Departmental Committee of Inquiry into Allotments

REPORT

Presented to Parliament by the Minister of Housing and Local Government and the Secretary of State for Wales by Command of Her Majesty
October 1969

LONDON
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
£2 2s 0d. (£2·10) net
Cmd. 4166

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
MINUTE OF APPOINTMENT
COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO ALLOTMENTS

On 2nd August, 1965, the Minister of Land and Natural Resources appointed:—

F. A. Barnes, Esq., B.Sc.
Professor Emrys Jones, M.Sc., Ph.D., F.R.G.S.
W. Nelmens, Esq., M.B.E., A.H.R.H.S., F.Inst.P.A.
Mrs. F. Perry, M.B.E., F.L.S.
H. S. E. Snelson, Esq., O.B.E.

to be a Committee of Inquiry into Allotments with the following terms of reference:—

To review general policy on allotments in the light of present-day conditions in England and Wales and to recommend what legislative and other changes, if any, are needed.

The Minister further appointed Professor H. Thorpe to be chairman of the committee and Mr. B. V. White to be its secretary.
Table of Contents

Chapter | Page
---|---
MINUTE OF APPOINTMENT | ii
LETTER OF SUBMISSION | xvi
INTRODUCTION | xvii

PART I

BACKGROUND

1 HISTORICAL SURVEY | 1
A. Allotments before 1850 | 1
B. Allotments between 1850 and 1900 | 10
C. Allotments from 1900 to 1950 | 15

2 THE OPERATIVE LEGISLATION | 21
A. Definitions | 21
B. Responsibility for provision | 22
C. Acquisition of land for allotments | 23
D. Disposal and appropriation of allotment land | 24
E. Administration of allotment land | 25
   (1) Rules to be observed by allotments authorities | 25
   (2) Financial obligations and powers | 26
   (3) Rights of and restrictions upon the tenants of allotment land | 26
      (a) Tenancies and cultivation | 26
      (b) Notices to quit | 27
      (c) Compensation | 28
F. Summary | 29

3 ALLOTMENTS SINCE 1950—THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM | 30

PART II

4 METHODS OF INVESTIGATION AND ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS | 34
A. Methods of investigation | 34
B. Difficulties | 37
   (1) Attitudes of mind | 37
   (2) Lack of reliable information | 37
      (a) Private allotments | 37
      (b) Statistical records | 38
   (3) Differences between areas | 38
   (4) Definitions | 38
      (a) Allotment | 38
      (b) Statutory (permanent) | 39
      (c) Rod | 39
# PART III

PROVISION AND ADMINISTRATION OF ALLOTMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th></th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACREAGES, NUMBERS AND DISTRIBUTION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Acreages and numbers of allotments</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Difficulties of interpretation</td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Total numbers of allotments</td>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Statutory allotments and security of tenure</td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Temporary allotments</td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Urban and rural allotments</td>
<td></td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Vacant plots and their significance</td>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Waiting-lists</td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Distribution</td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Urban areas</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Rural areas</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE ROLE OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Default powers</td>
<td></td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Confirmation of model rules governing tenancies</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Compulsory acquisition of land for allotments</td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Borrowing powers</td>
<td></td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Exemption from the obligation to establish an allotments committee</td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Disposal and alienation of statutory allotment land</td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Annual report to Parliament</td>
<td></td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Planning and allotments</td>
<td></td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. General</td>
<td></td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE ALLOTMENTS AUTHORITIES—URBAN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Regional variations</td>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Provision of allotments</td>
<td></td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Classification of sites</td>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Town planning and allotments</td>
<td></td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Tenancies</td>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Finance</td>
<td></td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Size of sites and plots</td>
<td></td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE ALLOTMENTS AUTHORITIES—RURAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Provision of allotments: regional distinctions</td>
<td></td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. 'Commercial' allotments</td>
<td></td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Classification of sites</td>
<td></td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Administration and planning</td>
<td></td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Tenancies</td>
<td></td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Size of plots: vacancies and waiting-lists</td>
<td></td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Finance</td>
<td></td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Summary</td>
<td></td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART IV
THE ALLOTMENT HOLDER AND HIS LAND

10 THE ALLOTMENT HOLDER ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 140
A. Personal characteristics ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 142
(1) Sex ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 142
(2) Origins ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 142
(3) Age ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 143
(4) Occupations ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 144
(5) Mode of life ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 145
(6) Economics ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 146
(7) Motivation ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 149
(8) Health ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 150
(9) Summary... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 151
B. The allotment holder and his plot ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 154
(1) Access and accessibility... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 154
(2) Number and size of plots ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 157
(3) Cultivation: vegetables, fruit and flowers ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 158
(4) Livestock... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 161
(5) Rents and amenities ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 162
(6) Problems confronting allotment holders ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 163
(7) Attitudes of mind ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 166
C. The non-allotment holder ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 169
(1) The 'ones that got away' ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 169
(2) Survey of flat-dwellers ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 170

11 THE SITE ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 174
A. Siting ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 174
B. External appearance ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 177
C. Internal character... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 177
D. The individual plot ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 181
E. 'Model' sites and other 'high-standard' sites ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 185
F. Livestock ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 188
(1) Livestock on allotment garden sites ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 189
(a) Bees ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 189
(b) Pigeons... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 189
(c) Poultry, rabbits, pigs and other livestock ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 192
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) ‘Stock’ allotments: The Land Settlement Association Limited</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. ‘Commercial’ allotments</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 THE ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Trading</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Social activities</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The sites: general character</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Leases and agreements</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Finance and amenities</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Condition of sites</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Attitudes of mind</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 THE NATIONAL ALLOTMENTS AND GARDENS SOCIETY LIMITED AND VILLAGE PRODUCE ASSOCIATIONS</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Finance</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Interest in allotment gardening</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Town planning and security of tenure</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Recreation: the case for Government assistance</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. The economic argument: ‘Dig for Britain’</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. The National Council for Recreational Gardening and Livestock Keeping</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Legislation and regulations</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Publicity and prospects</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. N.A.G.S.’s annual conference</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Conclusions</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PART V

14 ALLOTMENTS OUTSIDE ENGLAND AND WALES | 239 |
| A. Allotments on the continent | 239 |
| (1) Chalet gardens: history and development | 240 |
| (2) Provision, planning and security of tenure | 241 |
| (3) The chalet garden site | 246 |
| (4) The individual garden | 247 |
| (5) The chalet | 248 |
| (6) The local associations | 250 |
| (7) Finance and rents | 253 |
| (8) Summary | 254 |
| B. Allotments in Scotland and Ireland | 256 |

PART VI

15 SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE | 257 |
# PART VII
## RECOMMENDATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>THE FUTURE OF ALLOTMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Public provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>THE ALLOTMENT IMAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1) The term ‘allotment’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Planning aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Types of site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) The Town and Country Planning Act 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) The siting of leisure gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Aesthetic considerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1) Landscaping and amenities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Maintenance: the association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) The leisure gardener and his plot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>STANDARDS OF PROVISION AND SECURITY OF TENURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>LOCAL ADMINISTRATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. The transitional period: allotment gardens to leisure gardens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Administrative machinery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Tenancies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Closure and contraction of sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E. Expansion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>FINANCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Acquisition and disposal of land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Landscaping and amenity provision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. Borrowing powers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. The revenue account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E. Compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F. Government grants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>PRIVATE ALLOTMENT GARDENS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Charity allotments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Other private sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS AND OTHER ALLOTMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Livestock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Multiple holdings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C. ‘Commercial’ allotments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D. Fuel and ‘poor’s’ allotments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter

23  THE LOCAL ASSOCIATION AND THE NATIONAL SOCIETY ... 338
A. The site association ... ... ... ... ... 338
B. The town and county associations ... ... ... ... ... 341
C. The national organisation ... ... ... ... ... 341
D. Financial structure ... ... ... ... ... 344

24  THE MINISTER'S RESPONSIBILITIES ... ... ... ... ... 347

25  THE WAY TO A FUTURE ... ... ... ... ... 350

SUMMARY OF MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS 354

TABLES IN TEXT

1  Number of allotment plots in Great Britain: 1873–95 ... ... 14
2  Allotment sizes in England and Wales: 1887 ... ... 15
3  Proportion of allotments to householders, 1914–18: England and Wales ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 16
4  Major factors affecting reliability of official allotment statistics: 1908–67 ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 44
5  Changes in allotment provision, 1914–20: England and Wales ... ... 47
6  Allotment land provided under section 10 of the 1922 Act: England and Wales ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 47
7  Provision of urban and rural allotments, 1930–9: England and Wales ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 49
8  Changes in numbers and acreages of urban and rural allotments, 1914–39: England and Wales (excluding railway allotments) ... ... 49
9  Total allotments in the Second World War: England and Wales (estimated figures only) ... ... ... ... ... 50
10 Percentage decline in numbers and acres of allotments, 1950–67: England and Wales ... ... ... ... ... ... 51
11 Apparent decline in statutory allotment acreage, 1960–7: England and Wales ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 52
12 Local authority allotments in 1934: England and Wales ... ... 53
13 Compulsory purchase orders, 1950–65: England and Wales ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 70
14 Loan sanctions, 1965: England and Wales ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 71
15 Consents to disposal of statutory land, 1965: England and Wales ... ... 73
16 Subsequent uses of former allotment land, 1945–65: England and Wales ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 86
17 Present uses of former allotment land, 1967: Bristol ... ... ... ... ... 87
18 Local authority departments administering allotments ... ... ... ... ... 95
19 Local authorities prohibiting flower cultivation ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 100
20 Percentage of urban authorities allowing each type of livestock ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 101
21 Urban authorities having 'model' plots ... ... ... ... ... ... 101
22 Product of a 2d. rate in selected county boroughs: 1967–8 ... ... 103
23 Allotments expenditure in selected towns in England and Wales: 1965–6 ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 104
24 Percentage of urban sites possessing each amenity: England and Wales ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 106
25 Towns in England and Wales which have provided no amenities on their sites ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 106

viii
Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Provision of amenities on urban authority allotment garden sites</th>
<th>107</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vacant plots on urban authority sites providing different numbers of</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>specified amenities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proceeds of sale of a statutory allotment site, Grimsby County</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Borough: 1960</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of rural sites possessing each amenity: England and</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wales</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allotment holders in England and Wales: comparison of age</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hours spent on allotment by the average allotment holder: England</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and Wales</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparative sizes of allotment gardens: England and Wales</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of allotments for specified purposes</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of allotment holders keeping livestock: England and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wales</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allotment holders' views on fair rents for selected amenities</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allotment holders' rating of difficulties of cultivation</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reasons for giving up allotments: a survey of 103 sites with</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>associations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reasons for not having an allotment (Birmingham flat-dwellers:</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1967)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preferences of Birmingham's flat-dwellers for chalet gardens and</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>improved allotment gardens: 1967</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stock allotments: reasons for vacating plots. A survey of three</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sites (Coventry, Doncaster, Worksop): 1960–8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of urban allotment garden sites possessing each amenity</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intensity of recreational land use (after W. J. Gibson)</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estimated total value of urban allotment garden produce: England</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and Wales</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grant-aid received through the National Council</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Present and future provision of allotments (all types) in selected</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>continental cities with estimates of current demand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provision of chalets on continental chalet gardens</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allotment finance in selected continental towns: 1966</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recommended rents for a 10-rood plot: 1969</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Examples of methods of assessment of rent in 1969</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MAPS AND DIAGRAMS

Figure

|      | Early rural private allotments: Falmer, 1838                   | 4  |
|      | Distribution of 'guinea gardens' in and around Birmingham:     |     |
|      | 1824–5 (from a survey by J. Pigott Smith)                     | 8  |
|      | Changes in distribution of allotments: Birmingham: 1885–1965.. | 9  |
|      | Numbers of allotment plots in England and Wales: 1908–67      | 45 |
|      | Acreages of allotments by classes in England and Wales: 1948–67| 55 |
|      | Annual changes of area in local authority allotment land of all types | 58 |
|      | (excluding true statutory land): 1950–67                      |     |
|      | Acreages of urban and rural allotments by classes in England and| 60 |
Areas of vacant allotment land of all classes (excluding railway land) in England and Wales: 1950–67 ... ... ... ... 62
Urban and rural areas with allotments of an class: 1964 ... (facing) 64
Urban authorities in England and Wales without allotments of any class: 1964 ... ... ... ... ... ... 66/67
Decline in allotment garden provision (all classes) for twenty largest towns excluding London: 1952–67 ... ... ... 80
Urban allotments (all classes): acres/1,000 population for counties and county boroughs: 1963 ... ... ... ... ... 82/83
Rural allotments (all classes): acreage/1,000 population: 1964 ... 116
Rural allotments (all classes): average number of plots/acre: 1964 ... 117
Rural allotments (all classes): percentage decrease in acreage: 1952/1964 ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 118
Map of Nottinghamshire mining area showing allotment provision, 1967 ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 135
National averages (urban allotment holders): 1966 ... ... 143
Transect from Central to South Birmingham showing allotment catchment areas: 1958 ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 152
Transect from Central to South Birmingham showing allotment catchment areas: 1968 ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 153
Land use of small allotment garden site: 1966. ... ... ... 190
Land use of allotment garden/pigeon site: 1967 ... ... ... 191
Design for a ‘model’ ‘stock’ allotment site prepared by the Land Settlement Association, Ltd. ... ... ... ... ... ... 196
Chalet garden site at Bornbach, Hamburg ... ... ... ... ... ... 243
The improvement of an allotment garden site. Phase I: existing layout ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 270
The improvement of an allotment garden site. Phase II: design for leisure gardening ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 271
An impression of a community garden for use by flat-dwellers ... 274
An impression of raised flower beds for use by the elderly or infirm 275
Vector analysis: rotated factors I/II Q-mode of data for 58 of the largest allotments authorities (excluding London) ... ... 380
Regional variations of the allotments situation in large towns (excluding London) as indicated by vector analysis Q-mode. ... 381
Cluster analysis: the linkage tree derived from seven rotated Q-mode factors for 58 of the largest allotments authorities (excluding London) ... ... ... ... ... ... 383

**PLATES**

1 The standard ‘geometry’ of an allotment garden site (Percy Estate, Warwick: temporary site)
2 A high-standard allotment garden site (Wheelers Lane, Birmingham: statutory site)
3 A derelict allotment garden site
4 An ugly perimeter fence (Hearsall, Coventry: private site)
5 The problem of weed encroachment (French Barn Lane, Blackley, Manchester: statutory site)
Plate

6 A ‘do-it-yourself’ allotment shed
7 The move towards the chalet (Victoria Jubilee, Birmingham: private site)
8 A ‘model’ site (Iris Brickfield, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: statutory site)
9 A ‘model’ site (New Weelsby, Grimsby: statutory site)
10 A fine association headquarters building (The Uplands, Birmingham: statutory site)
11(a) Allensbank allotment garden site in 1950 before improvement (Cardiff)
11(b) Allensbank allotment garden site in 1952 during conversion (Cardiff)
12 Allensbank allotment garden site in 1954 after conversion to a ‘model’ site (Cardiff: statutory site)
13 A high-standard allotment garden site (Walthamstow Avenue, Waltham Forest: temporary site)
14 A neat mature private allotment garden site (Tennyson Road, Coventry)
15 A well-constructed pigeon cre (Holder House Allotment Site, South Shields: statutory site)
16 Railwayside allotment garden site used also for pigeons and poultry (Deans Hospital, South Shields: temporary site)
17 Allotment garden site devoted almost entirely to poultry (Huncoat, Accrington: statutory site)
18 An untidy ‘stock’ allotment site overlooked by flats (Blackley, Manchester: statutory site leased to the Land Settlement Association Ltd.)
19 A ‘model’ stock allotment site incorporating pigs, poultry and cultivation (Blackleach, Worsley, Lancashire: statutory site)
20 Rural commercial allotment (Bluntisham, Huntingdonshire)
21 Close proximity of high-rise flats and allotment gardens (Broad Lane, Kings Heath, Birmingham: statutory site)
22 Chalet garden (Volkstuin) site adjoining public open space in Amsterdam, Holland
23 View within a chalet garden site in Amsterdam
24 An impressive community centre at the Ons Buiten chalet garden site, Amsterdam
25 Neat vegetable plots (Kleingärten or Schrebergärten) with summer-houses in Dortmund, Western Germany
26 An attractive chalet garden (Hamburg)
27 Elliptical chalet gardens (Kolonihaver) in Naerum, Denmark
28 A demonstration leisure garden plot at Allensbank Allotment Garden Site (Cardiff: statutory site)
29 Two demonstration leisure garden plots at N.A.G.S. headquarters (Flitwick, Bedfordshire)
30 A demonstration allotment garden plot at the Gardening Centre, Syon Park, Middlesex
## Appendices

### Appendix

| I | References: Chapter 1: Historical survey | ... | ... | 361 |
|   | Chapter 2: The operative legislation | ... | ... | 363 |

| II | Principal visits made by the committee | ... | ... | 365 |
|    | 1. England and Wales | ... | ... | 365 |
|    | 2. Continent | ... | ... | 365 |

|    | National organisations submitting written evidence | ... | ... | 366 |
|    | Government Departments submitting written evidence | ... | ... | 366 |
|    | Student theses undertaken in connection with the work of the committee | ... | ... | 367 |
|    | Abbreviations used in text | ... | ... | 367 |

| III | Questionnaire issued to urban authorities | ... | ... | 368 |
|     | Table I: Scope of the analysis by type of authority | ... | ... | 368 |
|     | Table II: Changes in the total number of allotment plots between 1945–65 and 1961–5 | ... | ... | 369 |
|     | Table III: Changes in the total number of allotment sites between 1945–65 and 1961–5 | ... | ... | 370 |
|     | Table IV: Towns possessing each class of allotment site: 1965 | ... | ... | 371 |
|     | Table V: Sizes of allotment plots by class of site | ... | ... | 371 |
|     | Table VI: Allotment provision in terms of acres/1,000 population at various dates, with estimates for the future | ... | ... | 371 |
|     | Table VII: Comparative provision in terms of acres/1,000 population: 1945–65 | ... | ... | 372 |
|     | Table VIII: Restrictions on the cultivation of flowers and the rearing of livestock on allotment gardens | ... | ... | 372 |
|     | Table IX: Annual rents of allotment gardens | ... | ... | 373 |
|     | Table X: Local authority gross expenditure per allotment acre (statutory and temporary sites only) | ... | ... | 373 |
|     | Table XI: Local authority net expenditure on allotments in terms of a penny rate | ... | ... | 373 |
|     | Table XII: Local authority administration of allotment gardens | ... | ... | 374 |
|     | Table XIII: Local authority allotments estimates: 1965–6 | ... | ... | 374 |
|     | Table XIV: Local authority capital expenditure on allotments: 1965–6 | ... | ... | 374 |
|     | Table XV: Local authority revenue expenditure on allotments: 1963–6 | ... | ... | 375 |
|     | Table XVI: Local authorities’ views on the optimum size of allotment sites | ... | ... | 375 |
Appendix

Table XVII: Questions not analysed elsewhere in this Appendix 375
Table XVIII: Statistical data by county: England and Wales: 1965 376

IV The allotments situation in large towns: 1965 378
Table I: Variables used in factor and vector analyses 379
Table II: The computer programs 382
Table III: Significant correlations 384

V Questionnaire issued to rural parishes 387
Table I: Scope of the analysis 387
Table II: Changes in the total number of allotment plots between 1945–65 and 1961–5 387
Table III: Changes in the total number of allotment sites between 1945–65 and 1961–5 388
Table IV: Provision of allotment sites by classes: 1965 388
Table V: Sizes of individual allotment plots by class of site 389
Table VI: Allotment provision in terms of acres/1,000 population at various dates between 1945 and 1965 389
Table VII: Comparative provision in terms of acres/1,000 population: 1945–65 390
Table VIII: Restrictions on the cultivation of flowers and the rearing of livestock on allotment gardens 390
Table IX: Annual rents of allotment gardens 390
Table X: Local authority gross expenditure per allotment acre (statutory and temporary sites only) 391
Table XI: Local authority net expenditure on allotments in terms of a penny rate 391
Table XII: Local authority administration of allotments 391
Table XIII: Local authority allotments estimates: 1965–6 392
Table XIV: Local authority capital expenditure on allotments: 1965–6 392
Table XV: Local authority revenue expenditure on allotments: 1965–6 392
Table XVI: Sizes of waiting-lists for plots 393
Table XVII: Questions not analysed elsewhere in this Appendix 393
Table XVIII: Statistical data by county (England) and for Wales as a whole 394

VI Questionnaire issued to allotment holders 395
Table I: Scope of the analysis 395
Table II: Personal data concerning the allotment holder 396
Appendix

Table III: The allotment holder’s spare time and spare time occupations ... ... ... ... ... ... 397
Table IV: The allotment holder’s home garden: ... ... ... ... ... ... 398
  (a) Size ... ... ... ... ... ... 398
  (b) Function ... ... ... ... ... ... 398
Table V: The allotment holder’s origins ... ... ... ... ... ... 399
Table VI: The allotment garden and economic need: ... ... ... ... ... ... 400
  (a) General ... ... ... ... ... ... 400
  (b) The monetary value of the allotment garden ... ... ... ... ... ... 401
Table VII: Reasons for having an allotment garden ... ... ... ... ... ... 402
Table VIII: Sizes of allotment gardens ... ... ... ... ... ... 403
Table IX: Livestock on allotment gardens ... ... ... ... ... ... 403
Table X: Produce for showing ... ... ... ... ... ... 404
Table XI: The land use of the allotment garden ... ... ... ... ... ... 404
Table XII: Time spent on the allotment: ... ... ... ... ... ... 405
  (a) Frequency of visits by season ... ... ... 405
  (b) Number of hours each week by season ... ... ... ... ... 405
  (c) Number of hours per annum ... ... ... ... ... ... 406
Table XIII: Distance and travel ... ... ... ... ... ... 407
Table XIV: Allotment rents ... ... ... ... ... ... 408
Table XV: Site amenities ... ... ... ... ... ... 409
Table XVI: Classes of site ... ... ... ... ... ... 409
Table XVII: General questions ... ... ... ... ... ... 410
Table XVIII: Difficulties in cultivation and enjoyment of allotment gardens ... ... ... ... ... ... 410

VII Questionnaire issued to secretaries of allotment associations affiliated to N.A.G.S. ... ... ... ... ... ... 411
Table I: Classes of allotment garden sites with associations ... ... ... ... ... ... 411
Table II: Age of sites ... ... ... ... ... ... 411
Table III: Changes in the area of sites between various dates by classes ... ... ... ... ... ... 412
Table IV: Changes in standards of cultivation of sites: 1945–65 and 1961–5 ... ... ... ... ... ... 413
Table V: Sizes of individual allotment gardens ... ... ... ... ... ... 414
Table VI: Sites leased to associations: comparison between rents collected from tenants and paid to the landowner ... ... ... ... ... ... 414
Table VII: Allotment holders occupying several plots, by class of site ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 414
Table VIII: Restrictions on flowers and livestock ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 415
Table IX: Provision of site amenities: ... ... ... 415
   (a) Amenities installed ... ... ... 415
   (b) Method of installation by class of site 415
Table X: Use of communal hut ... ... ... 416
Table XI: Problems encountered on the site ... ... 416
Table XII: Vandalism and theft on sites ... ... ... 416
Table XIII: Questions not analysed elsewhere in this
   Appendix ... ... ... ... ... 417
Table XIV: Surrender of plots: ... ... ... ... 417
   (a) Numbers giving up allotments: 1961–5 417
   (b) Reasons for surrender of plots: 1961–5 417
VIII Questionnaire to flat-dwellers (City of Birmingham) ... ... 418
   Table I: Completed questionnaires ... ... ... 418
   Table II: Sizes of households ... ... ... 418
   Table III: Garden needs of flat-dwellers ... ... 418
   Table IV: Flat-dwellers who would like a garden: ... ... 419
      (a) Type of flat ... ... ... 419
      (b) Size of households ... ... ... 419
   Table V: Reasons for not having an allotment (a) ... 419
   Table VI: Reasons for not having an allotment (b) ... 419
   Table VII: Degree of interest in ‘improved’ allotments ... ... 420
   Table VIII: The ‘journey to dig’ ... ... ... 420
   Table IX: Cultivation of ‘improved’ allotment gardens ... ... 421
   Table X: Interest in ‘chalet gardens’ ... ... ... 421
   Table XI: Land use of ‘chalet gardens’ ... ... ... 421
   Table XII: Household sizes ... ... ... 422
   Table XIII: Summary Table: ... ... ... 422
      (a) Preferences of those interested in
         obtaining a garden ... ... ... 422
      (b) Overall response of Birmingham’s
         flat-dwellers ... ... ... 422
IX Model rules as to allotment gardens ... ... ... 423
X The improvement of established leisure garden sites: ... ... 429
   A. Suggestions and guide lines for improvements ... 429
   B. The improvement of an existing allotment garden site:
      design for leisure gardening ... ... ... 440
XI Special types of communal gardens ... ... ... 443

SUBJECT INDEX ... ... ... 445

xv
REPORT OF THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY
INTO ALLOTMENTS

To: The Right Honourable ANTHONY GREENWOOD, M.P.,
Minister of Housing and Local Government.
The Right Honourable GEORGE THOMAS, M.P.,
Secretary of State for Wales.

Sirs,
We were appointed by the Minister of Land and Natural Resources on 2nd August, 1965. Our terms of reference were:

"to review general policy on allotments in the light of present-day conditions in England and Wales and to recommend what legislative and other changes, if any, are needed."

On the dissolution of the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources on 16th February, 1967, the administration of the current allotments legislation in England passed to the Minister of Housing and Local Government while the Secretary of State assumed responsibility for allotments in Wales.

We now have the honour to submit our report.

H. THORPE (Chairman)
F. A. BARNES
EMRYS JONES
R. A. KIDD
W. NELMES
MRS. F. PERRY
H. S. E. SNELSON

F. R. GILL (Secretary)
16th June, 1969

xvi
INTRODUCTION

(i) This report is concerned with an important land use problem that must be judged within a changed social and economic context. Land is a scarce commodity in England and Wales today with its dense urban population occupying approximately 11 per cent of the total area, and we must ensure that all land is effectively used in the interests of the community as a whole. In the past, when allotments were held to make an important contribution to the food supplies of the individual as well as of the nation, both in peace and war, they were administered by the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. But since the Second World War, improvements in both the standard of living and agricultural productivity have reduced the economic need for allotments in peacetime, while greater emphasis is now placed on their value as a recreation particularly to the town-dweller. The supervision of allotments in England and Wales has accordingly moved successively from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources, before coming to rest in the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and the Welsh Office.

(ii) Part I of our report presents the background, historical and legislative, to the allotments situation up to 1950 when the system was last examined in detail by the Allotments Advisory Committee. Despite the recommendations of that committee, not all of which were implemented, the ranks of allotment holders continued to show a marked decrease, while public concern about the number of vacant plots and half-derelict sites increased. At the same time a hard core of keen gardeners, many with no home garden of their own, complained that good sites were being taken over in a cavalier fashion by local authorities who were anxious to use allotment land for other purposes, particularly for housing, parks, playing fields and schools.

(iii) Having thus examined the scope of the problem, we describe in Part II the methods of investigation which we adopted, particularly the examination of extant statistical data; the perusal of written evidence; the issue of questionnaires to all allotments authorities and to a sample of allotment holders and association secretaries; the initiation of special studies undertaken by university and college students of the allotments situation in 49 different areas; a survey of the gardening interests and needs of flat-dwellers; visits to allotments authorities, associations and sites both in England and Wales and on the continent; and the hearing of oral evidence from such bodies as the National Allotments and Gardens Society and the Land Settlement Association.

(iv) Our appraisal of the existing situation in England and Wales is presented in Parts III and IV, the former describing the provision and administration of allotments, the latter dealing with the allotment holder and his land. The acreages, numbers, classes and distribution of allotments, both urban and rural, are examined with the aid of maps, graphs and tables, and general trends established particularly for the period since 1950. We then discuss the respective roles of Central Government and local authorities in allotment provision, and assess the contribution of private allotments provided by charitable bodies. British Rail, the National Coal Board, British Waterways and others to the total number of plots available.
(v) Part IV provides a cameo picture of 'the man on the plot', his age, family, home, occupation, income and interests. It examines his reasons for having an allotment, how much he is prepared to pay in rent, and seeks to determine to what extent the land use on individual plots and entire sites is affected by particular objectives of the allotment holder, as well as by restrictions imposed by Central Government or local authority. Then follows a review of many problems confronting plot holders today and preventing them from fully enjoying the use of their land.

(vi) At a later stage in Part IV the character and organisation of sites is discussed, concluding with an appraisal of the contribution of the National Allotments and Gardens Society to the work of the movement and the nature of its image. Light is also shed on the attitude of allotment holders and associations towards their national body.

(vii) The existence of a vigorous allotments movement on the continent led the committee to make a short visit to Holland, Western Germany, Denmark and Sweden where chalet sites were closely examined and discussions held with municipalities and associations regarding the provision, location and organisation of sites. The emphasis on recreation, beauty, imaginative design, intensive land use and sense of community that we found there contrasted strongly with the situation in England and Wales. Some of these differences are clearly seen in the plates and figures with which we illustrate our report.

(viii) Part VI summarises the evidence, bringing into sharper focus the reasons for the heavy decline in the numbers of tenanted plots since the war-time peak of 1942, and for a depressing situation wherein relations between the allotments movement and authority are today at a lower ebb than at any time in the movement's history.

(ix) In the final section, Part VII, we see good reason for the continuance of an allotments movement but with an entirely new name and image, and submit our recommendations for provision, design, legislative changes, administration and finance. Important changes in the role of the national society are also proposed, and the foreseen responsibilities of the Minister and the Secretary of State with regard to the leisure gardens of the future are also discussed. Part VII is succeeded by a summary of our major recommendations, and we conclude with a number of Appendices which serve not only to substantiate and amplify the main text but also to record our principal witnesses, the names of national organisations and Government Departments which submitted written evidence, visits made and areas within which special studies were undertaken.

(x) The presence among the figures and plates which illustrate our report of what might seem to be a large number related to the Birmingham area is due solely to the fact that the location of the chairman in that city meant inevitably that certain investigations were most conveniently conducted there.

(xi) We have held forty-eight formal and two informal meetings which have occupied in all fifty-eight days. All our meetings have been held in private and we have not published any other reports of our proceedings. A record of the latter has been kept throughout.

(xii) We wish to record our gratitude to all our witnesses for the time and trouble they devoted to preparing memoranda or attending meetings to give oral evidence; and to the representatives of allotments authorities and new town development corporations in England and Wales who made special arrange-
ments for our visits; and to all those officials of the various municipalities and allotment organisations who helped to make our visit to the continent so successful. Our thanks are also due to the many association officials and plotholders who met us and talked so freely about allotment matters. We are also grateful to Mr. Neville Borg, City Engineer, Surveyor and Planning Officer of the City of Birmingham, and to the General Manager and staff of the Birmingham Parks, Smallholdings and Allotments Department for valuable help in many ways; to the many students who selected an allotments topic for their dissertation and whose names are listed in Appendix IID; to Mr. P. A. Taylor for his work in connection with the issue, return and preliminary analysis of the Birmingham flats questionnaire; to Dr. J. P. Cole and Mr. P. M. Mather of the Department of Geography, University of Nottingham for advice and help in connection with the computer programs described in Appendix IV; to Mr. S. B. K. Clark, Senior Planning Officer with the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, for his assistance in the later stages of our deliberations; and to the technical staff of the Department of Geography, University of Birmingham, for painstaking cartographic and photographic work connected with the preparation of figures and plates for inclusion in the report.

(xiii) Finally, we express our warmest thanks to the members of our secretariat. Mr. F. R. Gill, who at an early stage in our investigations succeeded Mr. B. V. White as secretary, deserves the highest commendation for his invaluable help in the conduct of the inquiry and the preparation of our report; he has been most ably assisted throughout by Miss J. Ungless, who has been particularly responsible for the marshalling of evidence and the summaries of visits and meetings. At all times we have been most impressed by their enterprise and initiative in dealing with the vast amount of work connected with general administration, the acquisition and analysis of a wide range of data, the organisation of visits and the final preparation of the report. To Mrs. E. B. Driver, Research Associate attached to the Department of Geography, University of Birmingham, our sincere thanks are also due for unfailing help in matters concerned with planning and landscape architecture, the direction of student research projects, the carrying out of specific investigations and the preparation of special designs for inclusion in the report.
PART I

BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL SURVEY

A. Allotments before 1850

1. It is often said that many of the problems of the allotments system today are a heritage of its charitable past. This is certainly so; but any attempt to establish the date when common charity first found expression in the provision of allotments or to trace any pattern in their early development is hampered by the absence of reliable and comprehensive records, by the lack of an accepted early definition of the word ‘allotment’ itself, and by the fact that, before national legislation sought to regularise allotment provision, local custom often applied widely different terminology to systems which were essentially the same.

2. The extent of this problem can best be illustrated by reference to a number of examples.

(i) During the later Middle Ages, instances are known of benefactors bequeathing areas of land for the relief of local poverty. It is certain, however, that little (if any) of this land was let directly to those whom it was intended to benefit; far more frequently, the land was made subject to a rent charge which might, if properly collected and administered, improve the lot of the parish poor.

(ii) A large number of manorial commons, each lying within the jurisdiction of one lord of the manor, were enclosed by agreement during the reign of Elizabeth I. In most cases the tenants who lost their common rights were compensated by being given specific ‘allotments’ of land. But such ‘allotments’ were almost invariably attached to the tenant’s cottage, and bore no resemblance to the vast majority of those which exist today.

(iii) During the seventeenth century there also arose the practice of awarding ‘cowgates’, by which a landless individual was given the right to use part of a tract of common pasture. These could scarcely be termed ‘allotments’ as there was no element of sharing or apportionment of available land, no tenancy and, initially, no cultivation.

(iv) Other records provide instances where landowners would permit their labourers to grow crops upon ‘potato patches’ on the edges of their land, a practice which survives in some rural areas today. But since in the seventeenth century this act of generosity appears generally to have been regarded as a contribution to the labourer’s wage, such plots have never assumed the character of allotments.

We have taken the view, therefore, that this short historical survey of allotments might best begin with the onset of parliamentary enclosure—enclosure of rural

---

1 In view of the large number of references in this chapter and in Chapter 2 a full list for both chapters is contained in Appendix 1. References for subsequent chapters are included as footnotes to the appropriate pages.
land by private Acts of Parliament—and its consequences. Although a handful of such Acts were passed during the first half of the eighteenth century, they were introduced in considerable numbers only from 1760 onwards; their numbers increased still further during the early years of the nineteenth century after the General Inclosure Act of 1801\(^2\) had considerably reduced the expense of enclosure.

3. It is no part of our task to assess the rival merits of enclosure and of the open field system of husbandry which it replaced. The advocates of enclosure were able to show that the open field system was no longer economically viable (whatever its social merit) in the face of the more scientific methods of farming associated with crop rotations, which were gradually being introduced, and the extent to which they succeeded in pleading their case can be deduced from the fact that between 1760 and 1818 over 5 million acres of land were enclosed by no less than 3,500 Acts of Parliament. The process of enclosure, in its simplest form, involved the division of areas of open fields and manorial commons into separate parcels, which were then ‘allotted’ to those individuals who could prove their entitlement to a share of them. The identity of such portions as ‘allotments’ quickly disappeared as the new pattern of farms and fields arose, and needs no further reference in this report. Many enclosures also reserved relatively small allotments of land for community use. This land was termed a ‘recreational allotment’, ‘gravel allotment’ or ‘water allotment’, according to the purpose for which it was prescribed. Most of these allotments still incorporated the name ‘commons’ or ‘greens’ and pass out of our story.

4. But the enclosure of the commons and open fields produced a great social evil. For many centuries, the agricultural system of this country had been founded on the concept of the peasant cultivator, exercising his ancient but ill-documented rights over large areas of common arable and pasture land. With enclosure, a great many disappeared from the rural scene almost without trace. Countless thousands who were unable or ill-equipped to prove a prescriptive claim to common rights found themselves landless; many more, who had been granted a token allotment of land by the enclosure award either were so incapable of making a decent living in an age when the large farm was often the most economic, or found the cost of fencing it so overwhelming that they were prepared to part with their holdings to nearby landowners eager to enlarge their farms still further, and usually at relatively little cost. Thus there emerged from enclosure a rural proletariat which had largely lost its direct contact with the soil and which faced a future of dire poverty. To these thousands, and to their families, there appeared to be only three alternatives—to offer themselves for hire to the nearest landowner for wages which (especially in the southern counties) were scarcely sufficient to enable them to survive; to move into the growing industrial towns in search of employment; or to depend upon poor relief. Some idea of the effects of enclosure upon such people may be gauged from two sets of comparative statistics: in 1790, four-fifths of the population of England and Wales lived in the country, but by 1831, 50 per cent lived in urban areas.* Significantly, too, the sum spent on poor relief throughout England and Wales rose from less than £700,000 in 1750 to £8 million in 1818.

5. It would be unjust to lay the blame for this calamity in rural areas entirely at the door of those who advocated enclosure. It could probably have been

---

* We recognise that this change was due as much to the rapid growth of towns as to the enclosure of land.
avoided by greater foresight and by a refusal to subjugate social conscience entirely to progress and economic greed. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the pleas of the few who foresaw the consequences fell largely upon deaf ears. For example, although in 1775 Nathaniel Kent recommended that in each enclosure award every labourer should have 3½ acres of land attached to his cottage, there is no record that this was ever done. Similarly in 1801, Arthur Young, who had earlier led the way in advocating enclosure, acknowledged that any act which deprived the poor of the means to graze their stock was "a mischief that might easily have been avoided, and ought most carefully to be avoided in the future".

6. Despite many such opinions, freely expressed by eminent men, the early Inclosure Acts did little to ameliorate the lot of the rural poor. A few, it is true, made some special provision for them, and very occasionally (as in the case of Bucklebury, Berkshire), Parliament rejected a Bill which it considered unfair. But more frequently the Acts did little more than pay lip-service to their plight by setting aside a 'fuel' allotment, usually in a distant corner of the parish and often on ground resistant to cultivation, from which the 'industrious poor' were permitted to take peat, turf, furze or other available fuel for their own use. These were clearly a wasting asset.

7. Even where, in the early days of parliamentary enclosure, the provisions of an Act incorporated an attempt to improve the conditions of the poor, it was customary to follow the former practice of letting the available land to a single individual with the intention of using the rent for the benefit of the poor. In his Law of Allotments, Hall stated that the Great Somerford (Wiltshire) Inclosure Act of 1806 was the first to set aside land as allotments for the labouring poor, but added that this example was quickly followed elsewhere. During the ensuing twenty-five years a greater number of Acts provided 'poor's' allotments, until, in 1833, Curtler could point to seven counties (unspecified) where allotments for the poor were provided in almost every parish.

8. It is clear, however, that even in the nineteenth century many Acts omitted all mention of 'poor's' allotments, and it was not until the General Inclosure Act of 1845 that any serious attempt was made to provide them. This Act empowered the Inclosure Commissioners to specify as one of the conditions of enclosure the appropriation of such an allotment for the labouring poor as they thought necessary. It went on to permit the warden of Inclosure Acts to set aside land as 'field gardens' (limited to a quarter of an acre in extent) for the poor, and, more important, required them to account to the Commissioners for any failure to do so. Thus, the association of enclosure with allotment provision was at last ratified. This came, of course, far too late, and the number of Inclosure Acts passed after 1845 was but a small fraction of those which had gone before.

9. During the same period, however, there were other ways in which allotments of different types came into being in rural areas. Even before the end of the eighteenth century a few large landowners had become convinced that the only answer to the great problem of rural poverty lay in the provision of individual allotments of land. By the turn of the century, men such as Lord Carrington, the Duke of Ancaster and the Earls of Winchelsea and Chichester had provided allotments for many of their labourers in Lincolnshire, Rutland and East Sussex, and similar provisions were made elsewhere (Figure 1). All such schemes, however, demanded a rare combination of philanthropy and wealth, and were incapable of general extension.
Figure 1

Part of the tithe map (1838) of Falmer, East Sussex, showing orderly 'cottage gardens' provided by the Earl of Chichester in an attractively landscaped setting with shelter-belts. The area (No. 53), formerly occupied by the allotments on the western side of the village, now forms part of the frontage of the University of Sussex.
10. At this time, when the provision of allotments for the poor was in its infancy, there was a widespread belief, even among their advocates, that they should be provided by acts of private charity rather than by national legislation. In fact, in 1800 the opposition to a plan by the newly constituted Board of Agriculture to introduce allotments legislation was led by Lord Carrington, who was himself providing allotments upon his own land. Because of this opposition, a number of attempts to introduce even permissive legislation proved abortive. For instance, a private member’s Bill of 1790, which proposed to give small allotments of land to the poor, and a General Inclosure Bill of 1796 which would have compelled future Acts to set aside land for the poor, were both rejected.

11. Nevertheless, a number of important Public Acts (apart from the General Inclosure Act of 1845) were passed into law, though most of these were introduced from political rather than altruistic motives. Thus, an Act of 1782 enabled guardians of the poor to enclose up to 10 acres of waste land near the poor house, for the purpose of cultivating it for the benefit of the poor, but there was no suggestion that the land was to be allotted to individuals. Similarly, the Act of 1801, referred to in paragraph 2, provided that small allotments of land made in Inclosure Awards might be grouped together and worked in common, in order to reduce the cost of fencing.

12. The first Public Act to make specific reference to the provision of allotments for the poor came in 1819. An Act of that year empowered parish wardens “for the promotion of industry among the poor” to let up to 20 acres of parish land to individuals at a reasonable rent and the limit was increased to 50 acres in 1831. A further Act of 1832 allowed the wardens of fuel allotments which had been provided under enclosure awards, and which had now been exhausted, to break them down into small units and to let them for individual cultivation at economic rents.

13. No record of developments during this period would be complete without reference to the voluntary action on the part of many churchwardens and overseers to provide allotments where none had previously existed. Since the accounts of such allotments are to be found in the records of individual parishes, it is difficult to be certain how widespread the practice was, but in 1833 allotment schemes were known to be in operation in about 42 per cent of all parishes in England and Wales, and it is clear that much voluntary provision had taken place.

14. It will be seen from this account, that in the century ending in 1850 the provision of allotments was erratic and spasmodic. In the light of subsequent developments, and of the statements which are frequently made about allotments today, it is necessary to examine some of the reasons why, in the face of conditions such as we have described, they were not introduced in far greater numbers.

15. The most vociferous opposition to the spread of allotments came from landowners and farmers. Much of it was unreasoned, but many farmers genuinely believed both that allotments were unnecessary and that they represented a potential waste of time and labour. Nor was this opposition confined to those who might have been expected to provide the necessary land. The philosopher and economist, John Stuart Mill, saw allotments merely as “a contrivance to compensate the labourer for the insufficiency of his wages by giving him something else as a supplement to them”, and as a “method of making people grow
their own poor rate”. Other objections to the provision of allotments were more theoretical. They were seen variously as a device which would tie the labourer to a particular piece of ground and inhibit mobility of labour, a method of reducing him to the level of the Irish peasantry by making him completely dependent upon the produce of a small piece of land, or as a prelude to the introduction of an agrarian law by which all property rights would ultimately be vested in the poor. Still more opponents, following the doctrines of Malthus, suggested that, since allotments could not be given to all who needed them, it was pointless to offer them to any.

16. There were also those who gave allotments only qualified or conditional approval, some demanding that each allotment should be restricted to half an acre or less. With a larger allotment, they insisted, a tenant would have so much land that he would cease to be available as a farm labourer, but insufficient to enable him to make a living; and the Select Committee on the Labouring Poor (Allotments of Land) recommended in 1843 that no allotment should be of greater size than a man could cultivate in his leisure moments. Finally, there were among those who expressed themselves as being firmly in favour of allotment provision many whose arguments were the product of self-interest rather than charity. Some saw allotments chiefly as a means of reducing the cost of poor relief, and it was often claimed that the main purpose of legislation concerning the poor should be the relief of agricultural interests. In most of the pamphlets of the time which proposed the introduction of allotment schemes, it was stipulated that the man who possessed an allotment should be excluded from poor relief, and there is evidence to suggest that the provision of allotments did in fact frequently reduce the size of the poor rate in the parish. For example, of ninety-six parishes in Cambridgeshire which contained allotments in 1831, the poor rates had fallen substantially in fifty-three.

17. In many people the wish to help the poor derived from a genuine fear that poverty must inevitably lead to immorality. To such people, any system was preferable to poor relief, and they needed to find no other virtue in allotments in order to justify them. Joseph Townsend asked in 1786 “what cause have [the poor] to fear, when they are assured, that if by their indolence..., by their drunkenness and vices, they should be reduced to want, they shall be abundantly supplied, at the expense of others? In general, it is only hunger which can spur and goad them on to labour; yet our laws have said that they shall never hunger”. This view found ready acceptance in the early nineteenth century and was reinforced by the unrest and riots which broke out in the southern counties in 1831. Thus the provision of allotments was often hedged around with stringent rules designed to ensure that the occupiers would remain honest and of good character. At Cranfield (Bedfordshire), the standard rules included a requirement that every tenant must attend church regularly, must conduct himself with propriety, and must bring up his family in a decent and orderly manner. The rules also stipulated that anyone convicted of any offence would be deprived of his allotment.

18. There were, however, many men who, from the outset, saw allotments not merely as a means of reducing the hardship of rural poverty, but also as a desirable feature in themselves. There were those who regretted the passing

---

* The current tenancy agreements of several rural parishes still prohibit working on an allotment on Sunday.
of the peasant farmer, and welcomed allotments as giving the labourer at least
"a small stake in the land". There were others who were appalled by the drift
of workers into the towns and who looked upon the provision of allotments as
a means of stemming the tide. And there were many with sufficient social con-
science to find a justification for them merely in the results obtained where
allotments were available. In 1795, the newly constituted Board of Agriculture
asked several landowners to pronounce upon the effects of an allotments system
on the cottager, the parish and the public. Among the replies was one from
Lord Brownlow:—

"To the cottager it affords the comforts of life; to the parish it lowers the
poor's rates; a man who keeps a cow has seldom been known to be troublesome
to a parish; and to the public it gives an increase of hands [by parents teaching
children] from infancy to work for their advantage." 27

The "Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the
Poor" had been formed as early as 1796 by William Wilberforce, and in a paper
to the Society dated 1797, the Earl of Winchelsea said:—

"From what I have seen of them I am more and more confirmed in the
opinion I have long held, that nothing is so beneficial to them and to the land-
owners as their having land to be occupied either for the keeping of cows or
as gardens, according to circumstances." 28

19. The great majority of the Inclosure Acts of the eighteenth and nineteenth
centuries concerned the midlands and the south. It was in these regions that
agricultural wages were lowest of all, and rural poverty was most prevalent. Not
surprisingly, therefore, it was in these areas also that the early allotments schemes
were concentrated. Thus, in 1833, the percentage of parishes in which allotments
were to be found varied from eighty-two in Wiltshire to twelve in Yorkshire.
When the Labourers' Friend Society, which quickly became the most influential
of the organisations formed to encourage allotment provision, was established
in 1815, its eighteen auxiliary societies were spread throughout the southern
counties and into the midlands, whereas there were none in the north or in
Wales.

20. From their inception, the size of the individual allotments showed no
consistency. There are records of allotments covering one-fortieth of an acre
in Northamptonshire and allotments each of 15 acres in Cumberland; the
average size appears to have been between a quarter and a half an acre. There
was a similar disparity between the rents which could be charged; these appear
to have varied between £2 per acre in parts of Essex and £6 per acre in some
Hampshire villages. Two facts are clear: that every allotment holder was required
to pay an economic rent or more with no hint of subsidy, and that the demand
for allotments was so great that they could have been let many times over at
rents which would ensure a profit to the owner of the land.

21. By 1850, allotments were recognised, if not defined, as areas of land, often
at a considerable distance from the village, provided by individuals or public
bodies as acts of charity, on which the labouring poor might supplement their
income by cultivation or stock keeping in their spare time. These last four
words seem to have been the most important. The fear that the provision of
allotments might induce labourers to neglect their work was undisguised through-
out early allotment provision. The rules at Cranfield, which we have already
quoted, forbade the allotment holder to cultivate his plot between 6 a.m. and
Figure 2

Early gardens of this kind were also clearly shown on Thomas Jeffery’s plan of Birmingham, 1791. Where they remain in Birmingham, Coventry and other towns today the plots are usually encompassed by mature hedges, and the sites as a whole are often very attractive (see Plate 14).
Figure 3

This series of maps demonstrates the evolution of the allotments system within the City of Birmingham, the largest allotments authority, and illustrates the considerable reduction in the number of sites that has occurred since 1945.
6 p.m. without permission, and we cannot find a better ending to this section than to quote The Penny Magazine of 1845:—

“But the object of making such allotments is moral rather than economic: the cultivation of a few vegetables and flowers (the committee’s italics) is a pleasing occupation, and has a tendency to keep a man at home and from the ale house. . . . Any extension of the allotment system beyond what a labourer can cultivate easily at his leisure hours . . . in the end will be an injury to himself and to others. If he becomes half labourer and half cultivator, he runs a risk of failing in both capacities.”

B. Allotments between 1850 and 1900

22. It will be apparent from what has been said that the common feature of the early campaigns for allotments was their emphasis on the relief of rural poverty. Their advocates, in the main, were not personally concerned with densely populated urban areas, or with translating the provision of allotments into them. One authority, indeed, wrote in 1845:—

“But if the allotment system be regarded as a means of improving the condition of the labouring class, its operation must necessarily be partial, since it cannot be rendered applicable to the non-agricultural labourers in the large towns.”

To some degree, this view was undoubtedly correct, for town land was even then too scarce and valuable to be offered in half-acre plots to people who might be unable to cultivate it successfully or economically. But the observation requires qualification in at least three respects. Firstly, a number of parishes which had taken advantage of the 1819 Act to provide a few allotments were in fact small country market towns. For example, there are records of a scheme in operation at Saffron Walden by 1829, when its population was 4,700, and as the population of such parishes expanded further, they tended to retain their allotments. Secondly, it occasionally happened that farm labourers, driven by poverty or ambition to move to the nearest large town, were able to rent land for allotments in the fields just beyond its boundaries. Thirdly, allotments which had been established in parishes beyond the boundaries of a large town were often absorbed into it as it continued to grow. The committee has seen a number of such sites, including one in the London Borough of Waltham Forest which has existed since 1841.

23. There was, however, another and much more important aspect in which the view that allotments were not appropriate to urban communities required modification. This lay in the assumption that ‘allotments’ necessarily meant ‘rural allotments’. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, owners of undeveloped land on the perimeter of some large urban areas had started the practice of dividing it into small gardens, which they then let to individuals at economic rents. In Birmingham, these neatly laid out gardens, known as ‘small gardens’ or ‘guinea gardens’ because of their annual rent, became very numerous (Figures 2 and 3A). An early newspaper of the city contained in 1765 notices advertising the gardens, stating, for example, that “it is proposed that there shall be two rows of gardens with a walk nine feet wide between them”. In 1812 the same publication offered for sale a garden “well planted with gooseberry and currant trees, fine raspberries, flowers, shrubs, etc., and stocked with asparagus and vegetables of various kinds, containing a summer house . . .”. Several histories of the city refer to these gardens, which eventually existed in very large numbers around the urban core. It is apparent that their cultivation was
largely recreational, and was mainly pursued by the lower middle class. The peak of provision seems to have been reached about 1820, after which the growth of the town and the building of roads and railways persuaded the owners to sell their land. By 1886 only three sites remained within the urban boundary, and that in Westbourne Road is still used as allotments today (Figure 3A).

24. In Nottingham also there were during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries several areas of gardens detached from houses, which are clearly shown on detailed plans of the city dating from 1740. During the early part of the nineteenth century, when there was constant pressure to enclose the city, the Nottingham Independent Cottage Garden Society managed to obtain land for gardens on Hunger Hills. By 1851 other garden areas existed in the same vicinity and hosiery workers quickly became prominent among the tenants of such gardens, rose growing being a favourite spare-time pursuit. In 1860 what is often claimed to have been the first rose show in England was held in an inn near these gardens, which several accounts then referred to as 'allotments'.

25. The 'guinea' gardens of Birmingham do not appear to have been known as allotments at least until the latter part of the nineteenth century, but it is clear from other records that in other urban areas the term was applied much earlier to groups of gardens let as acts of charity to the labouring poor. Of a number of such schemes to which our attention has been drawn, one which commenced in Southampton in 1850 merits a fairly full account, especially in regard to certain of its features. A field of 17 acres was rented by one man who sublet it as allotments at a rent of 8s. 4d. per 10-rod plot.* The plots were all eagerly taken, and a second field of 10 acres was let in the same way. In view of the refusal of landowners to let more land to men who were thought to be too poor to be responsible for payment of a large sum, a committee of three was appointed; they managed to acquire a third field of 18 acres, which they sublet as allotments at the same rent; so, in the course of one year, a total of 45 acres of allotment land was established. A surveyor was employed to divide the sites, leaving "convenient paths" between the plots; each plot was numbered, and a map of the site, with the plots allocated, was given to each tenant. It was stipulated in the rules that the allotment could be used only as a garden, that no work must be done on Sunday, and that no wheelbarrows, trucks, or carts could be used on the "public paths". In the following year, the rent was increased, but the allotments remained fully tenanted. In 1852, the rector of a local parish with over 20,000 inhabitants also let 20 acres of glebe land as allotments at 18s. 4d. per 20-rod plot; again, this was the full, economic rent. In this case, in addition to the rules already mentioned, the tenant was obliged to cultivate his plot by spade and not by plough; he was not permitted to keep livestock on his allotment or to sublet it, and he was warned that a decision as to whether it might be re-let to him for a second year would depend on the manner in which it was cultivated. The committee appointed a rent collector (who had other duties in addition) and paid him 1s. per annum per plot. The account of the Southampton ventures, which extolled the virtues of providing allotments for the poor of large towns, pointed out that, as a general rule, they had no private gardens, and could not afford to buy fresh vegetables in the quantities they required. It suggested that to those engaged in sedentary occupations in confined spaces, with no inducement for

---

* It is interesting to compare this rent with those charged today (paragraph 270). The rent assured a reasonable profit to both the owner of the land and the principal tenant.
taking exercise, the cultivation of an allotment “at some little distance from their homes” was most desirable. Furthermore, an allotment was often a “poor man’s bank” wherein he invested most of his savings, it fulfilled the wholesome desire to possess land, providing occupation in times of unemployment, and gave the poor a “grateful respect” for those who had provided the land. The report contained one sentence which was prophetic of what was to become commonplace a century later: “The [city] Corporation, having... purchased the private interests in the... field, intend to lay it out as a public park and garden, so that it can no longer be used as allotments, which the allottees consider a very severe loss to them”.

26. But although the movement towards allotments in urban areas had begun, national agitation in 1830 continued to be directed towards the plight of the rural poor. The period 1850–65 was largely one of reappraisal. There were two reasons for this—many authorities, including the Poor Law Commissioners, had become convinced that the provision of allotments could safely be left to private philanthropy, without the intervention of the State, and it was also clear that in at least one important respect the provision of allotments schemes in rural areas had failed in its purpose. Those who had looked upon allotments as a means of stemming the drift of workers into the towns, and of giving them “a stake in the land”, saw the depopulation of rural areas continuing unabated, while those who had advocated allotments as the “first rung in the farming ladder” were obliged to reconsider.

27. During the period 1850–70, therefore, any further establishment of allotments in both urban and rural areas was mainly the result of private initiative. By 1867, for example, there were over 900 allotments on the Duke of Marlborough’s Oxfordshire estates alone, and the new town of Saltaire in the West Riding of Yorkshire, designed and built by Titus Salt between 1859 and 1876, appears as a matter of deliberate policy to have left the mill workers without home gardens, while making provision for garden allotments on the banks of the River Aire. But in 1869, when it was estimated that out of 614,800 acres of rural land enclosed since 1845, only 2,223 had been assigned to the poor, the provision of allotments became a political issue for the first time. An Act of 1873 improved the management of allotments provided under Inclosure Awards; in 1876 a second Act compelled the Inclosure Commissioners to set aside land for the poor; and in 1882 the Allotments Extension Act required the trustees of land held for the poor to let it as allotments unless it was already being used as a recreation ground. *

28. It was in the late 1860’s that the cry first arose for the provision in addition to allotments, of much larger areas of land for rural farm workers. Such areas were, from the outset, termed ‘small holdings’. Their principal distinguishing feature was to be their size; they were conceived not as a means of enabling the labourer to occupy his spare time only, but as a device to give him a degree of independence by the award of land whose cultivation would fill part (or even all) of his working hours. While the early campaigns for the provision of small holdings, led by John Stuart Mill, Joseph Chamberlain and Jesse Collings, had little immediate effect, they appear to have stimulated further expansion of the

---

* This Act passed through House of Commons without difficulty, but the Lords inserted a damaging amendment to the effect that the obligation should not extend to land which was considered to be ‘unsuitable’ for allotments. No criteria were laid down to determine suitability.
allotments system by national action. As one writer has observed, the campaigns of the 1870's and 1880's were merely "a political stratagem to keep alive the issue of more land for the small man when proposals for the public provision of small holdings were not practical politics".

29. From 1878 onwards, the activities of those who pressed for Central Government action were directed towards the achievement of compulsory national legislation. For a time their pleas fell upon deaf ears, as the landed interests which opposed their ideas in both Houses were too strong. But in 1884 when the extension of the franchise gave rural property owners the vote, the picture changed immediately. An Allotments Bill was introduced in 1886, but was held in abeyance by a reluctant Government until in a by-election at Spalding (Lincolnshire) in 1887 an 'allotments' candidate was returned, defeating a strong conservative candidate. Immediately, the Bill was put through its remaining stages and became the Allotments Act of 1887. This Act was the first to 'compel' local (sanitary) authorities to provide allotments where a demand was known to exist, and indicated that such a demand was to be presumed on receipt of an application from four or more local inhabitants. It added the potentially dangerous point that such obligatory provision would only obtain where the authority was satisfied that allotments could not be obtained at a reasonable rent by private treaty.

30. A contemporary account of the situation in Lincolnshire indicates that attempts to apply the provisions of the Act met with intense and sustained opposition from the authorities. In the parish of Whaplode, fifty-seven applications were made for allotments soon after the Bill became law, but the immediate reply was that the petition could not be entertained until the applicants had exhausted all means of coming to a private arrangement. An Allotments Provident Club was then established, but after a campaign lasting six months, all local landowners had declined to provide allotments. A second approach to the sanitary authority met with 'illusive promises', and although in thirty nearby parishes application was made for no less than 1,600 acres, by 1889 none had been obtained. In the county council elections of 1889 every Lincolnshire constituency was fought on the test question of allotments, and the allotments party obtained a working majority. This fact, together with an edict of 1890 which gave county councils certain default powers, brought about a slight improvement, but by the end of the year, allotments had been provided in only four of the above-mentioned thirty parishes—and in one of these four the rents demanded were extravagant. In nineteen parishes around Spalding the total acreage devoted to allotments increased from 130 to 1,252 between 1887 and 1893, but even so their number continued to be wholly inadequate. There was a further slight improvement after an Act of 1894 established parish councils and gave them allotment powers.

31. In 1887, the year in which the Allotments Bill became law, Jesse Collings introduced into Parliament a Small Holdings Bill, and the first Small Holdings Act was passed in 1892. Subsequently, the stories of allotments and small holdings diverge sharply, the one being clearly identified as a spare-time activity, the other as a means of livelihood with which we are not directly concerned in this report.

32. The account of the situation in Lincolnshire in 1893 goes on to question the meaning of 'demand' in relation to allotments. It suggests that "demand"
will depend upon the location and quality of the ground offered as well as on the rent demanded, and states that in areas where farm rents were between 9s. and 12s. per acre, allotment rents were often astronomically high, even £5 per acre. The article concludes by suggesting certain principles which ought, the author felt, to be a prerequisite of any rural allotment scheme. These include:—

(i) The land should be obtainable without vexatious delays.
(ii) It should not be more than a mile distant from the village.
(iii) The individual allotments should be of adequate size (the Act of 1887 had imposed an upper limit of 1 acre) and of a suitable character.
(iv) The allotments should be let at a fair agricultural rent.

33. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, periodic attempts were made, both nationally and locally, to obtain reasonably accurate estimates of the number of allotment plots available. Table 1 excludes allotments attached to cottages.48

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of plots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1873...</td>
<td>244,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886...</td>
<td>353,821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890...</td>
<td>448,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895...</td>
<td>482,901</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is probable that these figures, if not derived exclusively from agricultural areas, omitted all urban allotments which were not yet so called. They show that the increase in the numbers of allotments provided during the period after 1887 was little greater than during the years which preceded it, and by the turn of the century it was clear that the Act had been only partially successful. At the same time, the way had been opened to the provision of small holdings in rural areas, and although the results of the Act of 1892 were disappointing,49 it ought to have been apparent that allotments would acquire a much greater urban emphasis in the years to come.

