

CHAPTER X.—RENT AND THE CAPITAL EMPLOYED IN AGRICULTURE.

1. **Rent of agricultural land.**—No information has hitherto been officially collected as to the average rent of agricultural land in England and Wales, but in connection with the present Census it was decided to make an effort to obtain some information on the subject. It was felt, however, that occupiers of land would probably be unwilling to state definitely on the Agricultural Schedule the rent paid for their farms, and it became necessary to fall back on estimates made by the Crop Reporters, who by their local knowledge and experience were in most cases well qualified to form a reliable opinion on the subject.

The Crop Reporters were asked to estimate the average rent paid in 1925 in their respective districts for eight different sizes of holding, distinguishing in each case between (1) holdings mainly arable (70 per cent. and over arable land), (2) holdings mainly pasture (70 per cent. and over pasture), (3) mixed holdings lying between these two groups, (4) fruit and vegetable farms and (5) poultry farms. In addition, enquiries were made as regards rough grazings. The results for each division in England and Wales are summarised briefly in Table 27 in the Appendix and show that on the average of the whole country the rent of arable, pasture and mixed farms as estimated in 1925 was approximately 31s. per acre. Fruit and vegetable holdings averaged 82s. per acre, while poultry holdings averaged 64s. per acre, which is a very similar figure to that assigned for the group of holdings of 1 to 5 acres, excluding these special farms. The distinction between holdings mainly arable and mainly pasture brought out a rental difference of some interest, as will be seen from the following table, which shows the average rents per acre paid on holdings of different types and sizes in England and Wales.

The main feature of this table is the higher rent paid for holdings mainly pasture as compared with holdings mainly arable. The mixed holdings naturally occupy an intermediate position.

The difference in the rent per acre paid for holdings of different sizes is to a great extent the result of the variation in the demand for small and large holdings and to the fact that the former are for the most part found in the neighbourhood of towns. In addition, the rent paid is in respect not only of the land farmed but also of the farmhouse and farm buildings, including cottages on the holding, and therefore as holdings decrease in size the cost of buildings necessitates a higher average rent per acre, even allowing for the absence of house or buildings on a large proportion of holdings under 20 acres.