were recruited through organizations and their original source was unknown, they have been classed under "organizations" - this includes Barnardo's Homes, Borstal and Reform Homes, Y.M.C.A. schemes, and the Wallingford Training Colony. The last category, "miscellaneous", covers an undefined group such as youths sent by County Agricultural Executive Committees and the Ministry of Labour, where they were merely drafted into agriculture, without initial training.

Although the results cannot be analysed statistically, the general impressions, shown in Figure C, are instructive.

Rural sources predominate, especially families of farmworkers. This may be attributed to social inheritance of occupation, lack of opportunity to find other occupations, especially in remote areas, or, in some cases, to attraction of wage rates offered to juvenile workers. It may be that this section provides many of the recruits who leave agriculture after the age of 18 when they are more able to fend for themselves. Farmers' families are rarely mentioned as a source, so it may be assumed that farmers' sons and daughters either work on the home farm or outside agriculture; in two counties, Yorkshire (West Riding) and Brecon, and generally in Wales, they are, however, more prominent. These counties include areas of stock farming on the small family farm, and the sons often work on other farms before they are able to take over one for themselves.

Map 4 (see Page 16) shows the counties with a high proportion of recruits from "other sources" (B, C, D and E). The counties are noticeably those surrounding large conurbations, such as the London area with Kent, Surrey and Hertfordshire. In Kent the good work of urban employment exchanges is commented on, and it is in counties such as Derby and Somerset that the Y.M.C.A. scheme is recorded as active. Around Birmingham the recruitment of regular labour is to some extent confused with seasonal gang labour coming from the urban areas, for example, to Worcester for fruit-picking, and to Hereford for hop-picking, and there is a similar seasonal movement from the coastal towns of Sussex. In the Midland counties, especially in Northamptonshire and Leicestershire, where there is light industry in smaller towns, it is stated that youths come from towns within cycling distance and this seems, therefore, to be a daily movement. Replies from West and North Yorkshire, Northumberland and Durham, and parts of Somerset state that recruits come from mining or heavy industry, and the same may be true of the South Wales area. Two features of the records not shown on the map are, first, that town boys apply for jobs in good numbers where there is a large estate with plenty of scope for specialization and better prospects of promotion, as for example, at Elveden in Suffolk; and, second, the frequency



MAP 4

Areas with high recruitment from "other sources".

with which evacuees have either stayed or returned to work on the land.

Several records, 31 concerning males and 26 females, gave information on a question which was not asked but is clearly bound up with this one, that is what employment do juveniles in rural areas seek? The youths were described as leaving rural areas for towns where there are more "pleasure facilities" or to become "kid glove workers" - and this was attributed to the urban bias of education. They were more specifically mentioned as entering forestry, industry, or local factories such as bacon and Fuller's earth, local employment such as building and garages, and government employment where the work was described as "light". Girls were similarly stated to be attracted to shops and offices in the towns, and local industries where there were higher wages and social welfare organizations. Six records actually stated that the boys spent a year or two on the land, then drifted away at the age of about 18 - these boys included both town boys who returned home and local boys. The latter were attracted into agriculture when wages compared favourably with industry, but at 18 moved to industries, for example, in one locality shipyards, where there were shorter hours and more pay. This difficulty in holding the boys was attributed variously to habitual prejudice against farming, problems of billeting town boys and the attitudes of the older men. It has been remarked already in the introductory section that this tendency to change-over after the age of 18 appears to characterize the employment of juveniles in agriculture.

Inexperienced Workers' Rates

As the Agricultural Wages Board provides special rates of wages for "inexperienced workers" (other than sons and daughters of farm workers), the following question was asked: "Do you know of any cases of employment of youths from non-agricultural families under the conditions of the Inexperienced Workers Order of A.W.B.?"

This question was left unanswered on many of the records, and only 68 gave any answer other than "No", so the following results are based on about one-eighth of the total. Of these 68, 28 answered "Yes" or "a few" and gave no further details, leaving 32 records concerning males and 8 concerning females for further investigation.

The boys were mainly in the age group 14, where age was given at all (this was just before the raising of the school leaving age to 15), except for one answer which stated that all workers were treated as inexperienced for their first eight weeks. The great majority were either those sponsored by organizations, such as Barnardo's and the Y.M.C.A. schemes, on farm pupils aiming to set up on their own later. This last type was described as keen and "all out to learn" but they often left because the hours were long or their parents wanted the boys at home. The general impression was that there were few

boys from non-agricultural families in any case, and that few farmers were able to take advantage of these special provisions in their normal recruitment.

The girls described under this clause were very few, and seemed to consist of either holiday labour, which would be only casual, or, in one case, trainees on a farm which was training girls for milking.

While special provisions were used occasionally, the general response to the question seems to indicate that the average farmer is not concerned with them.

3. Quality of Supply

The answers to the question "on supply in respect of quality (physical development, interest or teachableness)" varied widely both in form and content, so a brief summary of the answers referring to boys is given in the table below under three main headings - good, bad and indifferent in quality.

Table 6a. Quality of Male Recruits

Male Youths	Good	Bad	Indifferent
General answer	39	4	44
Physical development	77	5	25
Interest	50	15	37
Teachableness	28	10	24

There is little doubt about the good physical development of the boys. Interest and teachableness, which are hard to consider apart, are also described as good more often than bad or indifferent, and there seems to be a general picture of wide-awake youngsters, keen workers especially interested in machinery. One reply from Norfolk is a fair summary - "The employer who states that he has a "good lad" is the rule rather than the exception. There is a marked tendency to pay youths more than their appropriate minimum wage rate which points to the fact that they are more than satisfactory. The majority are well-developed and appear to take an active interest in the farm, particularly in tractor work and mechanization. A small percentage appear to be placed in the industry because they are considered too dull for anything else and there is unfortunately a proportion who show their lack of enthusiasm by their irregular attendance."