34. For a fair assessment of the local position in 1900, and indeed, of a whole century of allotment provision, we are indebted largely to Ashby's account,50 *Allotments and Small Holdings in Oxfordshire*. In a survey of 212 parishes in the county, he found 321 allotments schemes, which had been provided by:—

- Private owners... 163
- Public authorities... 52
- Clergy... 36
- Institutions and societies... 34
- Charity trustees (Poor Laws)... 21
- Allotment warden (Inclosure Acts)... 12
- Farmers (sub-letting)... 3

* The article related exclusively to agricultural areas; but its author added that "men of other occupations and trades also require a bit of land to cultivate—none more so than the miner and the town artisan".
It is clear that in Oxfordshire, and almost certainly elsewhere, more than half the allotments in existence at 1900 had been provided without the necessity for public action.

C. Allotments from 1900 to 1950

35. It seems very probable that, as late as 1900, there was still a general belief that future development of the allotments system would be greater in rural areas than in urban. That this has not been so is due to a number of factors related especially to changing social structures and political attitudes and to the impact of war and national need, which will be examined elsewhere in our report. It is, however, important to reiterate at this stage that the size and purpose of allotments had shown no consistency from their inception. In the early days of charitable provision plots were generally between 600 square yards and half an acre, with the majority tending towards the lower end of the scale. The norm for inclosure allotments—in so far as one existed at all—was about one quarter of an acre, but as the moves towards small holdings gathered momentum, larger plots became more common. The Act of 1887 established a maximum size of 1 acre, which the Local Government Act of 1894 increased to 4 acres.

36. By 1900, allotments had come to be recognised as either ‘garden allotments’ (quarter-acre and below) or larger ‘farm allotments’, the distinction apparently depending on whether they were cultivated by spade or plough. In an assessment of the 386,000 allotments which existed in 1887 throughout England and Wales, the relative percentages of each type were as shown in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment sizes in England and Wales: 1887</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Garden allotments’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under ½ acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between ½ and 1 acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Farm allotments’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 1 and 4 acres:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arable use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasture use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arable and pasture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fact that, in 1900, almost two-thirds of all allotments were ‘garden’ in character, undoubtedly paved the way for their subsequent adoption, without much alteration, into the pattern of urban life.

37. An Act of 1907 imposed allotment responsibilities upon the councils of boroughs, urban districts and parishes, and the Small Holdings and Allotments Act of 1908 repealed and consolidated the existing legislation. This Act is recognised as the basis of the modern allotments system, and much of it remains in force today. It repeated both the obligations of local authorities to provide allotments for the labouring population where land could not be obtained by private agreement, and gave every authority the right to purchase land compulsorily for allotments. It also permitted the wardens of inclosure allotments to transfer the land and its management to the local authority. A number of organisations issued pamphlets which explained the Act in simple terms, and the provision of allotments in urban areas began to show a significant increase, both in the public and the private sector (Figure 3B).

38. In 1913, evidence given to a Land Inquiry Committee showed a keen demand for allotments in almost every urban area. The great majority of urban
allotments had by this time acquired a standard size of 300 square yards (30 yards × 10 yards)* and the committee reported that in most large towns demand far exceeded supply. At the same time the committee, no doubt aware of the large working class urban communities living in densely packed housing without gardens, suggested the development of garden suburbs on the outskirts of towns which, it was felt, might reduce the demand for allotments.

39. The outbreak of the First World War gave a tremendous impetus to the extension of the allotments system, especially in urban areas (Figure 3B). To some extent, the provision of large numbers of extra allotments to meet the requirements of wartime was bedevilled by the absence of planning in most towns and cities in the preceding years. An account written in 1919\textsuperscript{56} stated that with every civilian working under pressure in industry it was imperative that the allotment should be as near as possible to the home of the cultivator; it added that the policy of “squeezing as many houses as possible upon each acre of ground...threatened to throttle the every-man-a-gardener campaign in its incipient stages”. In December 1916, local authorities were invested with powers under the Defence of the Realm Act to secure as much land for the provision of allotments as exigencies demanded. Immediately every small piece of open space, including parks and playing fields, and tracts of undeveloped building land were requisitioned; parks superintendents offered advice and assistance; an intensive advertising campaign—even door-to-door canvassing—was set in train; enterprising authorities organised the bulk purchase of seeds and requisites. Protective fences were quickly improvised, and within a few short months a vast number of ‘wartime plots’—as they came to be known—had appeared. At the same time, industrial concerns were able and ready to make land available for allotments. This was particularly true of the railway companies and between 1914 and 1918 the number of railway allotments increased from 27,680 to 93,473 plots. Similarly, coal mining companies encouraged the establishment of plots on land reserved for future tipping (Figure 16).

40. The success of the national campaign was overwhelming. In 1913, there had been some 600,000 allotments in England and Wales, but by 1918 this had risen to 1½ million. More important, perhaps, the areas of most extensive growth were the towns and cities, and the movement acquired an urban emphasis which has never since been lost. Table 3\textsuperscript{57} illustrates the achievements of the different classes of authority between 1914 and 1918:

![Table 3](image)

Among the larger towns the increased provision of Burton-on-Trent, Derby, Leicester, Oxford, Southend and Walsall was particularly impressive, with Birmingham, Coventry, Wakefield, Reading and York close behind.

* These dimensions were probably determined by the persistence of an ancient belief in the need to retain a three-year cycle of rotation.
41. A survey conducted by the Board of Agriculture in 1916\textsuperscript{58} emphasised the sharp differences between urban and rural allotments. At one extreme, it found, there were in industrial areas large numbers of plots of a maximum size of about 600 square yards, which were “thoroughly cultivated, liberally manured and intelligently cropped on the most intensive lines”, yielding crops equal to those of the best market garden land. At the other, there were allotments in rural areas varying in size from a quarter of an acre to 1 acre, which produced “barely as much as the neighbouring arable land”. They were, said the survey, “roughly cultivated, scantily manured, and cropped with little method or foresight”. The survey also found that allotment rents in rural areas were much lower than in urban. In the latter the rent was often as high as £10 per acre, with an average of £8 (10s. per 10-rod plot), whereas in agricultural districts it fell between £1 10s. 0d. and £2 10s. 0d. per acre (1s. 10\frac{1}{4}d. to 3s. 1\frac{1}{4}d. per 10-rod plot), and in many areas one man was able to take several allotments. The same survey (conducted, of course, at the height of the war) went on to suggest reasons for these distinctions. Many rural allotments, it found, had been established on waste land or land which was badly drained. It emphasized that for the agricultural labourer the allotment was merely a continuation of his daily work, and did not appeal to him as a recreation. In many instances he could grow all the vegetables he needed in his home garden, and found little demand for surplus vegetable produce. By contrast, the industrial worker had more leisure and, because he earned better wages, was able to spend more on seeds and fertilisers. Moreover, the allotment was to him a recreation, the more attractive because it was profitable. His enthusiasm was further maintained by the spirit of cooperation and competition which existed on many sites, while the agricultural labourer had “little inclination to adopt systems of cropping requiring continuous attention”. Most urban allotments were much better managed, stimulated by local competitions and shows, subsidised by bulk purchase of manures and lime, and were given added impetus by having a ready market for the sale of surplus produce.

42. With the end of hostilities there emerged a new problem. On the one hand the national purpose of allotments had largely disappeared, and it was obvious that the 50,000 acres requisitioned during the war must soon be given up. On the other, the demand for allotments, especially from returning ex-servicemen, continued unabated, particularly in the difficult economic conditions which prevailed. In 1919 it was estimated\textsuperscript{59} that no less than 7,000 new applicants were coming forward each week, but the number of vacant plots was not nearly enough to accommodate them; moreover, as soon as the holder of an allotment left, his neighbour would certainly try to seize the opportunity to enlarge his plot. Various theories were advanced to account for this unprecedented demand. First, the welter of free advice and help which had been available during the war had created a widespread interest in gardening among those who had not previously considered the possibility of taking an allotment. Second, there was, immediately after the war, a steep rise in the price of fresh vegetables, and third, the closing of munitions factories and a general ban on overtime had given many workers more leisure without offering any means of spending it profitably. Lastly, and perhaps this was the most important reason, there were in 1919 large numbers of returning ex-servicemen whose resettlement in civilian life was posing many problems. The provision of allotments undoubtedly assisted in this process, and the Land Settlement (Facilities) Act of 1919\textsuperscript{60} was intended
to help them. Among its many minor provisions the Act is noteworthy because it deleted all reference to the "labouring population" from the Act of 1908; henceforth, allotments were to be open to all, irrespective of status or occupation.

43. By 1922, pressure from owners for the return of land taken under the wartime emergency powers was increasing while, at the same time, allotment holders generally were becoming very worried by their lack of security of tenure. In consequence, the Government announced that the regulations permitting the requisitioning of land for allotments would come to an end by March 1923 and simultaneously introduced an Allotments Bill designed primarily to give tenants more security (by laying down specific periods of notice and compelling most urban authorities to appoint an allotments committee) and greater compensation on termination of their tenancies. The Bill, which became the Allotments Act of 1922,§ introduced a new concept into the law—that of the allotment garden. By definition the allotment garden was restricted in size to a quarter of an acre or less, and in use mainly to the production of fruit and vegetables. This new concept gave further emphasis to the smaller type of plot which had become associated with urban areas and perpetuated the common and legal view of allotments as a source of food for the needy.

44. Two years later the member of Parliament for Oxford introduced another Allotments Bill, to which the Government gave general support, and which became the Allotments Act of 1925.¶ Its two principal provisions were a requirement that the need for allotments should be considered in every town planning scheme, and a regulation that land purchased or appropriated by a local authority for use as allotments* must not be disposed of or used for other purposes without Ministerial consent. In 1926, yet another Act§§ made a number of minor amendments to allotments law. This spate of legislation had a considerable effect on the amount of allotment land available, but by 1929 the number of allotments in England and Wales had fallen below one million, and the area under cultivation was less than 150,000 acres. It is certain that part of this loss was due to a reduction in the numbers of those wanting allotments; part must have been derived from the growing emphasis placed upon town planning and the pressure to use allotment land for other purposes; and a large amount must also have resulted from the return of requisitioned land to its owners.

45. The continuing loss of allotment land increased the need for an organised voice to speak for the allotments movement, and the year 1930 saw the formation of the National Allotments Society by the amalgamation of two former organisations.†† The National Allotments Society, considered more fully in Chapter 13, quickly became the only authoritative national allotments organisation.

46. The onset of economic depression created the dual problem of relieving poverty and providing activity for the unemployed. Allotments were seen as the obvious solution, and the Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Act of 1931¶¶ which was essentially temporary in character and was to be repealed as soon as the position improved, was passed specifically for this purpose. It permitted the seizure of land for allotments and gave the Minister of Agriculture authority to provide allotments himself. During the same period the activities and resources of organisations such as the Society of Friends and the Land Settlement

---

* Such land is known generally as 'statutory' allotment land (see paragraph 61).

†† The National Union of Allotment Holders Limited and the Agricultural Organisation Society.
Association* appear to have considerably reduced the speed with which allotment land was appropriated to other uses, and between 1932 and 1937 only 2,000 acres of urban allotment land were lost.

47. During this period, there emerged, through the auspices of the L.S.A., the concept of a 'stock' allotment. The basic idea behind the schemes, which were initiated during the 1930's, was that the unemployed who wished to use their spare time profitably by keeping small livestock and those who grew fruit and vegetables could be successfully accommodated on the same allotment site. The attractions of this plan were several—not least the idea that the gardeners could enrich the soil with the waste products provided by the livestock. It was also acknowledged that such sites required careful planning and preparation, and a certain amount of centralised oversight. As an important side-effect of these schemes there was a gradual increase in the number of allotment holders who kept stock upon sites which had hitherto been used only for horticulture, thereby posing problems for the future.

48. On the eve of the Second World War, there were almost 60,000 acres of allotments (about 570,000 individual plots) in urban areas of England and Wales, and 50,000 acres providing some 170,000 plots in rural areas. With the outbreak of hostilities, a campaign similar to that introduced a quarter of a century earlier was swiftly put in train. The Minister of Agriculture, under powers given to him by the Defence Regulations, made the Cultivation of Lands (Allotments) Order 1939,\(^\text{65}\) which permitted councils to enter upon unoccupied land for the purpose of providing allotments, and, later, by Defence Regulation 62A, councils were authorised to convert to allotment use any other land in their possession, including once again parks and playing fields. After Dunkirk, the effort was intensified. On 10th September, 1940, the Minister appealed in a broadcast for "half a million more allotments", and launched the 'Dig for Victory' campaign. This campaign, with the eager help of local authorities and the National Allotments Society, was so successful that by the end of 1942 there were over 1,400,000 allotments\(^\dagger\) in England and Wales in addition to a great many plots (as well as home gardens) which were 'unofficially' under cultivation. Other regulations made at the same time permitted allotment holders to keep pigs, hens and rabbits upon their plots\(^\text{66}\) and made trespass upon allotments a statutory offence.\(^\text{67}\)

49. It would be difficult to overestimate the contribution which the produce of allotments made to the nation's food supply during the war years. On 15th March, 1944, the Government estimated that food grown on allotments, private gardens and plots of land cultivated by service personnel, totalled 10 per cent of all food produced in this country,\(^\text{68}\) and allotments made a major contribution to this total. In 1941, the Ministry of Agriculture assessed the total annual production from allotments alone at over 1,300,000 tons,\(^\text{69}\) and the total produced during the war by the newcomers to the allotments movement must have exceeded 3 million tons. The number of sites operating in Birmingham at the end of the war is shown in Figure 3C, which should be compared with the position in 1914 (Figure 3B).

50. In the years immediately following the end of the war, the allotments situation was largely one of indecision. On the one hand, the shortage of food

---

* Referred to throughout this report as L.S.A. A list of the abbreviations used is given in Appendix II.

\(^\dagger\) The coincidence of these figures with those of the First World War is remarkable.
continued, and the pressing need to produce a greater proportion of it at home remained. In a broadcast made in November 1947, the Chancellor of the Exchequer stressed the importance of allotment cultivation as a contribution towards the solution of the country’s economic difficulties, while at the 1948 conference of the National Allotments and Gardens Society* (formerly the National Allotments Society), the Minister of Agriculture declared:

"Today, we are digging for our very lives, for food, for dollars and for our self-respect."

On the other hand, local authorities were coming under increasing pressure to release requisitioned land (particularly public open space) to its former use; allotment land was in demand to help rebuild devastated towns and develop new ones; the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947† had omitted any specific reference to the need to take allotments into account in formulating town plans; and some allotment holders, freed from the incentive of war, found alternative pursuits to occupy their leisure time. Thus, despite the organisation of a 'Dig for Plenty' campaign, the number of allotments decreased, and the proportion of vacant plots rose to a figure which could not be related simply to normal turnover. N.A.G.S. and the Economic Research Council each put forward a series of proposals designed to maintain interest in allotment gardening and in 1948 the Minister of Agriculture reconvened the Allotments Advisory Committee†† which had last sat to consider the Bill of 1922.

51. In its report, dated 29th July, 1949, the A.A.C. recommended that each allotments authority should set itself a target of providing 4 acres of allotments for each thousand of its population. It recognised that in some districts this figure would be in excess of requirements; where, however, the target proved to be too low, every effort should be made to satisfy the demand fully. The A.A.C. also made a number of other recommendations, some of which—improved terms of compensation on termination of a tenancy, clarification of the basis of calculating rent, and statutory authority to keep certain forms of livestock—were included in a Bill which became the Allotments Act 1950.‡ In the context of the history of allotments, the Act’s most important feature was the provision that the obligation of all local authorities to provide allotments should in future apply only to allotment gardens. Thus 'farm allotments' of rural areas were no longer to be provided by law, and the urban emphasis of allotment gardening, established by a century of change and development, was accorded official recognition.

---

* Referred to throughout this report as N.A.G.S.
†† Referred to throughout this report as A.A.C.
CHAPTER 2

THE OPERATIVE LEGISLATION

52. The legislation which bears directly upon the provision and administration of allotments today is contained in the following seven Acts:—

(i) The Small Holdings and Allotments Act of 1908, a consolidation measure which repealed the previous Acts of 1887, 1890 and 1907 referred to in Chapter 1.

(ii) The Land Settlement (Facilities) Act of 1919, which was passed mainly to assist the resettlement of returning ex-servicemen, but which also made important amendments to the existing law.

(iii) The Allotments Act of 1922, brought in on the advice of a Departmental Committee in order to pave the way for the release of land requisitioned for allotment use during the First World War.

(iv) The Allotments Act of 1925, introduced by a private member but given general support by the Government.

(v) The Small Holdings and Allotments Act of 1926, which made certain minor amendments to previous legislation.

(vi) The Agricultural Land (Utilisation) Act of 1931, passed at a time of great economic depression in an attempt to assist the unemployed.

(vii) The Allotments Act of 1950, which followed the report of the A.A.C. referred to at the end of Chapter 1.

These seven Acts are together known as the Allotments Acts, and will be so described throughout our report.

We propose in this chapter to summarise the provisions of the Allotments Acts which remain in force under various heads, adding such comments upon their interpretation as appear to us to be desirable. We will not at this stage examine the success or failure of the legislation in any detail, but it is convenient to point out here that since each piece of legislation was clearly designed to deal with a different national situation, the whole could scarcely be expected to work successfully when national circumstances have changed yet again.

A. Definitions

53. The Allotments Acts contain no general definition of the word 'allotment'. For the special purposes of individual Acts, or even of sections of individual Acts, it is defined variously as:—

"Any parcel of land, whether attached to a cottage or not, of not more than two acres in extent, held by a tenant under a landlord and cultivated as a farm or a garden, or partly as a garden and partly as a farm."¹

"Any parcel of land not more than five acres in extent cultivated or intended to be cultivated as a garden or farm, or partly as a garden and partly as a farm."²

In addition to these special definitions, the Acts offer two clues to the meaning of the word, viz.:—

¹ A list of references is contained in Appendix I.
"One person shall not hold any allotment or allotments acquired under this Part of this Act,...exceeding five acres."\(^3\)

"The expression 'allotment' includes a field garden."\(^4\)

The Acts of 1922 to 1950 deal not only with allotments, but also with the special class of allotment gardens, and the definition of these is consistent throughout:—

"The expression 'allotment garden' means an allotment not exceeding forty poles in extent which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable or fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family."\(^5\)

It is apparent from the above definition that an allotment garden is merely a special category of allotment. The words "wholly or mainly" in the definition are confusing. If the word "mainly" is taken to apply to "vegetable or fruit crops", then the occupier may use part of his land for other purposes without going outside the definition; if it applies to the words "for consumption by himself or his family", then he may presumably sell or give away a small part of his produce. Both interpretations seem to be generally accepted.

54. Since 1950\(^6\) the occupier of an allotment garden has, subject to certain conditions, and provided that he does not offend against local bye-law, been permitted to keep hens or rabbits on his land. At the same time, the definition has remained unaltered, and it must therefore be assumed that, in order to remain within this definition, the land must continue to be used "mainly" for vegetable or fruit crops, with only a small area devoted to livestock. By the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1948 and other legislation, special conditions of tenancy were imposed in respect of land classed as an agricultural holding. The definition of an agricultural holding specifically excludes an allotment garden, but it is clear that other types of allotment may fall within it. It follows from these complicated rules that, in order to be an allotment garden (and thus outside the scope of the Agricultural Holdings Act) a piece of land must fulfil at least five conditions:—

(i) it must be an allotment;
(ii) it must be 40 poles or less in extent;
(iii) it must be used wholly or mainly for the production of vegetables and fruit for home consumption;
(iv) it must not be used for trade or business; and
(v) it must not be used for the keeping of pigs, or any form of livestock except hens and rabbits.

B. Responsibility for provision

55. The Allotments Acts impose certain responsibilities for the provision of allotments upon the council of every county borough, outer London borough, municipal borough, urban district and parish in England and Wales.\(^7\) Similar responsibilities are placed upon the parish meeting in the case of parishes which have no council.\(^8\) All such authorities are collectively known as 'allotments authorities' and will be so termed in this report. The councils of inner London boroughs (the former metropolitan boroughs) may provide allotments but have no duty to do so.\(^9\)

56. Since 1950,\(^10\) the type of allotment which allotments authorities must in certain circumstances provide, has been as follows:—
(i) in the case of all rural parishes and any other allotments authority with a population of less than 10,000—allotment gardens;

(ii) in the case of any county borough, outer London borough, municipal borough or urban district whose population is 10,000 or more—allotment gardens not exceeding 20 poles in extent.

If any allotments authority is of the opinion that there is a demand within its administrative area for allotments of the type mentioned above, it must provide "a sufficient number" and must let them to those residents who want them. In deciding whether a demand exists, the authority must take into consideration any written representation received from any six resident parliamentary electors or ratepayers. There is some doubt whether the phrase "a sufficient number" means "a number sufficient to satisfy the demand", or merely "a number which goes some way to satisfy the known demand". Opinions are divided on this point, but in view of other provisions the question is largely academic.

57. Every county council is charged with the duty of ascertaining the extent to which there is a demand for allotment gardens in the urban districts and rural parishes within the county, and the extent to which it is practicable to satisfy such demand. If a county council considers that it should itself provide allotment gardens in any such area, it shall pass a resolution by which the powers and duties of the relevant urban district council, parish council or parish meeting are transferred to itself, and shall thereupon assume the obligations so transferred. These default powers are not exercisable in respect of county boroughs or municipal boroughs.

58. If the Minister,* after holding a local inquiry, is satisfied that both the council of the local urban district or parish and the county council have failed to fulfil their obligations, he may himself assume the power to provide allotment gardens in the relevant area. The Minister's default powers do not appear to cover county boroughs, outer London boroughs or municipal boroughs, and he has no authority to provide allotment gardens in respect of the inner London boroughs.

C. The acquisition of land for allotments

59. Allotments authorities have the power to take a lease of or to purchase land for the purpose of providing allotments, either by agreement or compulsorily, and may also acquire land in advance of requirements, provided that there is a reasonable expectation that the land will eventually be required for allotments. Every compulsory purchase order or hiring order must be authorised by the Minister, and certain restrictions are imposed upon the type of land which may be compulsorily acquired. A council may make improvements to land acquired for allotments (e.g. by draining, fencing, partitioning, making roads), and may also adapt existing buildings or erect new structures.

60. An allotments authority may, with the consent of the Minister, borrow money for the purpose of acquiring, improving or adapting land for allotments; the Public Works Loan Board is also permitted to lend to an approved society for the purpose of purchasing land for use as allotments, the loan being restricted to two-thirds of the value of the land and secured by a charge upon it. An

---

* The duty of administering the application of the Allotments Acts in England is now vested in the Minister of Housing and Local Government, to whom, where the context permits, all references to "the Minister" relate.
authority may, in pursuance of a resolution, appropriate to allotments use land acquired for any other purpose. The allotment wardens under the Inclosure Acts may, by agreement, transfer the management of allotments and field gardens for the labouring poor to the appropriate allotments authority. The land will thereupon vest in the authority, and must thenceforth be treated in the same way as land acquired under the Act of 1908.

61. Such are the rules governing the acquisition of land for allotments. We must, however, point out at this stage that there is nothing in the Allotments Acts which requires an allotments authority to acquire land for the purpose of providing allotment gardens. An authority has always been able to fulfil all its obligations, if it so desires, by providing allotments:

(i) on land which it rents from a landlord, either for a fixed term or on a renewable tenancy; or
(ii) on land which it has acquired, and will eventually need, for some other purpose.

It has therefore been necessary for many years to find a way of distinguishing the various types of allotment land provided by allotments authorities, and at the same time to distinguish between land provided by allotments authorities and that derived from other sources. The following definitions of allotment land—although not included in the legislation—became widely accepted:

(i) Land of which the freehold was vested in the allotments authority, and which had either been originally purchased for allotments or had subsequently been appropriated to allotment use, became known as statutory allotment land.
(ii) Land which was either rented by the allotments authority on lease or tenancy, or, being owned by the authority, was destined ultimately for some other use, became known as temporary allotment land.
(iii) Land which was neither owned nor administered by the allotments authority in whose area it was situated, became known as private allotment land.

In Chapters 4 and 5 we will refer to the confusion which these definitions have caused. We will only comment at this point that since almost all the land provided by allotments authorities is in discharge of their statutory obligations, the choice of the word ‘statutory’ to describe one type of such land seems to us to be unfortunate. Since, however, the word (if not the definition) is now generally known, we propose to adopt this terminology in our report.

D. Disposal and appropriation of allotment land

62. In view of the above definitions, it is natural that the law relating to the disposal of allotment land and to its appropriation to other purposes refers only to statutory land. With two possible exceptions, the Allotments Acts provide that statutory allotment land shall neither be disposed of nor appropriated to any other purpose without the consent of the Minister. The exceptions are:

(i) An allotments authority may sell or let statutory allotment land to a county council for the purpose of providing small holdings.
(ii) Since the rule quoted above relates to land purchased for allotments or appropriated to allotments use, it is possible that statutory land acquired by other means (e.g. by transfer from the wardens of Inclosure Act
allotments) may be outside its scope. So far as we are aware, this point has never been satisfactorily resolved; if, however, the exception does exist, then such land may be disposed of with the consent of the county council,27 but the authority would still require the Minister's consent before appropriating it to other use.

Where application is made to the Minister for consent to the disposal or appropriation of statutory allotment land, he may, in giving consent, impose such conditions as he thinks fit.28 He shall not, however, give such consent unless he is satisfied either:—

(i) that adequate alternative provision will be made for the allotment holders displaced; or
(ii) that such provision is unnecessary; or
(iii) that such provision is not reasonably practicable.29

We will examine in Chapter 6 the manner in which the Minister interprets this rule at the present time.

63. The proceeds of sale of statutory allotment land must be applied in discharging the authority's liabilities in respect of other land acquired for allotments, or in acquiring, adapting or improving other allotment land; any balance remaining may then be applied to normal local authority purposes.30

E. The administration of allotment land

(1) Rules to be observed by allotments authorities

64. An allotments authority may appoint a manager to administer the allotments which it has provided, and may give him such powers as it thinks fit.31 It may also promote the formation of and assist societies established on a co-operative basis whose object is the administration of allotments, and may employ such societies as its agents.32

65. The council of every allotments authority except a rural parish which either:—

(i) has a population of 10,000 or more; or
(ii) provides more than 400 allotments;

must, unless exempted by the Minister, establish an allotments committee, which may be either a full committee or a sub-committee. All matters relating to the performance by the council of its powers and duties under the Allotments Acts shall be referred to the committee, and the council may delegate to the committee any of its powers under the Acts, except those relating to finance.33 A county borough which has established a small holdings committee may appoint it to be the allotments committee also.34 One-third of the members of the allotments committee (and in all cases not less than two) shall not be councillors, but shall be persons experienced in the management and cultivation of allotment gardens and representative of the interests of the occupiers of the allotment gardens in the district.35

66. Each allotments authority must make an annual report to the Minister of its proceedings under the Allotments Acts,36 and the report should include details of the price or rent paid for any allotment land purchased or taken on lease during the preceding twelve months.37 The Minister shall in turn make an annual report to Parliament.38
(2) Financial obligations and powers

67. The principle governing the financial administration of statutory and temporary allotment land is that an allotments authority must not commence any proceedings under the Acts unless, in its opinion, the cost of such proceedings will not involve it in a net expenditure in excess of the product of a 2d. rate. In making the appropriate calculation, any costs (other than the purchase price or rent) incurred in the acquisition of land and the cost of building public roadways may be excluded.\textsuperscript{39} This rule has been generally interpreted to mean that in any financial year, the excess of expenditure over income from the authority's allotments shall not exceed the product of a 2d. rate. Subject to this overriding rule, an allotments authority must let its allotments at such rents as the tenants may reasonably be expected to pay; it may, however, let them at lower rents if it considers that special circumstances exist.\textsuperscript{40} It may also, if it wishes, elect to pay the rates in respect of its allotment sites,\textsuperscript{41} although allotment gardens are not now rateable. In addition to its other powers which might involve financial expenditure,* an allotments authority may, in certain circumstances, purchase fruit trees, seeds, plants, fertilisers or implements required for allotment gardens. It must, however, sell these items (or hire out the implements) at a price sufficient to cover their cost.\textsuperscript{42}

68. Every allotments authority must keep a separate account showing the income from and expenditure upon its allotments, and cannot apply receipts from allotments to any other purpose except with the Minister's consent.\textsuperscript{43} It appears from this rule that if, in any year, an authority's allotment account shows an excess of income over expenditure, the surplus must be carried forward and used to defray future allotment expenditure; it may not be transferred to the general rate fund without Ministerial consent.

(3) The rights of and restrictions upon the tenants of allotment land

(a) Tenancies and cultivation

69. An allotments authority may make such rules as it thinks fit for the letting of its allotments, the eligibility of persons to be tenants, the size of each allotment, the conditions under which it is to be cultivated, and the rent to be paid.\textsuperscript{44} Such rules, however, shall not be enforceable unless and until they have been confirmed by the Minister.\textsuperscript{45} From time to time the responsible Ministry has produced a series of model rules for the benefit of authorities wishing to make application for confirmation of their own proposed rules. A copy of the latest print (1950) of these model rules forms Appendix IX to this report; we propose to examine their extent and effect in Chapter 7.

70. No person may hold an allotment in excess of 5 acres in extent,\textsuperscript{46} and no allotment may be sublet without the permission of the allotments authority.\textsuperscript{47} If an allotment cannot at the moment be let as such, it may be let to anyone at the best rent obtainable, subject to its being capable of repossession at not more than twelve months' notice.\textsuperscript{48}

71. As we pointed out in paragraph 54, the occupier of any allotment may now keep hens or rabbits on part of his plot, even if he has been forbidden to do so by his tenancy agreement. This provision is made subject to three conditions:—

\* For example, the power to "improve and adapt" land for allotments referred to in paragraph 59.
(i) that he does not keep livestock by way of trade or business;
(ii) that the stock are neither injurious to health nor a nuisance; and
(iii) that the rearing of livestock does not contravene any enactment (such as a local bye-law). 49

Any person causing damage to an allotment garden or to any crops, fences or buildings upon it shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding £20, provided that a notice to this effect is conspicuously displayed on or near the allotment site. 50

(b) Notices to quit

72. The length of notice to quit his allotment which a tenant must be given varies with the category of the allotment site, the nature of his allotment and the circumstances in which the notice is given.

73. Firstly, the tenancy of any allotment may be determined on the expiry of one month’s notice if either:—

(i) the rent is in arrear for at least forty days; or
(ii) the allotments authority considers, not less than three months after the commencement of the tenancy, that the tenant has failed to observe the rules made in respect of his allotment; or
(iii) the authority, again after a lapse of three months from the beginning of the tenancy, considers that the tenant is resident more than a mile outside the boundary of its administrative area. 51

Apart from this rule, the Acts contain no restrictions on the length of notice which must be given to the tenant of an allotment which is not also an allotment garden (see paragraph 53).

74. In the case of an allotment garden on a statutory site, a tenant must normally by given twelve months' notice to quit, expiring during the period 29th September to 6th April, both dates inclusive. 52 If, however, the allotment garden is required for building, mining or industry, and the tenancy agreement contains a power of re-entry, possession may be achieved on three months' notice. 53 If an allotment garden may be classified temporary, the length of notice required will depend upon the identity of the landlord. 5* In the case of land owned by the allotments authority, three months' notice is sufficient if the land is required for the purpose for which it was originally acquired, 54 but if it is now wanted for some other purpose, it appears that the same rules will apply as for statutory land. 55 If the land is not owned by the authority, but is let to it for the purpose of providing allotments, then the authority must necessarily ensure that the tenancy of the individual allotment is co-terminous with its own tenancy of the land; it appears, however, that the landlord will be subject to the same rules as apply to statutory land. 56 If, however, the landlord in this case is a public authority (such as British Rail or the National Coal Board) and requires the land for purposes other than agriculture, then, subject to the insertion of a suitable re-entry clause, three months' notice—or less in an emergency—will suffice. 57

75. In Chapter I we referred to the large amount of land which was taken for allotments under the Defence Regulations during the last war. For technical

* The Acts of 1908 and 1919 dealt only with allotments provided by allotments authorities. The later legislation sought to bring private allotments within its scope by substituting the term "landlord" for "council". The same distinction is made in this chapter.

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
reasons, such land was rarely, if ever, let to the allotment holder, who was permitted to cultivate it under licence. A small amount of this land is still in use as allotments and we understand, moreover, that some allotments authorities still continue the practice of hiring out their temporary allotment land under licence. By this means no tenancy is created, and none of the above rules apply; the period of notice required is that stipulated in the licence itself.

(c) Compensation

76. The Allotments Acts lay down a number of factors in respect of which the tenant of an allotment will (or may) be entitled to compensation at the termination of his tenancy; they also specify circumstances in which the landlord will have a claim to compensation against the tenant. A distinction is drawn throughout between the tenancy of an allotment garden and the tenancy of any other allotment, and it is clear from the wording of the Acts that the occupant of the one has no legal right to claim compensation on the basis prescribed for the other.

77. Provided that the tenant of an allotment garden is not himself directly responsible for the termination of his tenancy (e.g. by failure to pay the rent or to observe the rules laid down by his landlord), he will be entitled to compensation, notwithstanding any agreement to the contrary:—

(i) for crops growing upon the land at the date of termination; 59
(ii) for manure applied to the land; 60 and
(iii) for disturbance—an amount equal to one year’s rent. 61

In addition, the tenant will be entitled to remove from the allotment garden any fruit trees or bushes planted by him or any building erected or improvement made at his expense, 62 but he has no claim to compensation in respect of any of these. Furthermore, if the tenancy should be determined between 29th September and 11th October (both dates inclusive) in any year, he will be entitled to remove his crops from the land at any time within 21 days of such termination. 63 On the termination of the tenancy of an allotment garden, the landlord will be entitled to compensation from the tenant in respect of any deterioration in the land caused by his failure to cultivate it properly. 64 Each party will be entitled to deduct from any compensation payable by him any compensation due to him under these provisions. 65

78. In the case of an allotment which is not an allotment garden, compensation may be payable whether the tenancy is determined by landlord or tenant. There are two alternative methods of assessing such compensation. By the first, the tenant will be entitled to compensation in respect of standard fruit trees, fruit bushes, strawberry plants and vegetable crops which continue productive for two or more years, provided that the cultivation of such crops has not been forbidden by a written tenancy agreement. 66 The amount of such compensation will be determined by arbitration as with an agricultural holding. 67 The tenant may also remove from the allotment any fruit trees or bushes in respect of which he has no claim to compensation. 68 The second basis upon which the tenant may claim compensation is in respect of:—

(i) crops, including fruit, growing upon the land;
(ii) labour expended upon the land;
(iii) manure applied to the land;
(iv) fruit trees or bushes provided and planted by the tenant with the previous consent in writing of the landlord; and
(v) drains, buildings, pigstyes, hen-houses or other structures erected by the tenant with the landlord's consent.69

The amount of compensation payable under these last provisions must be determined by an independent valuer.70 The tenant of an allotment provided upon unoccupied land which the authority has taken over,71 shall be entitled to compensation upon the terms set out above, but, in this case, his entitlement to such compensation may be denied by a clause in his tenancy agreement if his annual rent is 3d. per pole or less.72

F. Summary

79. It must not be supposed that the provisions of these seven Acts represent the whole of the legislation appertaining to allotments today: there are many provisions elsewhere which have a direct or indirect bearing on allotments law. Some of these, in fact, such as section 101 of the Housing Act 1957, which permits local authorities to obtain possession of land required for the purposes of that Act on fourteen days' notice, appear to be in direct contravention of the Allotments Acts themselves. But the law set out in this chapter does establish the basic rules under which allotments are to be provided and administered. It is in many respects complicated, obscure and ambiguous, and it is scarcely surprising that it has been interpreted in several different ways by allotment holders and local authorities. We will examine each of its provisions in detail in the course of this report.
CHAPTER 3

ALLOTMENTS SINCE 1950—THE SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

80. The historical survey in Chapter 1 outlined the development of the allotments system down to 1950, the year of the latest Allotments Act. Since that date changes have been rapid and profound, both within the allotments movement and within the social environment in which it operates. The tenor of the 1950 Act in many respects reflects prior history, and can only be properly understood in that context; it has proved to be in no sense a blue-print for the future. Its operation in quickly changing circumstances has given rise to stresses and strains which have become intolerable for both the allotments movement and the local authorities. To bring into sharper focus the essential background to our work it is necessary now to set out objectively the scope of the immediate, specific problem presented for our investigation, a problem which has largely arisen since 1950. We must in due course examine critically as regards their validity the assumptions which have been maintained under the umbrella of the law, as well as the trends which have developed to discredit them and which have led to increasing conflict, dereliction and demoralisation.

81. If every allotments authority had achieved and maintained the target of 4 acres per thousand population recommended in the 1950 report of the A.A.C., there would today be some 200,000 acres of allotment land in England and Wales. In fact, on the most reliable estimate, the total acreage is 67,804. But this simple comparison conceals the full extent to which many authorities have failed to reach the ‘target’. Of the present total acreage, no less than 40 per cent lies in rural areas which house only 20 per cent of the population; thus the 40 million people who live in the thousand or so towns share only 41,000 acres between them—an average of 1·02 acres per thousand population. It is apparent from these figures alone that the allotment picture today is very different from that of 1950 (compare Figures 3C and 3D). We will, of course, be considering many facets of the present situation in succeeding chapters, but it is necessary first to mention some of the new factors which have emerged with increasing momentum during the last twenty-five years.

82. The report of the A.A.C. was, as we have seen, produced against a background of food shortage and Government agitation for a continuation of wartime enthusiasm. But even in this situation, it is very difficult to accept the committee’s recommendation as a true assessment either of what was required or of what was practicable. At the height of the war, 143,000 acres of allotments had been pressed into intensive cultivation; yet five years after it ended, the A.A.C. apparently thought in terms of attempting to increase this figure by some 40 per cent. In 1942 some 1,400,000 people had cultivated allotments; in 1950 the A.A.C. envisaged (on the basis of twelve plots to the acre) that a million more might cultivate them in time of peace!

83. While this particular recommendation received no official endorsement, its validity does not appear to have been seriously called into question by the allotments authorities to which it was addressed. Many of the complaints which allotment holders and their representatives have made persistently since 1950, however, have hinged upon the degree to which authorities have fallen short of
this target; similarly, many allotments authorities and planners were not prepared seriously to accept proposals for provision which were in most areas so far in excess of the current demand. It would seem to us that had a more realistic target been proposed the story of the last twenty-five years might have been very different. As things transpired, despite serious attempts by some authorities to reach the overall target of 4 acres per thousand population, a dramatic fall in the number of allotments from 1,100,000 in 1950 to 729,013 in 1964 occurred. The underlying reasons for this decline merit prompt and close examination, especially as they help to establish some of the problems with which we have been faced.

84. There are in fact three separate groups of arguments put forward to account for this fall in numbers. One group is proffered exclusively by those outside the allotments movement, and the second by those within it; the third is largely factual. The accounts of these various schools of thought overlap so rarely that it will be advisable to consider them separately without, at this stage, offering any opinion as to their relative merits.

85. Those not connected with the allotments movement allege almost universally that the appeal of allotment gardens as a popular leisure time activity has greatly declined. The emergence of the ‘affluent society’, better wages, less unemployment, family allowances and increased pensions, it is contended, have combined to reduce the individual’s need for an allotment as an economic necessity to the point where allotment gardening has become primarily a recreation. As a recreation, it has inevitably come into competition with other ‘new’ popular leisure pursuits such as the motor-car, television and bingo. Furthermore, they continue, fresh, canned and frozen fruit and vegetables have become more generally available in shops and markets, while allotment gardening has not proved a sufficiently attractive leisure activity to many who view with antipathy a recreation which has remained so strongly tied to its charitable origins. For all these reasons, it is said, the demand for allotments has decreased rapidly since 1950.

86. It is fair to say that this view appears to have been condoned by the attitude of Central Government. Although, in 1951, the Minister of Agriculture appointed a National Council for Domestic Food Production composed of organisations which largely, but not exclusively, represented the interests of allotment holders, there has at no time since 1950 been a consistent national campaign designed to persuade people to take allotments. Successive governments appear to have considered throughout this period that in times of peace, and especially in the light of great increases in farming intensity and production, allotment gardening is no longer necessary to the national economy, while in times of emergency sufficient extra land can be made available from parks and playing fields.

87. The factual group of arguments relates to the pattern of urban growth which during the past twenty-five years has proceeded at a pace in excess of anything previously known. There have been several reasons for this. Firstly, the need for urban planning, which became a matter of national concern in the early part of this century, has now become generally accepted. Successive Acts of Parliament have given the planner freedom to experiment with new ideas without being restricted by laws affecting the availability of certain areas of land, but have, at the same time, restricted development areas so as to encroach
as little as possible on land in agricultural use. Secondly, planning itself has become a science, with exciting new concepts, demanding different techniques and lines of approach. Thirdly, the devastation of many towns during the war provided both the need and the opportunity to rebuild on new lines, while obsolete living and working conditions made redevelopment essential in many other areas. Fourthly, the population forecasts made at the end of the war have proved to be totally unrealistic; the population, especially in urban areas, has risen at a far greater rate than was anticipated, bringing with it a greater need for additional housing, schools, playing fields and other services. The need to build entirely new towns to accommodate the surplus population from overcrowded urban areas has also given the planner an opportunity to create 'ideal' environments for the new communities. Fifthly, there have been great changes in the pattern and pace of urban life itself. For example, the evergrowing number of car owners has necessitated the development of new and better roads, while increasing periods of leisure have required more and larger parks together with provision of land for a wide range of sports. Lastly, alongside his greater power and authority, the planner has acquired an increasing sense of purpose. He is concerned not only with functional aspects but also with aesthetic appeal. His aim is the creation of a town which is at the same time viable, adaptable and attractive.

88. At a time of acute land scarcity it is not surprising that envious eyes have been cast on urban allotment sites. They are almost invariably to be found within the perimeter of the town, where land is most urgently required. They often lie close to heavily built up areas, where the need for ancillary services is the greatest. As little or no demolition is necessary, they are usually simple to develop. Since the closure of an allotment site affects the lives of only a small minority of the town's inhabitants (and electorate) no great clamour of protest occurs. Finally, many sites, because of their untidiness and neglect, are looked upon by the general public primarily as horticultural slums, whose disappearance would add to the attractiveness of the town and would provide space for more homes, schools or playing fields. It follows that if the planner proposes that a site should be developed, he is usually assured of the support both of the local authority and of the majority of its ratepayers. In rural areas pressures on land have not been nearly so acute. One may, of course, cite instances where a village allotment site has been suggested as the best area for the erection of a small number of additional houses required in a rural community but, in general, the need for land for alternative uses has not in rural areas created so severe a pressure on allotment sites.

89. There is another side to the same problem which has a more general application. One result of the need for land for development on such a scale has been to force up the value of urban land to a point which the A.A.C. cannot possibly have foreseen. It is by no means exceptional for allotment land in some of our congested towns to command prices of £15,000 to £20,000 per acre, or more. There are many, including planners, who have for some years considered it wrong in principle that the use of land of such value should be available to individuals on demand; while they would not object to the provision of small numbers of allotment gardens, they contend that the present law permits the allotments movement to hold the community to ransom. This view is reinforced when, as often happens, they see large areas of allotment land lying derelict. With mounting pressures on land, such waste can no longer be tolerated.
90. The validity of these ‘factual’ arguments is largely accepted by the allotments movement and by N.A.G.S. They point out, however, with some justification, that while such factors make it more necessary to defend the continuance of allotment garden provision, they cannot in themselves account for the decline in the numbers who want allotments. People do not normally suddenly cease to want something when it becomes more difficult to provide it.

91. In the view of the allotments movement, therefore, the ‘blame’ for the present situation lies primarily at the door of the officials both of Central and Local Government. The Central Government is accused of being apathetic towards allotments, of failing to give local authorities sufficient guidance, and of being prone to accept the assurances of authorities who are ‘known to be anti-allotments’.

92. But it is to the local authorities and to the planners that most of their complaints are directed. The allotments movement has alleged for some time that many authorities consider allotments largely as a nuisance and the allotment holders themselves as a minority having unwarranted privilege. Such authorities, it is argued, are induced by the need to introduce flexibility into local town plans to look upon every site as potentially available for development. Despite Ministerial circulars, they have failed to provide permanent sites; and they are unwilling to furnish the basic amenities which, by making the site more attractive, might encourage an increased demand for plots. They subtly foster the rumour that sites are to be closed in a deliberate attempt to frighten tenants into surrendering their plots so that they can then claim that demand is declining. They make frequent applications for the notation of allotment sites to be amended on their town maps in order to suggest that the life of the sites will be short. They give allotment holders on statutory sites notice to quit before obtaining consent to the alienation of the sites, thereby setting in motion the rundown of sites before their future has been officially decided. In extreme cases, the movement contends that such authorities, and their planners, are so antagonistic to the whole system of allotment gardening that, where possible, they will deliberately select an allotment site for development in preference to alternative and more suitable areas of land. Thus, although the allotments movement concedes that the demand for allotments today is lower than in 1950, it alleges that there is a potential latent demand which has been artificially stifled by the barbaric conditions which allotment gardeners are compelled to endure.

93. All these rival claims will be examined more closely in succeeding chapters. For the present, it is sufficient to indicate that they have produced a most unsatisfactory relationship between the allotments movement and authority and a series of problems greater and more urgent than at any time in the long history of the allotments movement.
PART II

CHAPTER 4

METHODS OF INVESTIGATION AND ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS

94. Before setting out the evidence which has been offered to us in the course of our investigations, we must indicate and, to some extent, justify the methods by which it has been obtained. At the same time, we will define some of the major difficulties we have encountered in carrying out our task, and show how we have tried to overcome them.

A. Methods of investigation

95. At the beginning of our enquiries, we consulted all available literature on our subject, published and unpublished, including theses, reports and surveys conducted in various towns and areas. The statistical data supplied to the Minister were made available to us, and by subjecting these to analysis we were able to establish certain trends in the allotments movement over the past few years. We were also made uncomfortably aware of the inaccuracy of the figures supplied, to which we must return in our next chapter. We then held a series of preliminary discussions with allotments officers, planners and allotment holders in a number of towns to establish the extent of the problems with which we were confronted, and to determine how they might best be approached.

96. Our first active step was to invite evidence in writing from all local authorities, allotment holders and organisations whom we thought might be interested in our task. To do this, we wrote to the council of every county, county borough, London borough, municipal borough, urban district and rural district in England and Wales to invite them to submit written evidence to us and also, in the case of all except the county councils, to ask them to display a notice on their public notice-boards inviting written evidence. At the same time, we asked every county association of parish councils to distribute a similar notice to each of its members, and to the parish meeting of any parish without a council. We wrote to a total of thirty-three national associations whom we felt might have views of which we should be aware. Finally, and at a somewhat later date, we invited evidence from six Government Departments whose responsibilities seemed to impinge to a greater or lesser degree upon our field of study.

97. From these sources we received a great deal of written evidence; some letters consisted of a single paragraph, others extended to more than twenty pages. We received copies of further surveys, town maps and development plans. It would obviously be impossible in this report to list the name of every organisation and individual who wrote to us, but we have included in Appendix II a list of the Government Departments and national societies from which evidence was received. All of this information was carefully read, and a full summary of every important point has been before us throughout our deliberations. At a later stage we decided to invite the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources, N.A.G.S., and the L.S.A. to supplement their written evidence by giving oral evidence before us, and all three readily agreed to do so. In addition, the secretary of the National Association of Parish Councils attended one of our early meetings.
98. From all of this evidence we derived much valuable information. It was, however, obvious at an early stage not only that many important questions were still unanswered but also that no coherent picture had emerged which would enable us to determine a national pattern. We therefore decided that we had no alternative but to issue a comprehensive questionnaire* to those whose combined fact and opinion were necessary to provide the information we required.

99. The issue of these questionnaires provoked so great a storm of protest by correspondence, telephone, in the press and on television, that we feel obliged to justify them at some length. It is necessary first to establish that questionnaires were sent to every allotments authority, both urban and rural, in England and Wales, irrespective of whether there were at the date of issue any allotments within their administrative areas. Other questionnaires were sent by two different methods to approximately 16,000 allotment holders selected completely at random, and to some 200 of their local associations.

100. While the response from the allotment holders and the associations was, for reasons which we will come to later in this chapter, not as great as we might have hoped, we received little or no adverse comment from them. It was from the allotments authorities that the bulk of the protests and the refusals to help were received, and the most satisfactory means of justifying our decision to issue the forms may be to answer in this chapter the main criticisms which were offered:—

(i) It was suggested by many authorities that much of the information we sought had already been supplied in statistical form to the Ministry. We have already referred to the inaccuracies in these statistics and we will deal with this point at greater length in the next chapter.

(ii) It was suggested that the questionnaires might have been confined to a random sample of authorities. The written evidence which we had received had shown us that the allotments situation in a particular town was almost always the result of purely local circumstances which often differed completely from those of nearby areas; we felt certain that no random sample would produce a comprehensive national picture.

(iii) It was suggested that forms need not have been sent to those authorities which, according to the annual returns, had no allotments. There are two answers to this. Firstly, we knew that the returns relating to some authorities were inaccurate, not merely in regard to the number and type of the allotments, but also to their very existence. We had found examples of places which were reporting having allotments when they had in fact disappeared many years ago. Secondly, since we sought information going back to 1945, it would have been necessary for our purpose to include those authorities which had possessed allotments at any time during the period 1945–65. The selection of such authorities would have been an impossible task.

(iv) It was suggested that it was unnecessary to seek information over a twenty-year period. We were obliged to go back at least to 1950, when the last national report was prepared; we elected to cover the previous five years since no regular annual statistics were called for during that period.

---

* The questionnaires are too large to be reproduced in full in this report, but lists of the questions are contained in Appendices III, V, VI and VII.
(v) It was suggested that the questionnaires were too comprehensive and difficult to complete. With the benefit of hindsight, we can see that the records of many authorities were inadequate for the task. But this fact is in itself a piece of valuable information, and there are two further points which ought to be made. Firstly, before the main issue of the questionnaires, we sent thirty-five copies on a 'trial run' basis to selected urban and rural authorities. Only one of these objected to their size and scope. Secondly, the urban district of Aberdare, which maintains full records of its allotments, was able to complete the entire questionnaire accurately and quickly.

(vi) It was suggested, finally, that the committee's task was not sufficiently important to warrant the expenditure of time on the furnishing of the details requested. To this allegation there is no factual answer if one overlooks the many millions of pounds worth of land involved; we must leave others to determine from our report its degree of justification.

None of the answers to these questionnaires told us why people whom we might have expected to be interested in taking an allotment had not in fact done so. Accordingly, at a later stage in our inquiries, we issued a further and much shorter questionnaire to a random sample of flat-dwellers in the City of Birmingham. The data derived from this questionnaire are included at Appendix VIII.

101. We also decided that it would be helpful to our work to obtain a series of independent appraisals of the local allotments situation in urban and rural areas. We therefore invited students at universities and colleges throughout the country to devote their final thesis to a study of the allotments system, both past and present, in a specified locality. We were able to offer them considerable assistance, including supervision and the opportunity to use our questionnaires, and in this way we obtained studies of the situation in forty-nine different areas, which are listed in Appendix II. We have read all these reports, and have extracted the considerable amount of important data.

102. The committee has made official visits to a total of twenty allotments authorities, both urban and rural, in England and Wales; in every case we have discussed the situation with representatives of the authority, met and talked with allotment holders and inspected a number of allotment sites. In several cases we made the visit at the express invitation of the authority; the remainder were selected for a wide variety of reasons and, in total, have enabled us to obtain a balanced picture. We have as a committee made unofficial visits (i.e. without meeting the authority) to a further four places, and individual members have visited sites in many more urban and rural areas. A list of the places which we have visited, both officially and unofficially, is included in Appendix II. Finally, we made a brief official visit to certain countries on the continent to inspect their allotments systems. This will be dealt with separately in Chapter 14; a list of the towns included in our visit is also contained in Appendix II.

103. During the whole period covered by our Inquiry we have made strenuous efforts to keep interested sections of the public aware of our existence and of the progress we have made. We have done this by periodic statements to the press, the British Broadcasting Corporation and gardening magazines, and we have been officially represented at the annual conferences of N.A.G.S. At the same time, in order to assess the readiness of the allotments movement to accept changes which might be necessary, we have endeavoured generally to ferment
new ideas by addresses (often illustrated by slides) to the N.A.G.S.'s conference and to meetings of local allotment associations, and by an article in N.A.G.S.'s own publication Garden. We have also gone to considerable lengths to encourage experiment with new types of allotment sites at Cardiff, Fliitwick (Bedfordshire), Birmingham and elsewhere, and have been able to assess the reactions to them.

B. Difficulties

104. We have referred to our decision to issue comprehensive questionnaires to every allotments authority and to a random sample of allotment holders and the secretaries of their associations. We must acknowledge that these questionnaires had some defects, which were due mainly to the need to draft them at an early stage in our enquiries, before all the intricacies of the problem had been established. For example, some of the questions might with advantage have been asked in a different way, while one or two were either ambiguous in themselves or were so framed as to permit of ambiguity in the answers. The task of interpreting and assessing the answers to a few questions was therefore rendered somewhat difficult, and the difficulty was accentuated by omissions and inaccuracies in the answers. But we are fully satisfied that the data which we present in the course of the next few chapters are accurate and meaningful, and that we have been able to determine (and will indicate) the points at which the interpretation of the answers is affected by any of the difficulties mentioned above. The issue of the questionnaires and what followed highlighted a number of other difficulties which we had not fully foreseen, and which we must now specify.

(1) Attitudes of mind

105. Our work has to some extent been hampered throughout by a number of different attitudes on the part of sections of the allotments movement. We have met with suspicion in the minds of people who have apparently assumed that a Government-sponsored committee can operate only to their detriment; we have encountered a degree of apathy, principally among allotment holders who have acquired a fatalistic attitude to the future of their movement; and we have been forced to contend with a widespread ignorance of the extent of the problem—or even that one exists—which is derived both from a somewhat insular outlook on the part of many allotment holders and from an inability on the part of N.A.G.S. adequately to keep its members informed. We will return to this point in later chapters.

(2) Lack of reliable information

106. The response to our questionnaires from every type of allotments authority showed a widespread lack of information about the local allotments situation. The records of most authorities appear to us to be woefully inadequate in many respects, but especially so in regard to:—

(a) Private allotments. It seems to us incredible that a great many authorities are unaware not only of the numbers of private* allotments which are provided within their administrative areas, but also, in some cases, of their very existence. Bearing in mind the duty of each authority to satisfy the demand for allotments, we would have thought that the consequences of large-scale reductions in the amount of private allotment land would have been looked upon as a matter of sufficient importance to impel them to keep the position under review.

* See paragraph 61 for definition.
(b) *Statistical records.* A surprisingly large number of authorities was unable to supply any information about allotments in 1945, and often in years even more recent. In general, this lack of information was more widespread among the smaller authorities, but some large towns were similarly placed.

We will discuss the implications of this at a later stage of our report; for the present, we need only observe that it seriously affected the amount and reliability of the information which could be drawn from the questionnaires.

(3) *Differences between areas*

107. We have already indicated that although the present allotments situation is largely the result of national legislation, it is very local in character. Not only do towns a few miles apart often differ from each other in their approach to the problems of provision, methods of administration and so forth, but also (and far more seriously), the contrast between urban and rural areas is very pronounced. If we restrict the application of the word ‘rural’ to country parishes situated outside the commuter belts of large towns, then there are in reality two allotment situations—urban and rural. In consequence, we have found considerable problems in bracketing them together and proposing composite solutions.

(4) *Definitions*

108. Throughout our work we have found great difficulty in choosing satisfactory definitions of a number of words and phrases which are of vital importance in assessing the present allotments situation. We must now indicate the nature of these difficulties and the interpretation which we have placed upon the relevant expressions in our report.

(a) *Allotment.* As we pointed out in Chapter 2, the Allotments Acts contain no definition of the word ‘allotment’. To most people, especially to those living in urban areas, the word signifies a group of relatively small rectangular plots of land which in size, though not necessarily in use, conform to the accepted legal definition of an allotment garden.

At an early stage in our investigations, however, it became obvious that any such ‘definition’ would be totally inadequate in assessing the national picture. There exist, especially in rural areas, large numbers of allotments which are outside its scope, and we were obliged to consider the widest possible interpretation of the word which our brief and the law would allow. It seemed to us that this might be comprised in the following form of words:—

“Allotments are groups of contiguous plots of land which are not smallholdings, not greater than 5 acres per plot and not attached to a dwelling, provided either as a result of an inclosure award or by a public or private body or by an allotments authority for fuel, pasture, horticulture or farming.”

Even this definition proved eventually to be inadequate. We received information about ‘allotments’ with houses attached, ‘allotments’ of more than 5 acres in extent and several other variations. We therefore suggest that, for the purpose of assessing the present situation, an allotment should be taken to be:—
"Any piece of land, except a smallholding, provided by an allotments authority under any of the powers or obligations contained in the Allotments Acts 1908–1950, or in the Defence (General) Regulations 1939, whether subsequently repealed or not; or any other piece of land which is known locally as an allotment, and which, by its similarity to any of the aforementioned in size, design or purpose, effectively reduces the demand for them."

We must emphasise that the wide variations of which we have spoken occur only in rural areas; in urban areas, the vast majority of allotments are allotment gardens.

(b) Statutory (Permanent). Before our enquiries began, there appears to have been little or no criticism of the meaning of the term 'statutory' as applied to an allotment. Yet for many years, the total area of 'statutory' land which has disappeared from allotment use according to the annual statistical returns has greatly exceeded the amount which has been alienated in the manner laid down by law, and it must have been apparent that many authorities were continually experiencing difficulty in placing their allotment land in the correct category.

For this reason, we decided in issuing our questionnaires to use the word 'permanent' rather than 'statutory', and to offer a new definition of the term which was related to the disposal rather than the acquisition of the land. We have evidence to suggest that one or two authorities took this opportunity to amend the classification of some of their land; on the other hand, we have since received much clearer evidence to indicate that large amounts of allotment land are still wrongly classified.* We feel, therefore, that in assessing the evidence we are bound to accept the definitions of the terms 'statutory', 'temporary' and 'private' offered in paragraph 61 although in doing so we are admitting a measure of inaccuracy.

(c) Rod. By definition, an allotment garden must not exceed 40 poles in extent, and it is customary in most parts of the country to measure such plots in rods. We discovered that the word 'rod' has several local variations in meaning, some of them quite substantial. We were able to take account of these variations in our enquiries, and throughout our report the word will be given its generally accepted meaning of 30½ square yards.

---

* See Chapter 5, paragraphs 140–7.
PART III

PROVISION AND ADMINISTRATION OF
ALLOTMENTS

CHAPTER 5

ACREAGES, NUMBERS AND DISTRIBUTION

109. In this chapter, it is our intention to examine the changes which have
taken place in the area and number of allotments provided at various times since
the Act of 1908 became law, and to consider briefly the pattern of allotment
provision in England and Wales today. For details of these changes we must
rely mainly on official statistics derived from the annual returns made to the
appropriate Ministry by local authorities under the provisions of Section 59 of
the 1908 Act.* The available data for those years up to, and including, 1937
can be found in classified summary form, with supporting text, in the annual
reports of the Land Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries by
whom the statistics were collected; for subsequent years, no report was made,
and the data are generally less extensive.

A. Acreages and numbers of allotments

(1) Difficulties of interpretation

110. The analysis and graphical treatment of the data made available to us
by the Ministry require considerable amendment and interpolation. There are
five reasons why this is necessary:—

(i) For many years either no returns were requested, or the data submitted
are no longer available.

(ii) In war years, authorities were asked merely to make a “broad estimate”
of the number of allotments and their total area.

(iii) Frequently, application for a return of allotments was made only to
certain classes of authority (usually urban).

(iv) The returns themselves are known to be deficient and the various
methods previously adopted of making good these deficiencies were
both inconsistent and inappropriate.

(v) The forms of return issued by the responsible Ministry have varied
considerably over the years; this has made it extremely difficult both
for local authorities to provide consistently accurate data, and for us
to interpret the data which have been supplied.

In order to establish the degree of difficulty involved, and the validity of the
methods used by us to overcome it, it is advisable to set out in detail the years
in respect of which each of these five problems arose; they are presented in
chronological sequence in Table 4.

* See paragraph 66.
(i) No data now available

111. Because of wartime and other emergencies, no returns were requested for the years 1915–9, 1921 and 1922, 1931, 1944–7 and 1949. For the year 1921 we have found a national estimate of the total number of allotments and for 1922 we have been able to use a figure quoted by the Minister during the Second Reading of the Allotments Bill of that year. For the years 1909–13 inclusive the data are no longer available, while for 1920, 1923–7 and 1938, much of the information collected has disappeared.

(ii) Inadequate data requested

112. During the years 1939–43 inclusive, urban authorities were asked to furnish broad particulars of the numbers of allotments in their areas instead of making the customary full returns, while rural district councils were required to provide figures for their requisitioned allotments only. An attempt was made by the Ministry for each of these years to translate the data provided into reasonable total estimates, but it is obvious that the figures cannot be very reliable.

(iii) Restricted issue of return forms

113. As an economy measure, no returns were requested from rural authorities for the years 1932 and 1933, and for 1935–7 inclusive. In 1960, the Ministry decided that returns from rural areas would, in future, be required only quadrennially, and there are consequently no rural figures for the years 1961–3 and 1965–7 inclusive. The forms issued for 1908–14 also omitted all reference to private allotments, and there are no returns of railway allotments for the years 1932 and 1933 and for 1935–7.

(iv) Deficiencies in the returns

114. We referred in Chapter 4 to the dearth of information about the private allotment land within the administrative areas of very many authorities. It has been the Ministry’s practice throughout to accept estimated figures where these have been provided, and where an authority has persistently failed to return its private provision the amount has been assumed to be nil. In consequence, both the figures for private land and the overall totals must be suspect throughout; they will almost certainly be too low. However, the problems caused by this deficiency are not so great as they might appear, for the extent of the shortfall is generally consistent, and under the circumstances we feel able to draw valid conclusions from the data available.

115. A variable, but small, number of authorities has each year failed to respond to the requests made for detailed information. The missing returns have usually been allowed for by using the last previous returns received from the authorities concerned, a device which must lead to some over-estimation in periods of general decline. The same system of making good missing data has been applied to each category of allotment land.

116. In the years since 1960 when no returns from rural areas have been required, the number and area of rural allotments have been estimated within the Ministry by applying the urban trend for each year to the next previous rural figures. Since urban and rural trends differ markedly in both scale and extent, and since the next previous rural figures may themselves be estimates, this error is cumulative and can only be corrected at four-yearly intervals. Our own
independent assessments would suggest, for example, that by 1963, the area of rural allotments as calculated by the Ministry was considerably exaggerated.

**(v) Variable forms of returns**

117. As each of the above sources of error operates independently, and can vary year by year, it is impossible to make any valid allowance for them. In our investigations, however, they are less important than the uncertainties introduced by changes in the definitions of the various classes of allotments themselves. It would clearly have been inadequate to base our findings simply on the total number and area of allotments when we also needed to know the different categories into which the available land has fallen at various points in time, both in order to establish the degree of security of tenure which exists today and to estimate future trends. In the sphere of private allotments this creates no obvious difficulty, although it is probable that some of the land owned by the railway authorities, but subsequently let to local councils for use as allotments, has habitually been included under two heads.

118. From 1925 to 1938, local authorities were required to report separately the number and acreages of their allotments according to whether they were provided by the authorities themselves or privately. Those provided by authorities were subdivided into four classes:—

(i) Allotments provided under the Allotments Acts by purchase or appropriation.

(ii) Allotments provided under the Allotments Acts by hiring.

(iii) Allotments on land entered under section 10 of the 1922 Act.*

(iv) Allotments on land held for public purposes other than allotments.

These categories are reasonably distinct and unequivocal, but, even so, there are at least two points of doubt. Thus it is not clear whether authorities invariably included land held by them on lease under category (ii)—although the text of the early reports assumed that they did—and there was no category appropriate to the charity allotment land vested in authorities without payment under section 33 of the 1908 Act.

119. The 1948 returns were required specifically for the purposes of the work of the A.A.C., and no copy of the return form can now be traced. When the collection of annual returns was resumed in 1950, however, the form was different from, and less explicit than, those of the inter-war period. The changes in classification were undoubtedly inspired by the wording of the A.A.C.'s report, but, quite apart from their serious internal inconsistencies, they raise problems of continuity with the inter-war data. In place of the four sub-classes used in the 1930's, allotments authorities were now asked to divide their own allotment provision into permanent and temporary plots; they were asked to state the number of vacant plots in each of the permanent, temporary and private categories and the number of persons on their waiting lists. It is apparent from the returns of the 1950's that permanent allotments were taken to mean all land owned, leased and rented by allotments authorities for allotments purposes under the Allotments Acts; they therefore represented essentially sub-classes (i)

---

* Section 10 of the 1922 Act replaced Defence Regulation 2L of the First World War and allowed allotments authorities to enter upon unoccupied land for the purpose of providing allotments.
and (ii) of the inter-war period. *Temporary* allotments, on the other hand, included land requisitioned for allotments under the emergency powers of the Second World War, the residue of land held under section 10 of the 1922 Act, and land in the ownership of the authorities which was intended for other purposes.* (Throughout this chapter, this last-named type of land will be referred to as ‘earmarked’ land.)

120. In 1960, the Ministry of Agriculture again altered the wording of the return form. The term ‘statutory’ replaced the word ‘permanent’, and statutory allotments were defined as “allotments on land purchased or appropriated for allotments”. While this definition was reasonably clear, *temporary* allotments were now said to be those on “land provided by the council by other means, i.e. land vested in the council for other purposes”. This meant that all charity allotments owned by the council, and all land leased or rented by the council for allotments should properly have been excluded from both categories; the actual allocation of such allotments in the 1960 returns cannot be known. In 1961, the “i.e.” of the 1960 form was changed to “e.g.” without comment. There was still no specific guidance about rented land, and since the form now remained unchanged for three years during which the figures produced for rural areas were based on the 1960 returns, it is apparent that throughout the early 1960’s there was rented allotment land in both categories.

121. In 1964 the return form, which was once again issued to rural authorities, contained a slight amendment of the definition of statutory allotments which did not affect its meaning. The definition of *temporary* allotments, however, was now changed completely to read: “Land held by the council on lease, or council-owned land not bought or appropriated for allotments”. On a strict interpretation of this new definition, land rented by a council without the protection of a lease should be excluded from both categories. Alternatively, if an authority had previously returned land held by lease or tenancy as *statutory*, it would now be in order to place the more secure (leased) land in the temporary class, incongruously leaving land held on an annual tenancy as statutory. Thus confusion continued, and today it is not apparent without careful examination how much land is still being returned as statutory allotments when it does not in fact enjoy the protected status of that class.

122. The difficulty of finding a way through this maze of problems is further aggravated by the method of calling for the annual statistics. Parish data have always been provided by rural district councils on forms issued to them for collective return. No forms are issued for use by individual parishes, and the possibility of definitions becoming garbled is obvious. For railway allotments a different procedure is adopted, railway authorities reporting overall figures region by region, without differentiation between urban and rural areas. Additional confusion stems from the practice of asking authorities to furnish particulars of the position at 30th September in each year, although other data published by the Ministry are produced on a calendar-year basis. Finally, so far as we are aware, no return form has ever offered a definition of the word ‘allotment’, nor do the published statistics draw an obvious distinction between the number of allotment gardens and other kinds of allotment in urban or rural areas.

* It is not possible to accept the statement made in the written evidence presented to us by the Allotments Section of the Ministry that “the definition of permanent land had been found to cover land held on lease or land owned by the council for other purposes”. It is clear that the latter was generally returned as *temporary* land.
123. In the following paragraphs we will attempt to clarify the present situation, identifying the approximate areas of true statutory and temporary allotments (as defined in paragraph 61) by reference to the statistics for earlier years. Although the validity of conclusions based on these data may be questioned, the present allotments situation cannot be properly assessed without an attempt to make use of them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1908...</td>
<td>Only an overall estimate survives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909-13</td>
<td>No figures now available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914...</td>
<td>Only an overall estimate survives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915-19</td>
<td>No returns were requested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920...</td>
<td>An overall total is available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921...</td>
<td>Only an overall estimate survives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922...</td>
<td>Total estimated by the Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923-7</td>
<td>Corrected totals taken from the Land Division’s 1928 Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928-30</td>
<td>Precise totals available, by area and category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931-3</td>
<td>No return was requested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932-3</td>
<td>Precise data available from urban authorities; no returns in respect of rural parishes, or railways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934...</td>
<td>Precise totals available, by area and category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935-7</td>
<td>Precise data available from urban authorities; no returns in respect of rural parishes, or railways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Overall totals available, urban and rural authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-43</td>
<td>Estimates of total numbers and area, based on broad estimates made by urban authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944-7</td>
<td>No returns were requested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948...</td>
<td>Special return called for in connection with A.A.C.; urban and rural totals available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949...</td>
<td>No return was requested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-9</td>
<td>Returns made by rural and urban authorities on basis of new and imprecise definitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960...</td>
<td>Returns made by rural and urban authorities on basis of amended definitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-3</td>
<td>Returns made by urban areas only, on definitions further amended; figures for rural areas estimated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964...</td>
<td>Definitions again amended but still faulty; returns made by urban and rural areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-7</td>
<td>Returns from urban areas only; rural areas estimated; definitions unchanged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) **Total numbers of allotments**

124. Figures for the total number of allotments at several dates in the later nineteenth century have been quoted in Chapter 1. By 1895, when there were said to be 482,901 plots in Great Britain, there appears to have been a levelling off in private allotment provision, but the introduction of certain default powers in 1890 produced a modest increase in the scale of local authority provision, which by 1908 had reached approximately 60,000 plots on 17,500 acres in England and Wales. Between 1908 and 1914 public provision accelerated, and by the outbreak of the First World War it accounted for some 140,000 plots on 33,500 acres (Figure 4). It is clear from the ratio of plots per acre (3.4 in 1908 and 4.2 in 1914) that many of the allotments provided during this period were not garden allotments, although the allotments movement was already making headway in urban areas.

125. The overall estimate for all categories of allotments in 1914 is 600,000. In addition to the 140,000 local authority plots already mentioned, the returns included 27,500 plots provided by the railway companies, which would indicate that about 433,000 plots were still provided privately. It will be noted that
this last figure is almost 50,000 less than the total for Great Britain in 1895 and it is almost certainly a considerable underestimate. In the Land Division's report for 1928, the figures previously published for the year 1920 were adjusted upwards, and if we apply an adjustment of similar magnitude to the 1914 total of 600,000, it produces a revised figure of 674,000. This large discrepancy may be due to the omission from the category totals of earmarked council land; this was first reported separately in 1925, when it accounted for 62,655 plots, a figure which then remained relatively stable for several years. We therefore conclude that it is more reasonable to use the extrapolated total of 674,000 allotments for the year 1914 in England and Wales.

126. Changes within the various categories of allotments over the First World War period are summarised in Table 5. Although we have seen few corroborative statistics, it is generally assumed that the wartime expansion reached its peak in 1920,* by which time 255,000 additional plots had been established on 18,500 acres of land commandeered under Defence Regulation 2L (Figure 4). Only 200 acres of this total were situated in rural areas. During the same period, allotments provided by authorities under the Act of 1908 increased by 190,000 plots on 13,500 acres, and private provision by some 60,000 plots on 4,300 acres;† railway allotments almost quadrupled, increasing by 77,500 plots on

---

* In 1918, the total number of railway allotments was 93,473; by 1920 it had risen to 104,818. The Land Division's 1928 report referred to "the continued decline in the number of allotments since 1920" and to "the immense expansion that took place during and immediately after the war".

† The increase of c. 60,000 private plots is accepted. Since there is no reason to suppose that the character of new allotments provided privately during the war differed from that of new local authority allotments, it may be assumed that the increase was at an average density of fourteen plots per acre. The total increase therefore covered some 4,300 acres, and the 1914 acreage of private allotments, 87,700, has been obtained by subtraction.
5,000 acres. The average of 14·1 plots per acre found among the new local authority allotments was in close keeping with their urban predominance, and it is clear that nearly all the wartime increase was in the form of what the 1922 Act was to call "allotment gardens". In calculating, for the purpose of Table 5, the urban and rural ratios of private allotments in 1914, we have assumed that the known plot ratio of 1920 was consistent throughout. If the validity of this assumption is accepted, it will be seen from Table 5 (b) and (c) that, excluding railway allotments, about 90 per cent of the adjusted increase of some 656,000 plots on 46,800 acres lays in urban areas. In 1914 only 57 per cent of the plots and 30 per cent of the total area was in urban areas; by 1920 the urban share had risen to over 72 per cent of the plots and 44 per cent of the acreage. Allotments had by now become a strongly urban phenomenon, in numbers if not in area.

127. The decline in the number of allotments after 1920 was at first attributable mainly to the loss of land held under emergency powers. By 1923 when the Defence Regulation had been revoked, nearly 255,000 of the 'emergency' plots recorded in 1920 had disappeared from the returns. Many of these had undoubtedly been acquired by authorities under the Allotments Acts and it is significant that the number of allotments provided under these Acts increased by 145,000 between 1920 and 1923. By 1923, a further 24,318 plots were provided under section 10 of the new Act of 1922, and it is certain that almost all of these were previously held under the emergency powers. Thus, the figures suggest that between 1920 and 1923 the net loss of 'emergency' allotments amounted to between 90,000 and 95,000 plots.

128. From 1920 to 1928, the total number of allotments fell by nearly a quarter, to 1,024,000 plots on an area decreased to 154,000 acres (Figure 4). In urban areas the decline was attributed to "industrial causes, the widespread housing activities of local authorities and private owners, the laying out of open spaces and recreation grounds and so forth".* In rural areas it was caused by a "waning of interest in the cultivation of allotments by those whose primary occupation is on the land".† The decline in rented (hired) land was partly offset by a steady increase in land owned by local authorities (protected, eventually, by the Act of 1925) and a parallel increase in the use of earmarked land. Section 10 allotment land was never very extensive, since its precarious tenure did not commend it either to local authorities or to allotment holders, and while it bridged a gap after the ending of the Defence Regulations, its area declined continuously to negligible proportions; this is clearly shown by Table 6.

129. The steady decline in the total number of allotments was checked in 1932 and arrested in 1933 (Figure 4). In 1930, with the onset of economic depression, special provision was made to encourage the unemployed to cultivate allotments, and the Ministry's reports referred to "a recent revival of interest". Although the total area of allotment land continued to fall, the number of allotments in urban areas increased for each of the years 1932, 1933 and 1934, and rose by 15,000 between 1930 and 1934, despite a decline in area of 677 acres: in rural areas, the same period saw a loss of 32,000 plots and 11,600 acres.

* Report of the Work of the Land Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries for 1928, p. 16.
† Ibid. p. 16.
Table 5
Changes in allotments provision 1914-20: England and Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>1914</th>
<th>1920</th>
<th>Increase: 1914–20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plots</td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>Plots/acre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) All classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railway</td>
<td>27,500</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>15-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotment Acts</td>
<td>140,000</td>
<td>33,500</td>
<td>4-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>432,500</td>
<td>87,700</td>
<td>4-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>123,000</td>
<td>4-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raised total</td>
<td>674,000</td>
<td>138,200</td>
<td>4-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Urban and rural by classes (excluding railway)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotments Acts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>85,000</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>7-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>55,000</td>
<td>22,300</td>
<td>2-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>240,000</td>
<td>25,500</td>
<td>9-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>192,500</td>
<td>62,300</td>
<td>3-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Totals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All except railway</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>325,000</td>
<td>36,500</td>
<td>8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>247,500</td>
<td>84,700</td>
<td>2-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>572,500</td>
<td>121,200</td>
<td>4-8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All numbers are rounded. Assumptions made are explained in the text.

Table 6
Allotment land provided under section 10 of the 1922 Act:
England and Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Plots</th>
<th>Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>24,318</td>
<td>1,788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>13,288</td>
<td>944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>9,432</td>
<td>715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>6,420</td>
<td>449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>3,407</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>2,786</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>2,461</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

130. This limited 'revival' was not maintained when employment conditions improved after 1934, when a growing number of council house tenants, being provided with home gardens, were giving up their allotments. It is true that, during this period, the pressure on open land for residential building and other purposes was intensified, but a decline of interest is indicated by an increase in the percentage of allotment land lying idle from 5-2 in 1930 and 1935 to 5-6 in 1936 and 6-5 in 1937. It is, perhaps, important to observe that this trend developed despite constant Government appeals between the wars on the need to provide security of tenure by the purchase of land for allotments.

131. Although the proportion of allotment land lying vacant in the late 1930's never approached the figure that has developed recently, the decline in provision continued, and by 1939 there were only about 815,000 plots in England and
Wales covering about 109,000 acres* (Figure 4). Tables 7 and 8 give details of the changes in both urban and rural areas during the inter-war years. It will be seen that, because of the rapid loss of the wartime allotments in the 1920's, urban allotments declined more rapidly than rural during that decade; in the ensuing decade, however, when one-third of the rural allotments were lost, the decline in urban areas was comparatively small. The comparison between the figures for 1914 and 1939 shows that while the number and area of urban allotments were 74-8 per cent and 54-6 per cent greater respectively in the latter year, the corresponding figures for rural allotments showed decreases of 31-7 per cent and 41-2 per cent respectively. So far as numbers were concerned, 77-1 per cent of all allotments in 1939 were situated in urban areas, and despite the much greater average size of rural allotments, the urban acreage surpassed the rural by 1935/1936.

132. During the Second World War, under the stimulus of the ‘Dig for Victory’ campaign, an explosive growth in allotments provision and cultivation took place which in many ways was similar in both character and dimensions to that of the previous war period (Figure 4). Table 9 includes the estimated figures for all authorities derived from the broad particulars of the allotment situation furnished by urban authorities alone. For the years 1944–7 no returns of any kind were called for and no information is available. In its evidence to us, N.A.G.S. (see Chapter 13) insisted that the peak of the wartime provision approached two million; this figure, however, included a great many odd plots of land which could scarcely have been termed ‘allotments’ under any definition. We suggest in paragraph 134, however, that the returns made for 1948 underestimated the true allotments position by the order of over 50,000 plots; and if the wartime returns were made on an equally ad hoc basis they, too, should probably be raised accordingly. Yet, even if one accepts these higher figures, there seems no doubt that both the number and acreage of allotments began to decline well before the end of the war. This was probably due to a combination of the effects of the mobilisation of labour, long working hours, and the elimination of unsuitable land.

133. The great majority of the additional allotments of the war years were on land requisitioned under emergency powers provided by the Cultivation of Land (Allotments) Order, S.R. and O. 1939, No. 1316, under Defence Regulations 51 and 62A. An examination of the available figures (Table 9) suggests that over 600,000 emergency plots on 40,000 acres were made available by local authorities in wartime. By 1948, well over half of this land had disappeared, and there remained about 240,000 emergency allotments on 16,000 acres, mainly in urban areas; this requisitioned land was then declining at a rate of nearly 2,000 acres per annum.

* The official estimate for 1939 suggested that the 815,000 plots were located on 95,700 acres giving an overall density of 8-5 plots per acre. However, since the 1937 and 1938 overall densities were 7-2 and 7-3 respectively, this density seems scarcely plausible. The following methods of computation seem more realistic:

(a) An overall density of 7-4 plots to the acre would produce an area of just over 109,000 acres for 1939.

(b) Extrapolation of curves for urban and rural allotment areas indicates a total area for 1939 of about 110,500 acres.

(c) If we assume that the increase in the number of plots from 1939 to 1940 was at the same density (fifteen new plots per acre) as between 1940 and 1941, the total area provided in 1939 becomes 101,550 acres.
### Table 7
Provision of urban and rural allotments, 1930–9: England and Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All allotments</th>
<th>All excluding railway</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plots</td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>Plots/acre</td>
<td>Plots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>965,000</td>
<td>146,000</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>879,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>936,000</td>
<td>134,000</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>860,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>858,250</td>
<td>118,950</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>782,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>835,800</td>
<td>114,270</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>760,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>814,917</td>
<td>110,800</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>739,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8
Changes in numbers and acreages of urban and rural allotments, 1914–39: England and Wales (excluding railway allotments)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1914</th>
<th>1920</th>
<th>1930</th>
<th>1939</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plots</td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>Plots/acre</td>
<td>Plots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>325,000</td>
<td>36,500</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>779,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>247,500</td>
<td>84,700</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>299,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>572,500</td>
<td>121,200</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1,078,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban %</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural %</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>55.9</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Percentage Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plots</td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>Plots</td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>Plots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>+139</td>
<td>+89.8</td>
<td>−21.4</td>
<td>−12.0</td>
<td>−6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>+21</td>
<td>+4.1</td>
<td>−10.8</td>
<td>−9.4</td>
<td>−36.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
134. The complete absence of any data for the years 1944–7 is the more regrettable in that the full returns for 1948 show a rate of decline more rapid than at any stage in the history of the allotments movement. To some extent this might have been anticipated, in that the loss of emergency land matched that of the years which followed the First World War, but one might have expected that the continuance of rationing, the frequency of Government exhortation (see paragraph 50) and the reconvention of the A.A.C. would have stemmed the tide. An inspection of the 1948 figures, however, reveals a curious phenomenon, in that while the provision of allotments by local authorities was still greatly in excess of the pre-war total, the number and (more particularly) the acreage of private allotments had apparently continued to decline steadily throughout the war and afterwards. *Prima facie*, this seems highly unlikely, and it becomes still more implausible when it is realised that, against all national trends, the returns for 1950 and 1951 both showed an *increase* in the total acreage of private allotments. Among the major conurbations, both Bristol and Newcastle reported an increase in private allotments during the early 1950’s, while Cardiff, which returned *none* in 1948, admitted to 31 acres in 1953. Part of the explanation must lie in the length of time which had elapsed since authorities had last been required to make a full return; many had apparently lost track of their private allotments, and, as we pointed out in paragraph 114, a *nil* return was now readily accepted. The extrapolation of pre-war figures suggests that the extent of the deficiency in 1948 was at least as high as 50,000 plots on 5,000 acres of land. How far this discrepancy has continued in years subsequent to 1948 is not readily apparent, but it seems probable that the general rate of decline in private allotment land, coupled with a greater awareness by local authority planners of the current use of the undeveloped land in their towns, will have ensured that much of it is by now accounted for.

135. The report of the A.A.C. and the 1950 Act which followed it had some influence in maintaining provision in the early 1950’s, but the decline has recently accelerated. Losses have been less heavy and less rapid in the local authority sector than among allotments privately provided, and this fact is undoubtedly related to the continuing legal responsibility of authorities to provide allotments and the statutory protection enjoyed by many of their sites. The outcome of these various influences was that the total number of allotment plots in 1954–5, ten years after the end of the Second World War, was almost the same as in 1928, ten years after the First World War (Figure 4).

* See immediately preceding footnote.
† Sir Dudley Stamp, *The Land of Britain: Its Use and Misuse* (1948), p. 191, quotes higher figures for these years, which he states were obtained from the same source.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of allotments</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
<th>Plots/acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>814,917</td>
<td>95,700*</td>
<td>8.5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1,044,829</td>
<td>116,877†</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>1,365,740</td>
<td>138,096†</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>1,451,888</td>
<td>142,808†</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>1,399,935</td>
<td>136,820</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c.f. 1948</td>
<td>1,117,308</td>
<td>107,282</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
136. The percentage decline in allotment numbers and acreage since 1950 is given in Table 10. In urban areas, the loss of plots has been generally greater than the decline in acreage, while in rural districts the percentage losses of plots and acreage have been almost identical. However, reasons will be advanced elsewhere for supposing that the decline in the numbers of tenants in rural areas has been greater than it may appear because of an increase in multiple tenancies. Over the last two decades, the general downward trend in the number of local authority allotments taken as a single composite group has tended to become steeper when expressed as a proportion of the declining total area. This acceleration has been even more marked in the case of private allotments, which are subject to few of the constraints deriving from the Allotments Acts. It would seem, therefore, that the apparent increase in the extent of private allotments in 1951 and 1952, to which we referred in paragraph 134, was probably spurious. It may represent a correction for allotments missed from the returns of 1950, or it may be explained in part by the fact that some allotments continued to flourish privately on de-requisitioned land.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Local authority</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Railway</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Local authority</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Railway</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950–60</td>
<td>22-6</td>
<td>23-8</td>
<td>28-4</td>
<td>23-3</td>
<td>18-7</td>
<td>21-3</td>
<td>25-9</td>
<td>19-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960–7</td>
<td>21-6</td>
<td>49-0</td>
<td>50-4</td>
<td>31-0</td>
<td>17-9</td>
<td>30-4</td>
<td>47-7</td>
<td>23-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950–67</td>
<td>39-3</td>
<td>61-1</td>
<td>64-5</td>
<td>47-1</td>
<td>33-3</td>
<td>45-2</td>
<td>61-3</td>
<td>38-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

137. Railway allotments must be treated separately, both here and elsewhere in our report. The composite data have always been obtained from the railway authorities and have never been subdivided into urban and rural groups. There is no possible check on their reliability, and, in consequence, no obvious reason to question it. For various reasons which will be explained in a later chapter, the decline in this class of allotments has been greater, proportionately, than in any other, and in the early 1960's it accelerated still further.

138. The various trends in the numbers of allotments in England and Wales from 1908 to 1967 are illustrated by Figure 4, which has been produced from the available statistics corrected, as far as possible, in accordance with the observations made in this chapter of our report. The diagram shows that the slow, long-continuing changes of 'normal' times have been largely overshadowed by the persistent effects of changes which have occurred in the more fluid circumstances of temporary emergencies. Thus the allotments history of the last sixty years can be seen as comprising two phases of rapid and massive expansion in wartime, each followed by a long drawn out period of decline and painful rationalisation which partially masks the effects of more subtle social change. The steady growth of allotments during the years before 1914 has never since been paralleled.

139. Without anticipating any of our findings, it is already clear that changes in the numbers, character and location of allotments will, to some extent, reflect changes in social and economic conditions, both nationally and locally. But a powerful inertia operates in the form of conservative attitudes supported

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
by conservative legislation, and current needs and attitudes are set against a pattern of provision that has, to some extent, been fossilised, and which contains many elements from the past.

(3) Statutory allotments and security of tenure

140. We must now turn to the more difficult task of interpreting the official statistics by reference to the different categories of allotment land provided by allotments authorities. Since the only valid reason for attempting any form of subdivision today* is to enable an assessment to be made of those areas which possess a greater degree of security than the rest, our objective must be to place local authority land into either the statutory or the temporary class, by reference to the definitions offered in paragraph 61.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Alienated by Ministerial consent</th>
<th>Net decrease in official statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960–1</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>1,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961–2</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>1,124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962–3</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>1,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963–4</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>4,412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964–5</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>2,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965–6</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>2,383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966–7</td>
<td>352</td>
<td>887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>2,963</td>
<td>13,580</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

141. The official return form used since 1960 has itself sought to divide local authority land into these same two categories, but the annual statistics are so inaccurate as to justify correction because:—

(i) the variations and ambiguities of the definitions of the words ‘statutory’ and ‘temporary’ used in the return forms have been so great that it must have been quite impossible to maintain any degree of accuracy throughout;

(ii) although no part of a statutory allotment site may be used for any other purpose without the Minister’s consent, Table 11 indicates that the apparent loss of statutory land in each year since 1960 has far exceeded the amount properly alienated, and

(iii) a number of towns have discovered in recent years that large amounts of land which they had previously returned as statutory do not in fact conform to the true definition of the word. In Nottingham, for example, the authority regards most of its allotments as ‘permanent’. Many are on estates acquired by the corporation, and include areas of communal garden plots dating back to the middle of the nineteenth century or earlier. The land was not specifically acquired for allotments, but the corporation does not at present envisage any other use for it. Such allotments cannot properly be assigned to either the statutory or the temporary class, and our investigations have shown that elsewhere there are many sites of similarly doubtful status.

---

* There may well have been a good reason for isolating ‘emergency’ land immediately after the war, but this has now disappeared.

52
142. Correction was attempted by computing the position in 1950 in terms of the categories recognised in the pre-war returns. Extrapolation to this point from the clearer situation of 1937 is hazardous, especially because the intervening years covered the war period of massive change. But this method of adjustment had the distinct advantage that, once the position in 1950 had been established, the basis for subsequent calculations could be provided by the reliable annual records of alienations and disposals of true statutory land by Ministerial consent.

The process involves three basic assumptions:—

(i) that the returns and statistics for the years before the war are generally accurate, both in total and in their division between the various categories;

(ii) that the total amount of land provided by allotments authorities in the statistics for all years is accurate; and

(iii) that no statutory allotment land has been used for other purposes without the Minister's consent.

These assumptions seem to be fair; the definitions used in the 1930's were both clear and consistent, there is no reason to suppose that authorities were unaware of the extent of their allotments, and we know of no case in which unauthorised alienation has occurred.

143. The statistics for 1934, the latest pre-war year for which full returns were called for, showed that allotments authorities were providing 59,244 acres of allotments, subdivided as shown in Table 12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 12</th>
<th>Local authority allotments in 1934: England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>True statutory allotments</td>
<td>21,496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land hired or leased</td>
<td>30,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section 10, 1922 Act land</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earmarked land</td>
<td>7,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>59,244</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At this time, the area of purchased (statutory) land was steadily increasing, especially in the towns, while hired land was decreasing. The annual reports indicate that in the late 1930's land for allotments was being purchased at an average annual rate of about 500 acres; at the same time, existing statutory land was being alienated by consent at a rate of about 130 acres per annum. Urban figures are available up to the year 1937, and on the basis of the urban trend it is possible to compute the total statutory provision in 1937 as about 22,500 acres.

By this date, hired land had probably fallen to 26,000 acres, and extrapolation to 1939 indicates for that year totals of 22,900 acres of statutory and 23,000 acres of hired allotment land. Thus, at the outbreak of war, the total area of land owned and hired by local authorities under the Allotments Acts was of the order of 45,900 acres. This is the area to be compared with the ‘permanent’ allotments said to cover 45,855 acres in 1948 and 50,451 acres in 1950.

144. The great wartime increase in allotments took place mainly through temporary requisitioning and renting under emergency powers, and the ploughing up of public open space: the extent of land provided under the Acts did not greatly change. The annual figures of loans approved for allotment purposes
are not available for years before 1950, but the cumulative totals to 1937 and 1950 are known: the total sanctioned during the twelve (calendar) years 1938–49 inclusive was £531,219. According to the working papers of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, "on the outbreak of war local authorities were required to restrict capital expenditure and borrowing to the narrowest limits, and to projects which were urgently necessary in the public interest. Borrowing for the provision of allotments declined immediately, and was almost entirely suspended from 1941 to 1944". If we assume that loans for 1939 were of the same order as those of the immediately preceding years, and that there were virtually none from 1940 to 1944 inclusive, we can deduce that some £350,000† was sanctioned in the five years 1945–9; and the known figures for later years indicate that if this annual average of £70,000 is correct, about £40,000 per annum would be used for the purchase of land for allotments.

145. In 1938 and 1939, the total sums available would have allowed for the purchase of about 560 acres of land at an average cost of £150 per acre. After making due allowance for alienations, and for the fact that some additions to the statutory acreage must have been made by purchase from the proceeds of sales, we deduce an increase of some 300 acres of statutory land during these years. In the period 1945–9, purchase at an average cost of £250 per acre would amount to 800 acres; assuming that alienations continued on the pre-war scale, and that there was some wartime loss, it seems likely that the total area of purchased land in 1950 was a few hundred acres less than in 1939. Thus we arrive at an estimate of about 22,500 acres of true statutory allotments in 1950, which, in turn, implies that about 28,000 acres, returned as 'permanent' in 1950 were in fact non-statutory allotments.

146. We can now attempt to subdivide the annual returns of 'permanent' and 'statutory' allotments from 1950 onward into the true statutory and temporary classes in accordance with our definitions. We know the area of statutory land alienated or sold annually since 1950, the areas purchased by means of loans from 1960 onwards, and the amount of loan for purchase approved for each of the years 1950–9. Making due allowance firstly for increasing land values when estimating areas purchased from the loans sanctioned, and secondly for purchases made from the proceeds of sales, we can estimate approximate figures for the net gain or loss in the statutory acreage year by year.‡

147. Between 1950 and 1967, some 5,300 acres of true statutory allotments were alienated by consent, while about 1,355 acres were purchased by means of loans. This latter category had in fact decreased from over 100 acres per annum in the early 1950's, when compulsory purchases totalled between 50 and 75 acres each year, to between 35 and 70 acres in the early 1960's; it is apparent that it is now more often possible to alienate allotment land without any need

---

* Total loans sanctioned:
  - 1938–49 ... ... £3,251,466
  - 1938–49 ... ... £1,720,247
  - 1938–49 ... ... £331,219
  - 1938 ... ... £85,493
  - 1949 ... ... £99,679

† i.e., £531,000 (1938–49) less £170,600 (1938 and 1939).
‡ The annual figures for alienations run from January to December, whereas the annual allotment returns relate to land in allotments use at 30th September. Attempts to equate figures from the two sources clearly introduce an error, but since the allotments letting year begins in February, this error is not serious.
to purchase new land to accommodate the displaced plotholders. If we reduce the figures for alienation by one-third to allow for the purchase of new land without loans,* we calculate a net loss of about 2,030 acres of statutory land between 1950 and 1967. We conclude, therefore, that the total amount of statutory allotment land in England and Wales in 1967 was about 20,470 acres

(22,500 less 2,030), and that of the 32,096 acres returned as statutory land for that year by local authorities no less than 11,600 acres were wrongly classified (Figure 5).

* For the years 1956–64 inclusive, consents for the disposal of allotment land (897 acres) were exactly half the consents for its appropriation (1,786 acres).
148. Since the computed total of net alienations can be apportioned approximately year by year from the annual figures for alienations approved, and then applied to the assumed 1950 figure for statutory land, it is possible to produce a year-to-year curve for true statutory allotments; this is shown in Figure 5 as "permanent owned". Subtraction of the annual computed area of statutory land from the areas of 'permanent' land returned up to 1959 and of 'statutory' land returned thereafter gives annual figures for the area of all other local authority allotments regarded as 'permanent'; that is, land leased and rented, publicly administered charity allotments, and any land which, although not acquired under the Acts, was not earmarked for other uses (see paragraph 141).

149. We have calculated that there were in 1950 about 28,000 acres of this 'permanent hired' land (Figure 5). This was some 5,000 acres more than the area estimated for 1939, and it is noteworthy that the total of 'permanent' land increased by 4,596 acres between 1948 and 1950. It seems probable, therefore, that in view of the heavy losses of 'emergency' land in the late 1940's at a time of continuing food shortage, a fairly extensive hiring of new land was taking place in an attempt to compensate for them. Of the 28,000 acres of 'permanent hired' land which existed in 1950, about 18,012 acres had been transferred out of the statutory class by 1967, while 1,688 acres were transferred into the 'permanent' class during the three years 1953, 1954 and 1958. There was thus a net outward transfer of some 16,300 acres during the whole period of seventeen years, and only about 1,300 acres of this hired land had been finally lost to allotments use by 1959. Of the subsequent apparent loss of 15,000 acres much was in fact alienated from allotmenis use, but a substantial proportion was simply reclassified into the temporary category from 1960 onwards. The figures depicted in Figure 5 suggest that by 1967 between 5,000 and 6,000 acres of 'permanent hired' land had been reclassified and nearly 10,000 acres lost.

150. A net loss of 16,300 acres of hired land from the total included in the 'permanent' class for 1950 would leave about 11,627 acres still being incorrectly returned as 'statutory' in 1967. We have suggested earlier that true statutory land today amounts to about 20,470 acres, and these two residuals combine to make up the total area of just over 32,000 acres of allotments called 'statutory' in 1967. The deduction that over 11,000 acres of hired land remain wrongly assigned to the statutory class has two obvious implications which must have important bearing on the evidence which we will introduce in succeeding chapters. The first is that more than one-third (36:3 per cent) of the allotment land which is called 'statutory' today will prove not to have the required protection against alienation if its status is called into question when proposals for development arise. The second is that, despite the fact that reclassification has been proceeding for eight years, many authorities must still be genuinely uncertain as to the legal status of much of their allotment land.

151. We do not suggest at this stage of our report that the whole of this large acreage of wrongly classified land is devoid of any form of security. Much of it may be akin to the land in Nottingham which we described in paragraph 141, while some will almost certainly be held by allotments authorities on long lease. What is certain, however, is that the value of the complex rules relating to the disposal of statutory allotment land should be assessed by reference to the fact that they relate to only 30 per cent of today's total allotment land, and not to 47 per cent as the official statistics imply.

56
(4) Temporary allotments

152. To appreciate the significance of the annual changes in the area of hired allotments in the ‘permanent/statutory’ class, we must view them alongside the recorded changes in temporary allotments. This latter class today also contains both owned and hired allotments. In 1950 it comprised land held under emergency powers (requisitioned) and earmarked land (owned). These two types are both separately shown in Figure 5 up to 1958/9, since although the emergency powers had been revoked, there were still 1,396 acres of ‘emergency’ allotments in 1959.

153. Since 1959, the withdrawal of temporary allotment land has tended, in the returns, to be masked not only by the small new accretions, but also by the large transfer of land from the ‘statutory’ head. In 1959–60, part of the excessively large ‘loss’ of ‘permanent hired’ allotments represented transfer to the temporary class following the new definition in the return form; in consequence, the temporary class showed an apparent increase. We can deduce that about 1,600 acres of former ‘permanent’ allotments were now called ‘temporary’, the net gain of over 1,100 acres in the temporary class as returned concealing a loss of several hundred acres of former ‘emergency’ allotments. There were further transfers in the next three returns, especially between 1962 and 1963, but these were small compared with the massive switch of some 3,000 acres from statutory to temporary in 1963–4 and of a further 1,000 acres in 1965–6.

154. In assessing the real changes in the provision of allotments over the past two decades, it is useful to group together all hired and earmarked allotments provided by local authorities, and the changes year by year in this omnibus category are indicated by the columns shown in solid black in Figure 6. A conspicuous feature of this graph is the large loss sustained in 1964–5; the decline in the rate of loss during the earlier 1960’s will be shown to be associated with a rapid increase in the proportion of vacant allotments.

155. The annual changes in the different types of temporary allotment land over the last eighteen years, as revealed by Figure 6, show the results of efforts between 1951 and 1954 to implement the recommendations of the A.A.C., supported by Ministry circulars. For a few years, land rented and leased under the Allotments Acts increased as ‘emergency’ land declined. Subsequent exhortations were largely ineffectual, although the limited increase in hired land during 1957–8 may have anticipated the end of emergency powers. From 1958 to 1959, when losses of rented land reached a peak after the unusually low net loss of the previous year, the rate of annual loss declined, but in 1964–5, after a large reclassification the previous year, the loss of hired land was greater than the combined losses of the years 1961–4. The most obvious explanation is that many authorities, which had just discovered that some of their sites were not after all true statutory land, were taking the first available opportunity to dispose of them without the need to seek Ministerial consent. In 1965–6, the wastage was of more normal proportions, while in 1966–7 the statistics showed a net increase in local authority hired land. This is puzzling, since there is no external evidence whatever of any large-scale hiring of new allotment land. We understand, however, that in 1967 local authorities were, for the first time, requested by the Ministry to furnish a list of their sites, with the area of each, and that some attempt was then made officially to compute a more accurate figure.

156. The graphs of Figure 5 show in cumulative form the effects of these annual losses and transfers on the various classes of provision. It would seem that about
one-third of the land now classed as temporary has been transferred from the permanent/statutory class. If we assume, in recognition of its former 'permanent' status, that the bulk of this remains as allotments and is not earmarked for development, it follows that over half the area of temporary allotments returned in 1967 was destined for other purposes; and, further, that temporary allotments which are not so destined are twice as extensive among the allotments still called 'statutory' in the returns as they are in the temporary class.

![Graph showing annual changes of area in local authority allotment land of all types (excluding true statutory land) 1950-1967.]

Figure 6

Temporary allotment land (see paragraph 61) has been shown under various guises since 1950 in the annual returns made to the Allotments Section of the Ministry. This columnar graph shows the annual changes in the amount of each type of temporary land during this period.

157. To summarise the recent history of local authority allotments as shown in Figures 5 and 6, the following generalisations may be offered. From Figure 6 it is seen that hired land included in the 'permanent' category increased from 1952 to 1954, while losses of emergency land were heavy. As the losses of the latter declined in the mid-1950's, losses of the former increased, except in 1957-8, when the relinquishment of requisitioned land was imminent. Subsequently, the total area of hired land declined at a rate of something over 1,000 acres per annum, with a much heavier loss in 1964 but an apparent gain in 1966-7. From Figure 5 it is clear that statutory allotments (permanent owned) declined at a much slower rate, but even in this category the loss has risen from around 50
acres per annum in 1960 to a peak of over 300 acres in 1963–5. It further appears from Figure 5 that in the early 1950's a considerable proportion of the emergency land lost was either re-hired or replaced; after 1958, however, the rate of alienation of rented or leased land, which had previously been held to be permanent, was generally similar to that of private allotments.

(5) Urban and rural allotments

158. For a number of reasons, some of which were discussed briefly in Chapter 4, many rural allotments differ both in character and function from those of urban areas, and it was logical to suppose that the trends of provision would also differ. Rural allotments as a group pose different and less pressing problems than urban allotments. Although over one-third of the land classed as statutory and more than half the private allotment land in 1967 was in rural areas, only one statistical return of rural allotments has been required during the past eight years of rapid change. It is important, therefore, to try to analyse the trends in statutory and temporary allotments in urban and rural areas separately. Rural and urban allotments were not separately distinguished before 1958, but we made a subdivision for 1952 and for 1955 from the Ministry's working papers for those years. Again, it is unfortunate that urban and rural are not differentiated in the available annual figures for alienations, disposals and gains of statutory land, and one must resort to reasoned estimates to establish the trends.

159. The estimated annual figures for net alienations of statutory allotment land have been subdivided into urban and rural components by taking account of the following points:—

(i) The proportion of urban and rural provision in the late 1930's.
(ii) The proportion of owned to hired land was at that time tending to increase more markedly in urban than in rural areas.
(iii) In the same period, urban statutory land was almost twice as extensive as rural statutory land.
(iv) Pressure on allotments since the Second World War has been more severe in urban areas.
(v) The post-war decline of allotments in urban areas at first affected mainly requisitioned land, little of which existed in rural areas.

In consideration of these points, the annual net alienations of statutory land were apportioned in the proportions of four-fifths urban and one-fifth rural from 1950 onwards, and for 1950 itself the respective urban and rural permanent allotments were estimated according to the proportions of the later 1930's.

160. For the missing years prior to 1958 the respective proportions of urban and rural 'permanent' allotments were deduced to fit the total net estimated change between 1950 and 1958 and to conform to the computed figures for 1952 and 1955. For subsequent years we accepted the ratio suggested by the official statistics. We must emphasise that the validity of the analysis for rural areas is bound to be more dubious than for urban; this will be especially true for years after 1960, because of the crude method which had to be adopted for computing rural trends in years when the parishes were not required to make returns. We cannot know how far the large fall of rural hired allotments from the statutory class in 1963–4, and the matching rise in rural temporary allotments, are to be attributed to the issue in 1964 of a reminder about class definitions, and how far they represent the correction of errors accumulated over three years.
of estimated figures. If these apparently large changes are spurious, then the totals of all statutory allotments included for 1961–4, and possibly also for 1965–7, must be considered faulty.

161. Data for statutory, permanent hired and private allotments in urban and rural areas have been plotted on Figure 7, which shows that in all categories the rate of loss over the last eighteen years has been greater in urban areas than in rural. Although the general trends and conclusions derived from this graph
are valid, no great accuracy can be claimed for the individual figures from which it was derived, but the margins of error are certainly no greater than those inherent in the official statistics.

(6) *Vacant plots and their significance*

162. The foregoing discussion of the trends of provision of allotments in their various classes has been based necessarily on changes in areas of land rather than in numbers of plots. The figures could no doubt be converted from acres to plots by using factors of plots per acre, but the exercise would be of doubtful value, for it is quite impossible to equate the number of tenanted plots with that of allotment holders. Firstly, there is an increasing tendency towards multiple plotholding, about which our questionnaires have yielded some useful sample data. Secondly, there has been a great variation in the numbers and proportions of untented plots. Since the law seeks to equate the supply of allotments with the demand for them, the proportion of vacant plots should ideally be constant, with alienations or acquisitions keeping pace with the fluctuating demand. In the context of the gradual decline of the 1920’s and 1930’s, the vacancies never exceeded 5 per cent or 6 per cent of the total plots available, and this was also the characteristic figure of the 1950’s. Such a level of vacancies is probably reasonable and unavoidable, as deaths, illnesses and removals would all contribute to it. But towards 1960 the percentage of vacant plots rose rapidly, reaching almost 20 per cent by 1965.

163. This increase does not, of itself, prove an accelerated rate of abandonment, since the extent of vacant allotments from year to year is affected by the rate of alienation of allotments to other uses, and the trend of vacancies may depend upon such factors as the rate at which alienation can keep pace with a declining demand, especially in view of the legal difficulties which hamper the disposal of non-viable statutory allotments. We know, however, that there has been an accelerating rate of decrease in allotment provision over the last decade, which appears to have been paralleled both by an increasing proportion of untented and uncultivated plots among those provided and by an increase in multiple holdings. Thus, the changes in the use of allotments, to which we will refer in subsequent chapters, can be appreciated only by examining the phenomena of vacant plots alongside the changes in provision.

164. Our first problem in attempting this comparison lay in the fact that while the Ministry’s Allotments Section has presented to us figures for the number of vacant plots in each of the years 1950-67*, alienation of allotment land was known only by area. We therefore calculated the vacant area approximately by dividing the number of vacant plots by the average number of plots per acre in the same year† and deduced the annual change in vacant area by subtraction. There was, however, a second and more serious difficulty. Since the first object of the exercise was to compare the trend in vacancies with that in provision, our concern was only with those areas which fell vacant in each year (‘newly vacant land), and not with the residual area of vacant land which might remain, however notionally, in allotment use for a period of several years. It was quite impossible to deduce this figure from any evidence presented to us. Clearly, it

* The accuracy of the figures, especially in regard to private allotments, is open to doubt.
† From 1958, this calculation was made separately for urban and rural areas; however, since the tendency towards multiple holdings is greater in rural areas than in urban, it is doubtful whether the amended figures are any more accurate.
must lie somewhere between two extremes. If, on the one hand, alienation of allotment land was confined exclusively to vacant plots and sites, it would be possible to compute the newly vacant area for each year by the formula:

Newly vacant area = total vacant area minus (vacant area of previous year minus area alienated)

The graph produced by this calculation is shown as 'Newly vacant (a)' on Figure 8. At the other extreme, however, if it could be assumed that all allotment land...
alienated each year was occupied during the previous September, the newly vacant area could be found quite simply by deducting from the total vacant area the vacant area of the previous year. This graph produces the curve ‘Newly vacant (b)’ on Figure 8.

165. We know that many allotment sites are closed for reasons quite unconnected with their degree of popularity, but at the same time, local authorities must acknowledge that it is generally both simpler and more equitable to alienate vacant land. The real situation is therefore not only incalculable but variable, and in computing a third curve shown in Figure 8 as ‘Newly vacant (c)’ we have assumed quite arbitrarily* that in each year half the alienated land was vacant. We have thus made allowance for the alienation of well-occupied sites and the continuing dereliction of others.

166. One would also suppose that the number of new vacancies in any year might be influenced by a number of ‘outside’ factors, such as the weather of the previous summer; apart from deaths, old age, removals and other unavoidable causes, it will usually be the less keen gardeners who will be next to give up their allotments, and they might well be induced by a good or bad season to continue or to leave. Thus, the peak of new vacancies for 1954–5 shown on Figure 8 certainly reflects a large fall in lettings in February 1955, which followed the exceptionally wet, cold and dull summer of 1954; similarly, new vacancies showed sharp falls after the good summers of 1955 and 1961. But the figures for new vacancies over the whole period since 1950 show no statistically significant relationships with amounts or duration of rainfall, sunshine or mean temperatures of the previous summers.

167. However, in order to reduce the effect of any such exceptional circumstances we have computed five-year running means of the estimated newly vacant land, which are also plotted on Figure 8. These show a trend of rising vacancies through the 1950’s, but a slight downward trend during the 1960’s. In most years since the early 1950’s the newly vacant areas, as computed, have not exceeded the net loss of land by alienation, but the total vacant area has continued to increase by the accumulation of residual vacancies so that it represents an ever increasing proportion of the total area of allotments provided; thus the appearance of dereliction has progressively extended. In consequence, by 1965, many local authorities were in a frustrating situation which promised to worsen rapidly, for while urban land prices, already high, rose still further, there were in full public view some 13,000 acres of unused allotment land, much of it protected by statute, and the rate of abandonment had taken a sharp upward turn in the two previous years. Since 1965, alienation has decreased, but although new vacancies have declined in both urban and rural areas, the total number of vacancies in urban areas has been maintained and in rural areas has still continued to rise.

168. If our arbitrary assumption that half the land alienated each year is vacant is accepted, the general rate of abandonment is seen to have risen from about 1.1 per cent per annum in the early 1950’s to 2 per cent in 1960 and 2.4 per cent per annum in the mid 1960’s. If, as is possible, the proportion of alienated land which was vacant has increased during the period, then the increase in the rate of abandonment will have been even more rapid. At the same

* Presumably the true proportion exceeds that of allotment land currently vacant (20 per cent).
time, in so far as vacancies have increased on statutory allotments whose alienation is more difficult, it seems that authorities which had in the past provided large numbers of statutory sites in a genuine attempt to afford their tenants good security of tenure, are now being more heavily penalised than others. We must deduce that the general trend continues to be one of increasingly rapid decline in interest and that the rigid legislative structure which limits the possibility of choosing the most suitable areas to alienate for development is harmful to the causes both of the allotment holders and the local authorities.

169. It would, however, be most unwise to conclude at this stage of our report that the increase in the amount of vacant land might be taken in conjunction with the reduced area of allotments available to produce a simple estimate of future demand. The extent of vacant allotment land at any time may clearly be due to factors which we have not yet been able to take into account. Thus, the dereliction of an allotment site may well be a cumulative process by which the lack of attention given to the first plots which fall vacant causes other tenants to give up their allotments and deters intending newcomers. It may be caused by a failure on the part of the authority to realise that the site is now 'in the wrong place', or by a reluctance to advertise the vacancies effectively. It may be accentuated by a refusal to keep the boundary fence under repair, to provide decent amenities, or by many other factors, all of which we must examine in due course. But as we have already indicated, if the claim is made that such attitudes are largely responsible for dereliction then those who make it must show why these attitudes have only developed during the last few years.

(7) Waiting-lists

170. The number of persons said to be on waiting-lists for allotments is compiled annually from the returns, and shows a substantial decline from 33,744 in 1950 and 35,149 in 1952 to 6,573 in 1965 and 5,879 in 1967. This means that whereas for every person on a waiting-list there were 1·9 vacant plots in 1950 and 1·7 in 1953, there were no less than 18·8 in 1965 and 18·6 in 1967; the figure had risen from 5·86 in 1958 to 13·67 in 1961. It seems probable that nearly all the people on waiting-lists today are simply waiting for better or more convenient plots than those which they already cultivate to become available. Very few are in the position of wanting to cultivate an allotment but being unable to find one in their district.

B. Distribution

171. An inspection of the returns made to the Ministry in recent years made us aware that a few urban areas and almost three-quarters of rural parishes now contain no allotments of any kind. The unreliability of the statistics, to which we have already referred, made it impossible to represent on a single map the density, size and categories of allotment provision in each area, and we were obliged to restrict ourselves to a map (Figure 9) designed to show simply whether there are any allotments in the administrative area of each allotments authority, both rural and urban.

172. In preparing the map we used the data included in the returns for the year 1964, the most recent year for which information was requested from both urban and rural authorities. Where an authority had failed to make a return for that year, we used the last previous return, which, in the case of rural parishes, covered the year 1960. When both returns were missing, we wrote to the clerks

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
Figure 9

Please see page 64.
of the appropriate rural district councils for the required information. By these means we were able to ascertain the position in every urban area and in almost every parish, and the results are presented in Figure 9. This map shows that allotment provision is today concentrated in England, and forms a discontinuous crescentic belt bounded on the north by a curving line from the Ribble to the Humber estuaries, and on the west by an arc which extends from the Wirral peninsula to Sheffield before turning south-west to the Birmingham–Black Country conurbation, the lower Severn valley and Torquay. Apart from the Tyne-Tees industrial area and the South Wales coalfield, allotment distribution elsewhere is thin, and is extremely sparse over the remainder of Wales and the Welsh Border counties.

(1) Urban areas

173. Since only 67 of almost 1,000 urban areas are without allotments, and since Figure 9 does not show the number of allotments provided, little need be said of its urban pattern. The sixty-seven towns without allotments are shown on Figure 10. These have a strong western distribution with distinctive groupings as follows:

   (i) One large municipal borough, four large urban districts (over 10,000 population) and seven small urban districts (below 10,000 population) in south and east Lancashire and the Wirral.

   (ii) A good scatter of small urban areas in Wales, Herefordshire, Devon and Cornwall.

   (iii) Five inner London boroughs.*

Scarcely any examples of towns without allotments are to be found in the remainder of England. We saw in Chapter 1 that allotments were born in rural areas, and in later chapters of this report we will see that dense provision in towns is often accompanied by dense provision in the surrounding countryside, even though the character of the two types of allotment may be quite different.

(2) Rural areas

174. The main distribution in rural areas occupies a generally triangular block of eastern, midland and southern England bounded on the west by a line from the Humber to the Severn estuaries and thence to the eastern borders of Devon. The densest pattern occurs in the rich fenlands of south Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, with extensions into Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire. In Chapter 1 we saw that many of the earliest rural allotments were found in these areas, and later maps and evidence will show that most of them retain their early characteristics of size and purpose. Provision is also dense in East Anglia and in Oxfordshire, two areas in which agricultural wages were very low in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and where there were then many rural paupers. Patterns of medium density appear in Warwickshire and Worcestershire, especially in the Vale of Evesham which has been associated with market gardening and intensive horticulture, and in Wiltshire.

175. The pattern of allotments is very thin in many upland areas of England, such as the Cotswolds, the Pennines, the North York Moors, the Lincolnshire Wolds, the central Weald and Devon and Cornwall; in several of these areas

*It will be recalled that inner London boroughs have power to provide allotments, but no obligation to do so.
### Key to Identification Numbers:

- **London Boroughs**
  - 1. Islington
  - 2. Kensington and Chelsea
  - 3. City of London
  - 4. Tower Hamlets
  - 5. City of Westminster

- **Municipal Boroughs**
  - 6. Cowbridge
  - 7. Dartmouth
  - 8. Kidwelly
  - 9. Lampeter
  - 10. Léonister
  - 11. Lostwithiel
  - 12. Malnesbury
  - 13. Rawtenstall
  - 14. Great Torrington
  - 15. Welshpool

- **Urban Districts**
  - 16. Ammanford
  - 17. Ashbourne
  - 18. Ashburton
  - 20. Billinge and Winstanley
  - 21. Bolington
  - 22. Bromyard
  - 23. Buckley
  - 24. Buiith Wells
  - 25. Burry Port
  - 26. Connah's Quay
  - 27. Cwmamman
  - 29. Dolgelau
  - 30. Festiniog
  - 31. Fishguard and Goodwick
  - 32. Formby
  - 33. Grange
  - 34. Hay
  - 35. Holywell
  - 36. [Isles of Scilly]
  - 37. Kington
  - 38. Ledbury
  - 39. Little Lever
  - 40. Llandeilo
  - 41. Llangefni
  - 42. Llanwrtyd Wells
  - 43. Looe
  - 44. Menai Bridge
  - 45. Middlewich
  - 46. Milnrow
  - 47. Mold
  - 48. Narberth
  - 49. Newcastle Emlyn
  - 50. New Quay
  - 51. North Walsham
  - 52. Ormskirk
  - 53. Oundle
  - 54. Presseil
  - 55. Presteigne
  - 56. Ross-on-Wye
  - 57. Skelmersdale (New Town)
  - 58. Standish-with-Langtree
  - 59. Trawden
  - 60. Upholland
  - 61. West Mersea
  - 62. Whitworth
  - 63. Windermere
  - 64. Wirral
  - 65. Woodbridge
  - 66. Woodhall Spa
  - 67. Peterlee (New Town)
enclosure came early, often before allotments were seen as a palliative for agricultural poverty and small tracts of land were readily available. Allotments are also sparse in regions of extensive chalk lands (e.g. the Salisbury Plain), and in north Hampshire which for long remained a well-wooded area. They are scarce, too, in Lancashire, Northumberland and Durham, where high agricultural wages in the nineteenth century reduced the demand for allotments.

176. The highland zone areas of Wales, Dartmoor, Exmoor, Bodmin and the Lake District are all virtually devoid of allotments. They are, of course, largely composed of high, steep, exposed and wet ground, often with thin, cold and acid soils devoted to pasture and supporting a very scattered population. Many of these regions were also subject to early enclosure, and had a strong pastoral element in their economy. Large parts of Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, Shropshire and Cheshire, areas traditionally associated with beef and dairy farming or with the cultivation of fruit and hops, are also without allotments.

177. In rural areas, therefore, the densest patterns of allotments occur in the traditionally agricultural parishes of medium and low elevation with good arable soils and favourable climate. They flourish especially in areas whose economy has a long-established arable basis, especially wheat and barley, or where intensive horticulture is practised; they have close associations with compact, nucleated villages with strong squirearchy traditions; and they are still prevalent in those areas where enclosure came late and which were associated with many landless labourers who had a great need to supplement their low wages.* By contrast, the pattern is very thin in pastoral hill country and in areas such as the Forest of Arden and the Weald which were well wooded until recently; in regions of small hamlets and scattered farmsteads; where enclosure came early and piecemeal; indeed, wherever the poor labourer had easy access to odd pieces of land for gardening use, as well as to keep a cow or a pig.

CHAPTER 6

THE ROLE OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

178. The provisions of the Allotments Acts set out in Chapter 2 accord to the Central Government a number of obligations, powers and responsibilities in regard to the operation of the allotments system. We propose to devote this chapter to an examination of the way in which these functions are interpreted and put into effect.

179. Throughout the Acts, the Minister charged with the task of carrying them into effect was the Minister of Agriculture under his various historical titles. This responsibility remained with his Department until February 1965, when all functions relating to allotments were transferred to the newly created Ministry of Land and Natural Resources.* On the dissolution of that Department in February 1967, the same functions in regard to allotments in England passed to the Minister of Housing and Local Government, while the Secretary of State assumed responsibility for allotments in Wales.† It is very doubtful whether, without the establishment of the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources, the responsibility for allotment administration would have left the Ministry of Agriculture. We must, in due course, express an opinion as to the Department best qualified to administer allotments legislation, but we are impressed by the argument that legislation whose primary effect is to impose obligations upon local authorities ought to be the responsibility of the Department which already holds a watching brief over many other kindred activities of those same authorities.

180. We have been assured, and accept, that throughout the changes outlined above, the interpretation of the law and of the Minister's obligations has remained unchanged; indeed, we understand that several of the staff engaged upon allotments work moved from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Land and thence to the Ministry of Housing in order to preserve a continuity of approach. The Section dealing with allotments now comprises some six officers, the senior members combining allotments work with other duties. The Allotments Section submitted written evidence to the committee in April 1966, and supplemented this by giving oral evidence to us in April 1967; we have also, to some extent, been able to study the day-to-day work which the Section is called upon to undertake. It was made clear to us throughout that the evidence offered would relate only to the present law and its interpretation; the Section has expressed no firm opinion on the need for changes to be made.

A. Default powers (section 24(4), 1908 Act; section 20, 1922 Act)

181. The Acts give the Minister permissive powers to provide allotments where, in his opinion, the local allotments authority and the appropriate county council have both failed to fulfil their obligations. These powers have never been used, and legal advice casts doubts upon their efficacy in regard to certain classes of authority. The Department acknowledges, however, that their existence has created a situation where the Minister is generally regarded, without

---

* S.I. No. 143 of 1965.
† S.I. No. 156 of 1967.
good reason, as having some responsibility for the adequacy of allotment provision. We can find no merit in the retention of a provision which cannot be used, and, in the context of the present law, we find it difficult to accept that, having imposed obligations upon certain authorities, it is then necessary to take precautions against their failure to fulfil them. We believe that if it should be desirable to retain or strengthen the Minister’s responsibilities in regard to allotments, this should be achieved by provisions far less tenuous than that under review.

Table 13
Compulsory purchase orders, 1950–65: England and Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st January to 31st December</th>
<th>Orders submitted</th>
<th>Orders confirmed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950 ...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951 ...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>22*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952 ...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953 ...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954 ...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955 ...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956 ...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>6*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957 ...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958 ...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959 ...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960 ...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961 ...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962 ...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963 ...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964 ...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965 ...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>152</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes one compulsory hiring order.
† Includes two confirmations of applications submitted in the previous year.

B. Confirmation of model rules governing tenancies (section 28, 1908 Act)

182. In order to be effective, any rules imposed by allotments authorities in regard to the letting of allotments must first be confirmed by the Minister. From time to time, the responsible Ministry has prepared and published sets of ‘model’ rules, the most recent of which was produced after the passage of the 1950 Act. The ‘model’ rules are used to indicate to authorities what regulations are acceptable, but even if an authority is prepared to accept them in their entirety it must still apply formally for confirmation. The Section estimates that some 50 per cent of all allotments authorities have now adopted model rules; applications for confirmation, however, have recently been rare.

183. There seems to us to be considerable merit in the issue of a standard set of model rules. We are, however, of the opinion that where these rules are adopted without amendment, reference to the Minister serves no useful purpose; moreover, we have found local variations in the allotments situation to be so great that we are inclined to the view that, provided an authority uses the rules as a basis, it should be allowed to adapt and amend them to its individual requirements.