It is this latter small proportion of unsatisfactory boys for which the replies give more detailed information, and attempt to offer reasons why the boys do not reach a higher standard, which are worthy of further consideration. It is claimed that the work is monotonous and early enthusiasm soon decreases so that many leave at about 18; one answer from Wiltshire states tersely "Interest lacking, too drab and rather a dead end". There is a frequent complaint that older men influence the younger ones, or that many youths from rural areas are resigned to farmwork, so they are steady and often experienced

but lack real interest: "They grow into farm work and it is just the way they earn their living". Several replies claim that the boys show interest if they are handled properly, and a frequent statement, in part a complaint, is that the boys show great interest in machinery and none in livestock or handwork. The five-day week in industry is blamed for either attracting the youths away from farm work or making them unwilling to work longer hours or to do any week-end work.

Information was occasionally volunteered on intelligence, although this difficult question was not asked. The general opinion of these informants was that the boys were only of very average intelligence, as all the brighter ones sought jobs in the town or nearby industries. From one county comes the following: "As a rule, youths employed in agriculture in the area are fairly well developed physically, although many of them from hamlets or villages appear to be rather below average in their ability to learn. The majority show keen interest, particularly where they are employed on progressive holdings, but owing to the custom of inter-marriage in many villages, there is a considerable proportion of sub-normal children."

Despite statements that better education was responsible for a higher standard than formerly, there was a frequent plea for an education that would turn the boys' interest into rural lines rather than encourage them to look to the town for their standards. One farmer remarked on how greatly the ability to use their hands varied among boys, and suggested that sport and handicrafts at school were particularly valuable to develop this ability.

Information was offered in 21 records on a comparison between boys from town and country sources. All stated that town boys were less developed physically, but few went so far as answers from Durham and North Yorkshire, which described boys from mining and industrial areas as poorly developed and "a weedy lot". The general opinion seemed to be that town boys were more interested and teachable than those from rural areas, but the details of the answers were very varied, and it was claimed that rural youths made up for this because they were steadier and could be relied on. One answer stated that farmers' sons and trainees (who would later expect to work their own holdings) showed interest, but the average village boy was only interested in "a riding job". Another group of records described town lads as better educated and more intelligent, but not so valuable at first as rural boys as the latter were "land minded".

A brief summary of the answers referring to girls is given in the table at the top of Page 20.

Table 6b. Quality of Female Recruits

	Good	Bad	Indifferent
General answer	22	4	19
Physical development	43	2	5
Interest	28	9	11
Teachableness	11	1	13

Few go so far as the following: "Quite anxious to learn but unsuited for much of the work on a farm", but, mainly because of the small interest in employment of girls, many records ignore this question.

There seem to be two distinct conceptions of girls on the land - some refer to gang labour (mainly if not wholly casual) doing handwork at piece rates, and others to regular members of farm staffs, probably trained in specialized jobs. Working as a member of a gang on handwork explains many cases where interest is low and centred only in the pay packet; hence they are said to be better on piece work than on day work. The girls who are regular members of farm staffs seem to be particularly interested in either the care of animals or horticulture, and have sometimes taken or often intend to take special courses of training in these subjects.

There is the same comparison between town and country-bred girls, and the same statement that girls from towns are more intelligent but less strong physically. One answer from Lindsey (Lincolnshire) compares local girls with the W.L.A. and declares "It is estimated that 75 per cent. of local girls are as successful as landworkers and only about 25 per cent. of the present Land Army". This must be balanced against an answer from Cheshire where the W.L.A. were described as fit and keen.

Some records compare the girls with boys. Girls are claimed as better at routine and usually outshining males in intelligence and teachableness. In one county they are "as good as youths of their own age" but the rates of pay give them no inducement to specialize. Nevertheless there are more indications of specialization and training among the girls than among the boys. The nearest approach among the latter are the farm pupils and these can hardly be compared with regular employees.

C. The Work of Juveniles

This section of the enquiry was mainly concerned with three aspects of the work done by juveniles. In the first place a question was asked about the tasks on which juvenile workers are actually engaged to-day and for which they are required. Secondly an attempt was made to find out what recent changes in types of work had taken place, as it is well known, on the one hand, that farm processes and equipment have been changing rapidly, and on the other, that horticultural and market crop production has been extending in

acreage and spreading to new areas. A third question was asked on any changes in the type of work done and the kind of supervision given as juveniles advance in age and experience.

1. Work done and required

Results of the answers to the two questions "Nature of work now done by youths" and "Nature of work for which youths are required" are given in Tables 7a and 7b for male youths and girls respectively.

Table 7a. Types of Work - Males

		Work done		Work for which Required	
		(No. of times mentioned)			
General	General farm work	130)		130)	
	Odd jobs - unskilled	26)	162	14)	149
	Skilled jobs	6)		5)	
	Tractor driving	115		62	
Arable	Cultivation - hand	29)		18)	
	- horse	17)	64	10)	36
	- tractor	6)		-)	
	Harvesting	12)		8)	
	Market gardening	22)	30	21)	29
	Fruit	8)		8)	
Livestock	Dairy cows	96)	101	115)	119
	Calves	5)		4)	
	Cattle	21		46	
	Sheep	6		5	
	Pigs	2)		4)	
	Poultry	10)	21	15)	26
	Horses	9)		7)	
No answer		23		33	

The different categories used are the result of an attempt to classify the very varied answers received and are not necessarily mutually exclusive; for example, "tractor driving" may mean some cultivation or other operations by tractor, and "general farm work" may include any of the other categories or may only mean odd jobs assisting older men.

With these provisos, it is clear that the largest section of these youths do not take on any specialized jobs but their work comes within the heading "General farm work". This means, in the majority of cases, that they assist at any type of work that is on hand, probably doing the less pleasant tasks and the fetching and carrying, or as one reply says: "the lighter and the dirtier jobs", but certainly getting a good idea of every side of farming activities. Only one job - ploughing - is ever specifically mentioned as work they are not given. Occasionally youths are described as tractor drivers or cowmen, and in Hampshire there is an apprentice thatcher. In a Bedfordshire farm boys specialize

after the age of 18 in piece work or as tractor drivers.

The most popular job seems to be tractor driving, and many of the records state that youths take to this at once, do a full man's job with great interest and ability, and get paid full rates. The next most frequent job is with dairy herds, but this reflects the frequency of milk production in farming rather than their own choice, as there are many complaints that youths do not like this work because it entails week-end duties or because they are "mechanically minded" and prefer tractors. A complaint comes from Berkshire that market-gardening and horticulture are unpopular with youths who are "willing to learn so long as the sun shines; they leave as soon as they have to work in the green-stuff (cutting, etc.) on a cold, damp winter's day". The informant does not lay all the blame on the boys for this lack of a spartan spirit, but suggests that lack of adequate clothing, especially footwear, and lack of protein foods may be responsible.

General farm work again heads the list of work for which boys are required with dairy work and tractor driving as the most important of the more specialized jobs. It is interesting to note, however, that the order of the last two is reversed, and the dairy workers are more in demand than tractor drivers. The comments bear this out - the usual plea is for boys to help with the dairy or cattle. Willing tractor drivers are plentiful as all boys are "tractor minded", but they are reluctant to take on work that involves week-end duties such as milking and feeding stock. Other replies ask for boys willing to learn the old skilled jobs such as hedging, thatching and "farriery". Average small size farms ask for boys who are "all-rounders" and one reply emphasizes the need for boys on smallholdings.

The type of work done by girls is, as is to be expected, quite different from that done by boys. The larger sections as shown in Table 7b are employed on dairy work, market-gardening, glasshouses, fruit and hand cultivation, and a slightly small number look after poultry. This may be partly a reflection of the fact that some of these jobs are shunned by the men, and partly because they are better suited to women. One recorder, for example, prefers women for horticulture as they have nimbler fingers.

Some of the girls doing hand cultivation and market-gardening probably represent the gang labour already described, much of which is only seasonal - one record in fact states that there is no winter work of this nature. Those doing dairy work, horticulture and poultry may be receiving special training, but often women are in complete charge of these branches. Sometimes it is impossible to distinguish between cases where trained or experienced girls have considerable responsibility and cases where girls are only employed to do the less skilled milk round, dairy cleaning, recording or packing. Many combine this type of work with domestic duties, and although the latter are not the concern of this study, it is impossible to ignore them completely.

Table 7b. Types of Work - Females

		Work Done		Work Required	
		(No. of times mentioned)			
General	General farm work	25)	38	15)	28
	Odd jobs - unskilled	13)		13)	
	Tractor driving	23		7	
Arable	Cultivation - hand	49)	62	40)	56
	Harvesting	13)		16)	
	General market-gardening	39)	71	43)	74
	Glasshouse work	11)		10)	
	Fruit	21)		21)	
Livestock	Dairy cows	84)	89	94)	101
	Calves	5)		7)	
	Cattle	9		8	
	Pigs	4)	43	3)	49
	Poultry	38)		45)	
	Horses	1)		1)	
Secretarial		-		3	
Domestic Duties		24		33	
No answer		118		10	

The types of work for which girls are required coincide very closely with the work they are actually doing, although there is a greater emphasis on dairy work, poultry and market-gardening, and less on tractor driving, general farm work and hand cultivation. There is a great demand for women at pressure periods for casual employment and a plea for women to do "tedious work" may mean this type of handwork among crops. The other main demand is for women to do a mixture of domestic duties and dairy work, particularly cleaning and retailing, rather than work with the animals. One recorder explains that this old combination of farm and domestic duties has gone, except for farmers' daughters on the home farm. This seems to have hit particularly the western counties and Wales, where nearly all recorders ask for girls to wash and clean the dairy and do domestic work - presumably on the smaller farms where activities in the farm house and the farm are closely interwoven. Two interesting records ask for girls to take complete charge of pedigree herds and for cheesemakers (Somerset). Although there is one plea for a girl to drive horses and free a man, there seem to be few openings for regular employment of women on arable farms - it is in the counties with a high percentage of arable land where girls are only regarded as stopgaps and the records were often not completed.

2. Changes in type of work in the last ten years

The question "Any change during the last ten years in the nature of work done or required" was aimed particularly at discovering changes in the nature of the work, but so many answers were in terms of changes in type of production, which were meant to imply changes in type of work, that this has been tabulated. Other answers described changes in type and availability of labour. The ten years referred to are 1938-1948, covering the war period, and it is, therefore, surprising to find so many replies claiming that there is little or no change in such a period of upheaval.