C. Compulsory acquisition of land for allotments (section 25, 1908 Act (as amended); section 39(1), 1908 Act)

184. Allotments authorities have the right, subject to the Minister’s confirmatory order, to purchase compulsorily land for use as allotments. In recent years,
the number of applications for authorisation of compulsory purchase orders has declined dramatically. Table 13 shows the applications made and orders confirmed from 1950 to 1965. Where objections to the making of a compulsory purchase order are taken to public inquiry, the Ministry of Agriculture’s Land Commissioner has generally acted as agent for the Ministry of Housing. Now that the responsibility for allotments legislation has passed to the Minister of Housing, there is a proposal that the Inspectors of the latter Department should be used instead, though there is as yet no case where this has been done.

Table 14
Loan sanctions, 1965: England and Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of land (33-37 acres)</td>
<td>48,366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads and paths</td>
<td>21,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings</td>
<td>14,461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layout, levelling and soil improvement</td>
<td>4,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fencing and gates</td>
<td>4,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water supply</td>
<td>4,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car parking facilities</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>£98,633</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. Borrowing powers (section 53(4), 1908 Act)

185. An allotments authority may borrow money for the purposes of acquiring, adapting or improving land for allotments. All applications for loan consent must be made to the Allotments Section of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, which will scrutinise them before passing them to the Finance Division with its recommendation.

186. Where the application relates to the purchase of land, the Land Commissioner is asked to carry out an inspection and make a report. He is asked to consider such factors as suitability of soil, situation and access and to estimate the probable trends in the demand for allotments in the area. In the case of adaptations and improvements, the Land Commissioner considers whether the work is necessary, the materials suitable and the estimated costs reasonable. If the Land Commissioner’s report is favourable, recommendation for the loan is almost automatic. Since 1950, when the obligation of local authorities was restricted to the provision of allotment gardens, no application for loan consent in respect of larger allotments has been received. The Section is not certain whether such an application would be entertained.

187. The total of loans authorised between 1st January 1908 and 31st December 1967, was £3,711,749. Not unexpectedly, there has been little consistency in the amounts authorised each year, although the conflicting factors of a decline in the amount of land purchased and a contemporaneous increase in the cost of land and materials have given a spurious stability to the figures. The total sum sanctioned during 1965 (£98,633) involved fourteen authorities, two of which shared almost £34,000. During this particular year, borrowing was sanctioned for the purposes shown in Table 14. It is apparent that the authorisation of a

* It is highly improbable that the whole of this sum has in fact been borrowed.
loan depends almost entirely upon the report of the Land Commissioner, who is required to apply his personal standards without guidance from the Section.

E. Exemption from the obligation to establish an allotments committee (section 14(1), 1922 Act; section 12, 1925 Act)

188. The Allotments Acts require the council of every borough or urban district which either has a population of 10,090 upwards or provides more than 400 allotments to establish an allotments committee unless exempted from doing so by the Minister. The Section has stated in evidence that requests for exemption have been extremely rare. They have been confined almost exclusively to authorities in London which have no substantial areas of land available or are able to show that there is no current demand for allotments within their areas. The Section is of the opinion that there is nothing in the legislation which would empower the Minister to intervene in the matters which the authority chooses to refer to the allotments committee or in the way the committee conducts its affairs. There is today a strong movement, prompted by the report of the Committee on the Management of Local Government* towards reducing the number of local authority committees and giving each authority more freedom to decide what committees to appoint. We shall have to consider, in this context, whether there should continue to be a statutory allotments committee for the future. It does, however, seem to us entirely sensible that as long as the law imposes this obligation upon allotments authorities, exemption from it should only be granted by the Minister.

F. Disposal and alienation of statutory allotment land (section 22(1), 1919 Act; section 8, 1925 Act)

189. Statutory allotment land may be neither disposed of nor used for any other purpose without the Minister's consent.† The Minister must not give consent unless he is satisfied either that adequate provision will be made for the displaced allotment holders or that such provision is unnecessary or "not reasonably practicable". This rule, and the interpretation which the Section puts upon certain of its provisions, have been and continue to be the cause of many complaints both by the allotments movement and the allotments authorities. We therefore felt it necessary to examine its operation in some detail, and a large part of the Section's oral evidence to us was devoted to an explanation of its current practice.

190. The Section maintains no statistics to show the number of applications for consent which are received. We regard this as particularly unfortunate, for without such figures it is very difficult to assess the degree to which allotments authorities are able or prepared to comply with any conditions which the Section decides to impose. However, the number of applications granted rose from sixty-three in 1950 to a peak of 254 in 1963, while the area covered by each has varied from a few square feet to 20 acres. In 1965, consent was given in 192 cases involving 387.9 acres; the land was required for thirteen different purposes, as shown in Table 15.

---

† This is the interpretation generally placed upon a law which is somewhat ambiguous—see Chapter 2.
191. The greatest cause for complaint appears to lie in the interpretation of the rule regarding adequate provision for the displaced plotholders. The proviso "that such provision is unnecessary or not reasonably practicable" can be disposed of quickly. The Section will allow that alternative provision is unnecessary if, and only if, the land in respect of which application for consent is made is completely vacant and uncultivated. The claim that alternative provision is "not reasonably practicable" has never yet been made, and the Section is unable to say how such a claim would be dealt with. In 1965, ninety-eight of the applications, involving 155 acres of land, related to sites (or parts of sites) which were vacant and uncultivated; in all of these cases, consent was given without further enquiry. In a further eighty-nine cases (207 acres) the displaced

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consents to disposal of statutory land, 1965: England and Wales</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Description</th>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Acreage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Housing</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>173.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Open space and recreation</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>98.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Education</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Industrial purposes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Scouting or youth centres</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Corporate purposes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Public health purposes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h) Gravel workings</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Cemeteries</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(j) Power supply</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(k) Improvement of private property</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(l) Car parks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m) Highways</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>192</strong></td>
<td><strong>387.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

allotment holders were satisfactorily accommodated on vacant plots either on the same site or on a nearby statutory site. Often this had been done before the Section was approached, and in some cases voluntary recompense for the allotment holder in the form of rent-free arrangements or cash compensation was made. In 1965, therefore, there were only five successful applications (involving 26 acres of land) where the displaced plotholders could not be accommodated without considerable disturbance and the question of adequate alternative provision became important.

192. In determining the adequacy, in such cases, of the alternative provision offered to the displaced plotholders, the Section applies three principles:—

(i) The alternative plots offered must always form part of a statutory site; in this way it is argued, the allotment holders will still retain Ministerial protection. From time to time there have been suggestions that the offer of a plot upon a site held by the authority on long lease might also be regarded as adequate, but these have so far been resisted.

(ii) The soil of the new plots must be suitable for cultivation. In this aspect the Section relies upon the advice of the Land Commissioner, who can be asked to make both physical and chemical tests. The factors taken into account include the fertility and consistency of the soil, the depth of the topsoil, the possibility of chemical contamination from factories, adequacy of the drainage and liability of the site to flooding.
(iii) The alternative plots must lie within three-quarters of a mile of the homes of most of the displaced plotholders. The history of this requirement, which has so far been applied in every case, is most curious. In 1952, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government published a booklet entitled *The Density of Residential Areas*, which contained (page 35) the following statement:—

"...the assessment of the allotment needs for a district depends to a considerable extent upon the size of private gardens and whether land conveniently situated, say within three-quarters of a mile of houses, can be allocated for allotment purposes."

The booklet gave no reason for suggesting this limit, nor has the true basis subsequently come to light. The Section feels, however, that it is compatible with other factors, such as the cost of public transport, the difficulty of carrying garden tools and produce on 'buses, the 'embarrassment' of wearing old or muddy clothes in public, and the need for the allotment to be near enough to allow the plotholder to visit it for short periods and, perhaps, for the sole purpose of harvesting a small amount of produce. On these combined arguments, the 'three-quarters of a mile rule', as it has become known, has been applied with rigid inflexibility; indeed, on occasion, the homes of the allotment holders have been plotted on maps in order to compare the 'journey to dig' on the old and new sites respectively. The members of the Section who gave oral evidence to us appeared to be divided as to the merits of the three-quarters of a mile rule. Some felt that it was a relic of a bygone age and militated against good town planning; others contended that most allotment holders still walk to their plots, even if they own cars, and that three-quarters of a mile was the maximum distance that elderly people should be expected to walk to close their greenhouse or to cut a lettuce for tea. We will return to this matter in Chapter 10 (vide Figures 18 and 19).

193. In addition to these three basic principles, a number of other conditions are sometimes imposed before consent will be given, such as the provision of:—

(i) adequate fencing (5-feet or 6-feet chain link is usually specified);

(ii) adequate water supply;

(iii) access and paths to a standard agreed locally or approved by the Land Commissioner;

(iv) a communal hut and tool storage facilities;

(v) lavatory accommodation (this condition is infrequently imposed);

(vi) temporary access to old plots to lift maturing crops; and/or

(vii) cash compensation for loss of crops;

as well as:—

(viii) rotation on new sites (compensation is often paid instead);

(ix) application of fertilisers, if necessary;

(x) removal of structures, such as huts and glasshouses, to the new site at no expense to the plotholders.

194. The Section acknowledges that there are two recurring problems linked with applications for section 8 consent. The first relates to the difficulty of ascertaining what is termed the 'true level of demand' for plots on the affected site, and involves three factors:—
(i) If the site has been badly managed, is unfenced, or is partly overgrown with weeds, it is considered that the number of existing tenancies may not reflect true demand in the locality.

(ii) It is possible that rumours of the site's impending closure may have considerably (and artificially) reduced the number of tenants.

(iii) Some cases have been found where the allotments authority has refused to re-let vacant plots on sites for which it intends to seek section 8 consent, so effectively running down the site in advance of a decision.

In cases where such doubts arise, the Allotments Section will generally call for details of the number of tenancies for earlier years, and might then assess the adequacy of the alternative land offered by reference to the trends shown in the national statistics.

195. The second problem follows the requirement (section 1 of the 1922 Act) that the holder of an allotment on a statutory site must be given twelve months' notice to quit. Some authorities which need a site urgently will give the plot-holders notice before applying for section 8 consent. In such cases, some tenants will always leave before their notice expires, while others may be persuaded to accept alternative plots elsewhere which are not up to the Section's basic standards, and, once established there, will be unwilling to move again. In its interpretation of this rule of law, the Section endeavours to be fair to all parties. But it readily admits that the problems referred to above might result—and in at least one case apparently have resulted—in a situation where it felt morally unable to give consent to the alienation of a site which had already been rendered totally vacant by action on the part of the local authority. How long it could maintain such a refusal in times of increasing urban land values is a matter for conjecture.

196. Later in this chapter, we will relate the operation of section 8 consents to considerations of town planning, and we will return to the subject from time to time throughout our report. It is, however, necessary at this stage to make one or two general observations as to the effects of the rules as they now stand. Firstly, it is evident that there is a natural tendency for each consent to reduce the total area of statutory allotment land. The allotments authority is not required to provide plots to replace those which are genuinely vacant at the time when consent is given; it need not provide more than one plot for a man who has several on the existing site; where the plots on the old site exceed 10 rods in extent, those on the new site may be smaller. In consequence, the area of the new site will almost invariably be less than the old. Secondly, whilst it is clear that the rules were designed primarily to give allotment holders a measure of security, we have been told by some authorities that their failure to provide more statutory sites is due principally to the stringent conditions imposed upon their subsequent alienation. Thus, to a certain extent, the rules may have had the effect of giving the general body of allotment holders less security than they might otherwise have achieved. Thirdly, the closure of a statutory allotment site will often present to the allotment holders a number of ancillary problems, not least of which is the break-up of a flourishing association which it would be difficult to re-establish. Whilst the Section is always ready to listen to tenants' complaints and will, on occasion, ask one of its officers to visit a site for this purpose, the rules are so narrow that absolute fairness must be very difficult to maintain.
G. Annual report to Parliament (section 59, 1908 Act)

197. The annual report to Parliament required by the Acts was discontinued at the beginning of 1938 and has not since been reintroduced. The collection of statistical data from allotments authorities, however, was resumed in 1950, and has continued every year since that date. We have already examined these statistics in detail and need say no more about them.

H. Planning and allotments

198. Section 3 of the Act of 1925 required any authority preparing a scheme under the Town Planning Act of the same year to consult the allotments authority about the reservation of land for allotments. This rule lapsed with the passing of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, and, despite a recommendation by the A.A.C. in 1950, has not been revived. Consultation with the Allotments Section in respect of town planning today, therefore, is almost invariably restricted to proposals to develop existing allotment land. Such of these proposals as come to the Minister of Housing and Local Government are referred to the Section for advice, as are plans to re-zone allotment land on town maps. The Section admits that its ability to offer detailed advice on such matters is restricted, in several ways:

(i) if there are numbers of vacant allotments in the town, the loss of a site to development will, prima facie, not affect the town’s ability to fulfil its legal obligations;

(ii) comment on proposals affecting private allotment land is prejudiced by the possibility that it may become the subject of a compulsory purchase order, upon which the Section will again be required to advise;

(iii) there is no statutory machinery whereby possible future trends in the demand for allotments may be assessed.

In very many cases, therefore, the Section can do no more than advise the allotments authority concerned of its duty to ensure that there are sufficient allotments to meet demand.

199. Allotments authorities desirous of taking a statutory allotment site for development require both planning consent and section 8 consent to alienation. The order in which these consents should be sought was a source of considerable controversy between N.A.G.S. and the Minister. Following representations from N.A.G.S. to the effect that it was both unethical and absurd for a “site to be emptied” by rumours of development and planning applications before it had been established that section 8 consent to its alienation would, in fact, be given, the Ministry issued a circular to allotments authorities* informing them that they should, in future, apply for section 8 consent before seeking planning approval. The effect of this circular cannot yet be judged, but it is quite clear that, under the existing allotments legislation, it would be very difficult for an authority to spend money upon the acquisition and preparation of an alternative site before it was certain that it could take the existing site for development.

200. We have been struck throughout our investigations by the tenuous nature of the relationship between allotments and town planning, and this applies particularly to the acquisition of statutory sites for alternative development. It seems to us that on the whole very little consideration is given either by planners or by the Allotments Section to the possibility of finding other land for the projected development or to the relative advantages and degrees of hardship involved when choosing between the various alternatives available. Nor can we find in the existing machinery any point at which the need for the new development on the one hand, and the needs of the allotment holders on the other, are assessed in broad terms of both land use and humanity. The institution of such machinery, together with fuller and closer liaison, might make little difference to the number of applications for section 8 consent, but it might go, at least, some way towards convincing the allotments movement that town planners are not, as it generally believes, its natural enemies.

I. General

201. The Allotments Section believes that most local authorities do not lightly seek to alienate statutory allotment sites. This may well be so, but we cannot avoid the feeling that the attitude of successive central governments since 1950 has been somewhat negative in character. Apart from a circular issued in 1956* which urged upon authorities the need to increase the proportion of permanent allotments, there has been little or no attempt to offer guidance in the many problems of allotment provision. Fuller and franker discussion between central and local government, planners and the allotments movement of the role of allotment gardening in a rapidly changing society might have avoided the difficulty of trying to interpret legislation which stressed the importance of allotments at a time when their importance was continually being eroded.

---

* Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food circular dated 1st February 1956.
CHAPTER 7

THE ALLOTMENTS AUTHORITIES—URBAN

202. We commented in Chapter 4 on the great differences between the allotment gardens which are to be found mainly, though not exclusively, in urban areas, and the large commercial allotments which still exist* in many rural parishes. Because of these differences, we felt it necessary to examine separately the position in urban and in rural areas, though we are aware that our distinction may in some ways be artificial. To our knowledge no urban area contains commercial allotments, although it is not uncommon for one tenant to hold several allotment gardens on the same site; but allotment gardens are to be found in many rural parishes, especially within the ‘commuter belt’ surrounding large towns.

203. A questionnaire was issued to every county borough, London borough, municipal borough and urban district in England and Wales. At the date of issue the total of such authorities was 938, but subsequent amalgamations reduced it to 922. Of these, at least sixty-five† now have no allotments of any kind within their boundaries.

204. Of the remaining 857, a total of 522 either completed the form in whole or in part, or provided information which enabled us to deduce the answers to some of the questions which had been asked. It is fair to say, therefore, that the effective response to this questionnaire was of the order of 60-91 per cent but these figures do not in themselves present an accurate overall picture. In general, the larger authorities found themselves far more able than the smaller to complete the form, and the questionnaire was completed by authorities representing over 80 per cent of the urban population of England and Wales. This suggests that the answers to some of the questions may be weighted in favour of larger towns with more than the average number of allotments. A full summary of the data derived from this questionnaire is included at Appendices III and IV. In drawing conclusions from this evidence, however, we have been able to use for comparative purposes information gained from the other sources listed in Chapter 4, which cover areas of all sizes and populations.

A. Regional variations

205. Although at first sight it may appear that there is no indication of any coherent variation in the total allotments situation in urban areas today between one part of the country and another, a computer analysis summarised in Appendix IV offers good evidence of the existence of regional variations (Figures 28–30). Allotment garden systems in the north of England are not identical to those in the south, and later in this chapter we will introduce examples to illustrate some of the major differences which occur. But our evidence indicates that within broad regions of the country, the allotments situation in each town is essentially the product of factors which belong to that town alone, and is influenced very slightly, if at all, by the situation in neighbouring urban areas. Thus, whilst most of the allotment gardens in Manchester are statutory, the great majority

---

* Despite the Act of 1950 which restricted compulsory provision to allotment gardens.
† In addition to Peterlee and the Isles of Scilly (see Figure 10) which did not receive urban questionnaires.
in Liverpool are temporary; Walsall charges a standard rent of 7½d. per rod, whereas the figure in Stoke-on-Trent is 1s. 2d.; Bradford, though much smaller than Leeds in population, contains almost twice as many allotments; Newcastle-upon-Tyne, South Shields and Sunderland permit allotment holders to keep pigeons on their plots, while nearby Gateshead does not; the allotments of Portsmouth are administered by a sub-committee of the Parks Committee, but Southampton has put them in the care of the Public Lands Committee; 44 per cent of Birmingham’s plots are more than 10 rods in size, while Coventry’s are all smaller.

3. Provision of allotments

206. In 1950, the A.A.C. recommended that all allotments authorities should set themselves a general target of providing 4 acres of allotments per thousand population. It recognised that this target would be in excess of the needs of some districts, but felt that it would be too low in others. But the target had little effect on provision, for in 1952 the total area of land devoted to allotments* in urban areas of England and Wales was 64,668 acres, or roughly 1·6 acres per thousand population; while by 1967, the total had fallen to 40,261 acres, a decline of 37·7 per cent in fifteen years, producing a new ratio of 1 acre per thousand population. The overwhelming majority of urban authorities have attributed this decline almost entirely to a reduction in the numbers interested in allotment gardening. They point out that over 20 per cent of all plots lie vacant, and that no town has a waiting list of applicants in excess of its total vacancies. They suggest that this drop in demand is due mainly to the factors outlined in Chapter 3, and stress that with the disappearance of the need to cultivate an allotment in order to supplement an inadequate income, allotment gardening has become a recreation which in its present form is unable to hold its own against such rival attractions as the television and the motor car. One authority summarised the situation in the following terms: “There is a continuing decline in demand, and the present problem is not the provision of allotments but the proper extinguishment [sic] of those which exist.”

207. In all the evidence submitted to this committee, only a few towns have differed from the general view expressed in paragraph 206. Of these, some accept the extent of the decline in interest and the reasons for it, but feel that the “hard core” has now been reached and that “the graph is levelling out”; in recent years a few have detected some slight increase in the numbers interested in allotments. A very small number indeed, which included Reading and the London Borough of Harrow, suggested that the decline in interest might be due partly to factors such as poor soil, inconvenient siting, lack of security or other factors which fall within the purview of the authority itself rather than of the allotment holder.

208. It is quite clear, without further examination, that there has been a considerable reduction since 1950 in the numbers of people interested in taking an allotment garden; the absence of a consistent national campaign designed to maintain the wartime enthusiasm and the consequent disappearance of the patriotic motive, together with improvements in national food supplies, would have been sufficient to cause a decline in numbers even without the other arguments which have been advanced. Moreover, the computer analysis referred to

* Excluding railway allotments.
in paragraph 205 showed a significant correlation between the number of allotments provided in each town and the number which lie vacant. But it is equally clear that this alleged lack of interest cannot be accepted as the only reason for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL PROVISION (ALL CLASSES) IN ACRES / 1000 POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATIONAL PROVISION</th>
<th>1952</th>
<th>1967</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Acres per Thousand Population (Urban)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BIRMINGHAM</th>
<th>BRADFORD</th>
<th>CARDIFF</th>
<th>COVENTRY</th>
<th>KINGSTON - HULL</th>
<th>LEEDS</th>
<th>LIVERPOOL</th>
<th>MANCHESTER - TYNE</th>
<th>NOTTINGHAM</th>
<th>PLYMOUTH</th>
<th>PORTSMOUTH</th>
<th>SHEFFIELD</th>
<th>SOUTHAMPTON - TRENT</th>
<th>SUNDERLAND</th>
<th>WALLSALL</th>
<th>WOLVERHAMPTON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11

a reduction of such magnitude without more detailed investigation. Figure 11 compares for the twenty largest towns, excluding London, the total allotment garden provision in terms of acres per thousand population in 1952 and 1967. *Prima facie*, a reduction in acreage due entirely to the factors mentioned above
would apply more or less equally to every town and would be reflected in a general drop of the same order as the national average of 37.7 per cent. In actual fact, although the acreage provided in each of these towns has fallen since 1952, the reduction has varied between only 5 per cent in Bristol and over 70 per cent in Walsall and Wolverhampton where boundary changes have been extensive. In Nottingham, Bradford, Plymouth and Southampton, the decline has been far below the national average but in Stoke-on-Trent, Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield it has greatly exceeded it. It might have been anticipated that many towns which provided large numbers of allotments fifteen years ago would by now have brought their position into line with the remainder, but closer inspection of Figure 11 proves that this is not so. Indeed, apart from Wolverhampton and Stoke-on-Trent every town which contained more allotments than the national average in 1952 also has more today. Figure 11 does not in itself prove that the emphasis placed upon loss of interest is false; there may, for example, be good reasons why allotment gardening remains more popular in some areas than in others. But the evidence is such that one could not attempt adequately to explain the variations in the rate of decline without reference to each individual town’s allotment history.

209. Figure 11 demonstrates two further points of interest. Whereas one might have expected that the intensive redevelopment of many large urban areas since the end of the last war would have adversely affected their allotment provision, it is apparent that the provision in the largest towns generally is no less than the national average. Secondly, Figure 11 shows that in 1952, almost immediately after the A.A.C.’s report, the average allotment provision in the twenty largest towns was little more than 1½ acres per thousand population, and that only one such town, Leicester, had reached the target of 4 acres per thousand. In Chapter 3 we discussed some of the problems which the existence of this target has caused; it is now evident that, at least for the largest towns, it was, from the outset, quite unrealistic.

210. In paragraph 173 we saw that of the sixty-seven urban authorities in England and Wales which possessed no allotments of any kind, a large group are in south and east Lancashire and the Wirral peninsula (Figure 10). Figures 11 and 12 now show that the two largest towns in this area both have a very low provision and it is clear that there is a marked dearth of allotment land in this part of the country. No simple explanation can be offered. In this area, enclosure came early and in south Lancashire the problem of low wages may not have been so acute at the time when allotments were conceived to be a solution for economic insecurity; but the same is true of other areas, where the provision is far greater. The proximity of alternative leisure pursuits may have lessened the popularity of allotments, but other towns, such as Norwich, which are equally close to popular recreational areas, contain far more allotments. In south Lancashire there is undoubtedly an acute shortage of land; but since no town in the area will admit to a genuine waiting list for allotments, to adduce this fact as a reason for the shortage of allotments would be tantamount to an allegation that the demand for them had been artificially stifled. We have no evidence to support such a notion.

211. The list of towns without allotments includes also the new towns of Skelmersdale, Dawley and Peterlee. Not unnaturally, the present legislation make no specific reference to new towns, and new town development corporations are under no obligation to set aside land for allotments or even to consider
the advisability of doing so. On the other hand, the existing allotments authorities in the designated area of each new town retain their powers and obligations throughout the town's formative period, including the duty of providing sufficient allotment land. It seems to us, however, that a parish council which will normally have had no experience of administering an urban area, can scarcely be expected to convince a development corporation that a demand for allotments may arise when the town is built. Nor is the position clear when that point arrives. If the new town became a borough or an urban district, its council would immediately assume allotment obligations; but if its administration was handed over to the
URBAN ALLOTMENTS (ALL CLASSES) ACRES/1,000 POPULATION FOR COUNTIES AND COUNTY BOROUGHS: 1963

Key to Identification Numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Town</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Barnsley</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Gateshead</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Rochdale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Barrow</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Gloucester</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Rotherham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bath</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Great Yarmouth</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>St. Helens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Birkenhead</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Grimsby</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Salford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Halifax</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Sheffield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Blackburn</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Hastings</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Solihull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Blackpool</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Huddersfield</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Southampton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bolton</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Ipswich</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Southend-on-Sea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bootle</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Kingston-upon-Hull</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Southport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bournemouth</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Leeds</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>South Shields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Bradford</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Leicester</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Stockport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Brighton</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Stoke-on-Trent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Sunderland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Burnley</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Luton</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Swansea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Burton-upon-Trent</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Tynemouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Bury</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Merthyr Tydfil</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Wakefield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Middlesbrough</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>Wallasey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Cardiff</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Newcastle-upon-Tyne</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Walsall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Newport</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Warley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Chester</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Northampton</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>Warrington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Coventry</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Norwich</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>West Bromwich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Darlington</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Nottingham</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>West Hartlepool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Derby</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Oldham</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Wigan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Dewsbury</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Wolverhampton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Doncaster</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Plymouth</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Worcester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Dudley</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Portsmouth</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Eastbourne</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>* Formerly known as</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Exeter</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Smithwick, Oldbury and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rosley Regis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Towns Commission these responsibilities would remain with the existing authorities. Clearly, in the spirit of the present law, the allocation of land for allotments in new town projects should depend upon a reasonable estimate of the probable demand. We will discuss later what factors should properly be taken into account.

212. The average total allotment provision in urban areas of England and Wales is now 1 acre per thousand population. As many as 75-2 per cent of all towns provide less than 2 acres per thousand (Figure 12), whereas in 1945 the corresponding figure was 46-3 per cent. Against all national trends, however, a very small group of towns still contain allotments on such a scale as to indicate the presence of special local circumstances. In this group, the urban district of Wolverton (Buckinghamshire) stands supreme. With a population of 13,150 it has no less than 200 acres of allotments, or more than 15 acres per thousand population, an allotment being available for one in every six of its inhabitants. Some idea of the unique position of Wolverton in allotment terms may be gained from the fact that the second most lavish provision appears to exist in Gainsborough (Lincolnshire) with 7-75 acres per thousand population. Wolverton is in reality a group of three individual settlements extending over an area of 4,700 acres; it was one of the earliest 'railway towns', with little or no other industry and, until very recently, a high percentage of its population was employed locally. Many of its older houses have little or no garden space, and many of the inhabitants—as in other towns based upon the railway industry—keep livestock, especially poultry, on their allotments. We are aware that none of these factors adequately explains the strong allotment tradition and the huge

83

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
areas of allotments which exist (and which, incidentally, enable Wolverton to
remain the only town to mention its allotments specifically in the Municipal
Year Book!). We visited the area in order to examine the system at first hand
but, apart from ascertaining that many plots have been handed down from father
to son through several generations and that, with a fairly static population, the
need to take allotment land for development has been less here than elsewhere,
we can offer no further explanation. There are signs that the popularity of
allotment gardening even in Wolverton is now slowly decreasing; more significant-
ly, perhaps, for the future, the urban district falls within the designated area of
the proposed new town of Milton Keynes.

C. Classification of sites

213. In Chapter 5 we examined the annual statistics prepared by the Depart-
ment’s Allotments Section and suggested ways in which the figures for each year
might be revised in order to present a more accurate picture. It is now necessary
to examine the reduction in the total acreage of urban allotment land over the
past few years separately and more systematically for each category of site.

214. We have accepted that the total area of allotment land in England and
Wales today amounts to 67,804 acres in accordance with the Department’s
statistics, and that 40,261 acres* of this land lie in urban areas. We are informed
that, of this latter figure, 9,473 acres are private allotments, which we will deal
with comprehensively in Chapter 9. It follows that the total area of allotment
land provided or administered by urban allotments authorities must amount to
some 30,788 acres.†

215. We have commented in Chapter 4 and elsewhere upon the difficulty which
allotments authorities appear to find in deciding accurately which of their
allotment sites are statutory and which are temporary. In Chapter 5 we en-
deavoured to apportion the total area on a more realistic basis and concluded
that, of the 30,788 acres mentioned previously, some 14,000 acres are statutory
and the remainder temporary. The whole purpose of this present apportion-
ment, whatever its initial motive, rests upon the premise—which has been put to
us so often by allotment holders and others—that the continued enjoyment of
allotment gardening depends largely upon security of tenure and that a statutory
site is more secure than one which is temporary. We must in due course examine
this proposition in depth, but, for the present, we are concerned only to assess
the evidence we possess about statutory and temporary sites.

216. In 1950, the A.A.C. recommended, though in a somewhat devious way,
that allotments authorities should endeavour to place as many allotment holders
as possible on permanent allotment land. In January 1952, a circular‡ issued
by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries stated that “the full and efficient
working of allotments depends to a great extent on the allotment holders knowing
that their tenure is secure”, and went on to urge allotments authorities to “use
to the utmost their powers under the Allotments Acts to acquire land” for
allotments; further circulars issued in January 1954, and February 1955, repeated

* With the addition of an unknown percentage of the 1,541 acres of railway allotment land.
† It is more sensible to examine the position in terms of acreages rather than numbers of plots,
since the size of the individual plot is so variable.
‡ Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries circular of 2nd January, 1952.
this plea. Finally, on 1st February 1956 a circular,* whose primary purpose was to foreshadow the repeal of the Defence Regulations, contained the following sentences:—

"[The Minister] appreciates that councils have often had great difficulties to contend with in giving effect to his policy of maintaining the acreage of allotments either by obtaining the land now under temporary allotments by the use of their permanent powers or by replacing it by plots on other sites."

"The Minister wishes local authorities to adopt a programme of placing all allotments on a permanent basis before the end of 1957."

217. In order to put these circulars into their true perspective and to assess the current statistics in a proper light, it is necessary to reiterate that during this period the Ministry of Agriculture restricted the meaning of the term 'temporary allotments' to allotments situated upon land requisitioned during the war. The whole purport of the circulars, therefore, was to urge authorities to move allotment holders from requisitioned land to land which today would be defined as either statutory or temporary. There was thus no justification for supposing that the implementation of the Ministry's policy would result inevitably in an increase in the area of statutory allotment land.

218. Only 2-8 per cent of the towns with allotments rely entirely upon private allotments to satisfy the demand; these include Blaydon-on-Tyne, Bridgend and Llchwyr (Glamorgan). A larger number, however, look to private sites to cater for the majority of their allotment holders; these include Bradford, Mansfield, East Retford, Tamworth and the London borough of Lewisham. In all, 17-1 per cent of urban authorities state that they now have no statutory allotment sites within their boundaries. Many of these towns are small, and it is unnecessary to list them all; of the larger towns in this category mention must be made of Swansea, Chesterfield, Scarborough and Altrincham. Conversely, 17.7 per cent have stated that all their publicly administered sites are statutory; these include Grimsby, Doncaster, Bolton, Eastbourne, Fareham and Beccles.

219. We have made a separate comparison of the data supplied by those urban authorities having both statutory and temporary allotments in 1945 and 1965. The comparison revealed that while the acreage devoted to temporary allotments had decreased during these two decades in 75-1 per cent of the towns concerned, the amount of statutory land had declined only in 42-0 per cent. At first sight, this appears to show conclusively that statutory sites are basically more secure, but it will be recalled that in 1945 many temporary sites were situated on requisitioned land, and the surrender of such land has almost certainly inflated the figures for temporary land artificially. Of more importance, perhaps, is the fact that no less than 37-3 per cent claim to have increased their acreage of statutory allotments during the same period. Some of these claims are almost certainly spurious, while others reflect extensive boundary changes, but there is no doubt that a fair proportion of these towns did pursue a policy of turning as many areas of allotment land as possible into statutory sites in the early 1950's.

220. The answers to the same question were subjected to further analysis which brought to light three points of considerable significance. Firstly, the number of towns whose acreage of statutory allotments has decreased since 1961 is no smaller than those which report a decline since 1945. This suggests that the security of statutory sites is less today than it was a few years ago; at this juncture,

* See paragraph 201.
it could equally well imply that the decline in the numbers interested in allotment gardening has now reached the point where security of tenure, in itself, is not sufficient to induce tenants to remain. Secondly, a large number of authorities which have maintained or increased the number of their statutory sites since the end of the last war have reduced considerably the number of plots available on those sites. This indicates, quite clearly, that while many towns have been reluctant to apply for consent to the closure of statutory sites with all that this entails, they have pursued a deliberate policy of concentrating existing tenants into one

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsequent uses of former allotment land, 1945–65: England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing ... ... ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks/playing fields ... ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education ... ... ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry ... ... ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other open space ... ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abandoned/derelict ... ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roadways ... ... ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other uses ... ... ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

section of a site, in order to apply for the release of the remainder for other purposes. We do not at this stage suggest that such a policy is wrong. Indeed, there are obvious arguments in favour of a smaller, fully tenanted site rather than a larger, half empty one, but these may not be the only alternatives. Thirdly, we attempted to ascertain by analysis whether a decline in the available acreage of any one category of allotment land had been reflected in the provision of another. This exercise was largely inconclusive, but appeared to demonstrate that, while there is a definite but tenuous connection between the provision of statutory and temporary plots, a persistent reduction in the number of private allotments available has not so far been reflected in increased provision by the allotments authority. This fact suggests that a man who loses his plot on a private site may be reluctant to look to the local authority for a replacement.

221. We asked each authority to indicate, in the case of allotment sites which had been alienated to other uses since the end of the last war, the use to which each had been put. The analysis of alienated land considerably in excess of 10,000 acres is produced in Table 16. While this Table is illuminating in itself, it does not distinguish between the various categories of alienated sites. We were, however, fortunate to discover that the records maintained by the City and County of Bristol were sufficiently detailed to enable us to assess this position for a single large urban area, and Table 17 provides a very interesting comparison. It shows that while, as might have been expected, large areas of allotment land especially from the private sector have been used for housing purposes, a larger proportion of local authority land has been taken for parks, playing fields and open space generally. (The “other uses” referred to in the Table included cemeteries, old people’s homes, hospitals and community centres.) The use of allotment land for schools has been small in Bristol, but is much more common in many other towns. Very little local authority land has been handed over to industry, but large areas of private allotments have been used for this purpose.

222. Authorities were asked to supply similar information about sites which had been reduced in size without being given up entirely. The replies failed to

86
show any appreciable difference between the subsequent use of the land released in this way and that provided by the extinction of a site, but there appears to be a slightly greater chance that it remained undeveloped. In their replies to this question, however, the urban authorities supplied details in respect of more statutory sites than temporary. This lends added weight to the point made in paragraph 220 that statutory sites are more often reduced in size than extinguished; it is clear that, in the case of temporary sites, the converse is true.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>121.3</td>
<td>165.3</td>
<td>52.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26.3 125.5 161.8 313.6 100.0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 17</th>
<th>Present uses of former allotment land, 1967: Bristol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acres used for each purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Housing</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Parks/playing fields</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Education</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Industry</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Other open space</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Abandoned/desperate</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Roadways</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Other uses</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

223. The analysis of the replies from all urban authorities shows that 58 per cent of the sites which they now provide are considered to be statutory. But only 8-1 per cent of these authorities had plans, however tentative, to acquire additional statutory allotment land, and only 4.7 per cent planned to appropriate to allotments use any of their existing temporary land. The 'average' town now contains thirteen allotment sites, of which seven will be statutory. According to our evidence, 7.5 per cent of urban allotments authorities have only one site within their administrative area, while (quite apart from the private sites available) the City of Birmingham manages as many as 182, of which no less than 75 per cent are statutory (Figure 3D).

224. It will be clear from what has been written that the plea for more statutory sites because of their greater security of tenure has a firm foundation (although there are indications that this is less strong than it was), and we have found a highly significant negative correlation (Table 3, Appendix IV) between the number of vacant plots in a town and a percentage of its sites which are statutory. In a sense, however, this security is artificially induced, since it hinges mainly upon the need to obtain Ministerial consent to a site's disposal, and upon the inconvenience and expense of replacing it, rather than upon intrinsic factors which might persuade an authority to retain it. To this extent, any attempt to persuade urban authorities voluntarily to create more statutory sites is almost bound to fail; the chairman of one allotments committee was no doubt expressing the views of many when he told us that his authority would gladly have tried to increase its percentage of statutory sites if it had not found through experience that the process of subsequently taking such sites for other purposes, however urgent, was both cumbersome and protracted.
D. Town planning and allotments

225. In Chapter 6 we pointed out that, since 1947, there has been no requirement in law that the reservation of land for allotments should be considered in the preparation of a town plan. The great majority of present-day allotment sites were already in existence in 1945 (for Birmingham the figure is as high as 90·6 per cent: Figures 3C and 3D), and it is a fair assumption that the authors of many development schemes instituted since that time have given little or no thought to the provision of allotments. We do not suggest that allotments authorities pay little heed to the planning and siting of allotment land; on the contrary we will summarise later in this section the many opinions offered to us. But we are left with a general feeling that these opinions are seldom communicated to, or heeded by, those responsible for the planned development; for example, we know of at least one large town where the friction between the allotments department and the planning office was such that we were unable to meet representatives of both at the same time. This lack of consultation has even extended beyond the local authority and, so far as we are aware, no attempt has been made to indicate to the development corporations of designated new towns the basis upon which allotment land should be reserved, despite the confusion on which we commented in paragraph 211. The inevitable consequence is that the provision of allotments in new towns and, to a lesser degree, in new developments generally, has proceeded on a haphazard and short-term assessment of demand. Thus, while Harlow originally allocated land for allotments at the rate of 2 acres per thousand population, Crawley was restricted to half an acre per thousand and Skelmersdale made no allocation whatsoever. We appreciate that the demand for allotments in a particular area will depend upon many factors which are peculiar to that area alone; we also accept that the allocation of too much land for allotments might make its subsequent alternative development more expensive, but we find it regrettable that on the comparatively rare occasions when a new development is introduced on such a scale as to permit a complete reappraisal of allotment needs, so little official effort has been directed to avoiding the haphazard and ill-conceived siting of allotments which has been such a feature of urban development in many areas in the past.

226. Several urban authorities made the point in their evidence that allotments should be an essential feature of development schemes, and Port Talbot suggested that “consideration must be given by local research to likely demand in all new residential development schemes, so that siting can be properly considered at the time the overall plan is drawn up”. The opinions offered regarding the factors to be taken into account in determining the best sites for allotments were many and diverse. Allotment sites, we were told, should be large enough to encourage the formation of an association, but not too large for easy administration; they should be situated alongside a serviceable road with access by public transport, but must not be open to the general public; they should have a southerly aspect, good soil and a pleasant outlook. The majority of towns felt certain that every allotment site must also be as near as possible to the homes of those whom it was intended to serve; this view was more generally derived from experience (Figures 18 and 19) than from logical argument. A few towns were more perspicacious; for example, Portsmouth suggested that sites should be close to other recreational facilities (Figure 23), while Salford felt that allotments should cater not only for the tenants themselves but also for their families. Coventry and Scunthorpe both told us that they favoured a number of small sites within
the urban area catering mainly for the older tenants, with larger ‘recreational’ sites on the periphery or beyond.

227. Despite the frequency with which these views on the location of sites have been expressed to us, we have seen little evidence of any serious attempt to integrate allotment provision with town planning schemes. Admittedly, in Aberdare we were shown an area of land which it was proposed to develop as a recreation complex incorporating part of an existing allotment site; similarly the Development Corporation of the New Town of Redditch was planning to include allotment sites in its new housing development areas, and a number of other authorities told us that they were giving serious thought to such integration. But these were the exceptions; the visits which we have made, the evidence submitted to us and the research carried out on our behalf, have all shown that a vast number of local authority sites have been designated without regard (and often in opposition) to sound planning concepts. The view that a site should be near the homes of the potential tenants has frequently been proffered as an excuse for allocating areas of land which happen to be left over when a new estate is built, without regard to the possibility that they may eventually be needed for other purposes. In such cases, little regard has often been paid to such factors as quality of soil, accessibility, adequacy of drainage and general suitability for horticulture. We have, indeed, seen several sites, and heard of many more, which exist quite simply because the land was unsuitable for any other purpose! We have received numerous reports, from students and others, of sites liable to flooding (Figure 20) or subsidence; we know of made-up sites whose soil is subject to spontaneous combustion or is toxic; we have been told of sites with inadequate soil depth. We will, of course, return later to the general problems of siting; we do, however, feel that an authority which has provided sites of this character ought not to complain of lack of demand if they subsequently look unattractive.

228. Our opinions with reference to the scant regard to planning principles in matters of allotment provision were reinforced by the answers given to some of the questions in our urban questionnaire. Almost 57.5 per cent of the urban authorities which completed the form had “no firm views” as to the best size of an allotment site, and 40.4 per cent were not prepared to estimate what their provision in acres per thousand population would be in 1970–1.

E. Administration

229. The systems adopted by different authorities for the administration of their allotment sites are many and varied; they are also the subject of most of the adverse comments and criticisms which have been made to us by allotment holders throughout our investigations. Some of these complaints will be quoted verbatim (without reference to their sources) in the course of the succeeding paragraphs, but their factual basis is invariably the same. Individual towns are accused of being ‘anti-allotments’—a phrase which recurs frequently in the evidence put to us—and of demonstrating by their attitudes and methods that they provide their allotments only because the law compels them to do so. Before we examine in detail the control and management of urban allotment sites, and try to determine how much substance there is in such complaints, it is only fair to acknowledge that criticism is by no means universal; allotment holders who are satisfied with their local situation probably felt that it was unnecessary
to say so, and it is therefore pleasant to record that there is a handful of urban authorities about which we received nothing but praise. In a table compiled on this basis the county borough of Grimsby would probably head the list. (See, for example, Plate 9.)

230. Any review of the administrative system must begin with the statutory allotments committee, since the Acts clearly intended that this committee should be responsible for determining the town’s allotments policy and deciding how it should be put into practice. We defined the constitution and duties of this committee in Chapter 2; we must now see how the committee operates in practice. After taking into account the exemptions conferred by the Minister, and the 321 urban allotments authorities whose populations are below 10,000, we calculate that there are some 570 towns which ought by law to have established an allotments committee, and our evidence indicates that at least 95 per cent of these have done so. In the small towns without such a committee, we have found that allotment matters are rarely discussed by the council or any of its committees and, of course, there is no machinery whereby the views of allotment holders may be taken into account. County boroughs which provide smallholdings are permitted by law to link these with allotments in the same council committee. Thus, in 1966, seven of the seventeen county boroughs concerned had a smallholdings and allotments committee; the largest of these—Birmingham—has since separated the two. If the recommendations made by the Committee of Inquiry into Statutory Smallholdings* are implemented, county boroughs (with the exception of Birmingham) will lose their smallholdings powers, and the provisions of the Act which permit the establishment of joint smallholdings and allotments committees will no longer apply. We are informed that in 66.2 per cent of the towns with an allotments committee this is a full committee of the council. In 23.3 per cent it is a sub-committee of the parks committee; in 8.2 per cent it is a sub-committee of estates or public works; in the remaining 2.3 per cent it reports to a wide variety of council committees.

231. By law, one-third of the members of the allotments committee must be non-councillors who are “experienced in the cultivation of allotment gardens”. Although the Act does not specifically say so, it is invariably assumed that these co-opted members must be tenants of allotments provided by the authority. It is also assumed that the intended functions of the co-opted members are twofold:—

(i) to represent the interests of the town’s allotment holders in the committee’s discussions; and

(ii) to keep the allotment holders informed of any decisions taken or action recommended which might affect their interests.

The method by which the co-opted members are chosen varies from town to town. In some urban areas, such as Cardiff, where the whole of the town’s allotments movement is formed into a single association which is invited to make nominations for the allotments committee, the co-opted members are able to perform both their functions without difficulty. But in many towns there is no composite association and, frequently, no association on any of the individual allotment sites. We have found cases where the co-opted members were simply invited by councillor members of the allotments committee who knew them

* Cmd. 2936 of 1966.
personally and were aware that they held allotments. In such cases it must be extremely difficult for them to fulfil their functions adequately. We have no direct evidence to suggest that councillors are ever selected for the allotments committee by any but the normal processes, but allotment holders have complained to us that members of this committee are sometimes builders or estate agents with a ready eye for allotment sites that are ripe for development; on the other hand, we have heard of several committees whose council members have been specially chosen because they are or were allotment holders. We are similarly informed that whether by accident or design members of the allotments committee are frequently also members of the housing, planning or education committee and thus face problems of conflicting interests but, with the proliferation of council committees, such pairing is in many cases inevitable; Furthermore, there is probably a good deal of truth in the allegation that it is customary in some areas to appoint new councillors to “one of the less important committees such as the allotments committee in order to gain experience in committee work”; while this procedure does not make the committee ‘anti-allotments’ it may mean that the representation of allotment matters at council meetings is less strong than for other committees served by more experienced councillors.

232. In all, the volume of complaint which we have received on this subject, supported as it is not only by N.A.G.S. but also by the findings of research students who have been looking at local allotment situations for the first time and with open minds, certainly suggests that in many towns the status and performance of the allotments committee leaves much to be desired. From a mass of evidence, the words of three co-opted members of allotments committees in widely separated areas have been selected to illustrate this point further. The first, who has served on the committee for many years is “well aware that it is the ‘cinderella’ of council committees”, while the second senses “the anti-allotment atmosphere” as soon as he enters the committee room. The third, describing the attitude of the elected representatives towards co-opted members, suggests that “behind a veneer of affability lies a relationship of grudging tolerance”.

233. In a large number of towns, including Cardiff and Grimsby, the allotments committee has equal status with other council committees and performs its task well; and it should also be recorded that the town clerk of Wakefield submitted a considered plea for the retention of the committee in its present form. But we are equally certain that there are many towns in which the procedure in the allotments committee has become a travesty of its original purpose. We were, for instance, invited to be present at a meeting of the allotments committee of Sheffield; it lasted for a mere ten minutes and appeared to have been called for the sole purpose of ratifying decisions which had already been taken elsewhere. In some towns the committee meets monthly, in others quarterly and in still more “when there is business to discuss”; in one town we were informed that it had not met for more than a year! We are aware too, that in many towns allotment matters are discussed by other committees before they eventually reach the allotments committee, and that in some urban areas it is the practice not to permit the co-opted members to vote or even to speak when matters upon which they might be presumed to have a tenuous personal interest are under discussion. Furthermore, strong complaints have been made to us
that in a large number of towns decisions taken by the allotments sub-committee are often rejected by its parent committee and are never discussed by the full council.

234. For the future, it is necessary to answer two questions:—

(i) Is the allotments committee the best means by which an urban allotments authority can administer its allotments?

(ii) If so, must the statutory obligation to appoint such a committee be retained?

In its evidence to us, N.A.G.S. insisted that the answer to the second question must be in the affirmative, if only because many local authorities would immediately disband their allotments committee if their statutory obligation was removed. This might well be so, but the argument seems to us to be entirely negative in character. If the image of allotments is so poor that local authorities cannot be trusted voluntarily to administer them properly, then the solution must be to improve that image; to acknowledge by maintaining the statutory obligation that the present image is both justified and immutable is pointless. The Committee on the Management of Local Government* has recently proposed that the number of local authority committees imposed by law should be drastically reduced, and in this situation we feel that a special case for the retention of the statutory obligation to establish an allotments committee cannot be made.

235. The question whether urban allotments authorities should, nonetheless, be urged to appoint an allotments committee voluntarily is more difficult to answer. We are certain that many such committees have performed their task nobly, especially during the years preceding and immediately following the last war. We are also convinced that the efficient administration of a town's allotments system requires continuous and friendly discussion between the local authority and the allotments movement. But we have reached the conclusion that the allotments committee, as at present constituted, is not the best means of achieving this. A committee whose sole responsibility is the efficient administration of a town's allotment sites cannot hope to compete on equal terms with housing, education or planning for either land or finance; it will often lack the equipment necessary for the proper maintenance of an allotment site; and, most important of all, its very existence helps to perpetuate the image of allotments as a kind of social pariah which ought not to be linked with any other of the town's activities. In Part VII of our report we will indicate what, in our view, ought to replace it.

236. During recent years, an increasing number of urban authorities has sought to reduce the burden of allotment administration by devolving some of it upon local allotment associations. Such authorities are still in a minority—in fact thirty-three of the fifty-seven largest towns excluding London retain every aspect of administration firmly in the authority's control—but it is evident that any general assessment of the degree of efficiency with which a town administers its allotments must depend largely upon this question. Before we examine the methods by which this devolution occurs, we must offer a number of observations upon the general principle involved. We consider that the idea of giving an association of allotment holders a greater share of the responsibility for the

---

success or failure of a site is basically sound; it strengthens the association, it allows discussion of problems outside office hours, it enables a daily watch to be maintained upon plotholders who neglect their plots, it encourages a pride in the appearance of the whole site rather than in the individual plots, and it increases the corporate spirit of the association and its members. We will analyse these points more closely at a later stage of our report. But there are, in our view, two factors which must be kept constantly in mind. First, the degree of success which any scheme of devolution achieves must depend ultimately upon the association and the character of its officers; before a scheme is instituted, the authority ought to be satisfied that it has a real chance of success. Second, under the present legislation nothing can divest an authority of its overall responsibility for the allotments situation in its area; in our experience, where the primary motive of devolution has been to enable the authority to shed its administrative responsibilities, the scheme has usually failed.

237. There are two ways in which this devolution has been effected. The first, and by far the more frequent, consists of the practice of leasing a site *en bloc* to an association for a period of years and at a stated overall rent. Since this practice is, of necessity, largely confined to statutory sites, only a few towns lease all their sites in this way, but the following are included among them:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taunton</td>
<td>Somerset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>Lancs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winchester</td>
<td>Hants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastleigh</td>
<td>Hants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urmston</td>
<td>Lancs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chippenham</td>
<td>Wilts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Godalming</td>
<td>Surrey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mynyddiswyn</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are, however, many more towns which have leased so high a percentage of their sites to associations that the administrative responsibilities retained by the authorities have been markedly reduced. Among the larger towns, the London Borough of Barking, Leicester, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Coventry and Salford fall into this category; such leases are also common in Manchester, Liverpool, Sunderland, Derby and Swansea. In general, the practice of leasing sites to associations is more popular in towns with a high provision of allotments (Appendix IV).

238. We have been able to examine copies of a number of these leases, and although they differ in several important details, all have one thing in common: the lessee is made solely responsible for lettings, collection of rent from individual allotment holders and maintenance of the site. The rent demanded from the association at present averages £5 per acre throughout the term of the lease, so if the association wishes to expend money on the maintenance of the site it must charge a sufficiently high rent for each plot to produce a surplus; it must also ensure that all the plots are permanently occupied, otherwise its income from rents will be reduced. Occasionally, as in the case of Brighton, the lease specifies a maximum rent which the individual allotment holder may be asked to pay; where this happens, the rent stipulated appears to permit the association to obtain a net profit of the order of £3 per acre per annum. In a number of examples, the lease provides for a reduction in the overall rent of a site to take account of vacant plots, but since this reduction is generally no more than 5s. per plot, it is obviously to the association’s advantage that every plot should be let. Provisions which will permit old age pensioners to pay reduced rents are included in leases granted by one or two towns, such as Brighton. We have seen a number of instances where an expiring lease has been renewed at a higher rent, and by this
process an authority may well be able to promote a reasonable increase in the individual rent charged to the allotment holder without directly incurring any of the customary opprobrium.

239. One of the leases submitted to us by Benfleet (Essex) was expressed to run for one year only and subsequently to be subject to annual renewal; another, from Sevenoaks (Kent), is for a term of fifty years. The great majority, however, lie between seven and twenty-one years, and many include a re-entry clause in accordance with the provisions of section 1 of the Act of 1922. The terms of these leases are largely unexceptionable, and the evidence which we have collected from other sources suggests that sites leased to associations in this way possess more amenities and have fewer vacant plots than others. But we have several reservations about the practice as it now exists. We would, for example, question whether an association with limited resources can maintain an allotment site as satisfactorily or as cheaply as could a local authority. We are not satisfied that an association, without access to local authority advertising media, ought to be expected to find tenants for vacant plots, especially in circumstances when its own prosperity hinges upon its success in doing so. We have grave doubts, which are in this instance shared by N.A.G.S., whether many associations yet possess the business acumen to manage a site successfully, although we acknowledge that some highly efficient associations do exist. Moreover, where, as may often happen, an association is induced to take a lease in the hope of gaining increased security of tenure, we feel that the insertion of a re-entry clause largely nullifies its effect. Our main concern, however, is that where an authority achieves a saving in administrative costs by leasing sites to local associations, this saving should be reflected by an increased expenditure on maintenance and improvements. The reduction of local authority expenditure is a laudable aim, but we cannot avoid the feeling that a saving which stems in part from the employment of officers of the association to act as unpaid clerks, is not in the best interests of the allotments movement.

240. The second method of devolution, which does not appear to be nearly so common, consists of appointing an association to act as the authority's agent on a site. In this capacity it will normally be responsible for collecting the rents and, possibly, for reporting cases of neglect of plot; it will generally receive a small fee for this work. By far the most extensive application of this system exists in Guildford (Surrey), where, in 1953, the authority entered into agreements with two large horticultural societies by which they took over the management of every local authority site in the town. The societies became responsible for every aspect of administration, including lettings, improvements to the sites, general maintenance, tenancy agreements and collection of rents. They are permitted to retain all rents, and, in addition, receive from the corporation a joint grant of just over £600. The authority owns each site, but has no responsibilities thereon. It derives no income from its allotments, but, on the other hand, its total expenditure is limited to the annual grant and loan interest of £500. There is no doubt that, in Guildford, this scheme works well, at least from the standpoint of administration. The total provision of 1·28 acres per thousand population is above the national average and, for such a town, is surprisingly high. On thirteen statutory sites, only 14 per cent of the plots are vacant—well below the national average. The overall standard of amenity provision is very good and a new site, opened in 1963, already incorporates a car park, toilets, individual and community huts, piped water and hard surfaced roads with no
extra cost to the authority. The cost to the ratepayer in 1965 was no more than the equivalent of 0.07 of a 1d. rate. The corporation is satisfied that it has not divested itself entirely of the responsibility for allotment provision. It maintains control of the sites and, through regular meetings of the allotments sub-committee (on which the two societies are represented), discusses its allotments policy. Whether a similar scheme would work as efficiently in other towns is debatable; it obviously requires the existence of a society which is keenly interested in the maintenance and improvement of the allotments system and which, in addition, is capable of putting its ideas into practice. The scheme has now been in operation in Guildford for fifteen years; the fact that it has not been copied elsewhere, even in adjacent towns, may in itself suggest that it would not be generally suitable. It is doubtful also whether many authorities would be prepared to hand over large sums to voluntary allotment associations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>County and London boroughs</th>
<th>Municipal boroughs</th>
<th>Urban districts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks.....</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk’s..</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer/Surveyor’s</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer’s..</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estates...</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing...</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

241. At this point, it is necessary to reiterate that both systems of devolution which we have described affect only a minority of towns, and, in many cases, only a minority of sites within those towns. In the vast majority of urban areas, therefore, allotments administration remains wholly or mainly the responsibility of local authorities, and it is in this context that their performance must be judged. Nine towns, including Manchester, Bristol, Cardiff, Middlesbrough and Norwich, have told us that they have a separate section dealing with allotments work only. In the remainder, the most popular department to which overall responsibility for allotments is given is that which is also in charge of parks; but even where a parks department exists, almost 50 per cent of authorities choose to allocate allotments elsewhere. Table 18 shows the percentages of each type of authority in which allotment administration is the responsibility of various departments. The columns in the Table do not total 100. There are two reasons for this:

(i) Many towns, including some comparatively large authorities, allocate different aspects of allotments administration to several different departments, with none having overall responsibility. Thus, in Luton, the parks department is responsible for ‘management’, the town clerk’s office for tenancy agreements and the borough treasurer for collection of rents.

(ii) There is a bewildering variety of departments upon which individual (usually small) towns have placed responsibility for allotments. These include markets, rating, health, highways and general purposes.

We are left with the impression that the inability of many urban authorities to shown any consistency in their allocation of this work is indicative of a great deal of confused thinking about the place of allotment gardening in urban
life today. This diversification of responsibility must weaken the link between the tenant and his local authority and must inevitably increase the difficulty of producing a coherent and effective allotments policy.

242. In the light of this situation, it is not surprising that 50 per cent of all towns have no official employed full-time on allotments administration, and that where allotments administration is the responsibility of the parks department, this figure is as high as 85 per cent. These figures are not affected by the status of the allotments committee, where such a committee exists. We cannot, at this stage in our report, see this situation in perspective. Obviously, the number of staff engaged upon the work must depend upon such factors as the number of plots provided, the rate of turnover of the tenants, the methods used to collect the rents, and the amount of maintenance carried out by the authority. But it is reasonably apparent to us that the successful administration of an allotments system in an urban area today should incorporate a number of items which in fact rarely exist:—

(i) There should be an official to whom an allotment holder can go (and knows he can go) for advice and help.

(ii) A prompt and honest attempt should be made to re-let plots which fall vacant.

(iii) There should be regular inspections of allotment sites by someone competent to assess whether anything is wrong and capable of taking action to put it right.

(iv) It should be possible to convey to allotment holders at an early stage planning decisions which vitally affect their future, thus reducing the unwarranted rumours of closures that so often circulate.

It seems doubtful whether the figures quoted earlier in this paragraph allow for these points to which we must obviously return more fully later. In our investigations we have found every conceivable degree of efficiency in administration. Thus, while the City of Bristol has maintained records of the names and occupations of its allotment holders over a period of forty years, a town in south-east England was unable to supply a research student with a map showing the distribution of its present sites! The administrative system in Aberdare is highly efficient, if somewhat regimental, and allotment officials are in close touch with the tenants on the authority’s sites; but in one London borough the long-serving secretary of a flourishing association met local officials for the first time when we visited the area! The strongest indictment of the attitude of some local authorities came from the students working on our behalf, who were clearly able to devote far more time to their investigations in each town than was possible for the committee. The following series of quotations is taken from student theses without reference to the towns concerned:—

“Allotments are treated in a very cavalier fashion.”
“The local authority takes little interest in allotments.”
“Administration is very haphazard.”
“A succession of persons are put in charge of allotments for a year or so—as a rung in the promotion ladder.”
“The local authority seems out of touch with allotment affairs.”
“Information which could be used to great advantage in any policy decision was not kept.”
“The authority’s policies for the future seem vague and ill-defined.”

96
Since the areas covered by these students were selected at random, it is obvious that dissatisfaction with the standard of administration is widespread; in the opinion of N.A.G.S. it is almost universal. In a sense we treat such criticism with caution; we have, for example, received letters from allotment holders in neighbouring towns each comparing their authority unfavourably with the other, and in the final analysis we can only assess standards of administration in the light of what the allotment holder has the right to expect. But one thing is already clear; if bad administration is even partly responsible for the unattractive appearance of many sites, then a local authority has no right to use poor appearance as an argument in favour of closure.

F. Tenancies

243. In Chapter 2 we stressed that no ‘rules’ made by an allotments authority for the letting of an allotment would be enforceable unless they had previously been approved by the Minister, and in paragraph 182 we set out the evidence supplied by the Allotments Section to the effect that to-date some 50 per cent of allotments authorities had sought and obtained such approval. Obviously the majority of applications have come from urban authorities and it is fair to assume, therefore, even without additional evidence, that most urban authorities have adopted such rules at some time since 1908.

244. The most recent version of the ‘model’ rules issued by the Ministry forms Appendix IX to this report. The majority of the rules included in this ‘model’ either repeat the provisions of the Acts or are closely in accord with the law of landlord and tenant and, in the context of the existing legislation, are perfectly sound. Rule 7, however, sets out a series of “General Conditions under which the Allotment Gardens are to be Cultivated”, and is apparently derived from individual suggestions made by allotments authorities since 1908. The nine conditions included in this rule are all couched in such broad terms that it is difficult to see what effective action could be taken against an allotment holder who transgressed them; certainly the rules could not reasonably be criticised for severity. Conditions (1), (5) and (6) which relate to the appearance of the allotment garden, require the tenant to keep it in a “good state of cultivation”, maintain in good repair any hedges, fences or gates which form part of it, and not to erect any building upon it without prior consent in writing. In accordance with section 12 of the Act of 1950, it is laid down that the local council will not refuse consent in respect of the erection of a building which is “reasonably necessary” for keeping hens or rabbits. Conditions (3) and (4) prohibit a tenant from sub-letting his allotment, and from removing timber from it without consent. The aim of conditions (2) and (7) is to prevent the tenant causing a nuisance or annoyance to the occupants of neighbouring plots; but not, apparently, to non-allotment holders who happen to live in the neighbourhood. Finally, conditions (8) and (9) compel the tenant to observe the covenants contained in any lease under which the council holds the land, and permit the council to impose further conditions if deemed necessary at a later date. There is probably little point in suggesting amendments or additions to these model rules in advance of our recommendations. We feel, in general, that while they are useful as a guide to the sort of regulations which may govern an allotment holder’s use of his plot, they are neither explicit nor exhaustive enough to form any real basis for ensuring the success of the site as a whole.

245. We have heard the view expressed in some quarters that the wording of section 28 of the 1908 Act would prevent an allotments authority from imposing
any conditions of tenancy upon an allotment holder other than those covered by Ministerial approval. We are advised, however, that this is not so, as section 28 relates only to general rules made by the local council and imposed upon the holder of every allotment garden in its administrative area. Thus, while a council would not be permitted to amend or add to its rules without a further submission to the Minister, each applicant for one of its allotment gardens could be required to sign a tenancy agreement which contained undertakings quite outside the scope of the rules themselves.

246. We have been able to inspect a very large number of tenancy agreements in use by urban allotments authorities. While, in general, they incorporate the model rules issued by the Ministry, almost all of them include additional covenants. Moreover, some authorities which have never sought Ministerial approval have been able to insert into their agreements binding covenants which are not only outside the model rules but often in contradiction of them. Thus, for example, although the model rules stipulate that a tenant may be given one month’s notice if his rent remains unpaid for forty days, several tenancy agreements reduce this last-named period to twenty-one or even fourteen days. We regard this situation as quite absurd.

247. In answering our questionnaire, a total of 72 per cent of the urban authorities which provide allotments told us that they require every tenant to sign a written agreement, and this percentage agrees with the number of contracts submitted to us. A further 5 per cent insist upon written agreements for their statutory sites only. Most of the towns which dispense with agreements provide only a small number of allotments, and are content that the tenant shall simply hold a ‘rule book’. There is, however, one system which, although now infrequent, deserves both mention and comment. During the last war it was common practice to issue a licence to cultivate rather than a tenancy agreement, and in a small number of urban areas this form of licence is still used for temporary allotments. This fact was first brought to our attention in the written evidence submitted by N.A.G.S. and an inspection of the agreements in our possession confirms that it continues. Unless these licences are confined to land which is still requisitioned—and we cannot believe that this is so—then their only apparent purpose is to deny the allotment holder the status of tenant, and thus to deprive him of the protection of certain sections of the Acts. We cannot but deplore this practice, the more so since such authorities appear to exceed the provisions of section 23 of the 1908 Act, which requires them to let allotments to persons who desire them.

248. Before discussing some of the more important provisions of the agreements submitted to us, mention ought to be made of a number of provisions which are more rarely found, if only to demonstrate the total lack of consistency between different authorities. An agreement presented by Halifax includes a detailed specification of the size of hut or shed which the tenant would be permitted to erect on his plot; Norwich merely insists that the total area of the hut must not exceed 45 square yards, while a document from Welwyn Garden City bans the erection of all buildings, including greenhouses. Elsewhere, one agreement incorporates a specific attempt to limit the compensation payable on termination of the tenancy; another requires a deposit of £1, to be refunded if the plot is left in an orderly state; and several impose a ban on the sale of produce. Among the more debatable clauses, we have seen a requirement that the tenant shall fix a number plaque upon his plot, attempts to regularise a strict rotation of
crops, and a rule that, before he obtains a plot, an applicant must become a member of the local association. The following provisions each appear to be confined to one authority:—

“The tenant will be expected to acquiesce in any necessary adjustment of boundaries”.
“The tenant shall not stage any contest between animals, birds or men”.
“Under no circumstances shall the tenant permit seeds to fall on other gardens”!

249. Any consideration of the contents of these agreements must inevitably include reference to three forms of restriction which many local authorities place upon the uses to which the tenant may put his plot. None of these restrictions appears in the Ministry’s model rules. The first relates to perennial crops and emerges from section 47 of the Act of 1908, which entitles the tenant of an allotment who is given notice to quit to compensation in respect of such crops unless their cultivation is expressly forbidden by the terms of his tenancy. In the tenancy agreements that we have seen it is almost universal practice for local authorities to forbid the growing of any crop which continues productive for more than one season. Since the insertion of such a clause is practically suggested by the 1908 Act, we cannot quarrel with the frequency with which it appears. It seems obvious, however, in retrospect, that if the law had made no provision for compensation in respect of such crops they would nonetheless have been grown; as it is, we have a ridiculous situation in that not only is there no compensation for these crops, but their very cultivation is forbidden!

250. The second important question concerned the cultivation of flowers and shrubs. We have seen that, by definition, an allotment garden must be used “wholly or mainly for the production of vegetable or fruit crops”. While, as we have indicated, the word “mainly” in this context could mean almost anything, it is very doubtful whether an allotment devoted “wholly or mainly” to flowers could be regarded as an allotment garden; if the flowers were sold, it might even be an agricultural holding. An allotments authority is under no obligation to provide a plot of land for this purpose, so it would not have been surprising to find that most tenancy agreements severely restricted the cultivation of flowers or shrubs. In fact very few specifically do so; and an even smaller number do so obliquely.

251. In answering our questionnaire, half the urban allotments authorities told us that their attitude to the cultivation of flowers on allotment gardens had never been defined or even considered. Town after town insisted that its allotment holders regarded their plots as “vegetable gardens” and that none had ever attempted to grow more than “a very few flowers”. A further quarter replied that, as far as they were concerned, the whole allotment garden could be devoted to the cultivation of flowers. They invariably added that the number of their tenants who took advantage of this policy was negligible. In contrast, the 18 authorities listed in Table 19 informed us that they operate a complete prohibition upon the growing of flowers on allotment gardens. It is curious that so many of the towns in this list are in the south of England. The remaining authorities, 22.7 per cent of the total, have decided that flowers must not be grown on more than half the plot.

252. In the light of these figures, it is pertinent to ask why so few allotment holders today make any real attempt to grow flowers. The evidence which we
have received from N.A.G.S. suggests that many authorities have actively discouraged the cultivation of flowers in allotment gardens, but the statistics show that this is not generally true. Indeed a number of authorities which make a practice of leasing their sites to associations told us that although the town had placed no restriction on flower cultivation, the associations themselves had included clauses prohibiting this in the tenancy agreements which they required their members to sign. We will be able to consider this matter further when we come to discuss the allotment holder himself; *prima facie*, however, the responsibility for the general lack of flowers on urban allotment sites would appear to rest mainly with the allotments movement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authorities prohibiting flower cultivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashby-de-la-Zouch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beeston and Stapleford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benfleet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bournemouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheshunt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

253. Finally in this examination of urban tenancy agreements we must turn to the complex question of livestock keeping on allotment garden sites. We do not intend at this stage to discuss in detail the advantages and disadvantages of combining stock-keeping with horticulture, nor to consider the merits of the ‘stock’ allotments originally conceived and provided by the L.S.A.; both will be covered later in our report. But, as we pointed out in Chapter 2, the law on the question is very confused and it is necessary to establish how urban authorities today deal with the problems it poses.

254. It is expedient to restate briefly the provisions of the Acts which relate to this question. Section 12 of the Act of 1950 permits the occupier of *any land* to keep hens or rabbits thereon subject to certain provisos, even where he has previously contracted not to do so. One of the stipulations is that by keeping livestock he does not offend the provisions of any enactment. If, however, an allotment garden is still to be “wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable or fruit crops”, then the use of the entire plot for the rearing of *any* livestock would presumably mean that it would cease to be an allotment garden; if so, the local authority would be under no obligation to provide a plot for this purpose. Faced with this situation the attitude of urban allotments authorities is interesting. Many authorities told us that the question of keeping livestock on their allotments had never arisen, and that no policy had been evolved. Of the remainder, 43-3 per cent sought to ban livestock altogether from their allotment sites, while 56-7 per cent were prepared to permit one or more types of small stock to be kept. A correlation (Table 3, Appendix IV) showed that the percentage of plots used for stock keeping increases significantly in towns which provide more statutory allotments, probably because the outlay on buildings to house the stock can only be justified if a measure of security is available. The actual percentages of towns permitting each type of stock are shown in Table 20; in practice many of the towns would offer no objection to the rearing of any type of small livestock. What is more surprising, however, is that of the towns permitting livestock no less than 26-1 per cent told us that they would permit the entire allotment garden to be devoted to one or more types of stock-keeping! Whether they realise that this would almost certainly bring it
within the definition of an agricultural holding seems very doubtful. It is peculiar, also, that of those authorities which forbid the keeping of stock entirely, only a small number, including Crosby and Widnes (Lancs.), Corby and Rushden (Northants), Blaydon-on-Tyne (Co. Durham), Llchwyr (Glamorgan) and the London Borough of Richmond-on-Thames, have made a bye-law to this effect; the remainder appear to rely upon regulations or clauses in the individual tenancy agreements. As we have seen, so far as hens and rabbits are concerned, these latter are likely to prove ineffective in law.

Table 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of urban authorities allowing each type of livestock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigeons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabbits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

255. No discussion of tenancies of urban allotments would be complete without some reference to the methods used by local authorities to find tenants for vacant allotments. Urban authorities were asked to state specifically whether vacancies were advertised either on notice boards or in the local press; 26.4 per cent replied that they advertised on notice boards and 22.8 per cent in the

Table 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban authorities having 'model' plots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackburn (Lancs.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourne (Lincs.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eccles (Lancs.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exeter (Devon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felling (Northd.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garforth (Yorks.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halstead (Essex)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keighley (Yorks.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenilworth (Warks.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knighton (Radnor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool (Lancs.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

press. However, since 18 per cent used both methods, it is clear that over 70 per cent use neither. They were also asked whether they had prepared a 'model' allotment plot which the general public could view; only the twenty-two towns listed in Table 21 reported that they had done so, although a few more, such as Bristol, have an area devoted to vegetables and maintained by the council.

256. Each authority was then asked what other methods it adopted to bring vacant plots to the notice of the general public. The answers to this question revealed a marked paucity of good ideas, but the list of replies from individual towns included the following:—

(i) Articles in a council publication distributed to all householders.
(ii) Slips of paper issued with rate demands.
(iii) Advertisement on local 'buses.
(iv) Circulars to occupants of new housing estates.
(v) Reports at town hall press conferences.
(vi) Canvassing by rent collectors.
(vii) Notification to local horticultural societies.
(viii) Contact by 'voluntary wardens' of sites.

All of these methods seem to us highly commendable, but we must not overlook the fact that over 50 per cent of all urban authorities appear to have no policy whatsoever. We acknowledge that authorities are under no legal obligation to find tenants for vacant plots, and (subject always to certain qualifications which we will make in due course) there seems no reason why an authority should be any more anxious to persuade people to use its allotments than, say, its football pitches. We are aware, also, that in almost every case in which a site has been leased to an association the local authority has divested itself of all responsibility in this sphere. We are, however, convinced that every allotments authority has at least two moral responsibilities which it cannot avoid. Firstly, so long as it is obliged to provide allotments for those who want them, it should ensure that every inhabitant is aware that plots are available and knows how to obtain one. In its evidence to us, N.A.G.S. suggested that one-third of the country's population would not know how to acquire an allotment. While we believe this to be a considerable exaggeration, we are satisfied that, in many towns, very little is done to let people know that allotments are available in the town. The second point is that, since, in the existing pattern of allotment gardening, vacancies resulting from normal turnover will occur even on the best regulated sites, the allotments authority has the choice of three alternative courses of action. It can either make a sincere attempt to fill the vacancies as they occur, irrespective of whether the site is leased to an association; it can take timely and positive steps to ensure that the vacant plots do not become unsightly; or it can just wait until a prospective tenant chances along, by which time the plot will be overgrown. The authority must then assume so great a share of the responsibility for the dereliction that it cannot reasonably use that dereliction as an argument for closing the site.

G. Finance

257. The Act of 1950 provided, according to its universal interpretation, that in any financial year the deficit on the allotment account of any authority should not, after the exclusion of a number of items, exceed the product of a 2d. rate. But in 1965, almost 90 per cent of urban allotments authorities spent less than the equivalent of a 1/4d. rate on their allotments (Table XI, Appendix III). Not unnaturally perhaps, this situation has been offered by N.A.G.S., in its evidence to us, as proof that the great majority of local authorities care little for their allotments or their allotment holders, and it is therefore worth examination in some detail. There are, we believe, three most important points to be borne in mind if this obvious discrepancy is to be put in its true perspective. The first is the somewhat elementary point that since 1950 there have been two property revaluations; their effect has been to increase rateable values and, therefore, the product of a 1d. rate, far in excess of any increase in costs. It is possible to illustrate this in general terms. Whereas in 1950–1, the total rateable value of England and Wales was £331 million, in 1964–5 it was no less than £2,099 million. In consequence, over a fourteen-year period, the total sum
which authorities were theoretically permitted to expend upon their allotments multiplied more than sixfold. But during the same period the total rate collected increased only from £290 million to £988 million, and even if it could properly be assumed that this rise was due entirely to increased costs (and not to increased responsibilities), it still represents little more than a threelfold increase. Expressed in another way, in 1950–1 a 2d. rate represented, on average, 0·9 per cent of an authority’s total rate income, whereas in 1964–5 it represented 1·8 per cent. The conclusion seems obvious; if those responsible for the 1950 Act had been able to foresee the two revaluations and their consequences, they would have set the maximum expenditure at a much lower rate than 2d. The second point carries this argument a stage further. In 1950, the A.A.C., in proposing that the maximum sum available to allotments by way of rate aid should be the equivalent of the product of 1¾d. in the £, believed that the number of allotments would not only

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product of a 2d. rate in selected county boroughs:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967–8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borough</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birkenhead</td>
<td>39,200</td>
<td>144,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackpool</td>
<td>65,840</td>
<td>150,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolton</td>
<td>42,400</td>
<td>160,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bournemouth</td>
<td>82,400</td>
<td>152,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighton</td>
<td>94,160</td>
<td>163,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luton</td>
<td>81,600</td>
<td>148,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middlesbrough</td>
<td>42,020</td>
<td>158,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>38,600</td>
<td>151,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

remain constant but would increase. As we have seen, their number has in fact declined since 1950 by almost 40 per cent and, other things being equal, it does not seem unreasonable that an authority which administers fewer allotments might expect to spend less (in total) upon them. Thirdly, although it is sanctioned by over forty years of continuous application, we feel bound to regard the whole principle of prescribing a maximum expenditure on allotments by reference to a specified rate product as open to doubt. In general, the need for allotments this century has been greater in urban areas where the population has lived at the greatest densities; equally generally, such areas have lower rateable values. Thus we find the paradox that towns whose rate product is high need to provide fewer allotments but are permitted to spend more upon them. This position is illustrated by Table 22, which sets out the product of a 2d. rate in the year 1967–8 in eight county boroughs whose populations are very much the same. It seems to us manifestly absurd that Brighton and Bournemouth should be entitled to spend twice as much money upon allotments as are Birkenhead and Salford; and it is even more ludicrous that they should be accused of antipathy towards allotments if they fail to do so.

258. For these reasons, we regard with some scepticism the suggestion that urban allotments authorities should approach the maximum permitted allotment expenditure. Yet at the same time we are unable to view the figures quoted at the beginning of paragraph 257 with any complacency. Not only did as many as 90 per cent spend less than a ¾d. rate in 1965, but 19 per cent actually showed a small profit on their allotment accounts, while a further 2·4 per cent produced a loss too negligible to be measured in rate terms. We cannot regard this as satisfactory; whatever view is taken as to the function of allotments today, it is
perfectly clear from the Acts that their provision is to be looked upon as a public service subsidised from the rates, not as a profit-making enterprise. At the other end of the scale, 29 per cent of towns estimated that their allotment income in 1965–6 would be less than one-quarter of the expenditure. The disparity between these two extremes is illuminating and merits further consideration later.

259. The expenditure debited to the allotment account falls conveniently into four heads—Administration, which includes the salaries, or apportioned salaries, of local government officers responsible for the town’s allotments system, together with the wages of any outdoor staff employed to look after the sites; Outgoings, which incorporates payments of interest on capital borrowing and the rent of any sites not owned by the authority; Maintenance, including renewal of fencing and repairs to buildings; and Improvements, which involves capital expenditure on the provision of amenities. In order to illustrate the differences in approach by various towns to expenditure under each of these heads, we have devised Table 23 from the 1965–6 estimates submitted by some urban authorities.

### Table 23
Allotments expenditure in selected towns in England and Wales: 1965–6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Population 1966 (thousands)</th>
<th>Total number of allotment gardens provided per thousand population</th>
<th>Estimated expenditure 1965–6 in shillings per plot</th>
<th>Estimated deficit in terms of 1d. rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aylesbury M.B.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Administration 5 Outgoings 8 Maintenance 45 Improvements 5</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedford M.B.</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Administration 33 Outgoings 38 Maintenance 20 Improvements 16</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham C.B.</td>
<td>1,103</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Administration 62 Outgoings 17 Maintenance 26 Improvements 7</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridlington M.B.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Administration 25 Outgoings 16 Maintenance 7 Improvements 16</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol C.B.</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Administration 38 Outgoings 6 Maintenance 20 Improvements 16</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derby C.B.</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Administration 8 Outgoings 22 Maintenance 7 Improvements 17</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool C.B.</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Administration 5 Outgoings 12 Maintenance 7 Improvements 3</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Windër M.B.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Administration 30 Outgoings 7 Maintenance 29 Improvements 3</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pontyprrid U.D.</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Administration 4 Outgoings 5 Maintenance 5 Improvements 16</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sale M.B.</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Administration 20 Outgoings 26 Maintenance 28 Improvements 16</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stourbridge M.B.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Administration 5 Outgoings 5 Maintenance 32 Improvements 3</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutton L.B.</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Administration 16 Outgoings 14 Maintenance 22 Improvements 3</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulverston U.D.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>Administration 6 Outgoings 3 Maintenance 16 Improvements 16</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The simplest method of comparison is to take the largest town (Birmingham) in the sample as a yardstick, and to consider a number of other towns in relation to it. In 1965–6 Birmingham spent 79s. on the provision of each plot in the city, and 33s. on its upkeep; Bristol, on the other hand, was able to provide a plot for 44s. and spent a further 36s. in caring for it. But since Bristol is more lavish than Birmingham in its total provision of allotment gardens per thousand population, the deficit recovered from the rate is almost as high. Derby, which leases many of its sites to associations, is able to keep its rate expenditure low by spending little upon administration or maintenance; Liverpool can spend more upon the upkeep of its sites without incurring a higher deficit because its provision is low. Among the smaller towns, Ulverston is able to maintain a high provision at relatively low cost by spending very little per plot on administration and rents, while Sale spends almost as much in catering for a much lower provision. In the case of almost every town in England and Wales the figure in at least one column of Table 23 would be either abnormally high or very low. With so many different factors involved, it is obviously impossible to suggest an optimum figure for any or all of these four heads as it would depend entirely upon local circumstances. But there are two points which seem to us to be self-evident. Firstly, neither the cost of administration nor the cost of maintenance should be permitted to rise
unduly at the expense of the other. Badly maintained sites create additional administrative problems which can only be solved by increasing the cost of administration still further, while a poor administration may be unable to direct the fortunes of a well-maintained site to advantage. Secondly—and this we regard as most important—since the size of a town’s ‘outgoings’ (loan charges and rent) is almost entirely the result of its allotments policy, it is unfair that the allotment holders should suffer because of it. Thus, if an over-emphasis on temporary sites involves an authority in large payments of rent, neither administration nor maintenance should be reduced by way of compensation.

260. It is of course, possible for a town to borrow* for the purpose of making capital improvements to its allotment sites, and during the year 1965 Ministerial authority was given to seven towns to borrow a total of £45,047 in this way. In one case, which covered the development of a new ‘model’ site, the amount involved would have been equivalent to a 3d. rate, and the only alternative to the loan would have been to spread the development over a number of years. But in five of the remaining six applications, the sum for which application was made was less than the product of one-tenth of a 1d. rate. We have no desire to argue here the relative advantages of financing minor capital expenditure by borrowing or by a charge upon the rates, as each authority is entitled to decide the better method for each transaction. It is, however, curious that an authority which is able to finance some capital expenditure on its allotment account, and which, nonetheless, spends no more than a ¼d. rate upon allotments, should then seek loan sanction rather than increase its rate call by one-tenth of a 1d. The probable explanation is that such authorities are determined to keep their rate expenditure in respect of allotments at the lowest possible level, even though they will then be obliged to borrow money for essential capital expenditure.

261. It will be observed that in Table 23 only four authorities included in the sample proposed to incur expenditure during 1965–6 in respect of improvements to their sites. It is necessary now to examine why this should be so, and whether the provision of amenities upon allotments sites is regarded generally as a necessary or desirable expense. We must at the outset acknowledge that an authority which has met the demand for allotment gardens is under no legal obligation to provide any amenities for its allotment holders. We must also recognise that some authorities may now have decided to withhold major expenditure on site improvements until the findings of our report are known.

262. Early in our enquiries, we thought it necessary to list every desirable amenity which we felt that the ideal allotment site might possess. In doing so, we were greatly assisted by the advice and help which we received from many quarters, and not least from a number of urban authorities which had clearly given considerable thought to the question. We decided that the amenities included in Table 24 represented all that could reasonably be required. If we allow that numbers (ii) and (iii) and numbers (v) and (vi) are mutually exclusive, then Manchester, Grimsby and the London Borough of Croydon each provide one site with all these amenities; another such site exists in Derby, but is privately owned. Walsall, Guilford and Sale can offer sites which lack only a meeting hut, a storage shed and a car park respectively. At the other extreme, twenty towns (listed in Table 25) acknowledged in their replies to our questionnaire

* Section 53(4), Act of 1908.
that there were no amenities on any of their sites. As neither Table 24 nor Table 25 differentiates between sites of different sizes, they tend to present an unfair picture. Accordingly, we totalled the number of plots available on sites with different numbers of the listed amenities, and Table 26 seeks to assess the degree of probability that an applicant for an allotment garden will be offered a plot on a site with good amenity provision. It shows that one tenant in nine can expect to find six or more of these amenities on his site.

Table 24
Percentage of urban sites possessing each amenity:
England and Wales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amenity</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(i) Piped water (or equivalent)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Individual sheds</td>
<td></td>
<td>49-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Grouped sheds</td>
<td></td>
<td>22-57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Communal meeting hut</td>
<td></td>
<td>6-58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) W.C.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vi) Chemical toilets</td>
<td></td>
<td>7-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vii) Communal storage shed</td>
<td></td>
<td>12-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(viii) Number plaques for each plot</td>
<td></td>
<td>9-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ix) Car park</td>
<td></td>
<td>5-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(x) Secure gates and fencing</td>
<td></td>
<td>62-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(xi) Hard surfaced all-weather paths</td>
<td></td>
<td>15-42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

263. The most important exercise, however, based on the data for amenity provision which allotments authorities supplied to us, was to discover whether there was any clear relationship between amenity provision and the popularity of the site. We have received much evidence to the effect that a reluctance on the part of the local authority to provide basic amenities was often responsible

Table 25
Towns in England and Wales which have provided no amenities on their sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alsager (Chesh.)</th>
<th>Goole (Yorks.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altrincham (Chesh.)</td>
<td>Halstead (Essex)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashby-de-la-Zouch (Leics.)</td>
<td>Havant and Waterloo (Hants.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashton-in-Makerfield (Lancs.)</td>
<td>Huyton-with-Roby (Lancs.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baldock (Herts.)</td>
<td>Penistone (Yorks.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bentley-with-Arksey (Yorks.)</td>
<td>Pwlilhei (Caern.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bromsgrove (Worcs.)</td>
<td>Tamworth (Staffs.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crediton (Devon)</td>
<td>Teignmouth (Devon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dearne (Yorks.)</td>
<td>Wells-next-the-Sea (Norf.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

for large numbers of vacant plots, and a computer analysis has shown a highly significant statistical correlation between the lack of amenities in a town and the proportion of its plots which are vacant. (Table III, Appendix IV). Table 27, which shows the percentage of vacant plots on sites providing different numbers of the specified amenities, indicates quite clearly that, on sites with a good standard of amenity provision, the number of vacant plots falls dramatically and consistently. Many of the sites with no amenities whatsoever consist of odd corners of land in close proximity to housing projects which local authorities often allow tenants to cultivate on request; the fact that they contain relatively few vacant plots may therefore be discounted.

264. A review of the itemised expenditure for the year 1965/6, summarised in Tables XIV and XV of Appendix III, shows that 63-2 per cent of towns incurred
expense in connection with the maintenance of fences and gates, 13·8 per cent
provided new fencing and 13·5 per cent installed a water supply for at least one
of their sites. Although we were told that individual sheds are available on 22·6
per cent of urban allotment sites, a far smaller percentage spent money upon
their maintenance. There can be little doubt that the poor standard of amenity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of amenities</th>
<th>% of total plots having such amenities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None ...</td>
<td>10·43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One ...</td>
<td>13·29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two ...</td>
<td>20·52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three ...</td>
<td>18·11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four ...</td>
<td>14·48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five ...</td>
<td>11·96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six ...</td>
<td>6·42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven ...</td>
<td>3·43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight ...</td>
<td>1·08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine or more ...</td>
<td>0·28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100·00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

provision on allotment sites today contributes in no small measure to their
unsightly appearance and general air of neglect. It is therefore pertinent to
consider why an authority which might in many other respects take a justifiable
pride in the services which it provides, remains reluctant to spend more than a
bare minimum upon the appearance of its allotment sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of amenities per site</th>
<th>% of plots vacant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None ...</td>
<td>17·67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One ...</td>
<td>24·08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two ...</td>
<td>23·33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three ...</td>
<td>21·94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four ...</td>
<td>22·51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five ...</td>
<td>18·52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six ...</td>
<td>13·89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven ...</td>
<td>11·43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight ...</td>
<td>9·55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nine or more ...</td>
<td>3·72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

265. There are, we believe, a number of reasons, the first and most important
of which is financial. We were told by very many urban authorities, both in
written evidence and during our visits, that when local authorities are obliged to
prune every item of expenditure to the absolute minimum, allotment sites must
suffer equally with other services. We must acknowledge at the outset that this
should be so, particularly as no convincing argument has been presented that
allotments should receive any special financial privilege. But the computer
analysis summarised in Appendix IV showed no correlation between rate expend-
iture and the provision of amenities, and we believe that, in the majority of towns,
the financial situation has been offered all too easily as an argument to avoid considering the problem in depth. In many areas, we have found that the allotments committee is not sufficiently powerful to compete with others for the little money which is available, and, in consequence, the allotments estimates are depressed every year while other services achieve an occasional advance. We have heard chairmen of allotments committees claim with pride that they have ‘managed’ to reduce their allotments expenditure, even though the town’s rate product has increased; thus allotments have often to some extent subsidised other services.

Table 28
Proceeds of Sale of a Statutory Allotment Site: 1960
Grimsby County Borough

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternative allotment site—cost of land</td>
<td>12,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site clearance, levelling, roads, water supply, fencing, stores and tool sheds</td>
<td>14,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erection of greenhouses (for letting)</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making up Ely Road frontage to Salt Ings allotments</td>
<td>30,668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repayment of loan debt outstanding at 31st March 1961 on various allotment sites (over 15 years repayment period remaining)</td>
<td>12,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvements to other allotment sites</td>
<td>6,242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance to invest in Consolidated Loans Funds as reserve for future capital expenditure on allotment sites</strong></td>
<td>4,499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>57,035</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nor do we believe that authorities have given sufficient consideration to the possibility that additional expenditure might be recouped from increased rents, an important matter about which more will be said in due course. Our main objection, however, stems from a conviction that, in a very large number of towns, the present situation is the outcome of a policy of regarding each allotment site as a separate unit and considering each item of expenditure in isolation. If, during the past fifteen years, every town had made a fair and rational appraisal of its allotments system as a whole, had decided which sites might merit financial aid and which would not, had considered how its administrative costs might be pruned without loss of efficiency and had debated the wisdom of continuing to pay high rents for temporary sites which were half empty, then we believe that the problems of finance might in many cases have been solved. As evidence of this, we cite the case of Grimsby County Borough which decided, in 1960, to sell a poor and badly tenanted statutory allotment site to two industrial concerns. The net proceeds of the sale were £61,534 and Table 28 indicates how this money was used. It is clear that, by this one transaction, the town was able to create a new ‘model’ site which is fully tenanted and one of the finest we have seen (Plate 9); it could improve the frontage of a second (existing) site; it repaid its allotment loan debt; and it was able to retain a balance of £4,499 against future capital expenditure. All of this was achieved without recourse to borrowing and without incurring a deficit on the allotment account; indeed, the discharge of the debt enabled the authority to increase its allotment expenditure in subsequent years without the need of a greater subsidy. We are certain that many other towns could have achieved similar results.

266. The second argument, which has been put to us less frequently, is that the continuing reduction in the demand for allotments makes it unwise to spend
money upon sites which may not be needed in a few years’ time. There is some substance in this argument, but all too often it is accepted by an allotments Committee with a hopeless resignation and without any detailed consideration (which can only be undertaken locally) as to whether it is valid in a particular case. We do not wish to anticipate our findings in this respect, but we are satisfied that, in many instances, the advocates of this line of thought have confused cause and effect. Unless they have sought to ascertain what proportion of allotment holders who leave a site do so because of its general air of neglect and its lack of amenities, their argument must lose much of its force.

267. There are two further points which, although they have rarely been expressed, seem to us to have a considerable bearing upon this aspect of the problem. We have said that many allotment sites are there by accident rather than by design, and without regard to their viability in a long-term planning context. In some areas, indeed, sites have become tacitly recognised as a sort of ‘unofficial land bank’ which may be drawn upon for other uses as necessary. In such areas it is not surprising that even the most thriving sites are regarded as vulnerable and, consequently, deserving only of the barest minimum of financial support.

268. The last point to be made concerns the attitude of the allotment holder himself, which we will cover more fully in Chapter 10. In the final analysis no tenant has the right to ask his allotments authority to spend large sums of money on the upkeep of his site or in providing the amenities which he needs, unless he is prepared not only to cultivate his plot in a way which will enhance the appearance of the site, but also to play his part in ensuring that the amenities are fully utilised. No authority can reasonably be expected to spend more money on its allotments than the allotment holders deserve.

269. We have not yet discussed the general level of rents which the tenants of allotments provide by urban allotments authorities are now required to pay, but this must clearly have a place in any examination of the financial aspects of allotment provision. The legal requirements have always been somewhat ambiguous. Between 1922* and 1950 a council was obliged to let an allotment at “the full fair rent for such use”. In 1950, the A.A.C. recommended the deletion of the word “full” from this requirement, but the Act of 1950 replaced it by a law compelling each authority to charge “such rent as a tenant may reasonably be expected to pay”. It also permitted a council to charge a smaller rent “where special circumstances exist”. N.A.G.S. suggested to us in evidence that the meaning of the 1950 Act was that the rent should be equivalent to that paid by an agricultural tenant in the same area for a plot of similar size, and that the only valid justifications for an increase in rent were an increase in the cost of living or the costs of administration or the provision of additional amenities. There might be some substance in this claim if rents were the same in different towns, but N.A.G.S. acknowledges that they “vary from a few shillings per plot to a top limit of perhaps £3 per 300 square yards”.

270. From the information received from local authorities it proved a little difficult to assess the rents which are actually charged today. We found that some towns demand differential rents in respect of plots upon statutory and temporary sites, and even upon sites with good and bad soils. Some charge more for plots on sites with piped water, while others prefer to ask for separate

* Section 16(3), Act of 1922.
payments in respect of water and other amenities. We decided, ultimately, to ascertain the lowest rent which a potential tenant could expect to pay in each town simply for 300 square yards of soil. We discovered that 58·6 per cent of urban areas charge 10s. per annum or less for a plot of this size, whereas only 8·2 per cent (almost exclusively the largest towns) demand more than £1. Over three-quarters of urban authorities (77·3 per cent) stated that they considered that their present rents were adequate, while the remainder believed that they should be raised (Table IX, Appendix III).

271. Reference was made in paragraph 23 to the fine gardens which surrounded Birmingham in the mid-eighteenth century (Figure 2) and which were let at an annual rent of one guinea for 20 rods of land. In paragraph 24 we discussed the Southampton venture of 1850, in which allotments were offered (and eagerly taken) at rents of 18s. 4d. again for 20 rods. A national survey conducted in 1916 showed that rents in urban areas then averaged about 10s. per 10-rod plot; this is similar to the sum charged in over half the towns of England and Wales today. In the face of the enormous changes in money values which have occurred during the present century, the stability of allotment rents highlights a ridiculous situation which merits close examination.

272. We are convinced that the 77·3 per cent of towns which told us that their rents were adequate had not thought about the question in any detail. Their call upon the rates is very low, and we suspect that they could foresee that a general increase in rents might make it difficult to avoid running their accounts at a profit. Since they would wish to avoid this situation, they were obliged to consider that the present rents were sufficient. Few towns can have examined seriously the practicability of coupling an increase in rents with a corresponding increase of expenditure upon maintenance and improvements. We cannot accept the contention of N.A.G.S. that the wording of the Act implies that an allotment should be let at an agricultural rent. The short answer is that one does not generally find agricultural holdings in the built-up area of a large town. It is probable that the correct interpretation of section 10 of the 1950 Act is that an urban allotment should be let at a rent similar to that demanded for a town garden of similar size, but since the adequacy of the rent is linked closely with the provision of amenities and the extent of the deficit on the allotment account, we do not propose to submit the question to detailed examination at this stage.

273. There are, however, further arguments to suggest that rents are at present quite inadequate. Foremost among these, in our opinion, is the relationship between the price which an allotment holder pays to rent his plot and the value which he places upon it. A man whose only unavoidable expense is of the order of 10s. per annum need have no real incentive to cultivate his plot properly; on the contrary, he may feel that as the expenditure is so small, he can even "afford to neglect it". Furthermore, a derisory rent seems to us to do much to perpetuate the aura of charity in allotment provision; indeed, we are aware of no other local authority service which costs a beneficiary no more today than it did a century ago. We have found a number of statistically significant correlations which support this view. There is a clear connection between the size of the rent and the number of plots in a town which are vacant, lower basic rents being associated with a high proportion of vacant plots (Table III, Appendix IV). Large towns tend to charge higher rents and generally need a higher provision in terms of acres per thousand population (Table III, Appendix IV). We appreciate that, in each case, there may be other factors which ought to be taken

110
into account, but as supporting evidence the following points have considerable value. Almost one-quarter of the urban authorities allow some form of reduction even of this low rent to old-age pensioners. Here, again, the inconsistency between different towns is apparent. While a small number will allow an old-age pensioner to hold one plot entirely rent-free, one major authority told us that it had received advice to the effect that the Act of 1950 did not permit any reduction in the case of old people. We can see no possible objection to the grant of some reduction where the normal rent is reasonable, but the allowance of a 25 per cent reduction on a rent amounting to no more than 3d. per week simply poses additional problems of accountancy. We take the view, therefore, that the rents charged by urban authorities for their allotments are today, in general, much too low. We acknowledge that there are many allotment holders who do not share this view, and that any proposal for a significant increase would inevitably mean that some would give up their plots. But if this is the only argument against an increase in rents, it is scarcely plausible; the claim that allotment holders will not pay more is no more an argument for failing to charge a ‘reasonable’ rent than is a contention that ‘bus fares ought not to be increased because of the possibility that fewer people will use the ’buses. In fact, a student working in Malvern ascertained that only 10 per cent of the town’s allotment holders had failed to renew their tenancies when the rent was increased, and those who left largely comprised people who had previously neglected their plots. Within the framework of the present legislation, a slight increase in rents which merely enabled a town to balance its allotment account or to run it at a profit, would seem to us quite inappropriate. But a general increase in rents upon both statutory and temporary sites would enable an authority to provide extra amenities and maintenance for its ‘permanent’ sites whose tenants could then legitimately be asked to pay even more. Examples of the success of such action can be cited. Thus, on a ‘model’ site in Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Plate 8), each tenant pays £3 per annum, plus £1 to the local association; on a similar site in Grimsby (Plate 9) the cost can be as high as £6 10s. 0d. (30s. for a plot with a brick toolshed, together with £5 for a fine greenhouse). Both sites are fully tenanted with a continual waiting-list for vacant plots.

H. Size of sites and plots

274. Each urban authority was asked to express an opinion as to the number of plots which would form the ideal site. Over 50 per cent replied that they had not considered this question and had no firm views to offer. We have no doubt that this response was perfectly genuine, but to some extent it indicates yet again the general laissez-faire attitude towards the allotments system in so many towns. So often have the allotment holders been offered the only ‘available’ piece of land, irrespective of its size, shape and suitability that such questions as the ideal size of a site seem pointless. It is disquieting to realise that these same authorities have seen no reason to consider the question even when the advantages of reducing the size of an existing site have been under examination, for we would have thought that the possibility that a site might become too small to be viable would have been taken into account in every such case.

275. Those authorities which felt able to offer an answer to this question again revealed a surprising variety in their views. While 16·2 per cent feel that the ideal site should contain fewer than 25 plots, 3·6 per cent offered a figure in excess of 200. The majority (67·6 per cent) favoured a figure between 25 and 100
plots, but it is clear in retrospect that sound arguments can be put forward for a site of almost any size. Generally speaking, the towns which opted for very small sites pointed to the ease with which small pockets of land can be provided, the fact that such sites can often be situated near the homes of the tenants, and the strong community spirit which emerges when every tenant on a small site has a good chance of getting to know all his colleagues. Those which came out in favour of sites containing between 50 and 100 plots spoke of the need to form a strong association, the difficulty of providing amenities for smaller sites, and the fact that such a site could serve a closely-knit and clearly defined area or neighbourhood. The advocates of larger sites preferred to rely on the relative cheapness of maintaining one site rather than two, and on the increased security which stemmed from the obvious difficulty which the town would face in providing alternative facilities for a very large number of allotment holders. The average number of plots upon urban allotment sites is 45; statutory sites are generally larger than temporary in the proportion of about 50 plots to 35, but this arises almost certainly from the fact that some temporary 'sites' consist of a single plot only on some odd island of ground. By contrast, we know of a number of sites which extend for more than 30 acres and contain 500 plots or more.

276. More than three-quarters of all the allotment plots in urban areas are of 10 rods (300 square yards) or less, and fewer than one-half of 1 per cent exceed the upper limit of 40 rods imposed by the present definition of an allotment garden (Table V, Appendix III). One may therefore conclude that, as we indicated in paragraph 202, the commercial allotment is entirely rural in character. We do know, however, that in some towns a number of tenants cultivate several allotment garden plots, apparently on a commercial basis, and with the tacit consent of the local authority. For example, during our visit to Gainsborough (Lincolnshire) we were informed that two tenants held 100 and 98 plots respectively, and our questionnaires showed that multiple holding on such a scale is not uncommon in small country towns. Provided that each plot is let separately for an individual rent, the whole would appear to conform to the law relating to allotment gardens. If not, then so large an area of allotments must form an agricultural holding and as such would be outside the scope of this section of our report. In any event, the remedy in such cases is in the authority's own hands, for we are advised that the extent of each authority's legal obligation is the provision of one allotment garden for each applicant.

I. Summary

277. It will be clear from what has been said that there is in our view much to be criticised in the way in which urban authorities manage their allotments systems today. At the same time, it must not be supposed that this criticism could be levelled against every town to an equal degree, or that the failings of the system and the problems which these cause are entirely the fault of the authorities. In more cases than N.A.G.S. is ready to admit, the allotments committee is allowed to function adequately, if not with the degree of authority which N.A.G.S. would wish to see. A number of authorities have produced 'model' sites which not only help to raise the general standard of allotments throughout the town, but also serve to demonstrate to the general public that allotment sites need not be derelict eyesores. Some towns incur an annual deficit of sufficient size to suggest that their expenditure upon maintenance is

112
adequate in relation to the rents they charge. A large number have shown by their evidence that they are aware of the problems which allotments present and are genuinely anxious to find a solution. Moreover, we feel most strongly that an authority which genuinely sought to bring its allotments system more into line with present-day thinking and objectives might well find itself opposed by many of its allotment holders and by the operation of the law. Of the attitude of the allotment holder we will have more to say in Chapter 10. But the existing legislation was devised piecemeal to cover a series of situations which have little or no relevance today, and since the present system is a reflection of that law, it is virtually impossible to change the one while the other is retained.

278. Our criticisms, then, are mainly directed to two aspects of the present situation. Firstly, very few towns have ever subjected their allotments system to a complete appraisal, evaluating each site in terms of popularity, security and suitability. The whole subject has been dealt with on a haphazard and spasmodic basis which must inevitably produce a system which creates in the mind of the allotment holder a feeling that the town is out of touch and sympathy with his needs. We have heard, throughout our enquiries, a great deal about allotment provision, but little or nothing about allotment policy; and only too often, where, as in the case of Coventry, a policy has evolved, no real attempt has been made to explain it to the allotment holders. We feel that far more towns ought to have asked themselves long before now what allotment provision really means, and whether this meaning should be the same today as in the past. They ought to have decided—and this decision has been open to them—whether they wished to provide only for the man who would be content with 300 square yards of indifferent soil at a nominal rent, or whether their moral obligations extended to those who sought something better and were prepared to pay more for it. Secondly, we are satisfied that there is a not inconsiderable number of urban authorities which regard allotment provision as a nuisance and a waste of valuable land. We are not concerned at this stage with discussing the rights and wrongs of such an attitude. Nor do these towns actively seek to avoid their legal responsibilities; we have found no case where an applicant for an allotment has been told that none is available when this is untrue. But this in itself is insufficient. If an applicant is offered a plot on a temporary site some miles away when vacancies are deliberately retained on a coveted statutory site near his home, the town can scarcely claim to have “satisfied the demand” when he turns it down. If, as we have found, a town refuses to accept rents from allotment holders in order to avoid being bound to observe the rules relating to notice to quit, it is guilty of sharp practice. And if a council contrives to impress upon the allotment holders that they are either “a privileged minority” or “second class citizens”—two diametrically opposed phrases which have been used in evidence to us—its attitude can only be directed towards a continual diminution of the ranks of its allotment holders and of its own responsibilities.

279. The claim that “this town has always been allotment-minded” with which one authority opened its evidence to us, is not as pretentious as it may sound. Its importance, however, lies not so much in its degree of truth as in the fact that it was not coined especially for our benefit. It has, indeed, been in general use for many years, and the fact that some towns are able to claim with justifiable pride the title “allotment-minded” for themselves indicates that they are well aware of others which are not.
CHAPTER 8

THE ALLOTMENTS AUTHORITIES—RURAL

280. We issued a questionnaire to all the 10,700 country parishes in England and Wales, irrespective of whether they possessed a council; 1,490 parishes completed all or part of the form, while a further 3,943 informed us that there were no allotments within their administrative boundaries. The returns made to the Allotments Section of the Ministry in 1964 indicated that as many as 7,660 parishes (71·6 per cent) have no allotments, and the 1,490 parishes referred to above therefore represented about 50 per cent of the remainder. A discussion of the distribution of those parishes without allotments was included in Chapter 5 (see also Figure 9).

281. In general, parish clerks were able to state the numbers and acreages of their private allotments far more frequently than were urban authorities. But, in answering our questionnaire, this advantage was neutralised by a number of factors for which we had not adequately allowed. In the first place, the number of allotments of all classes in most of the 1,490 parishes is very small indeed; in most cases they have existed for a very long time, and the oversight which the parishes have over them is now minimal. Secondly, and with the benefit of hindsight, it is clear that the records maintained by many parish clerks are not as extensive as we had been led to believe. In consequence, many of the answers to our questions appeared to be based more upon memory than on documentary evidence. Lastly, a scrutiny of the completed forms revealed that in some parts of the country the term 'allotment' had acquired an extended meaning which enabled the parishes to include areas of land which appeared to be outside our terms of reference. We discussed this difficulty more fully in paragraph 108. Despite these difficulties, we are satisfied that the completed questionnaires, the evidence of our visits and of the theses prepared by students, and the great mass of written evidence which parish clerks were good enough to submit at the outset of our investigations, have enabled us to form a clear and balanced picture of the allotment situation in rural areas today. A full summary of the data derived from the questionnaire is included in Appendix V.

A. Provision of allotments: regional distinctions

282. We have seen that allotments exist today in 28·4 per cent of the rural parishes of England and Wales, and in Chapter 5 we discussed their general distribution. Figure 9, however, was not compiled by reference either to numbers of allotments or to population, and for this reason, did not indicate the areas in which the greatest concentrations of sites are found. Figure 13, therefore, takes the analysis a stage further by showing, for each English county and for Wales as a whole, the total allotment provision of all classes in rural areas in acres per thousand population in the year 1964. It will be observed that by far the most intensive provision occurs in counties embracing and bordering the Fens, particularly in Norfolk, Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire, where the provision exceeds 7 acres per thousand population, and in Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire and Oxfordshire, with 6–7 acres per thousand population. Provision is also strong in Suffolk and Rutland (5–6 acres per thousand), and in
Warwickshire and Worcestershire (4–5 acres per thousand). In contrast, provision in much of northern England, Wales and the Welsh Border counties, Devon and Cornwall and in Sussex and Surrey is now less than 1 acre per thousand population.

283. It must not be supposed from Figure 13 that all allotment plots in rural areas are the same in size and purpose, for this is far from the case. We have already commented on the great differences between the ‘urban’ allotment garden and the ‘commercial’ allotment which is such a feature of many rural areas. We have seen that while the allotment garden is the product of mandatory legislation, of two national emergencies, of a lack of home garden space and of periods of industrial distress, its rural counterpart is largely the relic of the original concept of the allotment as a panacea against poverty, indolence and crime. We saw in Chapter 1 that many such allotments, born of charity, were large enough to require cultivation by plough rather than spade. We noted also that, because during the movement’s origins most land enclosure took place in eastern England from the East Riding to Norfolk and in the midlands and the south, because the quality of the local soil was so variable, and because the incidence of rural poverty was far from uniform, the provision of allotments tended to be concentrated in some parts of the country more than in others. Thus, today, allotment provision in certain rural areas consists almost entirely of plots which are individually too large to come within the definition of an allotment garden, while in others the allotment garden predominates. In still more, there is a curious combination of the two, each serving its own distinct purpose within a small village community. This situation is illustrated by Figure 14, which shows for each English county and for Wales as a whole the average number of allotment plots to the acre in rural areas. The black areas represent counties with relatively small allotment gardens, while the area of lightest stipple—Lincolnshire—has large plots averaging over half an acre each. It will be seen that the rural allotments of the most northerly counties and of Wales, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Staffordshire and Shropshire are now mainly small in size, averaging between eight and ten plots to the acre. This applies also to the south-east, where the spread of the metropolis and the extension of the commuter belt has engulfed the old ‘rural’ allotments of Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Essex, Hertfordshire and parts of Berkshire. At the other extreme, the allotments of Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire in the east and of Herefordshire and Worcestershire in the west are, for the most part, large commercial plots. The remainder of the country averages between 4 and 8 plots to the acre, the larger plots often being found in strongly horticultural areas and the smaller allotment gardens in rural areas adjoining large population centres, such as south Lancashire and the West Riding of Yorkshire.

284. The problem of commercial allotments will be considered more closely in the next section of this chapter. It is sufficient for the present to point to the difficulty of comparing standards of provision in areas where such allotments predominate, and to indicate yet again the unreliability of the national statistics. For the former, a single example will suffice: the Parish Council of Moulton, a village of some 2,500 population in the rural district of Spalding, Lincolnshire, provides 450 acres of allotments per thousand population, though the proportion of the inhabitants who occupy them is little greater than in many urban areas.

285. The overall decline in the total allotment provision in rural parishes since the last war has not been as great as in urban areas. In 1952, the total
area of allotment land in the rural parishes (excluding railway allotments) was 37,880 acres, whereas today it is estimated to be 26,000 acres*, representing a fall of 31.4 per cent, compared with a fall of 37.7 per cent in the towns. Once again, however, this simple statement fails to reveal the true situation, and Figure 15

RURAL ALLOTMENTS (ALL CLASSES): ACREAGE / 1,000 POPULATION 1964

DATA FOR WALES PRESENTED AS A WHOLE, AS INDIVIDUAL COUNTY PROVISION IS OFTEN VERY LOW.

Over 7 Acres Per 1,000 Population
6-7
5-6
4-5
3-4
2-3
1-2
Below 1

Figure 13

has been produced to show the percentage decrease in the rural allotment acreage of each English county, and of Wales as a whole, between 1952 and 1964. A consideration of Figure 15 in relation to Figures 13 and 14 reveals that the decline in the total acreage by counties has been most inconsistent, not only in those parts

* As the Department calls for statistics from rural parishes only quadiennally, it is impossible to be precise.

116

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
of the country where allotment gardens predominate, but also in those where the allotments are largely commercial. Thus, a drastic reduction of over 60 per cent has occurred among the allotment gardens and small commercial plots of Devon and Shropshire, whose overall provision was already low (Table XVIII, Appendix V). Similarly, the decline of between 40 and 50 per cent in Lincolnshire

![Map of Rural Allotments](image)

**Figure 14**

Fifty-six per cent of all rural allotments are 10 rods (300 square yards) or less in area. Making allowances for pathways and other open space this represents between 12 and 14 plots to the acre.

is in marked contrast to the very slight drop in Norfolk, though both counties have a high provision composed mainly of commercial plots. Decreases have also been slight in the commercial fruit and vegetable plots of Herefordshire and

---

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.

Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
Worcestershire. It would clearly be out of place to pursue this interesting analysis too far in this report but one final point must be made. The decline in the numbers of rural allotments in counties embracing large centres of population has often exceeded that in the majority of towns; for instance, reductions of between 30 and 60 per cent have occurred in the acreages of rural allotments in the home counties.

Since 1952 the total area of rural allotments has declined by 31·4 per cent (1967) compared with a fall of 37·7 per cent in urban areas.

286. Any attempt to assess the reasons for this decline in individual parishes is rendered difficult by the small number of allotments involved. We have, however, received from parish clerks a great deal of information on this point,
which indicates that the real decline in allotment gardeners in rural areas is masked in the statistics which we have used. In very many areas, for example, where the pressures to find land for development are less acute, it is customary to allow local farmers to use vacant allotments either for grazing or for growing crops, instead of giving up the land entirely. Thus, the total area of allotment land is maintained at an artificially high level and the number of vacant plots is reduced. Again, we have noted a growing tendency for individual tenants to extend their holdings by taking over several vacant plots; by this means many recognised allotment garden sites have become virtually indistinguishable from commercial allotments. It follows, therefore, that rural allotment gardeners are fewer than the statistics suggest.

287. Nor have we any reason to doubt the statement which has frequently been made to us that the decline in the numbers interested in allotment gardening since 1950 has been greater in rural areas than in urban. There are several reasons for this. Generally speaking, a higher proportion of the residents of rural parishes has a home garden of reasonable size and, if freed from the need to grow vegetables by reasons of national or individual economic stringency, such people are less likely to seek additional garden space. As we pointed out in Chapter 1, to most agricultural workers an allotment merely offers an extension of their paid employment; in times of reasonable wages and prosperity, they are therefore more inclined to turn to the alternative diversions which are now available than is the town-dweller. Moreover, an increasing number of country-dwellers now travel to the nearest town for their employment, and their journeys often leave them with less free time than was available when they worked locally. The growth in car ownership has also persuaded many to seek their recreation further afield in the town or at the coast, whereas previously they had been obliged to spend their spare time in the village. Furthermore, many letters received from parish clerks propounded arguments to explain the fall in the number of allotment holders which may not have a universal application. Thus, in many parishes, fresh vegetables are now on sale locally; in others, such as Aughton (Lancashire) and St. Teath (Cornwall), local farmers are prepared to allow their workers to grow vegetables on their land, thus reducing the need for allotments; still more parish clerks, including those of Ivinghoe (Buckinghamshire), Sunningdale (Berkshire) and Wonersh (Surrey) have told us that the enthusiast prefers either to make a little extra money by offering his services as a jobbing gardener or to appropriate to his own use a home garden belonging to another who is reluctant to cultivate it.

288. Yet there remain a few parishes which, often as a direct consequence of receiving overspill population from a nearby town, have noted some increase in the demand for allotment gardens during the past few years. Among these, we have noted especially Barwick-in-Elmet (West Riding of Yorkshire), Carlton-le-Moorland (Lincolnshire), Chalgrove (Oxfordshire), Ponteland (Northumberland) and Rustington (Sussex)—five parishes in widely separated parts of the country. Such parishes, however, are the exceptions to the general rule. We are forced to conclude from the evidence that, despite the apparent lack of pressures upon rural land, despite the fact that the long and involved history of allotments has often made them a recognised feature of village life, and despite the frequency with which rural sites are provided by a charitable trust whose terms are difficult to circumvent, there has, in recent years, been a considerable overall reduction in the interest shown in allotment gardening in rural areas.
B. ‘Commercial’ allotments

289. In this report, we have used the word ‘commercial’ to describe those rural allotments which are outside the legal definition of an allotment garden and which are cultivated wholly or mainly for profit.* We have seen that they still exist in considerable numbers on the rich soils of the Fenland and in the market gardening areas of the West Midlands. We have said, also, that in their truest form, they are the residue of the original rural allotments which we described in Chapter 1; or, alternatively, that they were provided at a time when the law that “no one person shall hold an allotment in excess of five acres” had real meaning.

290. In the great majority of the areas in which commercial allotments have been provided by the local allotments authority, they have become an accepted part of the pattern of village life, and were originally conceived as “the first rung in the farming ladder”. They are regarded with tolerance amounting almost to affection by the parish council or meeting, and the reason for this is not difficult to find. As we shall see, rather than subsidising their commercial allotments, most parishes ensure that they produce a small annual income. We do not quarrel with this system of management; we can find no argument today for asking the general body of ratepayers to support an individual's profit-making enterprise. We are, indeed, convinced that the rents of all commercial plots should approximate to the normal agricultural rents of the neighbourhood, and should not be restricted by reference either to the charitable instincts which created them or to an ingrained feeling that allotments, whatever their nature, ought to be subsidised. The commercial allotment is looked upon as a business venture by its occupant, and it is right that it should be similarly regarded by the parish which provides it (Plate 20).

291. We are satisfied that the tenant of a commercial allotment is quite different from the man who seeks an allotment garden, and that, generally speaking, the requirements of the one are satisfied without restriction of the legitimate needs of the other. Where, as in Ludham (Norfolk), an attempt has been made to reduce the size of commercial plots even down to the maximum compatible with the definition of an allotment garden, the commercial tenants have usually left, and no allotment gardener has taken their place. It is not surprising, therefore, that in such areas the concept of the allotment garden seems to have little appeal to the parishioners. Thus, the parish clerk of Flitton (Bedfordshire) considers that rural allotments should be large enough to allow cultivation by plough rather than spade; Hockwold-cum-Wilton (Norfolk) believes that the land should be let in 1-acre plots, while Deeping St Nicholas (Lincolnshire) has gone so far as to enlarge its plots from 1 to 3 or even 6 acres.

292. The size of commercial allotments shows no consistency whatsoever, either between counties or between parishes in the same county. From Figure 14 it is apparent that many commercial allotments exist in Lincolnshire where the overall number of plots to the acre is less than two. In such areas as the Fenland plots of several acres are the rule, and this also obtains in those parts of the Fens lying in Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire where the county provision as a whole averages 2 to 4 plots per acre. Similarly, in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, with the same provision, many large commercial

* This definition would exclude the ‘stock’ allotments of urban areas, although these may also, in certain circumstances, be operated primarily for profit.
allotments specialising in market gardening are to be found. Whereas the smallest commercial allotments only slightly exceed the quarter-acre limit of the allotment garden, in some parishes, such as Moulton (Lincolnshire), the plots cover 10 acres each and the council’s annual allotment expenditure includes “repairs to houses”. Presumably, the only reason why such allotments cannot be classed as ‘smallholdings’ is that the latter cannot be provided by parish councils.

293. Every commercial allotment must, it would appear, be an agricultural holding, and the tenant will have a degree of security and an entitlement to compensation which are denied to the occupier of an allotment garden. Since the Act of 1950, there has been no obligation upon a parish, urban or rural, to provide commercial allotments, nor, it would seem, any power under which money might be borrowed for this purpose. Furthermore, although the Minister’s consent to the disposal or alienation of a statutory commercial allotment site would still be required, such consent would almost certainly be automatic, without insistence that it should be replaced. The true commercial allotment, therefore, is today a voluntary transaction between the parish council acting as landlord and the tenant, and the fact that, despite the problems which undoubtedly arise, so many continue to survive is a tribute to the amicable relationship which exists between the occupiers and the parishes which provided them before 1950. We see no reason to disturb this relationship, either by imposing any new obligation to provide commercial allotments or by requiring any parish to close them down.

294. We cannot leave the subject of commercial allotment sites without referring again to the large numbers which have now acquired a commercial flavour which differs from their original concept. Firstly, there are, in the eastern counties, a few sites which are still thought of as being “the first rung in the farming ladder” (see paragraph 290). The most obvious of these is at Sutton Bridge (Holland, Lincolnshire), where the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has one of its three remaining farm settlement estates. Here, a total of 233 acres of allotments, including a few allotment gardens, provide a buffer zone between the village and the 7,000 acres of smallholdings beyond. Some of the allotment tenants progress to the part-time smallholdings, just as the tenants of the latter move in time to the larger full-time holdings as they fall vacant.*

295. Secondly, there is the practice which is now widespread in many parts of the country, both urban and rural, of permitting tenants of allotment gardens to extend their holdings by taking over vacant plots on the same site until they acquire sufficient land to manage it on a commercial basis. We feel that there are dangers in allowing this to occur which may not be sufficiently recognised by the parishes which, no doubt from the best possible motives, allow it to happen. The risk that these multiple allotments might become agricultural holdings could possibly be avoided by ensuring that the tenant continues to sign separate agreements for each plot, but it is doubtful whether this in fact occurs. The parish of Belbroughton (Worcestershire) told us that, in the past, local market gardeners had applied for every plot which became vacant in order to extend their business interests, until every individual holding was now a complete field. We have heard of many areas where this has occurred, particularly in those parts of the country where true commercial allotments already exist. For example,

the parish of Warboys (Huntingdonshire) contains one site of allotment gardens and two of commercial plots. Eighteen of the allotment gardens are now held by one man and, in consequence, the site is virtually indistinguishable from the two commercial sites. It seems to us necessary to keep in mind that, in every parish where this method of avoiding vacant plots has been adopted, there has at some time been a demand for allotment gardens. Such a demand might recur, and it is unwise on the part of a parish to let vacant plots in such a way that recovery of possession might be difficult. We are aware of several instances in which the tenant of an area of land which once purported to be a group of allotment gardens has successfully claimed that he now occupies an agricultural holding and, in consequence, cannot be dispossessed under any of the terms laid down in the allotments legislation.

296. Finally, there is a practice no less widespread of inviting local farmers or smallholders to cultivate vacant allotment garden plots until they are required for new tenants. We feel that, provided that it can be operated on an ad hoc basis and no tenancy is created, this system has much to commend it. The vacant plots will be in use, instead of being left to lie derelict, and the temporary occupier can reasonably be expected to make efficient and intensive use of his holding. In Congresbury (Somer set), for example, a local gardener cultivates the vacant plots on a particular site under the terms of an agreement by which he will keep the hedges trimmed, the gate repaired and the grass mown. When an application is received for an allotment garden, he will surrender a plot, which has been ploughed and is free of weeds, in either April or October. In consequence, the allotment site is managed without expense to the parish, and we feel that this is an admirable arrangement. But agreements of this type are rare, and most of the parishes which have let groups of empty plots to farmers could face considerable difficulties if the question of repossession arose. This problem was put to us forcibly by the National Association of Parish Councils,* which informed us in evidence that, following the decision in the case of Stevens v. Sedgeman (1951, 2 K.B. 434), parish councils had found it difficult to let vacant allotment land temporarily to farmers without creating agricultural holdings. Some had had recourse to technical devices which the N.A.P.C. felt ought not to be necessary, and it proposed, therefore, that in future all allotments (and not merely allotment gardens) should be specifically excluded from the legislation relating to agricultural holdings. We have much sympathy with the N.A.P.C.’s predicament, but we cannot support this proposal in its entirety. The true commercial allotment was always intended to produce an income, and we can see no logical reason for excluding it from the provisions of the relevant legislation. The position is quite different, however, in the case of an allotment garden which is used for purposes of profit, and we will make recommendations designed to remove the difficulty which now exists.