Table 8. Changes in Work, 1938-1948

Changes	Males	Females
PRODUCTION		
More arable	15	2
Less stock	2	-
More dairy	10	5
More market-garden	4	1
More glass	-	2
Decline pigs and poultry	2	2
WORK		
More mechanization	85)	21)
Horses - tractor	58)	4)
Hand - machine milking	10)	5)
More handwork	3	4
Less work with stock	6	-
More needed for stock	5	1
Need for old crafts decreasing	2	-
More specialization	3	1
Higher standards	9	-
LABOUR		
More education needed	5	1
Less labour needed	1	-
Fewer boys available	1	-
Fewer women available	-	7
Fewer women needed	-	1
Women used more and more useful	-	18
Little or no change	27	45
No answer	58	141

The most common changes in production are the increase in arable cultivation, which is a result of the plough-up campaign during the war, and more dairying. A few records give details of the changes, for example, Shropshire and West Yorkshire - from cattle rearing to dairying, Suffolk, - from arable sheep to dairying, Sussex - from commercial dairying to pedigree stock, and Warwickshire - from "ranch farming" to arable. There are even more minute details recorded, such as silage replacing roots, and an increase of glass in market-gardening. All changes tend towards more intensive or more

specialized production, as was to be expected in this period.

The main theme of the answers on "Work" is the increase in mechanization, or, expressed in greater detail, the change from horses to tractors and hand to machine milking. This needs no elaboration, but it is interesting to note the different opinions expressed on the effects of mechanization. Some recorders claim that it means fewer unpleasant jobs for the boys, that it cuts out tedious work and gives greater opportunities to show skill and intelligence. Others claim that it causes a lack of interest and loss of craftsmanship in skilled workers, that older hands deal with machinery and the boys get more drudgery, and that it creates a problem in stimulating initial interest when there are no horses on which to start a youth.

As far as "Labour" itself is concerned, several recorders agree that more education is needed for a farmhand than formerly, and it would be an advantage if some instruction in elementary mechanics could be given before youths go to a farm. There are numerous other references to the higher standards demanded in other branches, such as milk production and the care of pedigree stock.

A much higher percentage of records relating to girls gave no answer or stated that there was no change in the work - either more evidence of lack of interest in the employment of women or because the answer had already been given on the male form. The main theme is still mechanization and with it the much wider range of jobs undertaken by women, although several answers state that some jobs undertaken by women during the war, especially the heavier mechanized ones, have been given up to men again. Mention is made of the greater demand for women in dairy and poultry work, and again the change from domestic work to outside jobs is the cause of complaint in Wales and certain hill counties. It is generally claimed that women are now proving more useful in agriculture; this is attributed variously to mechanization, war, and to the activities of the Young Farmers' Clubs.

3. Changes in work with age and experience.

Recorders found some difficulty in dealing with changes in the tasks of juveniles with age and experience. They tended to describe what they considered the changes should be, or what they might generally be, whereas the form distinctly asked for specific cases. It is, therefore, only possible to give a general impression, based mainly on those records relating to actual cases of work being done by boys of stated ages.

At the ages of 14 and 15 there is a tendency for boys to start on odd jobs, especially with a horse and cart, yard-work and relief milking. There are examples from Kent, however, where a boy of 14 was an ex-member of a Young Farmers' Club and was a

competent tractor driver when he came from school, or a boy of 15 is declared as capable with horses and all farm work.

At the age of 16 the range of jobs quoted is much wider, and includes chain harrowing with a team of horses (Glamorgan), taking charge of milking when the cowman is away (Gloucester), and being quite capable "on his own" in all hand labour (Kent). Boys of 16 in Suffolk are described as "getting experienced workmen as good as any full-grown man".