C. Classification of sites

297. The total area of allotment land of all types in rural parishes today amounts to some 27,543 acres.† Of this figure, about 29-6 per cent consists of private sites, which will be dealt with in Chapter 9. As we might have anticipated,

---

* Referred to throughout this report as N.A.P.C.
† Plus an unknown percentage of the 1,541 acres of railway allotment land in England and Wales as a whole.
this proportion is considerably higher than in urban areas; not only do private landowners continue to let land for allotments, but a surprisingly large number of private charitable sites have survived every legislative attempt to destroy their identity. Rural private sites flourish both in the areas devoted to allotment gardens and commercial allotment sites; indeed of the 3,040 parishes which contain allotments today, no fewer than 24.7 per cent rely entirely upon private sites to satisfy the demand (Table IV, Appendix V).

298. Conversely, 51.9 per cent of the same 3,040 parishes now contain no private allotments, the remaining 23.4 per cent including both private sites and sites provided by the parish council or meeting. We also found that 64.3 per cent of the parishes with statutory allotment sites and 55 per cent of those with temporary sites had experienced no change in the number of their plots since 1945. These figures appear to conflict with the overall reduction of 31.4 per cent reported in paragraph 285 but the explanation probably lies in the number of parishes which have lost their last remaining allotments during this twenty-year period. No less than 249 parishes informed us that this was the position in their areas, and we calculate that in some 14 per cent of the parishes with allotments in 1945 the sites have since disappeared entirely. As with urban authorities, the number of parishes (21.3 per cent) which report a reduction in their total number of statutory plots is considerably greater than those (10.6 per cent) in which entire sites have been taken for other purposes (Tables II and III, Appendix V). While this fact again serves to illustrate that the practice of ‘eating into’ sites is prevalent, it is certain that part of the difference between these figures is accounted for by the tendency—of which we have already spoken—to increase the size of the individual holding whenever vacancies occur.

D. Administration and planning

299. It is clear from what has been said that the great majority of rural allotment sites have been in existence for very many years, and it is scarcely surprising that planning considerations have played little or no part in their formation. Indeed, the number of observations which we have received on the planning and siting of rural allotments has been negligible; they have been confined almost exclusively to stipulations that a successful site must be within the perimeter of the village rather than outside it, and that a long, straggling village should have a site at either end. One parish clerk told us, rather plaintively, that “the allotment site is situated in a particularly beautiful spot and provides delightful surroundings for those working on their plots. One would think it would be more popular”. Despite the general lack of forward thinking, however, the principles which have governed the siting of rural allotments seem to us in general less reprehensible than those which have applied in urban areas. We have, for instance, heard no accusation that a parish has sought to close a flourishing site when other land was available for a proposed development. Indeed, in one Sussex parish, the council felt obliged to reverse its decision to close a badly tenanted site because of an increase in the number of applications for plots which it considered had been artificially induced, and in another area the county council “changed its mind” about a proposed development because the site was “so well cultivated”. As in the towns, there is some evidence to suggest that even where attempts have been made to apply sound planning concepts they have not received the full approval of the allotments movement; thus, in a number of parishes, offers by the council to provide permanent, well sited allotments to
replace existing temporary plots have been rejected by the allotment holders who would benefit, on the ground that they would prefer to stay where they are.

300. No fewer than 17.3 per cent of the parishes which completed our questionnaire reported that they had appointed an allotments committee, while a further 3 per cent stated that they had a body of allotment managers. Yet, only 0.9 per cent indicated that they employed anyone exclusively to deal with allotment administration. The number of parishes which are required by law to appoint an allotments committee is minute, and it is doubtful whether many voluntary appointments have been made. There are a number of parishes in which the administration of the local authority sites is conducted with a standard of efficiency rivalling anything found in urban areas. In general, however, this is not so, and allotment matters, if they arise at all, are discussed on an ad hoc basis. To a certain extent, we accept that this state of affairs is inevitable. Not only is the amount of time which a part-time clerk—often the council’s only paid employee—is able to devote to allotments very small indeed, but his knowledge of the legislation and of his council’s responsibilities thereunder is often not very extensive. We concede, moreover, that many of the tasks which an efficient urban administration would undertake might be inappropriate to a rural parish. For example, we were told by almost every parish that the advertisement of vacant plots would be quite unnecessary, since their existence is known to the entire village; the same position would no doubt obtain in the case of the “unwarranted rumours of closure” to which we referred in paragraph 242. It would also be too much to expect every parish council which provides allotments to carry out regular inspections or to employ someone to whom allotment holders could turn for advice and assistance. But, at the same time, the evidence given us suggests that this self-sufficiency of rural allotments with its consequent lack of close administration has engendered a laissez-faire attitude on the part of many parish councils which in turn has blinded them to obvious defects and to their less obvious remedies. As an illustration of this fact, we can do no better than quote, without comment, a number of observations made to us by parish clerks:—

(i) “There has been difficulty in letting because of the poor nature of the soil.”
(ii) “Very little has been done to encourage plot holders.”
(iii) “Greater interest would be shown in smaller plots.”
(iv) “Today, pensioners want to rest, not work.”
(v) “There is a lack of demand; this may be due to the fact that the allotments are some distance from the village and have no amenities.”
(vi) “The allotments are a long way from the village and their popularity has waned.”
(vii) “The council is anxious to dispose of its allotments as they are a financial liability.”
(viii) “Only two requests for plots have been received since 1953, but there may be others who would like them.”
(ix) “Judging by the appearance of the site, there is no interest in allotments.”
(x) “There are now no poor people in the parish.”

301. In reply to a further question, 88.4 per cent of the parishes with allotments felt that parish councils and meetings should continue to be the allotments
authorities for their areas. This view is shared by the N.A. P.C., although it would also like to see the obligation to provide allotments replaced by permissive power to do so. Among the parishes which wished to rid themselves of the responsibility, the most frequent suggestion was that allotments should be provided by one of several voluntary organisations, such as the National Council of Social Service (Table XVII, Appendix V). A few parishes considered that the responsibility should rest with the county or rural district council, while others felt that allotments could properly be left to the beneficence of private landowners. A most carefully considered reply to this question—as, indeed, to several others—came from the parish of Rogerstone (Monmouthshire), whose clerk suggested that rural allotments should be the responsibility of the county council, using the resources of the county agricultural college and the teachers of rural studies in secondary schools; he added that there should be an efficient co-ordination between school gardens and allotments, to enable pupils to progress smoothly from the one to the other. To many parish clerks, who have come to regard allotments as an anachronism, such suggestions might seem extravagant; to others who despair of finding tenants for their vacant plots they might appear almost visionary; at this stage we would merely emphasise the contrast between those who see no problems in the rural allotment situation today and those who try to solve them.

302. The most remarkable feature of the answers to this question, however, was the large number of cases in which parish clerks claimed that the proper administration of allotments was beyond the resources of parish councils, and then proceeded to insist that they must continue to be the allotments authorities for their administrative areas! Part of the reason for this clearly lay in the fear that any change would compel the parish to part with some of its land, but the most important reason will be dealt with in section G (Finance) of this chapter.

E. Tenancies

303. We have not been able to inspect any leases of entire sites given by parish councils to local allotment associations but we have no reason to believe that they differ materially from those used by urban authorities. Such leases exist in some 3-3 per cent of the parishes with allotments, and it is clear that other parishes would like to see an extension of the system; but since the number of plots in many areas would scarcely warrant the formation of an association, it seems unlikely that any material increase would be possible.

304. The majority of the tenancy agreements submitted to us had been drawn up in accordance with the Ministry's model rules, and do not call for comment. A wide range of individual clauses, however, served to reveal yet again the unwillingness or inability of some rural allotments authorities to take an up-to-date view of their responsibilities. Provisions that "the tenant shall cultivate his plot in the method most approved among gardeners", that "no children shall be admitted onto the allotment except for the purpose of work" and that "the widow of any occupier shall be entitled to hold her late husband's garden" seem reminiscent of a bygone age. The clause which states that "any man who belongs to the labouring population shall be eligible to become a tenant" must have remained unchanged since the beginning of this century at least; and the rule that "no work shall be done on the Lord's Day" is almost certainly older still! Something of the defeatist attitude with which some parishes view their allotments is revealed by clauses which provided that "the tenant shall leave the plot
fit for the growing of grass seeds”, and that “an application for compensation will be entertained or rejected according to the state of parish funds”! Such peculiarities are by no means confined to allotment gardens; commercial plots are covered by provisions that “the tenant shall cultivate his land in accordance with the custom of the county”, that “no more than two corn crops shall be taken in succession”, and that “the tenant shall not be allowed to sell straw”. Finally, we observed two attempts to limit the total area of allotment land which an individual tenant might acquire; one agreement insisted that “if the tenant at any time occupies more than 10 acres of allotment land he must be given notice to quit”, while a second required the tenant to surrender sufficient land to reduce his holding to 1 acre if a demand for allotment gardens arose.

305. Only 30·8 per cent of the parishes providing allotments require their tenants to sign written agreements, compared with the figure of 71·8 per cent for urban authorities. It could probably be argued that written undertakings are less essential in a village than in a town, but the total of 30·8 per cent is nonetheless very small, and indicative of a somewhat haphazard approach. It would be illuminating to ascertain what proportion of those parishes which have fallen foul of the law concerning agricultural holdings have never insisted upon written agreements; this we do not know. As many as 83·7 per cent of the parishes have stated that they impose no restriction upon the cultivation of flowers. This is to some extent borne out by their tenancy agreements, although, as with the urban authorities, we have found some fascinating contrasts; thus, one agreement states quite simply that “there will be no objection to plotholders growing whatever they please”, while a second insists sternly that “allotments are let for the growing of vegetables”. It is almost certain that a large percentage of parishes have never found it necessary to consider the problem of flower cultivation upon allotment gardens, for the questionnaires showed that the number of rural allotment holders who grow a significant number of flowers is negligible.

306. It is perhaps surprising to find that the proportion of parishes which permit their allotments to be used wholly or partly for the rearing of livestock is not significantly different from that in urban areas. Rural authorities appear to be slightly more lenient towards the keeping of pigs and goats than are towns, but the latter are more ready to permit poultry, pigeons and rabbits. Of the 33·8 per cent of parishes which prohibit livestock altogether, over nine-tenths rely upon local regulations rather than bye-law. The N.A.P.C. has no general objection to the keeping of livestock upon allotment gardens, although it suggests that they might be restricted to sites reserved specifically for that purpose; we will discuss this point in a later chapter. The N.A.P.C. does, however, contend that the Act of 1950 was wrong in permitting a tenant to keep hens and rabbits in defiance of a written undertaking not to do so. We agree completely with this view, for while we can see the purpose behind section 12 of the Act of 1950, we consider the section to be a singularly inept way of achieving it.

F. Size of plots: vacancies and waiting-lists

307. We have already spoken generally about the wide differences in the size of individual allotments in rural areas. From the evidence provided by the questionnaires, it appears that only 8 per cent of all the allotments in rural areas are larger than 40 poles (the maximum size of an allotment garden) in extent. In assessing the value of this figure, however, two points must be kept
in mind. Firstly, these 8 per cent exceed the size of the average allotment garden to such a degree that their total area is greater than that of the remaining 92 per cent; secondly, the total of 8 per cent takes no account of the large numbers of allotment gardens which have been grouped into composite units whilst retaining their individual identities.

308. Of greater interest, perhaps, is the fact that, apart from the 8 per cent mentioned in paragraph 307, a further 35 per cent of rural allotments are between 10 poles and 40 poles in extent (Table V, Appendix V); the analysis shows, indeed, that approximately the same percentage of parishes have decided that their 'standard' plots should be within this range. In consequence, the average rural allotment garden plot is much larger than its urban counterpart. It is probable that better physical conditions, the availability of mechanical means of cultivation, a more professional approach and a greater amount of leisure time for those who live near their place of work, have all contributed to achieve this position. But it is apparent that there is now an element of profit in many rural allotments which at the outset were never intended to be commercial propositions; indeed, it seems to us very doubtful whether in these days of smaller families the produce of a 40-pole allotment garden, properly cultivated, could be used "wholly or mainly" for home consumption by the occupier and his family.

309. Our evidence shows that 15·5 per cent of rural allotments are now vacant, and that there is a genuine waiting-list in only 11·5 per cent of the parishes, all of which lie significantly in the areas devoted mainly to commercial allotments. The overall figure of 15·5 per cent is smaller than the comparable urban total (20·9 per cent) but it is misleading to consider it on a national basis. Thus, in the rural areas of south-east England, where the allotments have attained an 'urban pattern', the vacancies rise to over 20 per cent, whereas in the areas which contain a proliferation of commercial allotments the incidence of vacancies is much lower (Table XVIII, Appendix V).

G. Finance

310. Probably the most surprising single fact to emerge from the analysis of the rural questionnaires was that no fewer than 60 per cent of the parishes which provide allotments achieved a surplus on their allotment accounts in the year 1965-6. Moreover, it is apparent from an examination of the answers given to our questions on rate expenditure that this situation has obtained every year since the end of the last war; indeed, we could find no year in which the number of parishes which contrived at least to balance their accounts has fallen below 80 per cent.* In most cases, the surplus was small, but it still seems necessary to examine why it should exist. The general rule that an allotments authority may incur a deficit on its allotment account of an amount equivalent to the product of a 2d. rate applies equally to a small parish and a large town. But in considering allotment expenditure, the differences between the total financial commitments of the two types of authority become very important. Unless special dispensation has been given by the Minister, the amount which a parish may spend upon "general purposes" is limited by law† to the product of a 4d.

* This figure would, of course, include the 24·7 per cent which rely entirely upon private allotments.
† Parish Councils Act, 1957.
rate, or 8d. if prior approval has been given by a parish meeting. Expenditure on allotments (and on certain other matters) is specifically excluded from this limitation, and would therefore be permitted as an extra item. If, for example, the product of a 1d. rate in a parish amounted to £50, then a proposal to spend £50 upon the maintenance of the allotment site would not only involve every householder in payment of a measurable sum of money, but it would also, in certain circumstances, represent one-fifth of the total expenditure from the rates for the year. In such a situation it is scarcely surprising that many parish councils are reluctant to ask their ratepayers to provide the money.

311. A large number of parishes acknowledged quite frankly that they do in fact require their allotment accounts to show a surplus, which, in many cases, is retained and accumulated in the account to the point where it becomes sufficient for use on some worthwhile project. It is, however, obvious that in at least an equal number of cases, the attraction of the idea of creating a surplus lies in the corollary to the point we made in paragraph 310. In circumstances where the money available to a parish for its general purposes is so small, there must always be a strong temptation to budget for a surplus on the allotment account if a means can be found of transferring this surplus to the general rate fund. Section 49 of the Act of 1908 clearly provides that an authority may not allocate the income from its allotments to any other purpose without the Minister's consent. Applications for such consent are in fact made by rural parishes at a rate in excess of seventy per annum, and since many of these applications cover an accumulation of the surplus of several years, it is apparent that a fair proportion of the parishes which provide allotments seek to transfer their allotment profit in this way. According to our information, consent is given automatically in every case on receipt of an assurance that the money is not required for the purpose of expenditure upon allotments. The reason why so many parishes appear anxious to retain their allotments responsibilities is now clear. We have already expressed the view in paragraph 290 that it would be quite wrong to expect the general body of ratepayers to subsidise commercial allotments, and if a parish is able to provide them at a profit, we can see no objection to it doing so. But a correlation of the replies to our questions shows that while the parishes which achieve a surplus include 72-1 per cent of those providing such plots, they also incorporate no less than 49-7 per cent of those which deal only in allotment gardens. In some areas, it is true, groups of allotment gardens are now let on a commercial basis, while in others whole sites are let to farmers who are responsible for their upkeep. It seems probable, however, that an attempt to justify a surplus in such cases by reference to their present commercial nature may represent a confusion of cause and effect. These sites have become commercial because of a shortage of tenants; but if no money has been spent on them for very many years, this must surely have contributed to the decline in tenancies. While we understand and sympathise with the problems which face parishes which seek to subsidise their allotments, it is clear that the legislation intends that they should do so; and a parish which has deliberately allowed its sites to fall into disrepair ought not to proffer alternative arguments to account for their unpopularity.

312. A number of parishes, as well as the N.A.P.C., have recommended to us that the Minister's consent to the transfer of such surpluses ought not to be required. Since this requirement applies equally to urban authorities (by whom it is invoked much less frequently), and since the adoption of the N.A.P.C.'s
suggestion would necessarily involve the disappearance of the allotment account, this is not a point at which it could conveniently be considered. We feel bound to say, however, that when the number of applications is so large and their success so assured, the purpose of requiring them at all is difficult to find. The N.A.P.C. also recommended as an adjunct of its previous suggestion, that the maximum permissible expenditure upon allotments should now be set at the product of a 4d. rate, in order that a parish might engage in heavier items of expenditure without the need to accumulate a surplus over several years. Our remarks in paragraph 257, which questioned the wisdom of tying allotment expenditure to rate product, apply as forcefully to parishes as to towns, and our recommendations will be made at a later stage. We feel obliged, however, to point to the paradox of a situation in which, at a time when the majority of rural allotments authorities incur no deficit whatsoever, the N.A.P.C. should suggest that the permissible deficit should be doubled.

313. As in the case of an urban authority, a parish may, with the Minister’s consent, borrow money for the purpose of acquiring, adapting or improving land for allotments. By reason of the Local Government Act 1933, however, an application for loan sanction may only be made with the prior approval of a parish meeting, and in recent years requests for such consent have been very rare indeed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 29</th>
<th>Percentage of rural sites possessing each amenity: England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amenity</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Piped water ...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Individual sheds</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) Grouped sheds</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iv) Communal meeting hut</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(v) W.C.</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vi) Chemical toilet</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(vii) Communal storage shed</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(viii) Number plaques for each plot</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ix) Car park</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(x) Secure gates and fencing</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(xi) Hard surfaced all-weather paths</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

314. In the light of the foregoing paragraphs, it is not surprising that our evidence concerning the standard of amenity provision upon allotment sites in rural areas shows that they are less well equipped than their urban counterparts. If we return to the eleven desirable amenities which, in the case of urban areas we discussed in paragraphs 262 onwards, we find that the percentage of rural sites possessing each amenity is as shown in Table 29.* It will be observed that, with the single exception of car parks (whose frequency is probably due either to the distance of the sites from their villages or to a greater availability of land) the incidence of each amenity is lower than in urban areas, and is often quite considerably less. The average number of amenities on rural sites is artificially deflated by the large areas of commercial allotments in eastern counties, where the number of amenities per site is only 0:62 (cf. urban 1:89); only in the north-west, however, does the standard of amenity provision exceed that of urban areas.

315. Throughout this section we have discussed the generalities of rural allotment finance. It would be unfair to pass on to other matters without adding

* The corresponding urban figures are shown in Table 24, paragraph 262.
that there exist, in various parts of the country, rural parishes which offer their allotment holders a degree of subsidy comparable to most urban authorities, and, in consequence, possess sites which rival the best that urban authorities can offer. In this context, mention must be made of Eling (Hampshire), Kirkby Stephen (Westmorland), North Ferriby (East Riding of Yorkshire) and Great Aycliffe and Tunstall (Durham). We must point out also that, although the number of authorities planning capital improvements to their sites was very small indeed, almost 30 per cent spent money on maintenance in 1965-6. The parish of Rogerstone (population c. 6,000), which we mentioned in paragraph 301, had expended £150 over a two-year period, and planned to spend a further £400 upon the improvement of the access road to one site. It pointed out, however, that responsibility for the management of the allotments rested solely with the parish clerk, a part-time official who had many other duties; it also felt that the speed with which the improvement of its allotment sites could be carried out would be increased only with the formation of an allotments association and the appointment of an able manager on a full-time basis.

316. In trying to assess the general level of rent paid in rural areas today, our major difficulty lay in separating the commercial and non-commercial allotment. We succeeded eventually in isolating the parishes which provide allotment gardens alone, and discovered that their rents are even lower than those of urban areas. In fact, 88-9 per cent of such parishes charge 10s. or less for a 10-rod plot, and in only 1-6 per cent does the rent exceed £1 (Table IX, Appendix V). An additional rent for piped water is charged by 4-2 per cent while 5-5 per cent allow a reduction, usually of 50 per cent, to old-age pensioners. In response to a further question, 22-9 per cent told us that they thought their rents were inadequate, while the remainder felt that they were sufficient.

317. Any attempt to assess the reasons why the rents charged are so low must begin by accepting that the suggestions which we made in the case of urban areas cannot be as valid in the parishes. There can be no question of avoiding the ‘stigma’ of running one’s allotments at a profit when 60 per cent of parishes already do so. There is, however, an alternative explanation, namely that the large numbers of rural allotments which are still provided and managed by charity has impelled many parishes to the view that their own sites constitute a form of charity even today. There may in fact be a number of parishes similar to the extreme example which reported that “we only charge 2d. for a 20-rod plot, but some tenants voluntarily pay more”.

H. Summary

318. Despite the criticisms which we have made in the course of the preceding sections, we are convinced that the allotments system in rural areas today has a greater stability than in most towns. Pressure to alienate sites for other purposes occurs much less frequently, and the authorities appear to be readier to retain a half-empty site against a possible resurgence of demand. As we have indicated, the financial arrangements which parishes make for their allotments leave much to be desired, but we have received remarkably few complaints from allotment holders that their authorities are unsympathetic. Curiously perhaps, rural parishes appear generally to be quite prepared to accept half-derelict sites as a feature of the rural scene, and we feel obliged to question whether the success of the ‘Tidiest Village’ competitions has yet had any effect on the appearance of rural allotment sites.
319. Our main appraisal of the rural allotment situation today presents the dilemma that whilst we are satisfied that, in the existing structure of local government, the parish is the only authority in which allotment responsibilities can properly be vested, we are equally convinced that the average parish clerk cannot be expected to cope with the complexities of the existing legislation. Many clerks of parishes without allotments were unaware that any allotment responsibilities existed; others had neither heard of the 2d. rate limit nor knew the maximum size of an allotment garden. Still more had unintentionally created agricultural holdings through ignorance of the law. It is possible that some of these failings might be overcome by a simplification of the legal code, but we will consider this more closely in Part VII of our report.
CHAPTER 9

PRIVATE ALLOTMENTS

320. Despite the paucity of factual material on the subject, we consider that private allotments pose problems so substantial as to merit separate discussion. According to the Ministry's official statistics, there are today almost 150,000 private allotment plots in England and Wales, covering approximately 22,000 acres and representing one-third of all allotment land and one-quarter of the total number of allotments (Figure 7). We have already commented on the inability of most local allotments authorities to provide accurate data, and these figures undoubtedly lack precision. But they do conform broadly to the information which we have derived from other sources and we consider that they are reasonably accurate.

321. A private allotment has been defined in this report as "an allotment which is neither owned nor administered by the allotments authority in whose area it is situated". There is, however, an alternative definition which, although less precise, is more indicative of the problems associated with such allotments: "a private allotment is one provided by an individual or corporate body which is under no statutory obligation to provide allotments".

A. Charitable allotments

322. Even today, by far the largest single category of private allotments, accounting for well over 50,000 individual plots, comprises sites which were provided for charitable purposes. The great majority of these represent the residue of the fuel allotments, 'poor's' allotments and field gardens which arose mainly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and whose origins were described in Chapter 1. In addition, there exists an unknown number of sites which were originally bequeathed as allotments by individual benefactors, and still more sites whose identity as allotments is now sanctioned by usage over a prescribed period of time. All such sites would fall within the general classification of "charitable".

323. It is remarkable that so many such sites have survived the changes of the last seventy-five years, for the Local Government Act of 1894* transferred to the appropriate parish council the ownership of allotments which had been the responsibility of overseers of the poor or church wardens. The same Act† also empowered the trustees of charitable allotments in rural parishes to transfer them to the appropriate parish council, while the Act of 1908‡ enabled the wardens of Inclosure Act allotments to transfer ownership to the appropriate allotments authority, whether urban or rural. The survival as private allotments of those sites which were not transferred under these Acts must be due mainly to the complexities of the charitable trusts with which most of them are circumscribed and, at least in the case of fuel allotments, to the fact that the Charity Commission had no power to authorise sale between 1876 and 1939.§

---

* 56 and 57, Vic. c. 73 (sections 6(1) and 6(4)).
† Ibid., section 14(1).
‡ See paragraph 60.
§ This power was specifically denied by the Commons Act 1876, and was reintroduced by the Charities (Fuel Allotments) Act 1939.

132
324. In written evidence submitted to us in July 1966, the Commission explained that its present functions in regard to charitable trusts are derived from the Charities Act of 1960, by which it was invested with inquisitorial, administrative and judicial powers. It also has the function of promoting the efficient use of charitable resources in general. In its evidence, the Commission made three points of considerable importance:—

(i) By section 13(5) of the Charities Act, the trustees of existing charities are made responsible for applying to the Commissioners for variation of the trusts “where the property in its existing state can no longer be used effectively for charitable purposes”. The full implications of this rule are not clear, and would probably depend upon the terms of the individual trust, but it is apparent that unless a particular allotment site may in itself be regarded as a form of charity, then it must either produce an income which can be used for charitable purposes or must be alienated to some more profitable use.

(ii) In the opinion of the Commission, allotment land transferred to a local authority under the statutes mentioned in paragraph 321 above remains subject to its overriding charitable trusts. The Commission contends that each authority should ensure that it does not act in breach of trust in any of its dealings with such land. There are conflicting views as to the validity of this contention. Section 33(4) of the Act of 1908 laid down that the provisions of the Act relating to allotments should apply to allotment land transferred to the local authority by allotment wardens “as if the land had been acquired by the council under [its] general powers”. Legal opinion is by no means consistent and we have seen contrary advice which suggests that, by reason of this provision, an allotments authority is entitled to regard such land as ‘normal’ allotment land, without express regard to its charitable origin. We have not been able to resolve the point which may, under the existing legislation, have considerable importance, but one thing seems certain. All such land now in the hands of local authorities may be disposed of without reference to the Allotments Section of the Ministry, since it was not initially purchased or appropriated by the local authority for allotment purposes—in other words, it does not enjoy the protection of statutory allotment land.

(iii) In exercising its functions, the Charity Commission is concerned to maintain the principle that the property of a charitable trust should, so far as possible, be used according to the _cy près_ doctrine to further the intentions of the donor and thus safeguard the interests of the original beneficiary class. Where, as in the great majority of cases, charitable allotment land was originally intended to be held for the benefit of poor parishioners, the Commission is today presented with a considerable problem. Unless the allotment holders themselves are capable of being defined as “the poor” (and in general this could not be maintained), the income derived in rents from the site is usually so small that the Commission is forced to the view that the benefit to the poor is minimal. In such cases, the Commission feels that the _cy près_ doctrine can in present circumstances be better maintained in some way other than by the provision of allotments, and is prepared to
make the necessary changes “readily and sympathetically”. Since the Second World War, therefore, and particularly since 1960, the Commission has approved an increasing number of schemes involving the disappearance of charitable allotment sites; in most cases such sites have been sold for development, since the possibility of a site having an alternative use as public open space is no more compatible with the _cy près_ doctrine than is its use as allotments. In the Commission’s own words, it “can be concerned only with the needs of the poor, and not with the needs of the main body of [local] inhabitants, or those of them who (not being poor) merely want to cultivate small allotments”. We respect the Commission’s view of its responsibilities in this field, although we feel that its interpretation of the _cy près_ doctrine is in this instance too narrow to be completely valid in view of the profound social changes against which the problem must be judged. There are, however, two points of a general nature which ought to be made. Firstly, the terms of many of these charitable allotment trusts indicate that the donor had two intentions, namely that the land should be held as allotments, and that it should also benefit the poor. There may be cases in which it is arguable that the _cy près_ doctrine is safeguarded just as surely by paying regard to _either_ of these intentions. Secondly—and in the light of an example which we will give later in this chapter—it seems possible that in times of high land values the capital sum derived from the sale of allotment land may be so great as to prove an embarrassment to those who have the task of disbursing or investing it on behalf of “the poor”. In such circumstances, and more especially where the allotments are fully tenanted, the retention of the site as allotments may produce enough from rents to provide adequately for “the poor”.

325. In its report,* published in 1958, the Royal Commission on Common Land recommended that the ownership and administration of field garden allotments should be transferred to the appropriate allotments authority and that they should be treated as “ordinary” (i.e. non-charitable) allotments. Old fuel allotments, on the other hand, which by virtue of their size were generally used as open spaces and areas of recreation, should be regarded as commons and regulated accordingly.† Neither of these proposals found a place in the subsequent Commons Registration Act,‡ probably because it is a settled principle of law that rights of common cannot be vested in a fluctuating group of people, nor have they been included in other legislation. The Charity Commission disputes the Royal Commission’s recommendation and sees no reason to change the law relating to charitable allotments.

B. Allotments controlled by nationalised industry

(1) _British Rail_

326. In 1950, almost 75,000 allotment plots were provided privately on 4,000 acres of land owned by British Railways. Their number has since declined rapidly, until by 1967 only 26,076 plots, covering 1,541 acres, remained. Railway allotments are therefore disappearing at the rate of about 3,000 per annum,

---

* Cmd. 462, paragraphs 376 and 377.
† Ibid., paragraphs 373–5.
‡ 13 and 14, Elliz. 2, c. 64.
Figure 16

This portion of O.S. 6-inch Sheet SK/55SW (slightly reduced in scale) shows the close association of allotment gardens with miners' rows, collieries and railway tracks around New Annesley and Newstead on the Nottinghamshire coalfield. Elsewhere, where canals crossed mining areas, allotments were also sometimes established along their banks.
but British Rail continues to own more allotments than any other single organisation in the country.

327. The allotments were originally provided by the former independent railway companies for their employees. Before the First World War it was common practice for some of the lower-paid railway employees (especially porters and particularly in rural areas) to be allowed to do some work on their allotments between the arrival of trains and among their other duties. There were many cases where, in the process of acquiring land for new tracks, the companies were obliged to take more than was required, and part of the excess was devoted to allotments (Figure 16). In addition, the broad embankments which bordered the track itself provided ample space for allotment gardens, often at a considerable distance from the stations where the allotment holders worked (Figure 21 and Plate 16). With the passage of time, however, the companies came under increasing pressure to allow people not in railway employment to cultivate their allotments. Today, therefore, numbers of railway sites are let to local allotments authorities for use as temporary allotments or to local allotments associations, while individual plots have been let indiscriminately to all applicants. Only allotments which are situated alongside the track are still, for reasons of safety, reserved for railway employees, and even this rule seems to be interpreted liberally. For instance, we have seen a number of cases where the inhabitants of houses with gardens extending to a railway embankment have been permitted to cultivate the railway land, often with no more than a wire fence separating it from the track. The criterion appears to be whether the allotment is accessible without actually walking alongside the track.

328. The marked decline in the number of railway allotments, which exceeds that of any other private class, is due partly to the closure of many branch lines and the consequent disposal of staff or diminished use of railway land. It seems, however, to have been encouraged by the methods of administration adopted by the Board. We are advised that railway allotments throughout the country are administered by the Board’s regional headquarters, which, apart from the North-Eastern Region, are in London. Little or no serious effort seems to be exerted locally to re-let a vacant plot, and the cost of administering plots and sites at such a distance has risen to the point where the Board regards its allotments as an uneconomic nuisance. Thus, although in March 1966 the then chairman of the British Rail Board prophesied in a speech at Amersham that with increased leisure and more modern gardening aids there would be a great revival of interest in allotments, we were informed by one region that because the clerical work and time involved in documentation and supervision were not now justified by the financial return, it was no longer general policy to establish allotments or to re-let any that became vacant.

329. British Rail does not provide a high standard of amenities on any of its allotment sites; a few sites have piped water, but this has usually been provided and paid for by the plot holders themselves. The tenancies are secured by written agreements which conform to the provisions of the Acts in regard to the period of notice to be offered; most of them, however, stipulate that, in an emergency, the land may be repossessed at 24 hours’ notice, and the word ‘emergency’ is not defined. The Board operates a differential rents scheme, whereby its own employees pay a rent only half that charged to others, the annual rent paid by those outside the industry being often 20s. 0d. for a 10-rod plot. Once railway
allotment land is vacated, there will normally be no other use to which it can be quickly put, and it is therefore surprising that so little effort is made to re-let vacant plots.

(2) National Coal Board

330. Allotment gardens, situated upon land owned by the National Coal Board, are still a conspicuous feature of many mining areas. There are apparently over 7,000 such allotments, covering an area of 560 acres. In the development of mining communities, the provision of allotments often played an important part, and Figure 16 illustrates a typical example of the close association of allotment gardens with miners' rows, collieries and railway tracks at New Annesley and Newstead, near Mansfield, Nottinghamshire.

331. The readiness of the mining companies to provide allotments was due to a number of factors. Most of the rows of terrace houses provided for the miners had little or no garden space, and the provision of land for allotments was the obvious alternative; land in the vicinity of the mine was sometimes liable to subsidence as mining progressed and so was unsuitable for other forms of development, and areas of land set aside for future tipping were available as allotments until required for their eventual purpose. Of course, the provision of allotments in such numbers would have been pointless unless the miners themselves had shown considerable interest in gardening, and this they did. Their working conditions led many to seek an open-air pursuit for their leisure time, and the emphasis placed upon shift-work gave them more free time in hours of daylight than was available in many other occupations. Between the wars the high incidence of short-time working and unemployment in the mining industry made allotment gardening an economic necessity, and generally speaking, miners were able to maintain their traditions and their interests through two world wars when many other enthusiasts not in reserved occupations were forced to leave their plots and serve in the Forces.

332. Just as in the case of railway allotments where the closure of many miles of track has reduced the number of allotments, so the closure of pits has taken its toll on sites. In fact, the results have tended to be still more disastrous, since abandoned mines are often regarded as hazardous and the surrounding land may deliberately be left untenanted and derelict. But in many cases, National Coal Board sites have been rented en bloc by the local allotments authority for use as temporary allotments; for example, the urban district of Stanley (County Durham) rents at least five such sites totalling 18½ acres, and several mining towns in south Wales provide most of their allotments upon National Coal Board land.

333. Sites owned by the National Coal Board are usually administered by its area offices, which are reasonably close to the sites. For this reason, and because the sites are normally more accessible than railway allotments, there is less difficulty in letting vacant plots. Tenants need not be miners, but non-miners are required to pay a higher rent. A few sites, normally those close to the pit-head, are equipped with a water supply, but the Board have no present intention of extending such provision or of providing further amenities. As most sites originated during the lifetime of the independent companies, there is a wide variation in conditions of tenancy, period of notice and even in the rents demanded.

(3) British Waterways

334. The British Waterways Board provides 800 allotment plots (117 acres) adjacent to canals. Half of these are in south-east England, where the plots are
often as much as 30 rods in extent. The rents charged approximate to those of
British Rail and the National Coal Board.

C. Other provision

335. In addition to those provided by charity and by public utilities, smaller
numbers of private allotments have been provided from many sources. Some of
these are “private” only by the narrowness of our definition, such as those owned
by county councils, rural district councils and other ‘non-allotments authorities’.
Most of these were first provided under the emergency powers in force during the
two world wars and remained in existence when these powers were revoked.
Occasionally, too, allotments authorities provide sites on land outside their
administrative areas—Reading is a good example—thus reducing the demand to
be satisfied by those authorities in whose area the land is situated.

336. A number of large industrial concerns, such as Cadbury Brothers Limited
under the Bournville Village Trust, provide allotments usually (though not
exclusively) for their own employees or for householders on their estates, and
numerous examples exist of private landowners permitting their land to be used
for allotments. For obvious reasons these are more common in rural areas.
Farmers will also often allow villagers to grow potatoes and other crops upon
a specified strip of land for a nominal rent, and will occasionally allow the crops
to be harvested with their own machinery.

337. Finally, there is a small but significant number of sites which are owned by
the allotment holders themselves (Plate 14). In some cases the individual owns
his plot while the association owns the paths and roads and sometimes the
communal hut. In others, the association has formed itself into a limited company
in which the individual plot holders have shares. The origins of such sites are
diverse and often obscure, but they come into prominence quite frequently when
the tenants or the association are offered high prices for the land by speculative
builders. In recent years this has happened at Lavender Hill, Enfield, and at the
site of Robin Hood Small Holdings Ltd. in Birmingham. In the latter case, there
has been considerable conflict, which has not yet been finally resolved, between
those allotment holders who were eager to sell and those who preferred to con-
tinue to cultivate their allotment gardens.

D. Summary and conclusions

338. The incidence of private allotment sites is by no means uniform throughout
the country. As one might have expected, the early history of allotment gardening
with its emphasis upon rural poverty, has left a residue of private sites in many
agricultural areas. But in some large towns, private allotments are almost extinct
and Manchester, Stockport, Southampton and Sunderland each now contain
fewer than 100 private plots. On the other hand, Bradford has 3,125, Leicester
1,742, Sheffield 1,543, Derby 1,410 and Wolverhampton 1,250.

339. The existence in such numbers of allotments which are neither provided
nor controlled by public authorities seems to us to pose a number of major
problems. On the one hand we would be most reluctant to suggest that a landowner
who wishes to provide allotments should not be permitted to do so. On the other
hand, in the context of efficient town planning we cannot acquiesce readily in a
situation where the planner is unable to estimate with any accuracy how many
private allotments will exist within his area in five years’ time, and how many
allotments his authority will be obliged to provided by law; nor can we accept
as inevitable the continued existence of many untidy private sites whose owners are under no obligation to make them contribute to the visual amenities of the area or to provide reasonable facilities for the tenants.

340. The first of these problems is already upon us. The statistics introduced in Chapter 5 show that the rate of decline in the numbers of private plots is greater than for those provided by allotments authorities, and if nothing is done to counter this trend it is certain to continue (Figure 7). The attitudes of the Charity Commission and of British Rail, the closure of railway lines and pits, and the high prices being offered to the owners of developable land are all likely to increase the momentum of the decline and to create a situation in which allotments authorities are increasingly obliged under the present law to provide plots for tenants ejected from private sites; and, as we have seen, the authorities are in many cases completely ignorant of their numbers. The real problem is whether a local authority can be expected to retain an over-lavish provision of open space as a precaution against the potential extinction of private allotments in its area. This, in our opinion, would be quite unreasonable.

341. That this problem is far from hypothetical is well illustrated by the situation in the urban district of Walton and Weybridge (Surrey) during the past few years. There, trustees control some 200 acres of fuel allotment land, originally provided for the benefit of the poor, in a present population of less than 20,000, a level of provision which is far in excess of any existing or potential demand for allotments; much of it is at present indistinguishable from public open space. In consequence, the allotments authority saw little justification in the past to make much allotment provision itself. Recently, with the approval of the Charity Commission, and after an application by the trustees for planning consent had been rejected, the local authority was obliged by law to purchase a small part of the fuel allotment land. A certificate was given to the effect that the "alternative use" of the land was residential, and the authority was then forced to pay residential values for it. Paradoxically, but not unnaturally, it now feels compelled on economic grounds to use the land for building, although in the process a number of allotment holders must be dispossessed. Thus, by one transaction, the total open space in the administrative area was reduced, the income of the Trust came to exceed the needs of "the poor", the ratepayers incurred a considerable new debt, and the authority faced the possibility of having to acquire additional land for allotments to replace that which it could not afford to retain for that purpose.

342. The second problem relates to the appearance of private sites and their standard of amenity. We do not suggest that all private sites look untidy or derelict. Some, especially those run as limited companies, have good amenities and a high standard of husbandry (Plate 14). But, quite clearly, those who provide allotments voluntarily and at low rents cannot be compelled to spend large sums of money in making the sites attractive. Equally, if the financial benefit derived from a charitable site must fall directly or indirectly to the poor, any insistence that the income produced by such a site should be used to improve its appearance would inevitably jeopardise its continued existence. But if, as has been suggested, the poor image of allotment gardening stems partly from the sordid appearance of many sites, that image would not be greatly enhanced by schemes to improve the quality of local authority sites while private sites remained untouched.
PART IV
THE ALLOTMENT HOLDER AND HIS LAND
CHAPTER 10
THE ALLOTMENT HOLDER

343. From the outset of our investigations, we recognised that an accurate appraisal of the men and women who occupy allotments today would form a most vital part of the evidence on which our recommendations for the future must be based. We needed to know what first prompted them to apply for an allotment, how long they had held one, how often they visited it, what they grew, and much more. But we also wanted to discover what sort of people they were, their ages and occupations, how much they earned and how they utilised their leisure time. We knew that we would learn a great deal from the many allotment holders who wrote to us, from those whom we met on the sites that we planned to visit, and from those who talked to the students working on our behalf. In a sense, however, most of this was bound by its nature to be confirmatory evidence. The students would each be investigating only a local situation; the allotment holders who had taken the trouble to write to us were mainly those who wished to air grievances; and, since the majority of our visits had to be made during the normal working week, most of those whom we met on the sites would be retired people whose opinions might not have been representative of the allotments movement as a whole, or even of the generality of plotholders on their sites.

344. For these and other reasons, we decided that we must issue a questionnaire to a sample of allotment holders selected at random throughout England and Wales. The method by which the selection was made is outlined in Appendix VI. We relied upon the assistance of a large number of allotments authorities, both urban and rural, and we are most grateful for their help. We are satisfied that the issue of the forms was objective and impartial, except, perhaps, in one respect: the local authorities’ widespread ignorance of private sites, to which we have already referred, meant that a smaller proportion of the questionnaires reached tenants of plots on such sites than should in fact have been the case. This was unfortunate, but it should not have prejudiced the objectivity of the sample; and the answers given to our questions by the occupants of private sites did not differ materially from those of the remainder.

345. A questionnaire was sent to one in every fifty allotment holders, and the total number of forms thus sent out was 8,932. Of this total, 107 in respect of allotment holders who had either died or had given up their plots were returned blank. There were probably more cases in which the form did not reach its intended recipient, but for practical purposes it may be assumed that the size of the issue was effectively 8,825. The response was disappointing. A total of 1,761 questionnaires, 19.95 per cent of those issued, was completed and returned to us; this figure was made up as follows:—
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Issued</th>
<th>Returned</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban areas</td>
<td>7,196</td>
<td>1,514</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural areas</td>
<td>1,629</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8,825</td>
<td>1,761</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The eventual return thus represents a real sample of 0.4 per cent (1 in 250) of all allotment holders in the country. Although there were undoubtedly many reasons why four out of every five allotment holders who received the questionnaire did not complete it, we must assume that the apathy and suspicion to which we referred in Chapter 4 was a major one. However, the absolute numerical strength of the return, together with our evidence from other sources, shows that there is no reason to doubt the validity of the analysis of these forms, or of its application to the general body of allotment holders throughout the country.

346. We issued a further 7,027 copies of the same questionnaire to members of N.A.G.S., the recipients again being chosen at random from within the membership. These forms were sent for distribution to the secretaries of a number of allotment associations affiliated to N.A.G.S., the associations being selected at random (see Appendix VI). This produced a different type of problem in that 138 questionnaires were returned by associations whose membership consisted entirely of home gardeners, and the effective issue was therefore reduced to 6,889. Despite the assistance of the officers of the local associations, exhortations by N.A.G.S. and explanations of the survey given by the committee at the N.A.G.S. Conference in 1966, the response to this issue, 1,066 (15.5 per cent), was even lower than the national sample; we had expected that it would have been greater. We will discuss the possible reasons for this disappointing return later in this chapter. It is sufficient at present to state that the separate analysis of this set of questionnaires (which, despite the poor overall response, still constitutes a strong numerical sample) has produced answers which differ so little from those of the national sample that each in turn helps to validate the other. In quoting the results of the analysis of the allotment holder questionnaire throughout this report we will separate the two issues of the questionnaire. This will not only demonstrate the proximity of the answers, but will also allow us to point to any significant differences between the national sample and the N.A.G.S. sample, both in this chapter and when we come later to discuss N.A.G.S. in detail. We have also, for reasons which will be clear from Chapter 4, separated the analysis of the urban and rural questionnaires for the national sample, and in the account which follows will point to important differences as they occur. Where the answers derived from the three sets of questionnaires (national sample, urban and rural; N.A.G.S. sample undifferentiated) are very similar, we propose to quote the figure derived from the national sample of allotment holders in urban areas. A full summary of the data derived from the questionnaires is included at Appendix VI.

347. Two further points should be made. Firstly, because we asked for details of income it seemed to us necessary that the information should be anonymous. We are sure that this decision was wise, but one of its consequences was that we were prevented from following up directly any statement or answer which presented unusual features, and we were therefore obliged to include in the data for analysis a small amount of information which we would have liked to check further. Secondly, to overcome certain ambiguities, it has proved necessary
in a number of cases to apply an alternative and simplified form of analysis to some of the data.

A. Personal characteristics

(1) Sex

348. Only 3.2 per cent of the country's allotment holders today are women, and only 1.8 per cent are housewives. These bare statistics probably present a somewhat false picture, since there is a general tendency for tenancy agreements to be taken out in the husband's name, even where the wife spends more time than the husband on the plot. But the allotment garden is at present very much a male preserve. Moreover, only in a minority of cases do the wives of married allotment holders help their husbands in the cultivation of the allotment. Our own investigations support this conclusion, for we have seen few women working upon allotment sites. There is no evidence, however, to suggest that gardening is less popular among women than among men, and the cause seems to lie in the nature of allotment gardening itself. Three points seem to be involved. First, women generally prefer the cultivation of flowers to vegetables and often reach a tacit agreement that they will take charge of the home garden while their husbands look after the allotment. Second, it is probable that the successful growing of vegetables, which dominate the cultivation on so many allotments, requires a greater physical effort than is necessary for the growing of flowers. Third, women tend to be more fastidious than men about the conditions under which they will engage in their hobbies, and the lack of decent facilities, the absence of any strong social activity and the general air of dereliction on many allotment sites probably act as considerable deterrents. On the relatively few sites which possess good amenities and a community spirit, women allotment holders are much more in evidence than elsewhere.

(2) Origins

349. The rise in the numbers of immigrants to this country has produced no measurable effect upon the composition of the allotments movement. We have, however, noted a fairly large sprinkling of foreign nationals, particularly Europeans, upon sites near to factories employing foreign labour although their numbers are too small to feature in our random sample. There is certainly no evidence to suggest that many immigrants from Africa, Asia or the West Indies have taken to allotment gardening: it remains essentially a British pursuit.

350. A study of the background of today's allotment gardeners brings out two facts of considerable importance. Firstly, although at least 80 per cent of them now live in urban areas, almost half of these spent their childhood in a country district. Secondly, over 50 per cent are the sons of former allotment holders and the great majority of these worked upon their parents' allotments as children (Table V, Appendix VI). There is only a 50 per cent overlap between these two groups of people, and almost 72 per cent of today's allotment holders were either born in rural areas or are the sons of allotment holders. In this appears to lie much of the movement's strength, for the majority of allotment holders obviously possess a deep-rooted affection both for gardening and the open air. Indeed, one allotment holder described it as "inherited enjoyment". But the figures also demonstrate one of the movement's major weaknesses, for the number of people who are born in rural areas today and the number whose parents occupy allotments are both constantly declining, and unless the movement
can attract more recruits from outside these categories, it cannot survive indefinitely.

(3) Age

351. Over 62 per cent of allotment holders are between the ages of 40 and 65 years, and a further 20 per cent are 65 years or over (Figure 17a). A comparison

![Figure 17]

between the ages of allotment holders and those of the population of England and Wales at large* is shown in Table 30. It is clear from this table that, as so many local authorities and organisations have informed us, the present image of allotment gardening holds little attraction for the young. It is, however, possible to read too much into this Table, for well over 50 per cent of today’s

* Figures derived from the 1961 Census Returns for England and Wales.
allotment holders have held an allotment at least since 1945, and must therefore have been young men when they first took a plot. No fewer than 30 per cent were allotment holders before the last war, and it is evident that at that time younger people became allotment holders in considerable numbers without the stimulus of any form of national campaign. The most probable explanation of the current situation, therefore, is that the image of allotment gardening has failed to move with the times, and that while the older generation has largely

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>% of total population (1961 Census)</th>
<th>% of allotment holders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15–21</td>
<td>8·87</td>
<td>0·27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–40</td>
<td>25·29</td>
<td>17·24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40–65</td>
<td>32·09</td>
<td>62·41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and over</td>
<td>9·42</td>
<td>20·08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75·67</td>
<td>100·00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

maintained its allegiance, the younger element is today more attracted to the many other spare-time activities which are now available.

(4) **Occupations**

352. Although 44·7 per cent of those who are still working, and a much greater proportion of those who have retired, are (or were) manual workers, as many as 30·6 per cent* are in sedentary or professional occupations (Figure 17b). Statistics produced by the City of Bristol indicate that this proportion is increasing, and that the ratio of such people among younger allotment holders is even higher. Some of the reasons for this have emerged from our questionnaires. More manual workers are interested in playing or watching sport than those in other occupations, while sedentary workers figure prominently among those who believe that fresh vegetables are more beneficial than those bought in a shop; the latter group will be less easily diverted from their allotments. The other factors involved are more difficult to determine, and we are reluctant to speculate without concrete evidence. We are, however, impressed by the argument, which has been put to us frequently, that the stresses of office life today often produce a form of tension for which allotment gardening is, by its nature, a palliative if not a cure. Whatever the truth may be, we have visited sites which not only contain a strong proportion of clerks, insurance agents and civil servants, but also include architects, doctors, teachers, and university lecturers. Our research students have found similar ratios of white-collar workers, although, not unnaturally, the proportion is much lower in some types of area than in others.

353. The same analysis shows that 22·3 per cent of allotment holders are retired (Figure 17b). The role of the allotment garden as one of the few places where a man can be active in retirement has long been recognised, and many elderly allotment holders have told us, with obvious sincerity, that the cultivation of their allotments gives them a sense of purpose and is the only activity which prevents them from “mouldering away”. No fewer than 90·2 per cent of those

* The figure in the sample of N.A.G.S. members was 26·3 per cent, and in the rural sample 25·3 per cent.
allotment holders who are now retired took their allotments in advance of retirement. Very many indeed had already been allotment holders for a good many years, and it is important to note that whatever the advantages of having an allotment during retirement may be, at present relatively few men take a plot after they have retired.

(5) Mode of life

354. The typical allotment holder is married, with two children who are probably now living away from home. His day’s work is usually over by 7 p.m. but there is an even chance that he will frequently have to work on Saturdays. He spends most of his spare time in his home area, does not play or watch sport regularly at the week-end, and confines most of his evening television viewing to the autumn and winter months. His chief hobby or recreation during the summer is undoubtedly gardening, and over 40 per cent of allotment holders place it first for the winter period also. Although we made no attempt to analyse the many other recreations in which allotment holders participate, we were impressed throughout by the frequency with which “do-it-yourself” activities, such as home decorating, featured high in the list. Almost one in three (31·8 per cent) attends church regularly (Table III, Appendix VI).

355. It will be apparent from this brief summary that most allotment holders are able, if they so wish, to devote an appreciable amount of time to their hobby. But before we come to consider how much of this time they do in fact spend on their allotments, it is necessary to examine what facilities they have for gardening at their homes, and to study the relationship of these to the allotment garden. Four out of every five allotment holders have a garden attached to their place of residence. In most cases (58·6 per cent), it is no more than 150 square yards in extent, but 10·7 per cent of all allotment holders who live in towns and 21·2 per cent of those in country parishes have told us that their gardens exceed 300 square yards in size. We asked every recipient of our questionnaire who possessed a home garden to indicate, by placing a number of items in order of importance, the uses to which this was put. The great majority regard their gardens as a place for the cultivation of flowers and the tending of a lawn, and 42·8 per cent consider one or the other of these as of prime importance. Among the non-horticultural uses, “a place for drying clothes”, “a place for sitting out-of-doors” and “a place for children to play” all figured prominently (Table IV, Appendix VI). The reply “a vegetable garden” came as low as sixth on the list, and was placed first by fewer than 10 per cent of those who answered the question. The same group of allotment holders was then asked to consider to what extent the uses to which they devoted their home gardens would change if they lost their allotments. The answer “a flower garden” still remained the most important, but “a vegetable garden” improved to third place; moreover, the number (30·8 per cent) who consider that the latter would then be their first choice exceed the combined total (30·4 per cent) of those who preferred flowers and lawn.

356. Two points emerge from this analysis. Firstly, to most allotment holders, the uses of their gardens and allotments are complementary—the one devoted to lawns and flower beds, the other to fruit and vegetables; while the one is largely aesthetic, the other is more functional and productive. We will examine this dichotomy more closely when we come to look at the allotment garden itself. At this point it is sufficient simply to emphasise the prevalence of the philosophy which decrees, in the words of one tenant, that the cultivation of vegetables
may justifiably be banished to the allotment because "a vegetable plot of itself is not very attractive, and of necessity must be partly vacant for fairly lengthy periods in the course of each year". This implies that the allotment holder does not want to look from his window over an unattractive area of land. Those living in the vicinity of his allotment may clearly not be so fortunate! (Plate 21).

357. The other conclusion which we draw is that although the answers to our second question relate to a hypothetical situation, the loss of their plots would impel many allotment holders to devote a much larger part of their home gardens to vegetables than they do at present. There can be no doubt that the cultivation of vegetables appeals to many allotment holders for reasons quite unconnected with the availability of allotment land, and that such people would continue to grow vegetables even if they were restricted to their home gardens. Some of these reasons will be discussed in the course of this chapter.

(6) Economics

358. Throughout their history, allotments and allotment gardens have been provided primarily for the relief of poverty. Often, and even in the legislation, this concept has been openly acknowledged; less frequently, it has been disguised by phraseology such as "a means of occupying one's time during periods of unemployment" or "an aid to the resettlement of returning ex-servicemen". Occasionally, as in the two world wars, the function of allotments as an alleviation of individual poverty has been extended to cover their role in the task of surmounting a national food crisis; but inevitably, as soon as such a crisis has passed, their original, traditional and individualistic purpose has re-emerged.

359. It is vital that we should examine the extent of this function today. It is not sufficient merely to consider whether there are classes or groups of people whose incomes are insufficient for their basic needs, nor, indeed, would we be competent to do so. But we must determine whether such people feature strongly among today's allotment holders and, if so, whether the allotment remains the most convenient and effective means of alleviating their plight. We propose to approach this problem in three ways. Firstly, we will look at the economic circumstances of the allotment holders themselves; secondly, we will examine the evidence we possess regarding the value of the produce derived from an allotment today; and, lastly, we will consider the many statements made to us on this point by the allotment holders and their representatives.

360. Every recipient of our questionnaire was asked to state the total net income per week of his household during the year 1965. Less than 4 per cent felt unable to do so, and since the replies to this question on the three sets of questionnaires coincided almost exactly, we believe that it was answered honestly and accurately. The analysis revealed that 57 per cent of urban allotment holders in England and Wales had a net household income in excess of £16 per week, and in many cases, incomes will have risen since 1965. Almost half the remaining households received between £12 and £16, while almost all the 7.3 per cent whose net income was below £8 were bachelors or widowers living alone (Figure 17c). Over 50 per cent either own or are buying their homes which, in the great majority of cases, have rateable values in excess of £50. Of the remainder, half rent their homes from private landlords, and half from the local authority. Fewer than 7 per cent live in blocks of flats (Table IV, Appendix VI).

361. Each allotment holder was invited to place in order of importance eleven possible reasons why he might originally have taken an allotment; he
was then invited to rearrange the same reasons to show why he has an allotment today (Table VII, Appendix VI). Two of these ‘reasons’ represented an attempt to ascertain the extent to which economic need had compelled allotment holders to apply for their plots; the first was labelled “To help the family budget by growing produce”. We recognise that this phrase was unfortunately worded for our purpose; there is a world of difference between the need to take an allotment in order to compensate for an inadequate income, and the decision to take an allotment in order further to augment an income which is already adequate for one’s basic needs. We were not surprised, therefore, to discover from the correlation of the answers that this reason takes third place in the first list and retains this position in the second. There are, however, two points of considerable significance. As stated earlier, “economic motive” was placed third, and the two arguments which defeated it were quite unconnected with economics. Furthermore, in urban areas the percentage of allotment holders who place “economic motive” first fell from 22.7 in the first list to 16.7 in the second. In rural areas, the influence of commercial allotments enabled this reason to take first place throughout.

362. The second ‘economic’ argument offered was “To make additional money by selling surplus produce”. This was placed last of all in both lists, and the number of allotment holders who placed it first was below 0.5 per cent. It is conceivable that the ban placed upon the sale of produce by the definition of an allotment garden may have persuaded a few to deny that this featured highly in their reasons for having an allotment, but as the questionnaires were anonymous this is improbable.

363. Assessing the monetary value of an allotment garden today is extraordinarily difficult. It depends not only on such obvious factors as the size of the plot, but also on a multitude of variables such as the quality of the soil, the incidence of disease, the amount of time which the allotment holder is able to devote to it, his capabilities as a gardener, the types of crop he grows, the proportion of his plot which is under cultivation and his expenditure on seeds, fertilisers and rent. At one end of the scale, 11.7 per cent of urban allotment holders report that the total net value of their produce is nil (Table VIb, Appendix VI); at the other, a specialist estimated that the gross value of the vegetables harvested each year from his 18-rod plot was £350. If we discount these extremes, adjust the figures supplied in answer to our questions to conform to the most popular size of plot (10 rods), and assume that the remaining difficulties will cancel each other out over a large sample, then the gross value of the produce grown by the average allotment holder on a 10-rod plot was slightly less than £30 per annum. In fact, 41.5 per cent estimated that their produce was worth more than £24. In order to achieve this return, just over half (52.8 per cent) spent less than £5 per annum upon seeds, plants, fertilisers, insecticides, tools and rent. Those whose expenditure was higher generally had larger plots, produced a proportionately higher amount of produce, or used their allotments for purposes (such as the rearing of livestock) which make comparison impossible.

364. From these figures, therefore, it is possible to deduce that the net value of the produce of a 10-rod allotment garden today is about £25 per annum or 10s. 0d. per week. We are not, however, concerned at this stage with an attempt to establish the value of allotments to the country’s total food production or general economic stability, but the part they play in alleviating individual economic

147
need. It is necessary, therefore, to examine briefly what the allotment holder does with his produce after it has been harvested.

365. We must look first at the question of sale. The allotments legislation, founded as it is upon a desire to relieve poverty, has always insisted that the allotment holder and his family must eat the vegetables and fruit which he grows; and the legal definition of an allotment garden implies a prohibition on sale which is specifically repeated in many tenancy agreements. There are, we acknowledge, several justifications for this ban, not least the risk of creating an agricultural holding. But in our view, the economic argument, which has often been used, is quite illogical. From the standpoint of economics, there is really no distinction between the allotment holder whose family consumes the produce of his allotment, thereby avoiding heavy expenditure at the greengrocer’s, and the man who sells his produce and is then obliged to use his profit to purchase fruit and vegetables for himself and his family. One must also acknowledge that a keen and competent gardener who devoted the whole of his 10-rod plot to vegetables and bush fruits might not be able to consume all his produce. We will not therefore differentiate between that which is sold and that which is eaten at home.

366. Although 41·5 per cent of allotment holders estimate that the value of their produce exceeds £24, only 32·5 per cent consume or sell produce to this value. The remainder, we are assured, give away much of what they produce, and no less than 35·1 per cent—estimate that they dispose of produce worth more than £3 each year, in this way. Thus, we are satisfied that the net value of a 10-rod plot to the average allotment holder is reduced to £20 per annum, and in many cases is lower still.

367. In the many hundreds of letters which we have received from allotment holders, in the numerous statements which they have made in our questionnaires, in what they have said to us and to students on the sites, we have encountered no more than a handful of cases where it is claimed that an allotment holder today needs his allotment in order to supplement an inadequate income. We have, indeed, a great many letters which indicate that those who first took an allotment because of economic necessity were moved by other considerations to retain it when that need disappeared. The frequency with which such statements have been made, the income of the allotment holders themselves, the relatively small ‘profit’ which the allotment produces, the readiness, even among the lowest income groups, to devote the home garden to flowers and lawn, the failure, in many instances, to cultivate the whole of the allotment, and the opinions of the N.A.G.S.’s representatives have all led us to the view that in any proposals for the future of allotment gardens, the possibility that they may again be required to alleviate individual poverty should be discounted. We appreciate that such a decision is not without its attendant risks; we have, for example, noted a slight increase in the demand for allotments in areas of high unemployment, and we have heard of a number of cases where people decided to apply for an allotment because of a fear that entry into the European Common Market would entail an increase in the price of vegetables and fruit. But we cannot base our proposals on a pessimistic view of the future. At present only 0·6 per cent of allotment holders are unemployed and we have no reason to suppose that this figure will increase significantly (Figure 17c). Moreover, even if we are wrong, it seems to us highly debatable whether the provision of allotment gardens will ever again prove a satisfactory antidote to poverty. Not only does our general knowledge
of society suggest that, apart from the elderly, few people today would be prepared to take an allotment as a means of relieving poverty, but the price of urban land is such that the cost to the community of providing and maintaining an allotment must exceed that of many alternative forms of poor relief.

(7) Motivation

368. Having reached the conclusion that the general body of allotment holders is no longer driven to take a plot by reason of economic need, it is necessary to consider what has replaced it. We must, in fact, endeavour to ascertain why, with the passing of the traditional basis of allotment provision and the absence of any sustained campaign since 'Dig for Victory' to urge people to take allotments in the national interest, there are still half a million tenanted plots in England and Wales. The various possibilities can be seen in better perspective by looking again at the point in our questionnaire where we invited allotment holders to arrange in order their reasons for working an allotment today. We will examine each of the relevant reasons in turn.

369. A few allotment holders (1·0 per cent) have an allotment primarily in order to produce crops for exhibition purposes and, overall, this reason came tenth in our list of eleven. Others rate highly the companionship which they find on the site and the club facilities which are available; this reason was placed eighth. The two arguments which related to the inadequacy of the allotment holder's home garden—"Because your home garden is too small' and 'Because you have sole charge of your own plot of ground'—came sixth and ninth respectively; but 11·7 per cent of allotment holders place one or the other of these reasons first. The fact that the allotment offered a change from the home environment attained seventh place; a large number of allotment holders placed this reason high in their list, although only 1·1 per cent placed it first. Those who have an allotment primarily for purposes of mental relaxation formed 6·4 per cent of the total and this reason was placed fifth overall. Far more dig an allotment because they want fresh produce of better quality than they can purchase; this motive holds second place, and 17·4 per cent of allotment holders regard it as of first importance. These last two arguments both have a health aspect, and will be considered again at a later stage.

370. The two remaining entries in our list of alternative reasons for having an allotment were—"For physical recreation" and "For the love of gardening as a hobby". The first of these was placed fourth while the second came top of the list by a wide margin. No less than 45·1 per cent placed one of these reasons first, and this result conforms to our findings from other quarters. The great majority of allotment holders who have written or spoken to us think of their allotments today primarily as a hobby or recreation and the same view has been expressed in the evidence given to our students, and by a number of local authorities. The following quotations summarise what so many have said:

"The allotment site provides a convenient, cheap and effective keep-fit hobby." (An allotment holder.)

"An allotment gives us recreation, exercise, comradeship and a constructive mind." (An allotment holder.)

"Allotment gardening has a very definite place in the field of modern recreation." (An allotment holder.)

"The recreational value of good exercise in the open air is undoubted". (An allotment holder.)

149
“Allotments are still rather outside the main stream of communal recreation activities, and the aim should be to break down this isolation.” (County Borough of Halifax.)

“There is a social need for such a recreational activity,” (London Borough of Barking.)

“The pleasures of gardening have persisted long after the need to grow has disappeared.” (Student dissertation: *Allotment Gardens in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.*)

We find this evidence, which we might have extended much further, quite convincing. The only contrary evidence is in rural areas where commercial allotments have kept the economic motive in first place and relegated the ‘hobby’ aspect to third position. This in no way invalidates the main conclusion for we have ample evidence that the tenants of allotment gardens in rural areas share the views of their urban counterparts. We are satisfied that to the vast majority of allotment holders their plot is primarily a form of recreation, and the fact that it is also a source of profit in no way detracts from this primary function.

(8) *Health*

371. Having reached this conclusion it is probably no part of our function to determine whether allotment gardening is a hobby, a recreation, or both. We presume, however, that it is a prerequisite of any recreation that it should promote health in the broadest sense, and since so many allotment holders have said that allotment gardening does this in many different ways, we must say something on the subject. There is, unfortunately, a profound lack of authoritative statements on this point, and our conclusions must therefore rely heavily on our own findings.

372. The claim that allotment gardening promotes physical well-being rests upon two separate theories. The first, which is held almost universally by allotment holders, is that the combination of the physical effort of gardening and the fact that it is performed in the open air represents a healthy exercise. This proposition has been put to us by a very large number of allotment holders, many of whom are elderly and profess that their allotment is one of the major factors in keeping them healthy. As many as 12.5 per cent of all urban allotment holders state that they suffer from some disability, and while for some this claim may contain an element of exaggeration, we have met many who are afflicted in some way but claim to derive considerable therapeutic benefit from having an allotment. For example, at Aberdare on the South Wales Coalfield we spoke to a number of men who had been driven to leave the mines by silicosis, and who were quite convinced that they now owed their lives to working in the fresh air on their allotments. The second theory, which is put forward by almost as many today, is that fresh fruit and vegetables, and particularly those grown without the aid of artificial fertilisers, pesticides and weedkillers, are more conducive to health than those purchased in the shop. We have no wish to be drawn into the 'fresh food' controversy at this stage; but we are satisfied that freshly gathered home-grown fruit and vegetables taste better than others—possibly because so much care and effort has been put into their production and harvesting—and in general have a higher ascorbic acid content than other unfrozen raw produce. The majority of allotment holders believe that they also promote good health, and we cannot help respecting the combined view of so large a number.

373. We are also told that allotment gardening has a role to play in the main-
tenance of mental health. There are again two aspects to the question. Firstly, many of the 22.3 per cent who are retired tell us that the allotment is their sole hobby. The majority of these are convinced that without their plots they would lack a sense of purpose and would suffer from spiritual and mental atrophy during the long lonely hours at home. Allotments continue to play a major role in helping the elderly to overcome the tedium of retirement; in the course of our visits we have been particularly impressed by the spirit of companionship that exists among retired people meeting daily on many sites. Secondly, we are aware that many people today look upon gardening as both a preventive and a panacea for mental disorder. Those who wrote to us of their allotments as “having a soothing effect on the nerves” or as “a place of relaxation from mental strain” were echoing the views of many. We have referred already to the increasing numbers of professional men who take allotments and it has been suggested that health may be a key factor in this. The Royal Medico-Psychological Association has always regarded gardening as of considerable therapeutic value in the treatment of mental illness, and a psycho-analyst who himself tends an allotment informed us that “few gardeners suffer from neurotic disorders”.

We take the view that allotment gardeners are predominantly healthy individuals, and we have no reason to doubt that their allotments have, in various ways, contributed to this standard of mens sana in corpore sano. It is apparent that certain of these health benefits could be equally well attained by other means, but we doubt whether there is any other single activity which is alleged to help in so many ways. We cannot think of a better way to conclude this section than by quoting the evidence given to us by an allotment association in Birmingham:

“We asked our members why they found the cultivation of an allotment attractive. Here are some of the replies—relaxation; fresh air; a change from work, and from wife and children; the fascinating challenge of attempting something about which one knows little; getting away from bricks and mortar; the pleasure of striving for something worth while; exercise, pride in achievement; fulfilment in a life that would otherwise lack something; the pleasure of discussing among friends matters of mutual interest. When this list was read back to members, someone remarked that it sounded like a prescription for mental health!”

(9) Summary

374. The above picture of the allotment holder may not differ markedly from a portrait of ‘the man-in-the-street’, for the allotment-holder today is by no means an eccentric or peculiar individual clinging tenaciously to a relic of a bygone age: he is, indeed, a perfectly ordinary man who wishes to spend his spare time in a particular pursuit. He may originally have been motivated by either economic or patriotic considerations to seek an allotment, but these no longer apply to any major degree. He now looks upon his allotment as his recreation in the way that others would choose football or bowls. He believes that it promotes his health and physical well-being; he enjoys the taste of his own fresh produce; and he is anxious not only to help his family’s budget, but also to bring pleasure to others who are not fortunate enough to have an allotment by presenting them with some of his fruit, flowers or vegetables. Although the manner in which he puts these objectives into practice may leave much to be desired, it is, in our view, essential to realise that his shortcomings on the site in no way spring from his shortcomings as a man.
TRANSECT FROM CENTRAL TO SOUTH BIRMINGHAM SHOWING ALLOTMENT CATCHMENT AREAS 1958

Figure 18
Sites Nos. 5, 10 and 20 each comprised two or more smaller sites; in each case one of these was Temporary. Catchment areas for private sites are not shown on this map.

152
Figure 19
Catchment areas for private sites are not shown.
B. The allotment holder and his plot

(1) Access and accessibility

375. In 1893 it was suggested that if a site was more than a mile from the homes of the prospective tenants, its possible unpopularity ought not to be regarded as evidence of lack of demand. No arguments were then put forward to justify this limitation of the 'journey to dig', but it appears that even when allotments were regarded as an economic necessity many of those who stood to benefit were reluctant to travel over 1 mile to the site; one must remember, however, that the means of travel were then much more limited than they are today.

376. Today, 83·0 per cent of the allotment holders in urban areas and 93·3 per cent of those in rural parishes travel less than a mile to their plots (Table XIII, Appendix VI). Very many travel a much shorter distance, and it is probable that most allotment holders, both urban and rural, live within half a mile of their plots. Moreover, many of those who travel longer distances do so only because they have retained the same plot after changing their residence. A detailed study of allotment catchment areas in a transect from central to south Birmingham revealed that out of 1,112 tenants on 30 sites in 1958 (Figure 18) no less than 46 per cent travelled less than a quarter of a mile to their sites; 59 per cent lived within half a mile and 68 per cent within three-quarters of a mile, leaving 32 per cent travelling more than three-quarters of a mile to their site. By 1968 (Figure 19) of the 883 tenants then occupying the 26 sites remaining in the same area 44 per cent travelled less than a quarter of a mile, 61 per cent under half a mile and 73 per cent below three-quarters of a mile to their site, leaving 27 per cent who travelled above three-quarters of a mile. For neither year do the detailed statistics in the margin of Figures 18 and 19 indicate that tenants were generally prepared to travel greater distances to obtain a plot on a permanent site rather than one on a more proximate temporary site. Beyond the city centre, in the Middle Ring (which includes some 'twilight' and redevelopment zones) where there are few sites, tenants are prepared to travel considerably greater distances (even 5 or 6 miles) to a large flourishing site. This is well-shown by Russell Road/Moor Green Farm Site (No. 20), 80 per cent of whose tenants travelled over three-quarters of a mile in 1958; the subsequent decline to 69 per cent in this proportion may be due to a reduction in the acreage of the site and the effects of major redevelopment programmes. By contrast, in the Outer Ring of suburban housing a considerable number of smaller sites (e.g. Nos. 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, 28 and 32) draw their tenants from a very restricted area of half a mile or even a quarter of a mile. A comparison of Figures 18 and 19 also shows that the catchment areas were generally more nucleated and sharply defined in 1958, and have since become more diffuse and overlapping. The considerable overlap between the catchment areas of sites such as Nos. 20 and 26 is possibly associated with the availability of frequent 'bus services along and across a major arterial road.

377. Throughout our investigations, allotment holders have told us that they would not be prepared to travel far to reach their allotments, and it is clear that a reluctance to do so pervades the allotments movement today. This reluctance is typified by the views of those who admitted that, however great their desire for security might be, they would prefer a plot on a temporary site near their

* See paragraph 32.
home to one on a statutory site 2 miles away. It is echoed in the Minister’s decision that the alternative provision found for allotment holders displaced from a statutory site must be within three-quarters of a mile of their homes. It is reiterated by N.A.G.S., whose representatives argued before us in oral evidence that allotment holders ought not to be expected to walk further than half a mile. Yet, when we have sought to pinpoint the basis of this restricted mobility, to discover why one man will not travel more than half a mile to reach his allotment while another of similar age and fitness is quite happy to journey several miles in order to fish or play golf, we have been met by arguments which are both imprecise and largely inadequate. The ‘three-quarter mile rule’ imposed by the Minister and adhered to inflexibly for the past 16 years is defended as being the furthest distance that a man should be expected to walk to his plot. But our questionnaire shows that only 60-4 per cent now walk to their plots even within this distance, and it is certain that many of these could use other means of transport if necessary. We were told that the site should be near enough to the allotment holder’s home to enable him to visit it “during the short winter evenings”; but in fact the questionnaire revealed that 70-1 per cent visit their allotment no more than twice a week during the winter, and these visits are almost always made at the week-end. Allotment holders, we were also informed, should not be expected to spend money upon travel by public transport to their site; but the disappearance of economic need, and the residual profit which most allotment holders make, suggest that this argument is no longer valid.

378. It is beyond dispute that an allotment site should initially be situated as conveniently as possible for those who wish to use it, and there are certain groups of people, such as the elderly and the disabled, who cannot be expected to travel far. But the principle that an allotment must always be at the tenant’s doorstep has created more unnecessary problems for the movement than any other single item. It is largely because of this principle that allotments are invariably sited close to residential areas where they are bound to be vulnerable to closure rather than in areas where they might be more secure. It is for the same reason that little regard has so often been paid to the quality of the soil and the adequacy of the drainage of sites. The same principle makes it difficult to take a long-range look at allotments, including their integration into new urban development schemes and associated recreation complexes. It is also largely because of the arbitrary ‘three-quarter mile rule’ imposed by the Minister as a condition of giving consent to the alienation of statutory sites that so much ill-feeling has been generated.

379. Ideally, no doubt, every allotment site should possess all the prerequisites which the movement could possibly expect, and proximity to a residential catchment area would certainly be included prominently among them. But at a time when the pattern of most of our towns is subject to continual change, and when every acre of urban land is the target of conflicting pressures, this ideal can rarely be achieved. The most that could be expected is that allotment sites should be located by reference to as many of these ‘ideal features’ as possible; and we are convinced that, in such a list, ‘proximity to residential areas’ should not be given absolute priority.

380. The amount of time which an allotment holder spends upon his plot varies greatly, being determined by many factors, such as the size of his holding and the crops which he grows. It is affected also (and this gives added force to the theory which we advanced in paragraph 273), by the rent which he pays. There is clear evidence that a man who pays a higher rent spends longer on his
allotment, apparently being determined to obtain the maximum value for money both in recreation hours and in quantity and quality of produce from his plot. In the light of what has been said in the preceding paragraphs, it is interesting that the distance which the allotment holder must travel to reach his allotment has no measurable effect upon the total amount of time he spends there during the year. There is, however, some slight evidence to suggest that the man who travels further visits his plot less frequently but spends a longer time there when he arrives. The "average" allotment holder with a 10-rod plot estimates that he spends between 400 and 500 hours per annum upon it. This amount to between 5,600 and 7,000 hours of recreational activity per acre per annum, and it is pertinent to ask what other spare-time activity receives so much attention from its adherents. These figures are derived from Table 31.

381. The extremes shown by the answers to this question are illuminating. One allotment holder in every 100 acknowledges that he never visits his plot, and 4.7 per cent do not spend any time there during the winter months. At the other extreme, 8.3 per cent estimate that they spend more than 1,000 hours per year on their allotments, and 6 per cent go to their plots more than twelve times per week during the summer season; most of the latter group are retired. As many as 63.9 per cent reported that their families never visited the site, and this rose to 89.1 per cent during winter. These figures may be exaggerated in that although we endeavoured to exclude from this analysis those allotment holders who have no family, the vagaries of the questionnaire and of the answers thereto probably prevented us from locating every such case. The size of an allotment and the number of plots which an allotment holder occupies do not affect the chances of his wife and family giving assistance. We have already suggested a number of reasons why few women become allotment holders today. In paragraph 369 we pointed out that some allotment holders place "change from the home environment" high in their list of reasons for having an allotment, and in paragraph 373 we mentioned an allotment association whose members included "getting away from wife and children" among their own reasons for taking a plot. We wonder whether a fairly large number share something of the feelings of the one anonymous allotment holder who bravely told us that his only reason for taking an allotment was to get away from his wife! It is clear that the majority of allotment holders receive little assistance from their families, and it seems unlikely, on present evidence, that the nucleus of the next generation of allotment holders might emerge from the children of those who have allotments today.

382. There is a direct relationship between the number of hours which an allotment holder spends upon his plot and the length of time he has held it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Number of visits per week</th>
<th>Duration of each visit (hours)</th>
<th>Total time spent on allotment per week (hours)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2 1/2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2 1/2</td>
<td>12 1/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Again, this may sometimes be the result of special circumstances for, in general, retired people have been allotment holders for the longest periods and are now in a position to devote more spare time to their plots. Nevertheless, this relationship is consistent throughout, and we find that a man who has held an allotment for as little as ten years will spend more time upon it than one who has held one for five.

383. Those who place gardening high on their list of hobbies spend more time upon their allotments than others. This also might have been expected, for those who regard other spare-time activities as more important will have less free time available for gardening. But it also illustrates the difference between those to whom allotment gardening is a source of pleasure and those who, being motivated either by economic considerations or by a desire for fresh vegetables, deem it a painful necessity.

(2) Number and size of plots

384. The statements which we have made in Chapters 7 and 8 about the comparative size of allotments in urban and rural areas are confirmed by the analysis of the questionnaire issued to allotment holders; but since we have in this instance been able to break down the sizes of the smaller gardens in greater detail, it will be advantageous to present a comparative Table of sizes for urban and rural areas. This is done in Table 32. Commercial influence on rural allotment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of allotment garden (square yards)</th>
<th>% of allotment holders having allotments of each size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 50</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-150</td>
<td>16-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150-250</td>
<td>15-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250-350</td>
<td>48-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 350</td>
<td>20-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 precisely (10 rods)</td>
<td>36-7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
either exceptionally large or very small. The only satisfactory conclusion we can reach is that the amount of time 'needed' to cultivate an allotment, irrespective of its size, expands or contracts to meet the time which the allotment holder is prepared to devote to it; and thus he will be satisfied with the size of his allotment no matter how large or small it may be.

386. Allotment holders were also asked how many plots they cultivated. The answers submitted from urban and rural areas displayed a remarkable consistency; 72.4 per cent have one plot, and 17.6 per cent have more than three. In itself, perhaps, this information is of little value, but its correlation with other data shows that the number of plots which an allotment holder takes does not depend in any way upon age, occupation, the size of his family or the size of his income. The decision to take a second plot when it falls vacant appears to be made without regard to any obvious factor; it may occasionally be governed by considerations as simple as a desire to ensure that nearby vacant plots are kept free of weeds.

(3) Cultivation: vegetables, fruit and flowers

387. No less than 86.1 per cent of urban, and 91.6 per cent of rural allotment holders tell us that the whole of their allotment is “in use”; in neither case, apparently, does this proportion vary with the size of the plot. In the light of the general view that allotments are “the right size” (whatever size they may be) this answer was to be expected, but it is in serious conflict with the opinion of most of the general public, and this, in turn, is supported by our own observations. We will be able to develop this point further when we come to discuss the appearance of the sites, but in the meantime we must acknowledge that the phrase “in use”, employed in this context could be taken to cover a wide variety of different “uses” unconnected with allotment gardening.

388. In completing our questionnaire, each allotment holder was asked to indicate the proportion of his plot which was used for each of several purposes, and we were able to consider the answers given in two different ways. Firstly, we calculated the number of allotment holders who devote at least part of their plots to each of our specified purposes; the results are summarised in Table 33. The cultivation of vegetables is so universal among allotment holders (Figure 20) that the shortfall from 100 per cent, however small, is worthy of note. It is formed partly by those who devote their entire plot to fruit cultivation or the keeping of livestock, and partly by the few who use their allotment for the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 33</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of allotments for specified purposes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of allotment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit trees or bushes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compost heap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold frames or cloches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The fact that the figures for rural areas are lower in every line is due to the numbers which use their plots for purposes (such as grazing) not included in our list.

158
cultivation of flowers for exhibition or home decoration purposes. Other features of Table 33 which should not be allowed to pass without comment are the indications that of the urban allotment holders over one-third have a toolshed or similar structure, while over half maintain their own compost heap.

389. Our second review of the answers given to this same question was designed to ascertain whether it was possible to establish any connection between the size of the plot and the uses to which it was put. We discovered that while 41.6 per cent of all plots are devoted entirely to vegetables (without so much as a compost heap to relieve the monotony), these are comprised mainly of the smallest and the largest allotments. Our finding, in fact, is that as the size of the plot increases from 100 square yards or less up to 300 square yards, so does the possibility that it will contain a few flowers or a greenhouse; but as soon as the plot exceeds 10 rods in extent, this possibility declines sharply.

390. The cultivation of produce for exhibition purposes is an important feature of today’s allotment gardening. Some 19.1 per cent of urban allotment holders exhibit produce, and over three-quarters of these show vegetables alone. Contributions from allotment holders have long been recognised as an important aspect of very many local and county horticultural and ‘flower’ shows, and this continues to be so today; indeed, we have been told by some local authorities that the practice of ‘grow to show’ is on the increase.

391. It is clear from the preceding paragraphs that the great majority of allotment holders continue to regard their allotments primarily as an area for the cultivation of vegetables and, to a much lesser degree, small fruit, and that very many devote their entire plot to this purpose. We have said that the numbers who need to produce their own food are now insignificant, and we have seen that local allotments authorities generally would raise no objection to the cultivation of flowers. Moreover, the allotments movement is well aware that one of the chief criticisms levelled against it is that many sites are unkempt and untidy; and the cultivation of vegetables is generally held to be a rather untidy process with little or no emphasis on beauty. At various points in our report we have suggested reasons why the cultivation of vegetables on allotments should still be so popular, and we must now draw these together.

392. The first of these factors is tradition. From the outset, the whole concept of allotment gardening has been founded upon the production of food, and whether its ultimate purpose has been the alleviation of poverty, assistance to the unemployed or the salvation of the country, the identity of the allotment as a place where vegetables and a little fruit are grown has been retained. Occasionally, this identity has been preserved by implication only; but far more frequently, and especially during the two world wars, it has been stressed over and over again. The ‘Dig for Victory’ campaign of the Second World War—during which one in five of today’s allotment holders first took a plot and many more were helping on their parents’ allotment—was necessarily based upon this one concept; and a whole army of organisations, including the Inspectorates of the Ministries of Agriculture and Education, Local Education Authorities, the Royal Horticultural Society, Horticultural Research Stations, the Horticultural Education Association and the National Allotments Society, gave advice and direction on the production of vegetables and fruit on allotment gardens. A large number of articles appeared in the horticultural press and lectures, demonstrations and on-the-spot advice were freely available to urban and rural allotment holders, many of whom were recent ‘recruits’ who had never previously
wielded a spade. A long series of leaflets and circulars poured from the Ministry of Agriculture emphasising the need to plan production so as to avoid gluts and to ensure that produce was available throughout the year; the need to ensure variety in order to provide a complete diet, and the need to prevent wastage of precious seed. This pressure continued, though with a gradually decreasing momentum, for several years after the end of the war, and its effects can be clearly observed in the 1950 report of the A.A.C. That committee was able to refer to "the ordinary type of vegetable allotment" in the certainty that those who read its report would understand exactly what was meant. It is scarcely surprising that this continual emphasis upon the cultivation of vegetables and fruit should have produced in the minds of many allotment holders a lasting impression that one ought not to grow anything else on an allotment garden. Nor is this feeling confined to those who have held an allotment for some time; it permeates the whole of society to a point where most people would only consider taking an allotment today if, for some reason, they desired to grow fruit and vegetables. Such tradition dies hard!

393. The second clue to the omnipresence of vegetables and small fruit lies in the legislation which has so restricted the definition of an allotment garden as to create an impression that an allotment holder who was so bold as to grow a few flowers would be guilty of breaking the law! Moreover, since 1950 no local authority has been under an obligation to provide land except for allotment gardens; an allotment holder who cultivates flowers therefore does so under sufferance. N.A.G.S. has contended in evidence that the removal of all legal restrictions would persuade many allotment holders to grow more flowers on their plots. We doubt whether a change in the law would in itself have much effect. There might be a considerable number of newcomers who would be attracted to the idea of growing flowers on allotment gardens, but many existing allotment holders seem too set in their ways to accept so radical a suggestion easily.

394. Next, there is the general view among allotment holders that the allotment and the home garden are complementary. The one is designed for fruit and vegetables, the other for a lawn, flowers and a variety of domestic uses, and any suggestion that their roles might be amalgamated would be rejected by most allotment holders. The kitchen section of a home garden has, traditionally, always been sited where it cannot be seen from the house, and the allotment replaces the kitchen garden for a man whose home garden is too small to incorporate vegetables.

395. A large number of allotment holders take a plot specifically to supply themselves and their families with fresh vegetables and fruit. We are quite satisfied that those who claim that such fresh produce tastes better are right. The view is commonly held that the quality of most produce starts to deteriorate from the moment it is harvested, with an accompanying loss of taste and often of vital vitamin C. In the production of many fruits and vegetables for the commercial market considerations of taste are often of minor importance; varieties of green vegetables with strong leaf fibres are usually preferred by commercial growers because they enable the crop to withstand wind, cold, heat or drought, as well as rough handling in transit, but such green-stuff often lacks the delicate taste and tenderness of allotment or home garden produce. Others firmly believe that the artificial fertilisers, weedkillers and insecticides used in commercial production have a deleterious effect upon health, and have therefore taken an
allotment in order to avoid the necessity of eating produce grown in this way. Whether this opinion is valid or not, it has to be respected.

396. It is almost certain, however, that the most important single factor in the continued popularity of vegetable cultivation is economic motive. Most men who take allotments because of their love of gardening as a hobby could presumably find as much satisfaction in the cultivation of one crop as in another. But the cultivation of fruit and vegetables will directly save them house-keeping money, whereas the cultivation of flowers, generally speaking, will not. It is particularly where the allotment holder has no basic love of gardening that economic motive predominates. As one allotment holder, who could certainly not profess an economic need, explained his outlook to a member of this committee:—

"If my local authority has to provide me with enough land to grow all the vegetables I need for 10s. 0d. a year, I would be foolish not to take it."

397. All of these arguments, each to a different degree, help to explain why the typical allotment garden today is devoted almost entirely to vegetables, with, possibly, a row or two of fruit bushes at one end (Figure 20 and Plate 21). They illustrate how difficult it would be in the present climate of opinion to break the tradition by which vegetables and allotments are thought of as synonymous. Yet none of them satisfactorily explains the failure of so many allotment holders to plant even a show of flowers round the edge of their plots. By doing so they would upset no tradition and would break no law. Their crop of fresh vegetables would be no smaller and their profit margin would be virtually unaffected. But the improvement in the appearance of their sites might be enormous, and the rewards far greater than the effort entailed in achieving them. We will discuss shortly the reasons why this has been so rarely attempted.

(4) Livestock

398. The most surprising fact to emerge from the analysis of our questions about the keeping of small livestock on allotments is that so few allotment holders are involved. Fewer than 3 per cent of those in the urban sample keep stock of any description,* and one in seven of these is a beekeeper. Our visits to sites all over the country, the evidence we have received, and theses prepared by students had led us to believe that the practice was much more widespread. The evidence of the questionnaires, however, is consistent throughout, and we may safely conclude that the numbers of allotment holders who keep livestock on their allotments are as shown in Table 34.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of stock</th>
<th>% of allotment holders keeping each type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bees</td>
<td>0-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigeons</td>
<td>0-41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry</td>
<td>2-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pigs</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goats</td>
<td>↑</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† Numbers too small for analysis.

* The corresponding figures for the rural and N.A.G.S. samples are 4-9 per cent and 5-6 per cent respectively.
399. It is possible that our initial excessive estimate of the prevalence of stockkeeping stemmed from the way in which the whole character of an allotment site can be changed when relatively few of its occupants keep stock. We do not, however, intend at this time to discuss the general principles involved in combining horticulture with stock-keeping on the same site. We will deal with this comprehensively in Chapter 11.

(5) Rents and amenities

400. The majority (60·6 per cent) of urban allotment holders pay less than 15s. 0d. rent per annum for a 10-rod plot (Figure 17d). During the last few years many large towns have slightly increased the basic rents of their allotments—often the first increase for many decades. Of the 39·4 per cent of allotment holders who now pay 15s. 0d. or more for 10-rods, a few have plots on ‘model’ sites and pay rents in excess of £2 each year for the same area.

401. No fewer than 83·5 per cent of these consider that their present rent is “about right”. It is noteworthy again that these opinions are spread uniformly throughout urban areas in both England and Wales; in fact, our correlations have shown that both among those who still pay less than 5s. 0d. and among those who pay between £1 and £2 for 10-rods, 84 per cent think that the rent is correct. Naturally enough, the 5·4 per cent who believe that their basic rent is excessive and the 11·1 per cent who consider it inadequate are to be found at either end of the scale. Those who pay between 15s. 0d. and 20s. 0d. are the most satisfied, 89·5 per cent of this group deeming their rents to be “about right”.

402. The position in rural areas is, however, somewhat different. There, the majority (58·7 per cent) still pay less than 10s. 0d. for a plot of 10-rods, and it is clear that very few parishes have ever increased the rents charged for their plots. The number (85·4 per cent), who consider these rents to be “about right” is even higher than in urban areas. It will be recalled that our own views about the adequacy of current rents were set out in Chapter 7.

403. Bearing in mind that few allotment sites contain more than one or two of the eleven amenities which we felt might reasonably be provided,* we asked each tenant whether he was satisfied with the amenities at present available on his site. It was surprising to find that 55·2 per cent consider that their sites have adequate amenities, and that this percentage applies equally to allotment holders on statutory, temporary and private sites. We then invited those who felt otherwise to consider what additional rent they would be prepared to pay for a number of specified amenities. Unfortunately, this question provided very little authoritative data, but the following points, which apply equally to urban and rural areas, are satisfactorily proved:—

(i) The majority of allotment holders are satisfied with their present amenities, however poor these may be.

(ii) Of the remainder, the majority consider that good fencing, gates, road access and communal huts should be provided without any increase in their present rents.

(iii) Of those who would be prepared to pay an additional rent for each item, the majority would consider the scale shown in Table 35 to be fair.

* See paragraph 262.
Although no allotment holder in our sample is prepared to pay for all of these items, the maximum value placed upon each produces a total of 26s. 0d. for them all. By adding back the current ‘basic’ rent of 15s. 0d., it would appear that a plot on a site which possesses all these amenities is currently valued by the tenant at about £2 per annum. We have seen that on the few sites which already have these amenities (but no more), tenants are paying up to £6 per annum* and that such sites often have waiting-lists. It is apparent from Table 35 that those allot-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Per annum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual shed</td>
<td>3s.–5s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal hut</td>
<td>1s.–2s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toilet facilities</td>
<td>1s.–2s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good road access</td>
<td>1s.–2s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piped water</td>
<td>3s.–5s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate fencing and gates</td>
<td>3s.–5s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual greenhouse</td>
<td>3s.–5s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ment holders who are ready to pay more for good amenities rate those items which will be of direct benefit to their own plots higher than those which will improve the site as a whole. We will discuss both these points further when we examine the attitudes of mind of the allotment holder today.

(6) Problems confronting allotment holders

404. The recipients of our questionnaires were invited to rate in order of importance the difficulties which they encountered in successfully cultivating and enjoying their allotments. A relatively large number intimated, either by leaving the question blank or by adding a suitable note, that they found no difficulties whatsoever; these amounted to 18.5 per cent in urban areas and 28.2 per cent in rural. In Table 36 the answers to this question are analysed in two different ways. Column A shows the overall order of importance of each item, calculated on a ‘points’ system among urban allotment holders; Column B places each difficulty according to the number of allotment holders (also in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allotment holders’ rating of difficulties of cultivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecurity of tenure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No toilet facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism and theft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No communal hut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeds from adjoining plots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of access road or car park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor soil and drainage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No individual shed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate water supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to keep livestock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General neglect of site or inadequate supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictions on what may be grown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* See paragraph 273.
urban areas) who put it at the top of their list. Columns C and D, and E and F, repeat the exercise for rural allotment holders and members of N.A.G.S. respectively. It is necessary to discuss briefly the points which Table 36 reveals. We will deal individually with most of the entries, but will consider together those which seem to us to have a common interpretation.

(a) Insecurity of tenure

405. This problem was placed first on the list in our questionnaire mainly on the advice of N.A.G.S. which has told us time and again that it is the greatest problem which the allotments movement faces today. It is evident from Table 36 that the great body of allotment holders do not share this view. Those who are members of N.A.G.S. rate its importance higher than those who are not, possibly under the influence of N.A.G.S.’s propaganda; and allotment holders in the towns consider it to be more important than do those in the country. For urban and rural allotment holders combined, however, it holds only fifth place on the list.

406. A clue to this somewhat surprising revelation lies in Columns B, D and F, which show that a fairly large number of allotment holders in each of our samples did in fact place this difficulty first; it follows that, in order to obtain its relatively low final position, still more must have set it very low in their list or even failed to consider it at all. As one might have expected, allotment holders on statutory sites are less worried by thoughts of insecurity than are their colleagues on temporary and private sites, but the differences are slight. We are forced to conclude from this evidence that most of the allotment holders who are really worried about their security of tenure are those whose sites are actually under threat of closure. This finding does not, of course, lessen the very real difficulty of insecurity. It does not help to solve the problem of improving the appearance of a site if it is basically insecure. Nor does the finding imply that an allotment holder who loses his plot will remain keen enough to take another. But it does, in our view, tend to disprove the theory which has often been put to us that many allotment holders are reluctant to spend time and money upon their plots because of a constant fear that they may eventually lose them.

(b) No toilet facilities; lack of roads and car parks; inadequate water supply

407. These three separate difficulties, all of which relate to the absence of particular amenities which would help the allotment holder as an individual, are placed generally high in the list. The problem of a water supply is rated more highly in rural areas where the provision of piped water is generally less common than in the towns (paragraph 314).

(c) Vandalism and theft

408. It is clear that allotment holders generally find this a major problem, especially in urban areas. In the countryside it is somewhat less important. We are not certain why this should be so, but it is possible that the country-dweller has a greater respect for property and for growing crops than the man (or child) who lives in a town. Our evidence supports the claim that vandalism is a constant menace to many sites. Sometimes the reason why a particular site suffers more than another is obscure. For instance, we were told of two sites in Bristol of which one, surrounded by a high fence and with a locked gate, was the target for constant attacks, while the other, with only a thin hedge to define it, remained
completely free. It was suggested to us that the potential thief or vandal welcomes the challenge which a stout fence provides! On other occasions the cause is more obvious. In Warwick a student found that vandalism was most prevalent on a site which adjoined a children’s playground while another in West Bridgford discovered that it increased during the school holidays. A site in Leatherhead which is crossed by a public thoroughfare loses much of its produce, while on a similar site in Newcastle-upon-Tyne a regular trespasser told a student that “a bunch of flowers is always welcome at home, and nobody ever asks where I get them”.

409. The problem of vandalism and theft is difficult to solve, and is by no means confined to allotments. But an examination of the sites which suffer little from it shows that they are invariably well tenanted and well organised. For example, one student found that “a well-cultivated, adequately fenced site, generating gardeners at all times of the day, during all seasons, is plagued but little by this problem”. There may also be more truth than is realised in the statement made to us on one of our visits that “even today people are reluctant to destroy that which is clearly worth preserving”.

(d) Weed encroachment from adjoining vacant plots

410. As Table 36 clearly shows, allotment holders in all categories consider this to be the greatest problem which they have to face. At a time when as many as one in every five plots is vacant this was almost bound to be so, and little further explanation is required. It will clearly remain a problem until either the number of vacant plots is drastically reduced or a determined effort is made to keep the weeds in check (Plate 5). Moreover, it is to some extent a self-generating problem. If more allotment holders are driven from their plots by their failure to win the battle against weed invasion, there will clearly be more vacant plots to increase the difficulty still further.

(e) Poor soil and drainage

411. This problem, which is placed in the middle of the list throughout, does not cause as much difficulty as might have been expected. Even so, one allotment holder in twenty in urban areas regards it as the biggest problem he has to contend with. Students inspected sites with every conceivable type of soil; they found many which were liable to flooding after a small amount of rain (Figure 20); they discovered made-up sites where frost never occurred because of spontaneous combustion in tinned material at shallow depth and where potatoes ceased to grow because the tubers were virtually cooked underground; they saw a number of sites so liable to subsidence that it was “difficult to build even a garden shed”. On the majority of sites the quality of the soil and the adequacy of the drainage seem largely a matter of luck, and it is probable that some of the worst sites escaped our visits and random sampling because so few tenants remained.

(f) No individual shed

412. The lack of an individual shed is rated much lower than those amenities which we have already mentioned. The reason for this is obvious: the individual allotment holder can scarcely provide toilets, roads, car parks or piped water, where none exist; but he can, and so often has, contrived to compensate for the lack of a garden shed by erecting a ramshackle and unsightly structure of his own that does much to perpetuate the image of the ‘labouring poor’ (Plate 6).
(g) *No communal hut; general neglect of the site and inadequate supervision*

413. At first sight it seems incongruous to group these two items together. They have, however, one important thing in common; both affect the management and, ultimately, the success of the *site* rather than of the individual plot. Both are placed low in the list, the first occupying tenth place throughout, while the second lies sixth in urban areas and ninth in rural.

(h) *Debarred from keeping livestock; restrictions on what may be grown*

414. These two difficulties, which occupy the last two places in the list, are regarded as the least important by almost every allotment holder, although a small number in rural areas find the ban on livestock a trifle irksome. We have already seen that relatively few allotments authorities impose a restriction on the cultivation of flowers, and that almost half are prepared to permit the keeping of various forms of livestock on their allotment gardens. It is clear that those allotment holders who wish to grow flowers or keep livestock are generally able to do so. It is also obvious that, for the reasons set out earlier in this chapter, the great majority of allotment holders today are concerned only to grow vegetables upon their plots.

(7) *Attitudes of mind*

415. Throughout this chapter our analysis of the allotment holder, his motives and the way in which he gives expression to them has been factual rather than critical; and there is a reason for this. The failings of the allotments movement today emerge largely from a series of attitudes which it adopts towards authority, the general public, and even its own members. It has seemed to us preferable to examine these attitudes in a separate section of the report, and to illustrate each from the points we have already made. There are three such attitudes to be discussed which together charge the allotments movement with a fair share of the responsibility for the problems which it faces today.

416. We have found several major differences between the home garden and the allotment. These, however, have all been differences of degree, and there is in fact only one fundamental distinction between them. A home garden is a single private unit, the province of an individual and his family; their area of responsibility is bounded by walls, fences or hedges. But every allotment gardener is part of a body corporate. When a man takes an allotment, then technically, perhaps, he is accepting the tenancy of a single plot of land, but he is invariably aware that by history, tradition and necessity his plot is one of a group provided for the same purpose. Whether his site has an established association or not, he becomes one of a band of people with a common interest and a common purpose, and he can no more abdicate from his responsibility towards his allotment neighbours than he could if his site were a playing field and his neighbours part of his team.

417. There are many sites all over the country where the team spirit is well developed; there are a few where it is very high indeed. But on the majority of sites this is not so, and the allotment holders are a collection of individuals with little or no sense of corporate responsibility. On such sites the few public-spirited allotment holders who exist find their efforts stifled by the general air of indifference and sink all too easily into the apathy which surrounds them. When the driving force behind allotment gardening was sheer economic need, a spirit of comradeship existed on almost every site. Particularly in the great
slump of the 1930's and during the last war, co-operation among allotment holders often reached remarkable proportions; but on very many sites the disappearance of such stimuli over the past two decades has largely destroyed this spirit. Our first major criticism of today's recreation-oriented allotment holder, therefore, is that he is primarily an individualist who considers his allotment to be as private as his home garden, who is seldom interested in anything beyond its boundaries, and is blind to his further responsibilities.

418. We might have sought in this report to demonstrate conclusively that this was so from the answers provided to our questionnaires. Unfortunately, however, we did not include the questions necessary to this purpose, partly because we had no reason at the outset of the inquiry to suppose that this situation was so prevalent. We do not know, for example, what proportion of allotment sites today have an association of any description. But there is a great deal of evidence which points to the above conclusion, and it is supported by much that we have seen and heard upon the sites which we have visited. It will be recalled, for example, that the companionship of other allotment holders was placed eighth (out of eleven) in the list of reasons for having an allotment, that allotment holders with few amenities were prepared to pay very little for those with a corporate function, and that the neglect of the site and the absence of communal facilities featured only to a minor degree in their list of problems and difficulties. All of these factors lead inevitably to the conclusion that at present most allotment holders regard the corporate life of the site as very unimportant.

419. We have found sites where many allotment holders do not know—and some have never even seen—the tenants of adjoining plots; we have spoken to allotment holders who not only failed to attend meetings of their association but professed to be unaware that an association even existed; members of this committee have attended association meetings at which only a minute fraction of the allotment holders has put in an appearance, and similarly, students have investigated the allotment situation in several large towns where few, if any, sites enjoy a corporate life at all.

420. It is, we are convinced, this indifference to the general good which has persuaded so many allotment holders not to 'waste time' with a border of flowers whose main purpose would be to make the site more attractive to the eye. This same indifference has led allotment holders so often to invite us to stand on a path covered with weeds and littered with debris in order to admire a well-tended plot, or to expect us to walk blindly past a large compost heap or a rubbish dump seemingly placed as an advertisement at the main entrance to a site! It is seen even on the model sites, where a genuine attempt by an allotments authority to provide allotment holders with first-class facilities is often undermined by the thoughtless actions of allotment holders who use part of their plots as a dumping ground for objects of every description (Plate 9). As we have said, there are many sites where this criticism would be quite unjustified, and where, indeed, the allotment holders might be surprised to learn that elsewhere such indifference exists. Such sites fully merit the compliments which we will bestow upon them. But in the case of the majority of sites the individualism of the allotment holders is now one of the movement's greatest weaknesses; for one of the strongest justifications for allotment sites today is that they provide for a gardening community.

421. Our second main criticism of today's allotment holders is that so many of them ignore the changes which have taken place around them during the past
twenty years and fail to face up to the realities of their situation. They acknowledge freely that the significance of allotment gardening has changed from economic need to recreation, but cannot see that in a more affluent society its standards should have changed also. It is probably for this reason that no less than 55 per cent of allotment holders remain satisfied with their amenities, which might have been considered adequate twenty years ago, and that over 80 per cent see no need to change the name ‘allotment’ which in the minds of the general public still conjures up a link with the movement’s charitable origins. In so far as allotment holders see that their sites are unattractive, many regard this as ‘natural’ and inevitable, and as something which society must endure today as readily as in the past. But so much emphasis is now placed on the importance of beauty in our man-made environments, that citizens whose homes overlook dismal, monotonous sites have a just cause for complaint (Plates 3, 16, 17 and 18). Yet allotment holders seem unable to appreciate that, without the impetus which has carried the allotments movement in the past, its strength in the council chamber today must rest upon new factors, such as its readiness to accept reasonable proposals for the loss of some derelict sites and the contraction of others, especially when these are based upon a desire to reduce the number of vacant plots. Above all, perhaps, they fail to realise that the readiness of the public to support a minority recreation must conform ultimately to the degree of support which it merits. In this context a fully tenanted attractive site (Plates 2, 8, 9, 10 and 12) will certainly be more successful in retaining such support than one which is drab and half-empty; and the hard core of staunch allotment holders would certainly improve their own prospects if they created attractive conditions designed to keep their colleagues on the site, instead of complaining about the weeds when the disillusioned have left.

422. Finally in this section we must refer to the reluctance which many allotment holders feel, and often openly profess, about accepting any suggestion that the best form of help is self-help. The allotments movement makes many complaints against authority, and some at least are fully justified; but it is hard to understand why so few tenants on local authority sites have sought to compensate for the failure of others by doing something for themselves, as so many tenants on private sites have had to do. We acknowledge that this attitude is by no means universal; for we have seen a number of sites which contain storage sheds or communal huts provided and built by the tenants, and we know of others where they are erecting toilets or laying piped water. But these are still the exceptions, and we find it both odd and reprehensible that so many who, as we have seen, claim ‘do-it-yourself’ as their second hobby, never seem to extend this principle as far as their allotment sites. Students all over the country have found the tradition that the movement was bred out of poverty so ingrained in the minds of many allotment holders that they tend to regard the possession of an allotment as a right which imposes no balancing obligations. Even forward-looking allotment holders have complained to us about their colleagues that “the apathy is appalling and must be worse than [in] any other section of the community; very few will lift a finger to help themselves or the movement”.

423. This committee has seen abundant evidence of such apathy on many sites. It is exemplified by the attitude of those who showed us an entrance gate which lay drunkenly on its side with the comment that “the council knew about this gate three months ago and has done nothing about it”. We estimated that the repair would take less than 15 minutes and would cost less than 10s. Od., yet
the same allotment holders had just acknowledged that their rents were at least 30s. 0d. too low! The same apathy has caused many allotment holders to see no need for the appointment of this committee and to ignore its questionnaire; we have, indeed, met allotment holders who were quite unaware of our existence or our task. We are quite certain that unless this indifference disappears, unless it is replaced by a new enthusiasm akin to that which pervaded allotment sites twenty-five years ago, the movement cannot survive for long—and it will have itself to blame if continuing atrophy brings about its extinction.

C. The non-allotment holder

424. Inevitably, perhaps, almost all our direct evidence about the allotments movement today has come from the allotment holders themselves or from their representatives. We were, however, very conscious from the outset that in a comprehensive enquiry of this nature, an investigation into the reasons why people do not take allotments would be as helpful as an examination of the motives of those who do. It was realised that a complete appraisal of such people, even on a random sample basis, would be quite beyond our resources, and we decided ultimately to concentrate upon two groups of individuals:—

(i) former allotment holders who had given up their plots; and
(ii) flat-dwellers who, having no home garden, might have been expected to be more attracted than others to the idea of taking an allotment.

In neither case was it possible to conduct the investigation on a national random sample basis, and our findings must therefore be treated with caution when applied to England and Wales as a whole.

(1) The ‘ones that got away’

425. In a questionnaire (which will be further discussed in Chapter 12) issued to the secretaries of a wide scatter of allotment associations we asked the recipients to list in order of importance the reasons why allotment holders had given up plots on their sites during the five years ending in 1965. The answers, expressed in terms of percentages, are shown in Table 37, Column A. Column B of the same Table shows the actual numbers who left for each reason in the single year 1965. The figures in Table 37 cover 103 sites with associations, and our only

| Reasons for giving up allotments: a survey of 103 sites with associations |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------|----------------|
| A Percentage surrendering plots: 1960-5 | B Actual numbers surrendering plots: 1965 |
| Death ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 18·5 | 37 |
| Illness ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 16·6 | 40 |
| Old age ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 15·2 | 33 |
| Lost interest in allotment gardening ... | 14·1 | 31 |
| Moved from district ... ... ... ... ... ... | 7·3 | 37 |
| Weed invasion ... ... ... ... ... ... ... | 7·2 | 9 |
| Insecurity of tenure ... ... ... ... ... | 6·1 | 12 |
| Vandalism or theft ... ... ... ... ... | 5·5 | 2 |
| Now prefer to buy fruit and vegetables ... | 4·9 | 5 |
| Poor soil and bad drainage ... ... ... ... | 4·4 | 5 |
| Damage by straying animals ... ... ... | 2·8 | NIL |
| Total | 211 |  |

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
doubt was that the results might not have been closely comparable had we extended the exercise to sites without associations. We did, however, ask a number of students to use the same list for the sites—some of which had no association—included in their surveys, and the results are broadly similar. Some of the reasons in our list overlap slightly, and it would be unwise to look at each separately from the rest. The main feature of the Table, however, is that only 50·3 per cent of vacancies are due to circumstances (death, illness, old age) which could not possibly be avoided; this total rises to 57·6 per cent if one assumes that those who leave the district do not apply for allotments in the area of their new abode. The remainder result directly from defects of the allotments system itself and it seems possible that the removal of these faults might reduce the numbers who leave by almost 50 per cent.

(2) Survey of flat-dwellers

426. During the summer of 1967 a questionnaire was issued to the occupants of 8,442 flats in the City of Birmingham, representing one-quarter of the city's flat-dwellers, in an attempt to ascertain:—

(i) whether they felt the need of a piece of ground to cultivate and, if so,
(ii) why they had not applied for an allotment, and
(iii) whether they would be interested in taking an allotment if the 'image' of allotment gardening could be improved.

Before we come to discuss the results of this survey, it is important to point out that since it was conducted entirely in Birmingham, the conclusions drawn would not necessarily apply to other towns with different housing patterns and allotment systems. In order to enable other towns to assess the relevance of our findings to their own situations, it is necessary to establish that in 1967 there were some 33,000 flats and maisonettes within the city boundaries, and that the number of new multi-storey blocks of flats built annually has fallen from 68 per cent (1964) to 17 per cent (1967) of the total housing programme. It is anticipated that this figure will remain fairly constant at 15–17 per cent for the foreseeable future.

427. The exercise was divided into two parts. In the first, a 100 per cent examination was made of all known flats in three areas of different characteristics:—

Edgbaston: Private flats, many of a luxury type, set among a great deal of attractive open space in the Middle Ring of the city. Good allotment provision within the area.

Nechells: Council flats in a central redevelopment area that have replaced old back-to-back housing and slums. No allotment sites exist in the area and the nearest is three-quarters of a mile away.

West Heath: Council flats in a suburban setting in S.W. Birmingham, adjoining the Green Belt. Many tenants have been re-housed from central redevelopment areas. Good allotment provision within the area.

From this issue, we received an overall response of 17 per cent, including 35 per cent, 13 per cent and 14 per cent from Edgbaston, Nechells and West Heath respectively.
428. In Part 2 of the exercise, a 50 per cent examination was made of small groups of high-rise and low-rise flats of contrasting character in several parts of the city. The response was 13 per cent overall, and these returns were amalgamated with those in Part 1 for the purpose of analysis; by this means we achieved a total response of 15 per cent, comprising 1,296 usable returns. We are satisfied that, within the limited scope of the exercise itself, the data produced and the conclusions drawn are valid, but it should be borne in mind that the response from the occupants of private flats was so good that the analysis is slightly weighted in their favour. A full summary of the data derived from this questionnaire is included at Appendix VIII.

429. The answers to the first part of the questionnaire revealed a number of characteristics of Birmingham flat-dwellers which will affect the application of the data to other cities. The most important of these are as follows:—

(i) As yet, long-term flat-dwelling is not a feature of the city. The majority have lived in flats for less than ten years.

(ii) In consequence, between 50 per cent and 70 per cent, according to area, lived in houses (often with little or no garden) before moving to flats.

(iii) While most of the private flat-dwellers live in flats by choice, a high percentage of the occupants of council flats were compulsorily rehoused; some asserted that, although they had told the authority that they would prefer a house with a garden, they had been directed to a flat.

(iv) The mean number of persons per flat is 2.3 compared with the city's mean household size of 3.17 (1961 Census), and in private flats drops below 2. To the extent that allotment gardening is practiced largely by men with families, this may well be an important factor in assessing the answers to the questionnaire.

Between 27 per cent and 39 per cent of private flat-dwellers live in a flat expressly to be relieved of the burden of a garden. The corresponding figure for council flat-dwellers varies between 8 per cent and 16 per cent. Such people, we assume, would not be interested in any form of allotment garden.

430. Although only one private flat-holder included in the survey has an allotment today, one in every twenty-five of the council tenants is an allotment holder; this compares with an approximate figure of one in forty for City of Birmingham households generally, and indicates that, especially if they have been housed in flats compulsorily, the demand for allotments among tenants of council flats is likely to be higher than among householders in the city. Curiously, the largest percentage of allotment holders was found in Nechells, which contains no allotment sites, and eleven of the twelve tenants travelled more than 2 miles to reach their plots.

431. Of those who completed the questionnaire 25.5 per cent stated that they felt the need of a piece of ground to cultivate. The analysis of these answers raised three points of interest:—

(i) The percentage of council tenants (30 per cent) expressing this need was much higher than that of private flat-dwellers (15 per cent).

(ii) The need appeared to be generally greater in high-rise than in low-rise flats (Plate 21).
(iii) The family size of those who expressed such a need was considerably greater than the average for the whole group of returns.

Those who stated that they felt this need of a piece of ground to cultivate were then asked why they had not taken an allotment garden. They were allowed to select any or all of five reasons, and the answers were as shown in Table 38. Three of the reasons included in Table 38 (numbers 2, 4 and 5) suggested that the occupant of the flat had already considered taking an allotment garden and had, indeed, investigated the possibility of doing so. It was noteworthy that while the majority of private flat-holders were discouraged primarily by the image of allotment gardening and the lack of amenities, the occupants of council flats tended to be deterred more by reasons 2, 4 and 5.

Table 38
Reasons for not having an allotment
(Birmingham flat-dwellers: 1967)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% of flat-dwellers selecting each reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Because allotment gardening, as now practised, does not attract you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Because there is no allotment site near enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Because the layout or amenities are inadequate on sites otherwise suitable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Because no vacant plots are available near enough good soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Because you cannot obtain a plot with sufficiently good soil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

432. Those who had answered this question were then asked whether they would be interested in taking an allotment garden if the difficulties which they had enumerated could be overcome. Affirmative replies were received from 65.8 per cent, and there was little difference between the percentages of private and council tenants who fell into this group. In practical terms, however, the analysis showed that 9 per cent of private flat-holders and 20 per cent of council flat-holders would be interested in taking an allotment if the difficulties listed in Table 38 could all be overcome.

433. In reply to further questions, 52 per cent of those who might eventually become interested in taking an allotment garden said that they would be prepared to travel further than a mile to a suitable site, and as many as 13 per cent would be ready to face a journey of more than 5 miles. In the light of our evidence about the allotments movement today, one of the most revealing sets of answers arose from the question "What would you wish to grow in an allotment garden?" No fewer than 84 per cent replied that they would cultivate some flowers, while 82 per cent would use part of the plot for vegetables. It is clear that the lack of a home garden would impel flat-dwellers to diversify the uses to which they put their allotments, if the law allowed them to do so and the general standards of the site made it worth while.

434. The final group of questions introduced flat-holders to the possibility of acquiring a new type of allotment similar to that which has become known as the 'chalet garden' or 'continental' allotment. These will be examined in detail in Chapter 14, and it is sufficient for our present purpose to indicate that 24.5 per cent of those who have no allotment today would be keen to take such a plot; the optimum size was considered to be 200 square yards. In all, therefore,
we found that of those who felt the need of a piece of ground to cultivate, the preferences were as shown in Table 39. It appears that those comprising the last group of Table 39 include some who were hoping to leave their flats in due course and others who insisted that, to be acceptable, a garden must be attached to the residence of its tenant. As one explained:—

“I personally feel [that] to enjoy the recreation of a garden [you] should be [able] to see the results from your home, and to have contact; not to set aside certain times during the day to go pottering around and appreciate the garden.”

Table 39
Preferences of Birmingham’s flat-dwellers for chalet gardens and improved allotment gardens: 1967

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Council</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Chalet garden’ only</td>
<td>14·6</td>
<td>9·9</td>
<td>10·6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Improved’ allotment garden only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>51·2</td>
<td>59·5</td>
<td>58·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>29·3</td>
<td>21·8</td>
<td>22·9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

435. Many of those who completed the questionnaire added comments, some of which were most interesting and showed a refreshing difference of outlook from that of the ‘traditional’ allotment holder. Several expressed the view that all allotment sites must be provided with good amenities and planted with trees and shrubs if they were to become an attractive proposition in the future; others said that the constant fear of vandalism was the main deterrent to taking an allotment today. There were many who insisted that any garden must be near at hand since “the real therapeutic value of a garden [is linked with] its easy availability”; a number felt that a garden should be private, and that “the thought of cultivating an allotment surrounded by others appeals as little as spending a holiday in a holiday camp”. A few tenants already possessed gardens attached to their flats, while others felt that it would be simpler to enter into an arrangement with a nearby householder who was not interested in tending his garden. On the other hand, many tenants welcomed the suggestions made in the questionnaire and saw them as a possible solution to what they regarded as some of the problems associated with life in flats.

436. We began this section by pointing out that this survey related to Birmingham alone. But although the answers to our questions would no doubt differ elsewhere, it seems clear that the improvement of existing allotment sites and particularly the provision of chalet gardens would meet a very genuine need among any group of urban flat-dwellers.
CHAPTER 11

THE SITE

437. We have referred to the view which is widely held that the majority of allotment sites today are derelict eyesores. We have also expressed the opinion that much of their vulnerability to take-over stems from a general feeling that they are a waste of valuable urban land, and that the release of a site to an alternative use can only add to a town’s attractiveness, whatever the alternative may be. We have said that there is among allotment holders a general reluctance to accept responsibility for the condition of their sites or to evince any great interest in their appearance. We have spoken of the failure of many towns and rural parishes to use sound planning principles in providing new sites, and of the restrictions which the present legislation imposes upon any attempt to improve the position. We have accused some urban authorities of being ‘anti-allotments’, and others of aggravating by indifference a situation which is steadily worsening. In this chapter we propose to make a general appraisal of allotment sites, to reveal their general characteristics (Plate 1), to assess what is good (Plate 2) and also to discuss what is wrong and, where appropriate, to apportion blame.

438. There are many allotment sites whose faults are obvious (Plate 3). There are others whose merits can only be assessed by reference to a particular standard, and it is therefore necessary to indicate what that standard should be. Essentially, a good site should have three qualities:—

(i) **Accessibility** in relation to a large enough concentration of population to provide an adequate clientele, and the availability of convenient public transport facilities.

(ii) **Viability**, which is dependent on suitable physical conditions (relief, soil, microclimate, drainage), adequate amenities and good administration/organisation particularly within the association/site.

(iii) **Attractive appearance** both within and without the site. This depends not only on site landscaping and the character and condition of plots, but also on adequate maintenance by the local authority and the association and respect by the general public for the site.

It is on this basis that the observations which follow should be read.

A. Siting

439. The vast majority of urban allotment sites owe their location to accident rather than design. This fact, and the problems which it generates, are not entirely the fault of those responsible for designating areas of land as allotments. A great many sites are of considerable antiquity (Figure 3); they came into being at a time when land was relatively cheap and before the planning of towns was either general practice or supported by effective legislation. The choice between alternative possibilities was wide, and the selection was usually made by reference to factors which happened to be important at that particular time. Thus, the earliest urban sites were established on the periphery of the growing towns where they tended to be engulfed very quickly in the urban sprawl of the nineteenth century (Figures 2 and 3A). By contrast, sites provided under the
early national legislation were often situated in densely populated industrial areas with back-to-back housing, which had sprung up almost overnight, and were subsequently engulfed in a wave of 'bylaw type' housing as the urban areas extended. Today, many of these twilight areas have been rebuilt but the old allotment sites remain. Similarly, during the two world wars, despite the increasing complexity of urban development, large areas of land were provided almost indiscriminately for allotment use. But when hostilities ended, the alienation of sites both good and bad to other purposes was generally governed more by the needs of education, housing and other services than by the pre-eminent suitability of the allotment sites that remained for gardening purposes.

440. Since 1945, however, allotments authorities and the allotments movement must carry their fair share of the blame for the poor location of so many sites; very few authorities have subjected their allotments system and its needs to a comprehensive survey and fewer still have put their findings into effect. Some have realised perhaps that any attempt to rationalise their allotments pattern would be thwarted by restrictive legislation, while others may well have been influenced by the A.A.C.'s recommended target to believe that demand was bound to rise, but these can scarcely have been sufficient difficulties in themselves. There is little evidence to suggest that authorities in general have made a real effort even to assess the requirements of a successful site. Moreover, while local surveys have been conducted to ascertain the space needs of almost every other recreational facility, allotment gardening needs have rarely been included. Meanwhile, the allotments movement has fought a series of rearguard and often hopeless battles with local authorities, many of which have been joined on the flimsiest of pretexts. It is perhaps understandable that the movement should seem unable to appreciate that if through changes of planning circumstance, a site is now 'in the wrong place' it will be vulnerable; that if it is vulnerable the allotments authority will spend little time and money upon it; and that, in consequence, it will become unpopular and be more vulnerable still. It is not prepared to accept the obvious fact that if people are deterred from taking the vacant plots by the intrinsic faults of the site, it is far better to 'move the site' than to struggle on until it reaches the point where it can be closed without difficulty or replacement.

441. On occasion, this general lack of appreciation of both short and long term problems of siting has led authorities to accept for allotment use areas of land which could not immediately be used for other purposes without considerable difficulty and expense. In many cases little thought has been given to the initial preparation of such sites, and they have often been handed over to the prospective allotment holders in a state which was bound to discourage even the most enthusiastic gardener. Applicants have found their 'plots' covered by dense clumps of weeds or brambles, or littered with debris from the previous use of the site. They have been allocated land with a very irregular surface, poor soils and drainage, which would have been difficult to improve quickly even with mechanical aids. In one town, an area offered by the planning authority for use as allotments was found on inspection to be a large flat expanse of concrete!

442. Where this laissez-faire attitude obtains, little or no attention has been—or, indeed, could have been—paid to the internal characteristics of the site itself. There are many sites which are constantly liable to flooding—no less than fifteen such sites exist in one town of moderate size—usually because they
lie on the alluvial soils of river valleys or on low-lying sand and gravel river terraces (Figure 20). The soil is doubtless very fertile, but this is small consolation to allotment holders who can expect to see their plots flooded every year. In large urban areas the increased run-off following heavy rain on extensive hard surfaces often leads to a very rapid rise of stream level, and flooding of low-lying allotments, once considered to be fairly dry, has increased in recent years. Other sites invariably become waterlogged and unworkable after heavy rain, especially where the soil is heavy clay with totally inadequate drainage. In fairness to local authorities it should be emphasised that in some mining areas slow subsidence over several decades has resulted in soils that were initially well-drained and easily workable becoming increasingly waterlogged and intractable.

443. In general far too little attention is paid to the character and constituents of the soil itself. Rarely is any detailed analysis made of its structure, texture and composition and particularly of its acidity or nutrient deficiencies. Such simple analysis would enable authorities to advise allotment holders which crops should flourish and which might fail, or what types of fertilisers or additives will counteract the soil's intrinsic deficiencies. Instead, allotment holders are often left to succeed by trial and error, and many continue year after year to harvest poor crops through ignorance of what is specifically required for their type of soil.