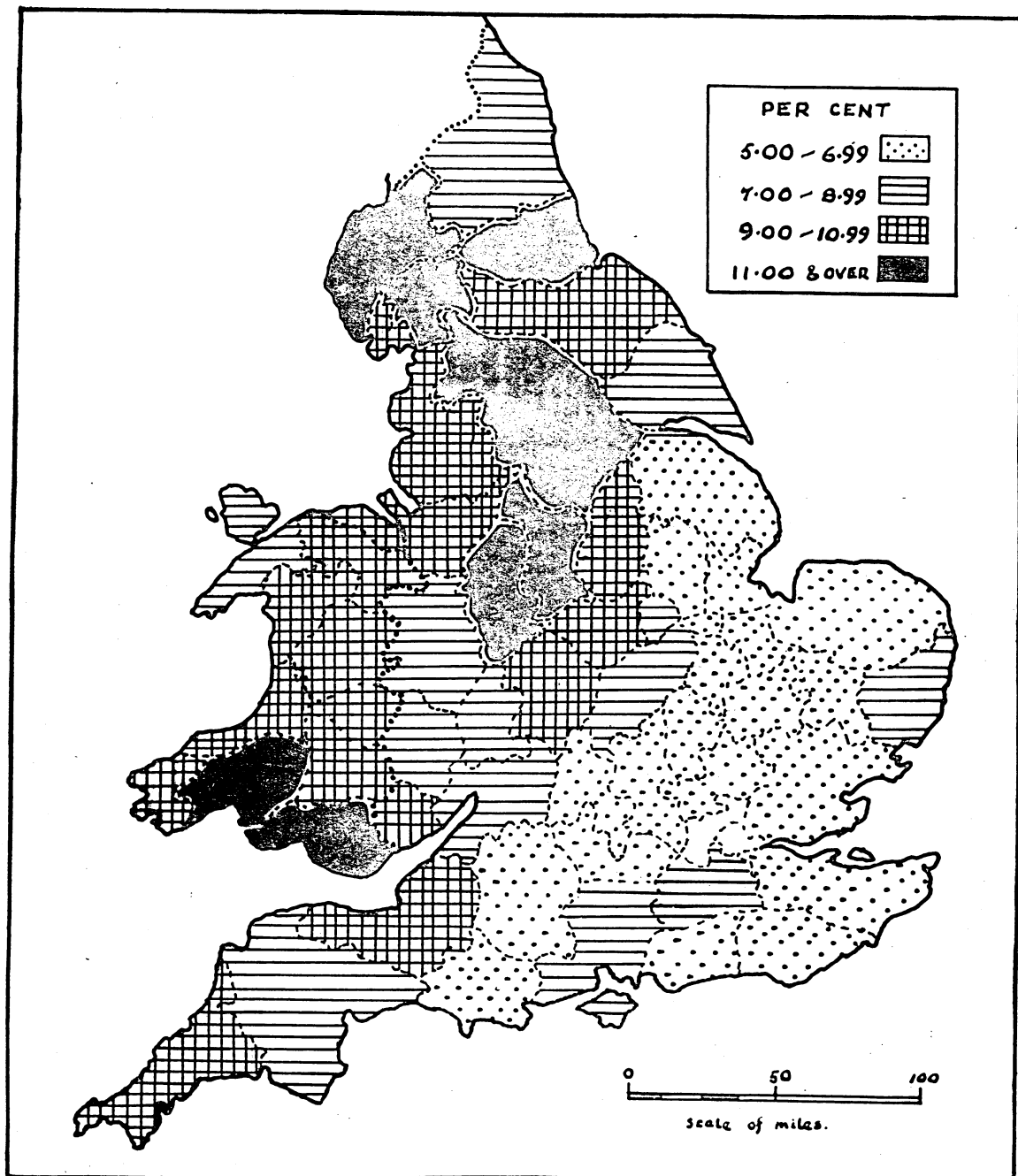
At 17 and 18 it appears that these boys have mastered all but the special trades such as thatching and "splashing" (trimming or laying) fences, and are considered as fully qualified hands. One record from Northumberland states that by the age of 17 a lad is "proficient in all work if any good" - this includes lambing. A similar opinion comes from Cumberland and Westmorland - "Can plough and milk, drive a tractor and do all work on small mixed farms, including work among sheep such as shearing, dipping and lambing". It seems that youths in the hill counties take easily to the work and do a man's job early, but they are not the only areas, as one youth in Somerset was engaged on contract work - ploughing, discing, rolling, sowing, reaping and threshing by tractor.

Supervision of the boys follows no regular pattern, and the remark by one informant is probably true for many farmers - "There is not much supervision, he watches what others do and learns as he goes on". The majority of youths seem to be supervised directly by their employer, as most of them work on smaller farms, and by the age of 17 have little or no immediate supervision. A record from West Yorkshire is the only one to mention a very important point which is an essential factor in any consideration of this question - "Similar type of work for all youths with increasing responsibility according to age and number of other workers employed".

Some idea of training and tackling the job as a craft to be learnt rather than a means of livelihood appears in a few records but they are in the minority. One from Kent describes a boy who attends agricultural day classes once a week, and from Sussex it was stated that where a worker shows promise he is encouraged to attend lectures. The counties near London seem to have the whole system of recruitment and training much more highly organized than elsewhere. One record which is known to refer to a 1,600 acre arable farm, states: "I like to take on one or two boys each year, and train them on, and have at present a dozen men on my farm who have graduated in this way, and are now highly skilled men". This is obviously only possible on a farm of this size, and the more normal routine is described from another county - "Often these young employees are "Jack of all trades" and do most of the "dirty work" to enable more experienced employees

to spend longer time at a stretch on the skilled work. After experience they remain on the same duties but with very much less supervision, and when a vacancy occurs through dismissal or illness of another member of the farm staff, they fill this place and the newcomer goes to the bottom rung".

The girls are in a different position from the boys. Those working in gangs do not regard this as the beginning of a career and the work may be seasonal; there is little scope for training or progression and the only difference between the ages is a slight increase of responsibility over more junior members. On the other hand, those working with milking herds in dairies, or in horticulture have often already received training and are taking a lot of responsibility; for example, a farmer in Wiltshire states "I met a girl in this age group (17) who was in sole charge of an electrical milking plant which included running of same, sterilizing, etc. Employer spoke very highly of her capabilities".

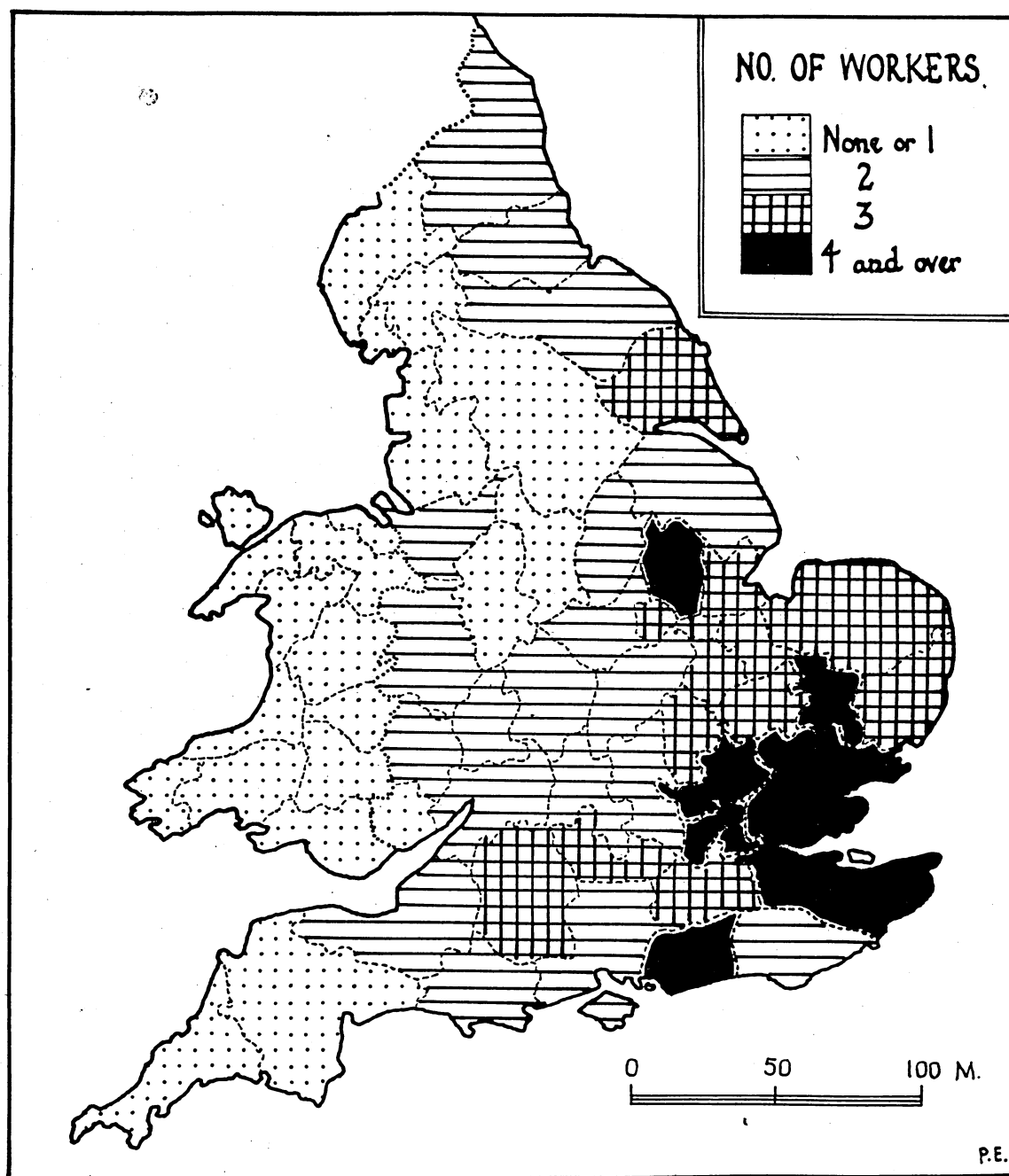


MAP 5

Regular male workers under 18 years as a percentage of the total regular male labour force in agriculture, June 1950.

Source:

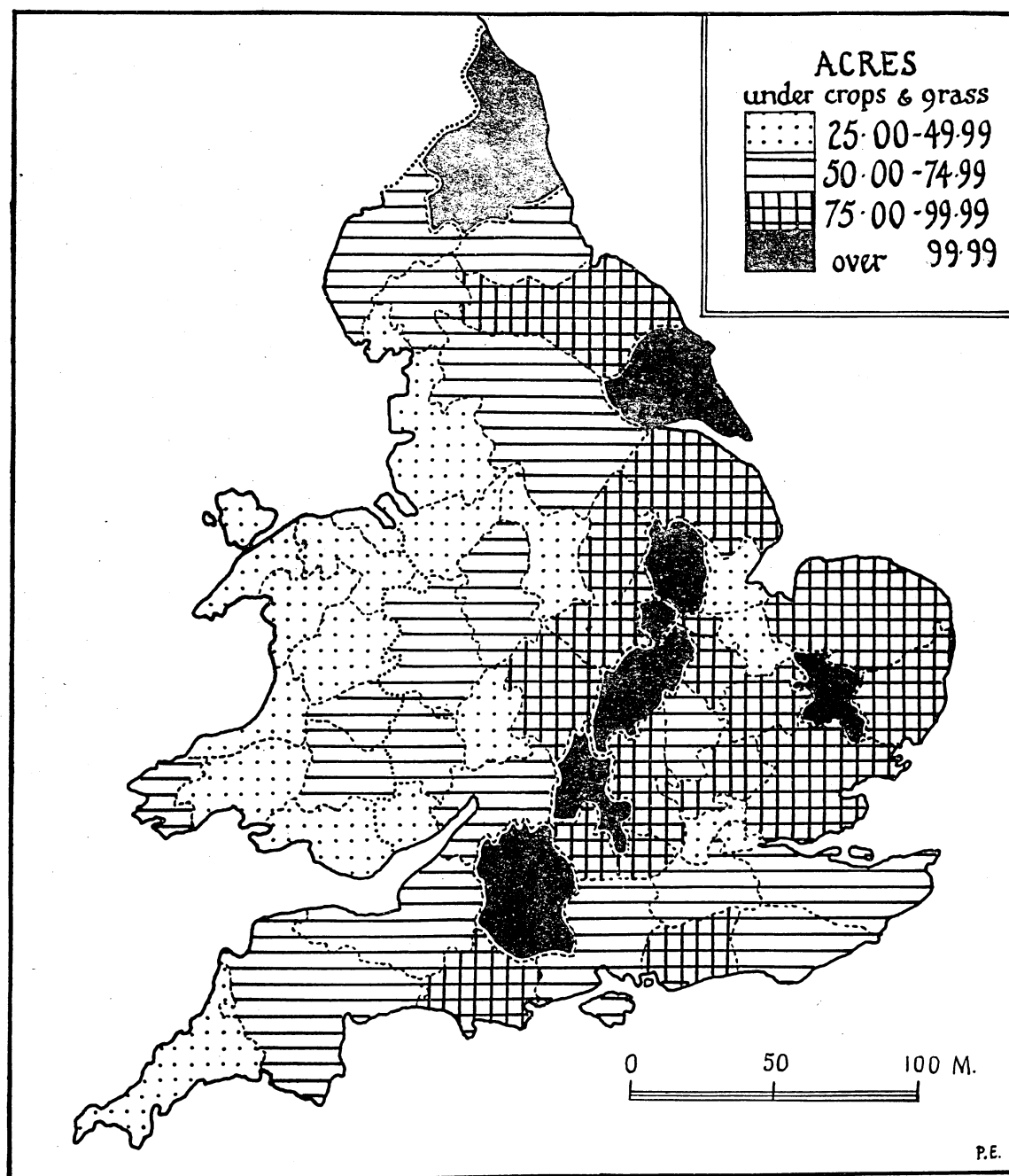
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries,
Agricultural Statistics.



MAP 6

Average number of all workers per holding (over 1 acre), June 1950.

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Agricultural Statistics.



MAP 7

Average size of holdings, June 1950.

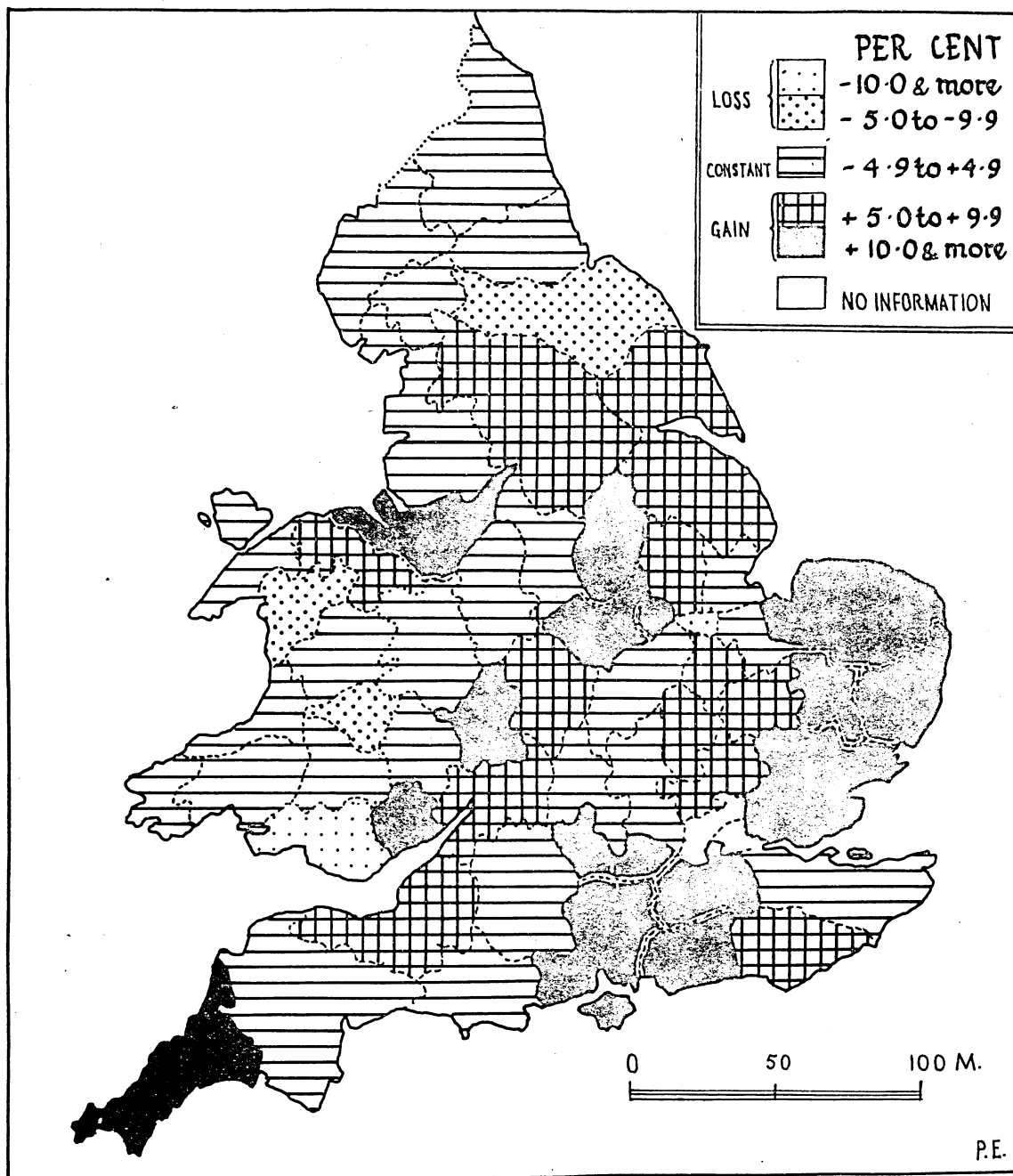
Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Agricultural Statistics.

III. Discussion

In contrast to the statistical evidence given in the introductory section, where it was shown that the recruitment of juveniles into agriculture has been steadily increasing since 1948, and that juveniles constitute a high proportion of the total agricultural labour force, the general picture given by the answers to this enquiry show dissatisfaction with the number of juveniles forthcoming.

It will be remembered that the counties where the majority of recorders expressed satisfaction with the supply position concerning boys, were limited to a band running from the southeast to the Scottish border (see Map 3, Page 12). An attempt was made to relate this distribution of opinions with such factors as the percentage of boys in the total regular male labour force (Map 5, see Page 28), average number of all workers per holding (Map 6, see Page 29) and average size of holding (Map 7, see Page 30) in the individual counties, as such might a priori be expected to affect the availability of youths. Allowing for the fact that there are many diverse types of farming in the counties, Map 5 indicates a low proportion of boys in the eastern arable and market-gardening areas, but a high proportion in the northern and western hill lands. When comparing this Map 5 with Maps 6 and 7, it will be seen that the higher proportion of boys occurs roughly in those counties which show the least number of workers per holding and a small average size of holdings. Or in other words, juvenile male labour is relatively more important on the smaller farms in hill country. In these cases the greater part of the labour is probably supplied by the farmers' family, supplemented by a youth rather than a full-grown employee, a youth who does the odd jobs and may manage a great part of a man's job at less expense. Although the factors shown on Maps 5, 6 and 7 are related to each other, there is nevertheless no relationship apparent between these factors and the distribution of replies concerning the supply position of juvenile labour as shown on Map 3.

The counties in which a majority opinion expressed itself as satisfied with supply, had in actual fact a satisfactory position. Out of these fourteen counties seven experienced gains in the number of boys in agriculture, six kept their numbers more or less constant ($\pm 5\%$) and only one suffered a real loss between 1948 and 1950. In the six counties in which satisfied and dissatisfied recorders equalled each other, the numbers of boys rose in four counties and remained constant in two. On the other hand, however, a number of counties in which a majority of replies expressed dissatisfaction with the supply of boys experienced substantial gains (i.e. over 10 per cent.) in the number of regular male workers under 18. These are Norfolk, Suffolk, West Sussex, Surrey,



Map 8.
Changes in the number of regular male
workers under 18. June 1948 - 1950.

Source: Ministry of Agriculture and
Fisheries, Agricultural Statistics.

Berkshire, Cornwall, Monmouth and Cheshire. (See Map 8, Page 32) for changes in counties of the numbers of regular male workers under 18 between 1948 and 1950.)

There are a number of possible explanations for this discrepancy between opinions and actual supply position. It may be that the agricultural recorders were confusing ideas about the under 18 group with the over 18 group. It is also likely that the absence of new recruits in 1948 through raising of the school-leaving age in that year had largely influenced the opinions of recorders. Most likely, however, is the explanation that despite rising numbers in these counties as total units there remained a further unfulfilled demand, or in other words the overall statistics mask widespread local unfulfilled needs.

Sources of supply are mainly rural, the exceptions being those cases sponsored by special organizations or those areas where industry and agriculture are interwoven. The majority of boys seem to drift into agriculture locally, but tend to leave rural areas both before and after the age of 18. The girls fall into two distinct groups - those coming as gang labour, often casual with no thought other than high piece-work rates, and those who are specializing in some branch with the idea of making this their career.

It is interesting to note that there exists some correspondence between the areas where sources other than rural ones were mentioned as important (see Map 4) and the central band within which replies expressed satisfaction with the number of recruits (see Map 3). This central band coincides approximately with the area of maximum industrial and urban concentration. This suggests either that proximity to the labour supply in towns is more important than local characteristics of farming (see Maps 5, 6 and 7), or that farms near to towns and industry provide more attractive conditions of work than in the areas beyond urban influence. The result is that the supply of boys is described as satisfactory only in those areas in which there is some recruitment from other non-rural sources (see Maps 3 and 4).

The importance of these "other" or non-rural sources should not, however, be exaggerated, as it is clear from Figure C above that they account for a fairly small proportion of juvenile workers. Perhaps the answer of one farmer in Cheshire sums up the position correctly: "The British farmer draws his labour force from whatever source he is fortunate enough to find available. In the main, he is no respecter of race, colour or creed, so long as his recruits are efficient labour units. The only consideration I have known enter into a farmer's calculation is the size and strength of the recruit when calculating the recruit's potential output."

The main impression left by the records on the work done by boys and girls is the extraordinary range of jobs tackled by these youths. They vary from the normal cleaning

out, piece work and milking to cultivation, shepherding on the hills and even walling. It is the all-rounder who is prominent, and only very rarely is there a mention of specialization, except in so far as local types of farming dictate.

The work of juveniles is praised in most cases - as one reply from Devon puts it - "It is surprising what youths can do. I have met farmers' sons of 12 and 14 years of years of age driving tractors and doing a fine job of work".

On the other hand, one has to reach the conclusion that on the average farm - outside the large estates - there is no organized progression in kind of work carried out by juveniles in accordance with rising age and experience. There is little organization of their labour but that arising from the exigencies of the day or the hour, mainly because labour teams are so small. It is a matter of the size of the farm staff, the type of farming, the personalities of the farmer and the boy, and the immediate requirements on the farm. The situation can be summed up by one of the replies received: "Working conditions and tasks set do not vary a great deal with time spent on farms, except that the employee tends to become more efficient. There is no grading system in operation and the tasks allotted to young men do not vary a great deal between 14 and 18 years. It is largely a matter of the worker accumulating experience as he goes from one job to another."

Thus at the age of 17 or 18 the young worker is efficient in most regular tasks, from a practical point of view rather than with any scientific understanding, and the majority have little or no prospect of proceeding any further on "the rungs of the ladder".

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