444. In some areas, shortage of land has compelled authorities to establish sites on areas not previously under cultivation. Much land in this category is reclaimed from rubbish tips, which ought, ideally, to be first allowed to stand for several years before being covered by 18 or more inches of good topsoil. Instead, such sites have often been reclaimed far too quickly and covered with too little soil, with the result that the allotment holders constantly dig up refuse and find, occasionally, that spontaneous combustion is taking place only a few inches below the surface. Many of these sites are also very liable to gradual, or even sudden, subsidence.

445. The microclimate of a site has a pronounced effect on the growth of crops; for instance, strong winds can cause crops to be stunted in growth or even to be blown down, and the provision of windbreaks becomes a virtual necessity. Frost pockets sometimes make it impossible to grow certain crops at all. We have evidence of many sites where these problems are severe, but we know of few cases in which the authority has given much consideration to local climatic aspects in selecting an area of land for allotments or in devising an initial landscaping policy. Problems of another kind are often caused by the flora and fauna of the neighbourhood. Allotment holders have complained to us frequently of the trouble caused by vegetation outside the boundaries of their sites. Weeds often encroach on to sites, and the roots, shade and leaf-fall of large trees bordering the plots may adversely affect the growth of many crops. Large trees on the periphery of a site may also harbour insect pests, as well as wood pigeons. Tenants all over the country have suffered from the depredations of rats, moles, rabbits, sheep and cattle; where sites adjoin pasture land, especially those bordering commons in Wales, trespass by sheep and cattle is a constant cause of complaint. All of these problems might easily have been assessed at the outset and appropriate measures taken to combat them. The indifference to the difficulties to which we have referred has been so widespread that the existence of sites which do not suffer from them is often fortuitous. So long as the basic characteristics of allotment sites deter would-be allotment holders—so long, that is, as

176
sites are *ineffective*—then the true measure of demand for allotments cannot properly be ascertained.

B. External appearance

446. In answer to the question in our rural questionnaire "Are model plots on view to the public?", one parish clerk replied: "Unfortunately, *all* our plots are on view to the public"! Of necessity, the great majority of sites today *are* almost permanently on view, and we share the general opinion that very many of these constitute a blot on an otherwise attractive landscape or townscape (Plate 3). If it can be accepted, for the time being, that an allotment site need not *necessarily* look unattractive, then the blame must be shared equally by the allotments movement and the authorities which have established the sites. The overall impression is given firstly by the rectilinear layout of the plots, which present a formal, entirely functional and depressingly orthodox appearance, generally devoid of interest and artistry (Plate 1). There is a lack of attractive fencing and landscaping, an absence of spaciousness and vertical relief; in consequence, the 'average' site appears two-dimensional, cluttered, hemmed in and overcrowded. There is an almost complete absence of flowers or ornamental shrubs to relieve the monotony of green and brown, and generally to brighten the site. On most sites there is a large number of individual sheds, each different from its neighbour, and most in an advanced stage of dereliction (Plate 11a). Vacant plots are neglected, and become seas of weeds which encroach remorselessly upon the plots of the survivors; at an advanced stage of decline the whole site presents an air of almost total neglect (Plate 3). So prevalent, indeed, are these faults that what we have described is often regarded by the general public as a picture of a 'typical' allotment site; those who continue to cultivate their plots despite all these difficulties are looked upon as eccentric, foolhardy, misguided or myopic. On our visits, scenes such as we have described above were so familiar that those sites which *were* visually attractive were greeted with pleasant surprise (Plate 2). We must admit that on occasion, the general atmosphere of decay and dereliction which is at its worst in winter, has proved on closer inspection to be somewhat false, but both the local authorities and the allotments movement must come to realise that it is this *external* appearance which influences and deters both the potential allotment holder whose *interest* cannot light-heartedly be disregarded, and the general public whose *sympathy* is vital.

C. Internal character

447. The first impressions of an allotment site in the mind of a visitor are closely bound up with the condition of the entrance, the gates and the external fencing. In Chapter 7 we saw that, according to the answers given to our questionnaire by urban authorities, 62.9 per cent of all urban sites possess secure gates and fencing. Our observations and the evidence from allotment holders and students suggest that this figure is an over-estimate, although it must also be remembered that 63.2 per cent of the towns incurred expenditure on the maintenance of these items during the year 1965–6 (Table XV, Appendix III). On most sites, those responsible seem to experience considerable difficulty in finding a means of combining security with a moderate degree of attractiveness. We have seen main gates constructed of all manner of materials, some sacrificing durability in favour of aesthetic appeal, others preferring expediency to attractiveness. There are many sites with gates which are never locked, and others where they are rarely opened. At one site we were obliged to climb over the gate because none of the allotment holders present had a key; several had lost their keys, while
the remainder had left them behind as "the gate was sure to be open". The dimensions of the entrance are as variable as the gates themselves; for example, on a site in Crawley the gate is only 2 feet wide, and the dumping of manure at the entrance can scarcely be avoided, whereas some of the largest allotments authorities have provided for their major sites impressive entrances which would grace the finest park. The wooden gates of many sites appear to be used as official notice boards and are often covered with untidy scraps of paper, or bear the name of the site and warning notices on a battered board. Quite frequently, a public right of way exists through a site, and in consequence the gate cannot legally be locked.

448. If the material of the gates is variable, that of the fencing is often almost unbelievable (Plate 4). On many sites the perimeter fence, which may originally have been quite adequate, has either rotted away or has been broken down by marauders, leaving large gaps. These have been plugged with pieces of rusty corrugated iron, old bedsteads, or oil drums; the result is a squalid hotch-potch which must deter many people from applying for plots and contribute to the poor image of allotments. On sites where the fencing is composed of more traditional materials, rust-covered metals and rotting wood are prevalent. In almost every case the construction seems to have been dictated by considerations of cheapness rather than effectiveness or aesthetic appeal, and maintenance is often totally inadequate. We recognise that maintenance is often expensive, especially on sites which are subject to trespass and vandalism; we are aware also that the upkeep of the fencing is often the responsibility of the allotment association to which the site has been leased; and we accept that allotment holders generally should take a far greater interest in the appearance of their site than is evinced by the hideous makeshift fences which we have seen. But if an authority elects to provide a fence of materials which are subject to rust or decay, it would be wrong to blame the allotment holders when it falls to pieces through inadequate maintenance; and, if a council neglects or delays the repair of a fence which vandals and trespassers have destroyed, it cannot reasonably blame allotment holders who seek to protect their crops by any means open to them, nor should it seek alternative reasons to explain a site's unpopularity when a number of dispirited tenants are impelled to give up their plots.

449. Our statistics show that 15.4 per cent of urban sites have "hard-surfaced, all-weather paths" (Plates 2 and 9). Again we feel that this is something of an exaggeration, but the fact that about 85 per cent of urban sites are acknowledged to lack these facilities sufficiently proves the main point. Where an entrance road exists, it can rarely serve every plot, except on very small sites; it is frequently too narrow for vehicular traffic and soft-shouldered, with the result that in the absence of turning space and passing points, cars and lorries must encroach upon the gardens bordering the roadway. Quite often the surface, which could have been made more durable and more attractive with little extra expense, is not strong enough to take the weight of lorries or cars; it breaks up within a comparatively short time, leaving a series of ruts and potholes which look unsightly, fill with water and, in winter, are often impassable. These defects result partly from poor construction, but mainly from insufficient maintenance. On many sites, piles of rubbish, left by the side of the road in the hope that someone will collect them, and pieces of broken glass constitute an additional hazard. Here, of course, it is the negligence and thoughtlessness of the allotment holders themselves which is primarily responsible. As far as we are aware.
road patterns have rarely been designed to help break up the monotonous rectilinearity of a site, although this has occurred fortuitously on a few sites with the passage of time. On most sites both the roads and the minor paths are surfaced with earth, grass or cinders; they are invariably unsightly, encourage weeds, and in bad weather can become a positive danger to elderly allotment holders. Even where paths are paved, lack of regular maintenance leads to a rapid deterioration, and they quickly become uneven, overgrown and poorly defined. The time-honoured rectilinear layout has decreed that they must be straight and formal, and only rarely have the pathways on a site lost some of this formality. The pathways between the plots are usually the worst of all; they are generally far too narrow, even for a wheelbarrow—a relic of the time when it seemed vital to put as much of the site as possible under cultivation—and being, so often, the responsibility of no one in particular, are frequently overgrown and littered with debris. The obvious solution—to site the paths within each plot, and to use other unobtrusive means of separating a plot from its neighbour—seems never to have been seriously considered.

450. Our questionnaires show that 5·4 per cent of sites include car parks, and 17·5 per cent of urban allotment holders now travel to their plots by car or motorcycle (Table XIII, Appendix VI). It is hardly surprising, therefore, to find many sites on which cars block the entrances or internal roadways, or are left outside the gate to constitute a traffic hazard. Where car parks have been constructed—often on the land taken over from a compact block of vacant plots—few are properly surfaced or maintained, many are badly sited and none, as far as we are aware, have been successfully screened.

451. Various forms of communal building exist on a minority of better sites; 6·6 per cent, 12·8 per cent and 7·1 per cent possess community huts, storesheds and toilets respectively (Table 24, Chapter 7). Most of the sites which contain a communal hut also have both the others, and it is usual for all three to be grouped in the same structure. Rarely does a site with a single association possess more than one communal building. The communal huts which we have seen or of which we have heard, range from an architect-designed building on a site in Newcastle-upon-Tyne to nissen huts, 'bus bodies and obsolete railway carriages. Between these extremes comes a variety of wooden sheds, many of the most unimaginative design and construction. Yet well-designed community buildings could easily be the showpieces of the local associations. They might form the centre point which could turn an unattractive site into one which is admired, but most of all, they could provide to potential allotment holders outside the movement evidence of a thriving site and a vigorous society which would be as attractive to women as to men (Plates 2 and 10). Instead, many of these huts are most unprepossessing, being either creosoted or painted a dull green, with small high windows. The exterior is given the minimum of attention and sometimes becomes very untidy; most contain one room only, though a few have a kitchen annexe as well as a toilet. The storeshed is even less pretentious, and the standard of maintenance is often poor. The volunteer storeman is a busy person, with a plot to cultivate as well, and often receives little or no help in the task of sweeping mud from the floor and arranging seeds, fertilisers and pea nets in orderly fashion. On some sites where the shed is used as a shop, we have found that there are no set times of opening and no one person in overall charge. Where toilets, whether W.C.s or chemical, are provided they are usually clean and respectable. It is again rare to find anyone charged with their maintenance though
many retired persons undertake general tasks in the community’s interest. We know of very few sites indeed with separate toilets for men and women. We are aware that on an unknown, but considerable, number of sites such communal buildings as exist have been paid for and erected by the allotment holders themselves without the aid of, and sometimes with some opposition from, the local allotments authority. We cannot but admire the initiative and enthusiasm of such people, who display a spirit which is all too rare on allotment sites today. But the harsh fact must be faced that a building which, by its structure and design, has little appeal to newcomers, contributes little to the site, and helps to preserve the poor image of allotment gardening may, despite its social significance, do harm to the site and to those who erected it by inviting public criticism.

452. Before we leave this discussion of the general appearance of the communal parts of allotment sites, it is necessary to consider the different ways in which tenants obtain a supply of water for their plots. In a sense this section is out of context, for a water supply is provided for individual use, and its absence does not directly affect the appearance of the site. But if the allotment holder must carry every drop of water he needs from his home or from a nearby stream, or use the roof of his shed as a catchment area then the site is unlikely to attract many new adherents. We saw in Chapter 7 (Table 24) that 49·8 per cent of sites have piped water “or its equivalent”. In crediting a site with the “equivalent”, we tried to be as lenient as possible, and it follows that on at least half of all urban sites today the allotment holders are in the unfortunate position to which we have just referred. Where an “equivalent” supply is available, this often means that the tenants must take water from adjacent rivers or streams. Quite apart from the risk of flooding, to which we have already referred, and the problem of how to transport the water from the river to a plot at the opposite end of the site, we are assured that the water of some rivers has been so polluted by industrial effluent as to be positively injurious to crops. This also often applies to water from canals, and the tenants on several sites in West London complain of the high degree of contamination of the Grand Union Canal on which they depend. In the case of certain rivers, the natural properties of the water may make it dangerous to use; for example, the River Salwarpe, which supplies the water to a site in Droitwich, is here too saline because of numerous salt springs.

453. On other sites, including a number in Burton-on-Trent, water is obtained by boreholes and pumps; on still more, the tenants have sunk their own wells. It follows, therefore, that the number of sites which strictly possess a piped water supply (wide Plates 2 and 9) is considerably less than the 50 per cent already mentioned. In view of the length of time for which most sites have been in existence, this figure seems very low; and when taken in conjunction with the readiness of the Ministry of Agriculture to make grants towards the cost of installation, it becomes remarkable. Under an Act of 1941, the Ministry is prepared to pay either 40 per cent or 25 per cent of the cost, according to whether the supply is to be derived from private (e.g. boreholes, wells, pumps) or from public sources, subject to two important provisos:—

(i) The area of the site concerned must exceed 4 acres in urban and 2 acres in rural areas.

(ii) Application for a grant must be made and approved before the work is put in hand.

The methods of making application envisage that it will sometimes be necessary for the allotment holders to contribute to the cost. Urban authorities may apply

180
direct to the Ministry's Divisional Office, but rural parishes must apply through the N.A.P.C. and allotment associations through N.A.G.S. Both N.A.G.S. and the N.A.P.C. have told us that they are generally satisfied with these arrangements. There are, however, a number of comments which need to be made. Firstly, while we understand and accept the need for the Ministry of Agriculture to determine the minimum size of site which may benefit, it seems unfortunate, to say the least, that some allotment holders should fail to qualify merely because the local allotments authority has seen fit to establish a number of very small sites. Either the rules applicable to this grant should influence authorities to favour larger sites, or authorities should be prepared, if necessary, to install water supplies without recourse to the grant. Secondly, we understand that, although the second proviso has been given wide publicity by N.A.G.S. (but not by local authorities) cases continue to arise where allotment holders, either through ignorance or zeal, have commenced the work of installation before applying for a grant, and are thereby automatically debarred. It seems certain that every urban allotments authority must be aware of these rules; if, therefore, an authority fails to advise its allotment holders in good time of the consequences of starting operations before making an application for a grant, it is at best evidence of bad administration. Thirdly, we accept that, on private sites particularly, it will often be necessary for allotment holders to install a water supply without the assistance of the landowner, and provision to enable them to obtain a grant must therefore remain. But we are firmly of the opinion that the only valid arguments by which a local authority may refuse to provide an adequate water supply for its sites are the small sizes of the areas involved or the probability that the sites will soon be needed for other purposes. We can see no justification for expecting urban allotment holders on a local authority site which exceeds 4 acres in extent and which is not scheduled for early closure to make their own arrangements for obtaining a water supply.

454. Although the installation of piped water is a boon to the allotment holder, it gives rise to several problems of organisation. Unless allotment holders can be trusted not to leave taps running and to report faulty washers as soon as they are discovered, a piped water system is liable to be very wasteful; moreover, unless the system is drained at the onset of winter, there is always a danger of pipes freezing and bursting with the thaw.* The number of allotment holders who must share each tap presents problems of cost, efficiency and convenience. We recognise that in some areas mains services have not yet been installed, and it would therefore be very difficult to justify the exorbitant cost of introducing piped supplies to sites. However, water butts can be made unobtrusive, and it is probable that these would be adequate on such sites, as well as on many sites too small to qualify for a grant. Elsewhere, however, a more efficient means of obtaining water is clearly necessary if a site is to flourish.

D. The individual plot

455. To most people, a prize onion or leek never looks quite as attractive as a prize chrysanthemum or dahlia. Our visits, and the local surveys prepared by research students, have tended to confirm the picture revealed by our questionnaire—that the average well-tenanted site comprises an expanse of vegetables, stippled here and there with small clumps of flowers (Figure 20). Only very occasionally have we come across an entire plot devoted to flowers, and these

* It is possible today to use plastic tubes and pipes which overcome this problem.
have invariably been planted, like vegetables, in serried rows with no conscious attempt to arrange them to make an attractive garden. Many of our collaborating students, approaching the problem of allotments for the first time and from an unbiased standpoint, shared our view that a relatively small increase in the number of flowers grown and effectively arranged could produce a remarkable improvement in the appearance of a site (Plates 7 and 10). Students in Wolverhampton, Norwich, Malvern, Sunderland, Stoke-on-Trent and Normanton (West Riding of Yorkshire) found individual sites which contained “many flowers”; in West Kesteven it was suggested that younger allotment holders were more disposed to “experiment” with flowers than their elders; in Newcastle-under-Lyme, two sites which contained large numbers of flowers and, by implication, looked more attractive, were said to suffer less from vandalism than the remainder. By contrast, students in Crewe, Grantham, Lewisham, Northampton and elsewhere found little evidence of flower cultivation; if flowers were grown at all, the proportion of the plot used for them was very small.

456. Allotment gardens used for the cultivation of vegetables and fruit can often present a neat and orderly appearance, at least for a considerable part of the year (Plates 1, 12 and 14). We have seen some sites on which the neatness of every plot is in marked contrast to the untidiness of the communal areas which surround them, and others where a few tidy plots stand out like oases amid a desert of weeds and dereliction. Quite apart from the vacant plots which we will discuss presently, there are a very large number of ‘occupied’ plots whose forlorn air of decay rivals that of the worst sites we have visited. We recognise that the lack of attention which some allotment holders give to their land may be caused by illness or other unavoidable circumstances, and that in other cases the magnitude of the task of turning a wilderness of weeds into an orderly garden has quenched an initial enthusiasm; but in the main, these plots belong to people who either took the plot with no intention of using it for its prescribed purpose, or who have been all too easily diverted to other spare-time activities, yet find the rent of their plot so cheap that they can afford to retain and neglect it. We have been told of allotments taken for the sole purpose of finding somewhere to hang the clothes-line, and others used simply as a dump for household rubbish and refuse. There are many plots which are only partly cultivated, often held by allotment holders who have been at pains to assure us that their plots are “the right size”. There are others where the occupiers appear to have removed the willow herb, docks and couch grass from the minimum area which will permit them to sow a particular crop, with the result that their plants are soon lost in the general disorder. So long as such cases are permitted, there is little hope that the general appearance of allotment sites can be improved. We are convinced that the solution lies in three directions: a general increase in the level of rents sufficient to deter those who are not prepared to cultivate their plots from renting them; a greater variation in the size of each plot, so that those who find the cultivation of 10 rods beyond their capacity are able to obtain a smaller plot at a proportionately reduced rental; and the establishment of effective machinery by which those who continue wilfully to neglect their allotments may be summarily evicted.*

457. Our statistics reveal that one allotment garden in five is now vacant; Figure 8 showed how the proportion has increased rapidly over the past ten

* We understand that the practice exists in Wolverhampton County Borough of requiring an incoming tenant to pay a substantial deposit which will be refunded only if he eventually surrenders his plot in good condition.
years to the point where it has become difficult for authorities to adjust to the apparent reduction in demand. Allotments authorities have told us that they are reluctant to take vacant plots out of allotment use, both because there might be a resurgence of demand and because such a course would involve a continual contraction of each site with an attendant upheaval of the remaining allotment holders. We have considerable sympathy with this view, but far too many authorities are prone to use it as a justification for doing little or nothing to lessen the deleterious effect which large numbers of vacant plots are bound to have on a site. We are firmly of the opinion that every allotments authority has a moral obligation either to keep its vacant plots ploughed and reasonably free from weeds, or to grass them down for regular cutting until they are required. To abandon them to nature is bound to affect the future of the site in two ways. Firstly, some of the remaining allotment holders will lose heart in the face of their inability to stem the influx of weeds from the nearby vacant plots (we have indicated that allotment holders generally consider this to be their greatest problem), and by giving up their allotments will further aggravate the problem. Secondly, newcomers will be deterred not only by the condition and appearance of the site, but also by the formidable size of their task of reclamation.

458. Despite this obvious truth, we have seen sites all over the country where stalwart allotment holders are desperately trying to grow their crops though surrounded by plots often waist-deep in weeds and brambles (Plate 5). It is clearly only a matter of time before such men are compelled to admit defeat and their sites are closed. Yet it could never be logically argued that those who give up for this reason no longer want an allotment, or that the town could satisfy the demand by excluding them. Twenty years ago both a seasoned allotment gardener and a raw recruit for a plot could be reasonably certain that they would be able to grow their crops in surroundings which, although unattractive, would neither shame them into submission nor constantly threaten the success of their endeavours. They have a right to expect that this would be equally true today.

459. At this point, it is necessary to consider the high incidence of disease and pest damage which we have observed upon many sites. For example, large numbers of black currant bushes are infected with big bud and reversion, while raspberries suffer badly from virus mosaic. On many sites brassicas are afflicted with club-root, and trees damaged by aphid and other insects. Allotment holders often add to their problems by bad crop rotation, which not only produces stunted growth but also increases the risk of disease. It has been put to us on occasions that an allotment holder likes to succeed by trial and error, to make mistakes and to rectify them. But since many plant diseases are progressive and, on an allotment site, can quickly affect the crops on every plot, it is clearly wrong to permit an allotment holder to continue raising diseased crops either because he cannot recognise the disease when he sees it or because he is unwilling to seek advice. The remedy must lie in the regular inspection of sites, and in better oversight by officials of the site association. The city of Bristol and one or two other authorities appoint an allotments officer whose duties include the detection of disease in crops, and a few give allotment holders instruction by means of demonstration plots. In general, however, there seems far too little co-operation between county or borough education officers with horticultural responsibilities and the allotments authorities and associations. A site where disease is rife cannot be inviting to new members, and many allotment holders must be deterred by the repeated failure of some of their crops. Yet a little
expert advice and tuition might effect a great improvement; and allotment holders who failed to take active steps to eradicate pests and disease might then become as liable to eviction as those who failed to cultivate their plots. It would, however, be unreasonable to dismiss an allotment holder whose crops were affected by contagious and other diseases if no one was available to explain to him how such disease might in future be prevented.

460. The appearance of the individual plot and of the entire site does not depend solely on the crops which the allotment holder grows or on his enthusiasm. It depends equally on the standard of the structures which he erects, gadgets which he brings on to his plot and, above all, on the extent to which he considers the feelings of others. Unfortunately, as we have said, many allotment holders lack the corporate spirit which would direct them to take the rights and aspirations of others into account.

461. In Chapter 7, we indicated that individual sheds are to be found on 19 per cent of urban allotment sites (Plate 1) and grouped sheds (centrally situated and each serving a group of plots) on a further 3-6 per cent. Grouped sheds can be seen to advantage on sites in Cardiff (Plate 12), Birmingham and elsewhere. Most that we have seen tend to look somewhat functional and austere unless they are screened, but it is a relatively simple matter to train evergreen climbers or creepers across them.

462. The individual sheds are a different matter. Unfortunately, when we asked each authority to state which sites possessed such sheds we omitted to ask who had erected them. There are certainly a number of sites whose plots incorporate cedar or brick tool sheds of good design, and an increasing number of authorities with site appearance in mind are now trying either to ban the erection of sheds altogether, to require the allotment holder to seek planning permission before he builds a shed on his plot, or to restrict him to one of a series of specified designs and materials. It is probable that, for many towns, these decisions have been made too late. There are a multitude of allotment sites whose individual sheds are a disgraceful eyesore (Plate 6). They are constructed of anything from soap boxes and rusty corrugated iron to old doors and windows; where they have rusted or rotted away many have been patched with strips of tarpaulin, linoleum or even pieces of canvas. They have been built with little thought for siting, with the result that the whole area often appears a confused jumble of squalid and unsightly sheds (Plate 11a). Yet many allotment holders who have invited us to admire their rows of prime vegetables have clearly been unaware of the impact which such structures make upon those who see them through unbiased eyes. To be fair, it is often only the local authority's failure to provide accommodation for the storage of tools and for the allotment holder to find shelter from the elements which has led the allotment holders to take action to help themselves. Yet among some allotment holders one can clearly see the urge to convert a bare storage shed into a neat little summerhouse in which they can sit at times with their family, take a meal together and enjoy a well-earned rest from their labours (Plate 7). Even so, we cannot believe that any allotment holder who was concerned about the overall appearance of his site could really have been satisfied with some of the structures we have seen. In close conjunction with the 'shed' are the old zinc tank, white enamelled bath and large wooden barrel storing rainwater led from the roof by an array of 'Heath Robinson' guttering. Nor does the problem end with the shed; on a number of
sites even greenhouses have been allowed to fall into decay (Plates 3 and 5), the tottering structures being patched with flapping sheets of polythene and broken glass being strewn indiscriminately around the site.

463. Among the assortment of equipment which allotment holders bring to their plots and leave in full public view are cloches and cold frames. With a little thought and ingenuity these can often be made unobtrusive and even attractive, but so many are of homespun and makeshift appearance; a number of allotment holders add further to the unsightly appearance of their plots by using patched up polythene cloches. Rows of rusting enamel buckets or disused oil and tar drums stretching across the plot are commonplace and do little to enhance the appearance of either plot or site. Scarecrows and other birds-scaring devices, pieces of tinfoil which are blinding in the sun and rattle continually in the wind, old tubs and boxes strewn around the plot, and sections of ancient bedsteads used as fencing further contribute to this sorry picture. One irate householder in a heavily built-up area adjoining a small allotment site complained of the dense smoke emitted from six bonfires on a still summer's day; housewives elsewhere felt that they had a right to expect their weekly wash to be able to dry properly in their back gardens without blemish from gusts of smoke from an adjoining allotment. We have seen plots with an evil-smelling compost heap or rubbish dump adjoining the communal path and even the main entrance gate; we are also aware that many allotment holders leave their plots untouched, covered with rotting vegetation and debris, from autumn to spring. We have seen plots on which garages have been erected while others on the same site are still being cultivated. It is, in our view, quite unnecessary that allotments should look like horticultural slums, and in our next section we will consider a few of those which do not. To a certain extent, local authorities accentuate the problem by their failure to arrange for the collection and disposal of rubbish, but in the ultimate analysis, it may be neither untrue nor unfair to suggest that on many sites allotment holders get the conditions they presently deserve and have no right to expect more.

E. ‘Model’ sites and other ‘high-standard’ sites

464. In the previous section we were strongly critical throughout of the general standards, both of cultivation and appearance, of allotment sites today. We have, however, emphasised that these criticisms are not universal, and that there are sites all over the country where either the allotments authority or the allotment holders, or both, have recognised the problems and dangers which derelict, untidy and run-down sites must present, and have sought in different ways to overcome them.

465. Several towns include in their total provision a ‘model’ allotment site. By definition, presumably, a ‘model’ site is one which, in the opinion of those who provide it, incorporates every refinement and amenity for which the allotments movement could reasonably ask; it represents, in short, the allotments authority’s current concept of the ‘ideal’ site. Inevitably (and rightly), the authority which provides such a site must expect the allotment holder who takes a plot to pay a much higher rent than his less fortunate colleagues on other sites, and to maintain a higher standard of cultivation and tidiness. We have no statistics to show the number of towns which have prepared ‘model’ sites; such figures would in any event be only marginally relevant, since the term ‘model’ may not be applied by every town to sites which have attained the same standard. For this reason,
we will extend our comments in this section to include a number of sites to which the term ‘model’ has never been, and could not be, applied, but which nevertheless are of a particularly high standard.

466. In the course of its visits, the committee has inspected two ‘model’ sites, one in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the other in Grimsby, while individual members have examined similar sites elsewhere. The city of Newcastle has in fact provided two new ‘model’ sites within the last few years, and a comparison between them is revealing. The Iris Brickfield statutory site in the east of the city is an unqualified success (Plate 8). Each tenant pays an annual rent of £3 to the corporation and a further £1 to the local association—yet all its sixty-five plots are taken and there is a long waiting-list. It is bounded on three sides by terraced properties with little or no garden space, and most of the allotment holders live nearby. The corporation has provided good strong fencing and gates, tarmac and gravel roads, and a neat association building incorporating a storeshed and toilets. It has also installed greenhouses, of uniform design, on a quarter of the plots, and is responsible for most of the maintenance. There is no restriction on the cultivation of flowers, but livestock are not allowed. In all, the site presents a neat, orderly and thriving appearance, every plot being well cultivated, and a measure of the attraction and success of the site is given by the fact that twelve of the tenants are women.

467. At the other side of the city, Fenham Hall statutory ‘model’ site, prepared and provided at the same time and with similar rents, has failed. It is situated in an area where almost all the residential property incorporates large gardens, and there appears to be no demand for plots, only six of the forty plots being occupied. On the assumption that the site has been well advertised, it is strange that none of those on the waiting-list for the first site are prepared to travel 3 or 4 miles to the second; one would have thought that the prospect of obtaining a ‘five star’ plot immediately would have provided sufficient inducement.

468. The new Weelsby ‘model’ site (statutory) at Grimsby was provided from the proceeds of the sale of a former statutory allotment site.* The site includes a communal hut, storeshed, toilets and other amenities, and most of the plots are supplied with a brick shed and an attractive greenhouse (Plate 9). Flower borders make the entrance to the site most colourful, and elsewhere flowers are being grown for show and for sale. A critical examination of the site reveals, however, that its development has clung to the formal layout of the past, with the result that the sheds and greenhouses are laid out in rows on each side of the broad central road, giving the area an appearance of regimentation. Here also, although the rent for a fully equipped plot exceeds £6 per annum, there is a genuine waiting-list. During our inspection of this site, we noticed one or two cases where allotment holders seemed to be less concerned about the appearance of their plots than in Newcastle, possibly because the local association was not able to exert so rigid a control. On a fine site such as Weelsby, individual departures from the general high standard are apt to stand out more prominently than would normally be the case.

469. The Camp Lane and Hermitage Farm statutory sites in Birmingham, known collectively as The Uplands, form a 31-acre area containing 367 plots. This site owes its success to a magnificent association which, by being prepared

* See paragraph 265.
to help itself, has won further strong support from the allotments department of the local authority. The association’s impressive headquarters (Plate 10) set among flowers, shrubs and ornamental trees close to the main entrance to the site, includes a large hall suitable for meetings, dances and flower shows, a committee room, store room, secretary’s office, kitchen and cloakrooms; it was provided and paid for by the association, which supplements its income by organising football sweeps and bingo sessions. The site, which contains a large car park, is now being partially landscaped. Individual sheds have been re-sited and repainted according to an overall plan, and the general appearance of the site is one of neatness and colour. It is unfortunate that such efforts by a small group of enthusiasts have not yet succeeded in making the site fully tenanted; only 6 per cent of the plots remain vacant, and although they are less unsightly than most, they undoubtedly still detract from the general appearance of the site. But one should record that the number of vacant plots has steadily decreased since the association began to flourish.

470. The Allensbank statutory allotment site in Cardiff is a good example of the improvement that can be effected by an authority which is prepared to spend time and money on a site over a period of several years. Plates 11 and 12, which show the same site before and after its development, illustrate what was achieved between 1950 and 1954 at a total cost of £6,888. The compact row of sheds in the centre of Plate 12 appears somewhat stark, but this arrangement might sometimes be preferable to the erection of an individual shed on every plot. Clearly there is great scope for local authorities to experiment with imaginative designs and uses of material for individual or grouped sheds.

471. The Walthamstow Avenue site (Plate 13) in the London borough of Waltham Forest, is a temporary allotment site, but again the enthusiasm and energy of its committee have produced a site to compare favourably with any in the country. Most of the communal part of the site is laid down to grass, the entrance and main access ways are some of the neatest that we have seen, good use is made of flowers, and the whole site is very well maintained by the allotment holders, who readily give up an hour or two of their spare time for the general good.

472. In the city of Coventry, we were much impressed by a private site which had been used as allotments for over a century. Each plot was a complete unit, separated from the next by a mature hedge, and accessible from the main path through its individual gate. This arrangement has several advantages, as Plate 14 shows—the hedges break up the drab monotony of so many two-dimensional sites; they also make the site attractive in winter as well as summer, and any untidy plot is much less conspicuous than on an open site.

473. We are conscious of the fact that a short review such as this cannot adequately describe the merits of the sites which we have been able to mention. We are aware also that there are other sites which might well have received honourable mention in this survey; these have been omitted both for the sake of brevity and because their features are similar to those which we have described. We know, too, that a number of towns, of which Manchester and Bristol are good examples, prefer to spread amenities over all their sites rather than to devote the major part of their expenditure to one or two very active sites at the expense
of the remainder. Our visits to sites in all these areas have led us to a number of
definite conclusions:—

(i) When properly designed, an allotment garden site can be attractive
not only to the allotment holders but to the general public as well.
(ii) An attractive site must contain an effective association if it is to remain
attractive.
(iii) Serious allotment holders are prepared to pay higher rents for better
conditions.
(iv) The main criticism of most 'model' and good sites is that no attempt
has been made to get away from the formal and stereotyped allotment
layout, with its rectangular plots, straight roads and rows of sheds.
Such sites are a considerable tribute to the authorities which have
provided them and to the allotment holders who maintain their standard
simply because there are so few of them, but they invariably fall short
of much-needed, exciting innovations. Householders whose vistas
extended over sites such as we have described above would probably
have few grounds for complaint in broad landscape terms, but at
present most would probably prefer that their property overlooked
a park or other open space.
(v) The design, materials, disposition and maintenance of individual sheds
and communal huts leave much to be desired.

F. Livestock

474. It has been our intention throughout to discuss all aspects of the problem
of livestock-keeping on allotments in one section. There are several reasons
why this should be so, including the fact that the legal position in regard to stock-
keeping is by no means clear. Inevitably, however, we have been obliged to make
brief references to livestock in earlier chapters and sections, and it would therefore
be as well to repeat that, according to our evidence, 56·7 per cent of urban allot-
ments authorities and 65·2 per cent of those rural parishes with allotments do
not at present object to the keeping of certain forms of small livestock on their
allotment gardens; 2·9 per cent of the allotment gardeners covered by our
random sample of urban areas do in fact keep stock, and only 0·7 per cent place
their inability to keep livestock first among the factors which prevent them
enjoying their allotments to the full.

475. The advocates of the early rural allotments clearly envisaged that they
would be used for stock-keeping as frequently as for cultivation, and thus the
connection between allotments and livestock is as old as the allotments movement
itself. The problems which this connection poses are many and varied, and cannot
possibly be considered in a single comprehensive review. For instance, the
position of livestock on allotment gardens is very different from its place on
rural commercial sites; similarly, the problems which arise from a site used
indiscriminately for stock-keeping and horticulture differ from those which
emerge from a site devoted entirely to stock; and furthermore, each different
form of livestock raises its own distinct and individual problem. We are thus
obliged to examine each of these facets separately.

476. From time to time in this report* we have wrestled with the legal definition
of an allotment garden in so far as it affects the keeping of livestock. There is

* See, for example, paragraphs 54 and 254.
no need to go into this further, but it would be as well to repeat in a slightly
different form the only reasonable construction which we feel could be placed
upon the present law:—

(i) An allotments authority is under no obligation to provide any allotment
which is not an allotment garden.

(ii) An allotment garden must be used wholly or mainly for the production
of fruit and vegetables for consumption by the occupier or his family.

(iii) That part of an allotment garden which is not used for fruit and vege-
tables may be used for the keeping of hens and rabbits, provided that:—

(a) this is not prevented by local bye-law;

(b) it does not constitute a nuisance; and

(c) it is not done by way of trade or business.

(iv) That part of an allotment garden which is not used for fruit and
vegetables may also be used for any other purpose, including the
rearing of other forms of livestock, subject to the same three provisos,
unless such use would be in breach of a covenant made by the tenant.

It is necessary to make these points again in order to demonstrate that the only
obligation upon an allotments authority today is to provide land for those whose
main concern is the cultivation of vegetables and fruit; but the occupier of land
provided on this basis is then permitted to use a small part of his plot for the
rearing of certain forms of livestock. There is no similar obligation to provide
allotment land for those whose primary object is the keeping of livestock, even
if they are also prepared to cultivate part of it. It is in this context that the keeping
of livestock on allotment garden sites must be judged.

(1) Livestock on allotment garden sites

(a) Bees

477. We have received little evidence to suggest that the keeping of bees on an
allotment garden causes inconvenience or annoyance to the tenants of neighbour-

ing plots. A large number of hives will leave little room for cultivation, but we
can see no objection to allowing an allotment holder to keep one or two, provided
that the remainder of the plot is well cultivated. In recent years great improve-
ments have been made in the appearance of hives, and we have seen examples
of their unobtrusive siting on plots in Coventry and elsewhere. The numbers of
allotment holders who keep bees on their allotments are at present very small
indeed, but if the cultivation of flowers were to become more widespread, they
might increase considerably.

(b) Pigeons

478. In those parts of the country where pigeon racing and pigeon keeping
are popular hobbies, a number of local authorities have banned the keeping
of pigeons in council house gardens. When the many pigeon fanciers in the
town have requested the provision of alternative facilities, they have been
allowed to take allotment garden plots in considerable numbers. There is thus
a political slant to this practice; the authority is seeking at the same time to
respect the views of council house tenants who might object to a proliferation
of pigeon keeping on their estates and to appease the pigeon fanciers who are
deprived of an opportunity to practise their hobby at home. The keeping of
pigeons on allotment garden sites differs in two respects from the rearing of
other forms of livestock. Firstly, it is essentially an industrial pursuit, with the
great majority of its adherents living in mining towns and large industrial cities. Secondly, the pigeon fancier is not primarily concerned with the production of food; the attraction of the hobby lies in breeding good strains, in competitions and in the wagers which some owners place on the racing performance of their birds. Although most of the authorities which permit the keeping of pigeons on their sites specify that the loft must not occupy more than 25 per cent of the plot and that the remainder must be cultivated, this rule is more honoured in the breach than in the observance. We were able to inspect a number of 'pigeon' sites in South Shields, and formed the impression that the majority of pigeon fanciers are not in the least interested in cultivating their allotments, and that the

**LAND USE OF SMALL ALLOTMENT GARDEN SITE 1966**

![Diagram of allotment garden site from 1966]

**Figure 20**

This map, from a student's dissertation, shows the dominance of vegetables in the land use of a representative allotment garden site in Crewe, the areas devoted to fruit, flowers and glass being considerably less. Similar examples could be provided for almost every allotments area.

tasks of caring for their birds, preparing them for competitions, and their ancillary activities, leave them little time to make more than a token gesture of observance to the cultivation rule imposed by the authority (Figure 21 and Plate 15).

479. The lofts or crees which pigeon fanciers erect to house their birds vary from well-constructed and imposing structures to ramshackle and tumbledown sheds. Plates 15 and 16, which illustrate lofts on different sites in South Shields, clearly demonstrate the two extremes. The lofts are often sited at the rear, or along one side, of the plot and the remainder obviously receives little or no attention. Frequently, too, they are 'crenellated' with upstanding laths and painted in black and white stripes in the belief that this helps pigeons to recognise their 'home'. Figure 21, which illustrates the land use on one of these allotment garden/pigeon sites in the same town, show: the confused jumble of structures
that can arise when an area of land is devoted almost exclusively to the rearing of pigeons. (See also Plate 16.)

480. We have received conflicting reports regarding the complaints by gardeners on these and adjacent sites that the pigeons damage their crops. Many have laid this charge both to us and to our research students. The pigeon fanciers, on the other hand, have assured us that their birds are not responsible. Racing pigeons, we are told, must have a controlled diet, and would quickly become useless if they ate indiscriminately. Moreover, a major part of the pigeon fancier’s art consists of breeding birds which will fly directly to the loft without wasting precious time by alighting on neighbouring crops. The truth probably lies somewhere between; racing pigeons do not generally attack crops on the site—but their presence on a site may attract wood pigeons and other birds which can cause a great deal of damage.

Figure 21

This plan, based on data kindly provided by the Borough Engineer of South Shields, should be considered together with Plate 16 covering the same area. The long narrow site, bordering the railway, has little of the traditional character of an allotment garden, though some cultivation is bravely attempted even in such a dismal setting.

481. There are two further points concerning mixed pigeon and horticultural sites which must be made. The needs of the pigeon fancier will often impel him to take a plot in one part of the site rather than another. Thus, on one site which we visited, a long narrow strip of vacant plots existed immediately below a line of power cables which were said to constitute a flying hazard for pigeons; it would have been virtually impossible to find an alternative and suitable use (short of cultivation!) for a piece of land of so peculiar a shape, and it merely accentuated the general atmosphere of dereliction. One or two pigeon sites, moreover, seem to have acquired an unsavoury local reputation, and it was hinted to us that their dirty and unkempt appearance is conducive to their use for a number of dubious pursuits.

482. The views of the research students, who were able to spend a considerable time in the study of individual pigeon sites, conform to our own, and part of a description of such a site in Newcastle-upon-Tyne deserves to be quoted verbatim:
"The site has an over-representation of pigeon-keeping tenants, and from this quite drastic imbalance stem all the many difficulties that bedevil the site and combine to make it one of the most dismal allotment sites in Newcastle. There may be nothing at all wrong with keeping and racing pigeons as a hobby, but when coupled on one small site with other tenants seeking to grow crops, the results are disastrous. One of the major causes of unrest is the conflict of age groups, for while the gardeners are middle-aged or older, the majority of the pigeon keepers are in their twenties."

We, for our part, do not condemn pigeon keeping as such. It is, we accept, an absorbing and worthwhile recreation, but in our view it simply does not have a happy association with allotment gardening.

(c) Poultry, rabbits, pigs and other livestock

483. Stock kept on urban allotment garden sites include chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys, pheasants, rabbits, pigs, goats, dogs, calves, heifers—and horses. Not surprisingly, the complaints made about stock-keeping by tenants whose only interest is cultivation are many and varied; essentially, however, they may be divided into three groups. Firstly, it is claimed, livestock attract vermin and disease to the site, causing damage to crops, which is further accentuated when the stock is allowed free range to forage on nearby plots. We have seen many instances where the storage of pig swill has attracted swarms of flies and rats, and where the amassing of manure prior to its use as fertiliser on local plots has done likewise. Secondly, it is alleged that the disreputable structures which the stock-keepers erect and the filthy conditions in which they are often prepared to allow their animals to exist, combine to ‘lower the tone’ of the site to a point where the gardeners’ own efforts to maintain a reasonable standard seem ineffectual. It is virtually impossible to make an open pig pen or a chicken run attractive, since the grass cover is inevitably worn and eaten away leaving pock-marked bare ground. There is considerable truth in both these arguments, for on some sites as much as half of the land is now used for livestock, and the overall standards, both aesthetically and in terms of cultivation, are invariably low (Plate 17). For some reason, the prevalence of livestock on a site seems to attract other elements which are even more undesirable. An extreme example was found by a student in Ipswich, where pig keeping, erection of garages, car repairs and paint spraying, abandonment of cars, car breaking, scrap metal dealing, and the sale of firewood existed side by side with horticulture on the same (private) site.

484. The third complaint seems to us to provide the key to the whole argument. The tenants of allotment gardens whose only desire is to grow fruit and vegetables on their patches of ground, assert that the allotment holders who keep livestock are different people; they have different aims, different interests and different standards, and it is often impossible to draw them into the ambit of allotment gardening sufficiently to enable a site to function as a single cohesive unit. This charge, we believe, is well founded. The man who keeps livestock on his allotment garden may have started to do so as a supplementary hobby or during a period of national emergency, but it has usually taken him very little time to realise that stock-keeping can be much more profitable than gardening. He has then extended the area which he uses for his livestock until it occupies the whole of his plot. The next step is then to take vacant plots nearby—plots whose occupiers may have been driven away by the proximity of his own—until he controls a
large area of land. We are quite satisfied that the main reason why stock-keeping on allotment gardens exerts an influence so disproportionate to the numbers who practise it lies in the fact that so many of the practitioners occupy several plots on the same site; and from the evidence given to us we are equally certain that the aim of the majority of stock-keepers is to make a handsome financial return from their 'allotment gardens'. The evidence of individual research students, who investigated the situation in different towns quite independently of this committee and of each other, does much to substantiate this view. Thus, a thesis devoted to Rugby stresses that on one site "several tenants rent blocks of 4 to 6 plots to rear pigs, poultry, geese and rabbits. One man has fenced off six plots, and has a notice on the door of his hut 'Mr. ........ & Son, Pig Breeders'. As adjoining plots are abandoned, this man tries to rent them to extend his holding". In Northampton, one tenant is said to earn his living by rearing pigs on a half-acre plot, while in Newcastle-under-Lyme, "one man has taken over several plots for livestock". In Grantham "on at least 3 sites, livestock are kept commercially. A large piggery exists on one site". On sites in Accrington several tenants estimated that they were making a net profit of about £220 per annum from their hen batteries, while one industrious tenant with a particularly well-organised unit of 3 poultry huts (each c. 20 feet × 60 feet) housing 600 hens in all claimed a net profit of just over £500 per annum. Similarly, in Stoke-on-Trent, a student found many tenants who sold the produce of their livestock holdings in contravention of their tenancy agreements, while at Normanton one allotment holder devoted no less than 9 plots to livestock. A further point of some significance may be made here. Whereas many keen allotment gardeners use part of their plot for the raising of fine fruit, vegetables and flowers for competitive showing, few instances have come to our attention, apart from among pigeon and rabbit fanciers, of high-quality livestock being bred on sites for the specific purpose of being exhibited at local shows. Only too often the creatures raised on allotment sites are non-pedigree stock kept under poor conditions, and the owner is more concerned with the return in eggs or meat than with fine points of breeding.

485. There is presumably no need to remind allotments authorities again of the definition of an allotment garden or of the risks involved in permitting the tenant of an allotment garden to turn it into an agricultural holding. Some authorities have told us they are satisfied that a precise tenancy agreement will give them adequate security; others accept that some of their allotments are now agricultural holdings and are prepared to face the consequences. For our part, we are certain of two things: first, that there is not and should not be any compulsion upon an authority to provide allotments for commercial purposes, whether the profit is derived from livestock or horticulture; and second, that if they choose to provide such plots voluntarily, they ought not to involve their ratepayers in any expenditure whatsoever.

486. After due consideration of the substantial evidence given to us on this point, and in the light of our own observations, we are convinced that there is today no valid argument in favour of permitting livestock to be kept, commercially or otherwise, on sites provided specifically as allotment gardens. Quite apart from the arguments set out in paragraph 483, we are satisfied that the link which once existed between the gardener and the man who kept small livestock is now tenuous in the extreme. The use of compost and organic fertilisers has become increasingly acceptable as a substitute for the animal manure once considered
a valuable by-product from livestock kept on allotment sites, while domestic swill has provided a more reliable and substantial source of feed for pigs than surplus green-stuff from plots. We were told that both gardener and stock-keeper concern themselves with "living things"; so, for that matter does a lion tamer—but no one has yet suggested that he should be given an allotment on which to practise his art. We know that the legal association of the two began during the last war, when the domestic production of meat was recognised as being as vital to the national effort as the cultivation of vegetables. This was still the position in 1950, and the Act of that year is the basis of the present situation. It is many years now, however, since domestic food production of either type was considered to be of great national importance. There are, moreover, some forms of livestock, even on allotment gardens, which are not reared to provide food; and if—as the recognition of allotment gardening as recreational would seem to require—present restrictions on the cultivation of flowers were removed, the legal association of allotments with food production would be severed. We recognise that those who wish to keep small livestock in their spare time have a certain right to look to their local authorities to provide facilities; but we are satisfied that such provision should be kept separate from that made for gardeners. If an allotment garden site is to be successful, administratively and aesthetically, the activities and broad interests of its tenants must coincide. It is no more right to expect keen allotment gardeners to acquiesce in the transfer of adjacent plots to pig keeping than to expect bowls enthusiasts to allow half their green to be ploughed up for vegetables.

(2) ‘Stock’ allotments: the Land Settlement Association Limited

487. The L.S.A. submitted written evidence to us in April 1966, and supplemented this by appearing before us in oral evidence in April 1967. In addition, at our request, the L.S.A. has been good enough to institute a number of small-scale investigations, the results of which will be introduced at the appropriate points in this chapter. At all relevant times, one of the chief protagonists of the L.S.A.’s case was the late Sir Arthur Richmond, whose recent death was a severe loss to the allotments movement. Much of the L.S.A.’s evidence, both written and oral, related to general allotment matters—on which its representatives are well qualified to express their views—and coincided to such an extent with the findings included earlier in our report that it is unnecessary to comment further on it.

488. Soon after its formation in 1934, the L.S.A. took over from the Society of Friends twenty-three schemes in the north of England known as group holdings. These consisted of plots averaging half an acre in extent, on which unemployed men could keep pigs and poultry.* With the aid of funds supplied by the Carnegie U.K. Trust, the Development Commission and the Commission for Special Areas, it decided to develop and extend these schemes. They were in no way connected with the L.S.A.’s work in the field of smallholdings† and is outside the scope of this report.

489. By the outbreak of the last war, the L.S.A. had in this way provided over 130 group holdings in areas of severe unemployment, and over 2,000 men were

---

* It is interesting how closely the intentions of this scheme resembled those of the first allotments 150 years earlier.
† Cmdn. 3303.
keeping small livestock on their plots. Each plot was handed over fully equipped and stocked, the tenant being required to refund part of the cost by small weekly instalments. After the war, however, the L.S.A. was prevented from extending the schemes further by lack of financial backing, and the responsibility for the management of most of the holdings was transferred to the appropriate allotments authorities. Subsequently, the L.S.A.'s activities in this sphere have been much more restricted; but it has been involved, mainly in an advisory capacity, in association with the few local authorities which have decided to continue old schemes or to attempt similar new schemes, and is still able to call upon a wealth of experience.

490. The L.S.A. accepts without reservation the view which we expressed in paragraph 486 that the indiscriminate allocation of plots on allotment garden sites to stock-keeping ought not to be permitted. In its evidence to us on this point, however, it was clear that its views were based not on the social and aesthetic considerations which led us to the same conclusions, but rather upon the purely practical side of the problem. Its representatives pointed out that the preparation of plots intended for stock-keeping often involved the installation of drainage schemes and other facilities which could easily affect the entire site; they felt also that it would be unreasonable to expect a gardener to take over a plot recently vacated by a man who had kept livestock, especially if the incoming tenant was required to dispose of a number of semi-permanent structures which his predecessor had left behind. They did not, however, agree that a carefully regulated association of gardening and stock-keeping on the same site was implausible. They felt that the practitioner of each had something to offer to the other—much of the gardener's waste vegetable matter could be used as pig food, while the animal wastes could be dug into the garden plots.

491. The solution, in the L.S.A.'s view, lies in the compromise which has become known as the 'stock' allotment site. In its purest form, a stock allotment is an attempt to link stock-keeping and gardening by designing sites from the outset to serve this dual purpose. It is an essential feature of such a concept that the stock-keeper and the gardener should each be allocated a specific part of the site, and that neither should subsequently be permitted to encroach upon the land of the other. Thus, it is argued, the two will work in harmony for the good of the site as a whole. Figure 22 represents a design recently prepared by the L.S.A. to indicate how such a site might be constructed, with the plots reserved for livestock at the end of the site furthest from its entrance, and the remaining plots devoted entirely to horticulture. The design, which is entirely theoretical, incorporates facilities for car parking, children's play and for social activity by the families of both types of allotment holder.

492. Every stock allotment scheme with which the L.S.A. has been connected, whether in an administrative or an advisory capacity, was at the outset designed and equipped in a manner which would permit the best standards of husbandry to be maintained. It is therefore possible to assess the merits and defects of the stock allotment system by considering the extent to which each site runs efficiently today. The sites which remain must for this purpose be divided into two groups:—

(i) sites in which the L.S.A. has, for various reasons, retained an interest; and

(ii) sites which have passed into the control of the local allotments authority.
We have been able, in the course of our investigations, to inspect three sites in the first of these groups. At Coventry, the site is in the middle of a heavily built-up area, the property in the neighbourhood consisting almost entirely of council houses. The scheme was started in 1953 on land rented from the corporation,

Figure 22

The above layout, re-drawn from a recent design for a 'model' 'stock' allotment issued by the Land Settlement Association, seems rather formal, but the segregation and screening of different uses, and the inclusion of an amenity area, represents a considerable improvement on the association's existing sites.
and covers 3 acres of a 10-acre allotment garden site. It includes 14 poultry units and 15 piggeries with all necessary buildings. Each tenant pays an annual rent of £11 1s. 0d. or £9 15s. 0d. for a poultry or pig holding respectively, both of which sums include a payment for maintenance of the buildings. The site appeared to us to be efficient and, within the limitations which unscreened piggeries and poultry houses necessarily impose, was relatively unobtrusive. The tenants are drawn almost exclusively from the houses nearby, and we understand that there has never been a lack of demand. It does, however, appear that the occupiers of these plots regard themselves as quite separate from the adjacent allotment garden site and have little or no social contact with the allotment holders there.

493. The site at Worksop covers 8 acres and comprises 34 plots, each tenant paying an annual rent of £1 2s. 6d. We found the site, which is very formal in layout, to be neat and tidy. Its efficiency, we were informed, is due largely to the efforts of the secretary who has held a plot there since the inception of the scheme. The local authority regards this private site with favour, partly because its existence has enabled it to ban livestock from its own allotment garden sites. At the time of our inspection the site appeared to be devoted entirely to pigs and poultry, and there was evidence of vegetable cultivation on relatively few plots.

494. The site in the Blackley district of Manchester is described by the L.S.A. as "a problem site". To this committee it is now a disaster (Plate 18). Situated conspicuously on a hillside, it comprises a confused jumble of broken-down sheds between which a few sorry animals wander about in filthy conditions. With its huge piles of tin cans and rubbish, and the howling of dogs which are presumably kept there to guard the stock, it seems to us to represent the nadir to which a stock site can fall if not subjected to rigorous control. The site is leased from the city corporation, and the L.S.A. told us in evidence that both improvement and closure would be expensive propositions. In our view it should be closed without delay.

495. On the brighter side, the student whose survey covered the towns of Rotherham and Doncaster reported that the stock allotment sites in both towns were run as efficient units, and our chairman was able to attend the opening of the new Blackleach site at Worsley, Lancashire, which has made a most propitious start under the joint administration of the Worsley Urban District Council and the L.S.A. (Plate 19).

496. In regard to the sites which have passed out of the L.S.A.'s control since the end of the war, we are obliged to rely mainly on the results of a survey carried out by the L.S.A. covering 8 sites in the midlands and the north. Three of the sites were found to be derelict and untenanted; two of these had apparently been destroyed by rumours that they were shortly to be closed for development, while the third, which was handed over to the local authority in a thriving state as recently as 1962, has been subject to continual vandalism and theft. The remaining sites appeared to be in a fairly satisfactory condition; on most of them the boundary fences were properly maintained, but the interior fences had been repaired with the aid of a variety of unsightly materials. Most of the buildings and structures showed signs of age, and there were usually a number of vacant
plots. From the survey, the L.S.A. concludes that the schemes which have survived and continue to flourish possess four basic requirements:—

(i) The sites were well designed at the outset.
(ii) They were provided with good fencing, equipment and roadways.
(iii) There has always been a strong tenants’ association on each site,
(iv) The sites have had security of tenure.

497. During the summer of 1968, the L.S.A. was able to conduct a second survey, designed to establish how the movement of tenants on stock allotment sites compared with that on allotment gardens. This survey, which related to the years 1960–8, covered the sites at Coventry, Worksop and Doncaster, and its findings were somewhat surprising. On 63 of the total of 94 plots on these 3 sites, the tenants have been in occupation for less than 5 years, and no fewer than 25 tenants are still in their first or second year; on the other hand, 17 plots have been held by the same tenants for more than 10 years, and four allotment holders at Worksop have been there for 22 years or more. The rate of turnover appears to be generally higher than for allotment garden

Table 40

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stock allotments: reasons for vacating plots.</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A survey of three sites (Coventry, Doncaster, Worksop): 1960–8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ill health ...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved from district ...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismissed for inefficiency ...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Domestic’ ...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient free time ...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred other forms of stock ...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed to make a profit ...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism ...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost interest ...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Died ...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plot destroyed by fire ...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous ...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>72 tenants</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

sites. The survey showed that of 72 tenants whose reasons for departure were known, 27 had left after only one year and a further 16 after 2; this must jeopardise the chances of establishing a strong association on a site and of creating a good social atmosphere. The reasons why the 72 former tenants gave up their allotments are shown in Table 40. Of the present tenants on these sites, 71 per cent are manual workers. This is a far higher proportion than that which is generally found on allotment garden sites (44.7 per cent) but it must be remembered that the 3 sites are situated in or near areas devoted to mining and industry.

498. In evidence to us, the L.S.A. acknowledged the difficulty in which it had been placed by the legislation relating to agricultural holdings. Its representatives accepted that most stock allotments offended against the legal definition of an allotment garden in four ways:—

(i) they were usually more than 40 poles in extent;
(ii) they were not used wholly or mainly for the production of fruit and vegetables;
(iii) their produce was not wholly or mainly consumed by the tenant and his family; and

(iv) they were often used for the rearing of pigs.

The L.S.A. has taken the precaution of incorporating in its tenancy agreements provisions which it hopes will absolve it from the rules regarding compensation included in the agricultural holdings legislation. For the future, however, it feels that stock allotments, if they continue to exist, should not only be specifically excluded from the definition of an agricultural holding, but should also be brought within the ambit of the allotments legislation. This view is based, firstly, on the argument that the provision of a stock allotment is the only alternative to admitting livestock keepers to allotment gardens; as such, it merits recognition on aesthetic grounds. Secondly, it is doubtful whether, under the existing legislation, any allotments authority, except a county borough, has the power to establish a stock allotment site; and the power of most of the county boroughs to do so would disappear if the recommendations of the Committee of Inquiry into Statutory Smallholdings are accepted. Lastly, the L.S.A. contends that, although most tenants of stock allotments make a fairly substantial profit, this is only ancillary to the main purpose of the stock allotment, which is to provide a man with a congenial spare-time occupation; in this respect, it is claimed there is no distinction between stock allotments and allotment gardens.

499. We accept that there is in many urban areas a latent demand for facilities to enable small livestock to be kept as a spare-time activity. We are quite unable to assess the extent of this demand, and we are somewhat sceptical of its basis. The history of the stock allotments which exist today, and the reviews carried out by the L.S.A., suggest that it is the expectation of profit rather than the interest which stock-keeping provides that draws most of the tenants into the movement. There may, of course, be nothing wrong in such profit-making; we have stated that 16-7 per cent of all allotment holders still keep their plots primarily to help their family budget, and that we can see no real difference in motive between the man who eats his produce and the man who sells it. It is, moreover, difficult to justify in equity a claim that while a stock allotment holder’s profit of (say) £100 constitutes a trade or business, an allotment gardener’s notional profit of £25 does not. The fact remains, however, that a man who grows fruit and vegetables on a 10-rod plot could use his produce entirely for home consumption, while a tenant of a stock allotment producing large quantities of eggs or pork could not. The profit element is therefore implicit in the creation of a stock allotment, irrespective of the motive of the individual tenant who takes a plot, and for this reason it seems to us proper that it should be regarded as an agricultural holding.

500. If a genuine demand for stock-keeping facilities exists in a town, and the local authority is prepared to set aside land for this purpose, we can see no reason why it should receive any less recognition than the demand for allotment gardens, provided that:

(i) the local authority does not seek to satisfy both demands on the same area of land;

(ii) the initial preparation and subsequent maintenance of the stock site are both of a high standard;

(iii) the stock-keepers receive adequate instruction on the care both of their stock and their land; and
(iv) the rent paid by the tenant for the land, buildings and services is commensurate with that of an agricultural holding.

If, in future, local authorities are to be permitted to establish sites for spare-time stock-keeping on this basis, then we are certain that the L.S.A. is the only organisation qualified to advise on the area and locality of the site, the type of equipment needed, and the construction of the permanent buildings. We will return to this point in Part VII of our report.

G. 'Commercial' allotments

501. For several reasons, it is unnecessary to discuss the appearance of commercial allotment sites at any great length. In the first place, their provision is now voluntary, and the landlord, whether a parish council or a private owner, has ample and obvious means of redress if he is not satisfied with the manner in which a tenant cultivates his plot. Secondly, as we have said, the appearance and facilities of the site ought not to be enhanced at the expense of the ratepayer; it would seem, therefore, that improvements are likely to be severely restricted. Thirdly, many of the amenities, such as communal huts,surfaced roadways and landscaped areas, which the allotment gardener might reasonably expect, would be quite unnecessary on a commercial site.

502. In point of fact, the commercial plots which we have visited present a more respectable appearance overall than do the majority of allotment gardens. Most are of open character, an acre or more in extent, and are intensively cultivated; the crops grown include wheat, potatoes and small fruit; the pathways are kept to the barest minimum in order to restrict the area of land not under cultivation. In consequence, the entire area in common with horticultural areas as a whole, is generally neat and tidy, though from the point of view of cultural landscape it may seem to be somewhat devoid of interest (Plate 20).
CHAPTER 12

THE ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

503. Compared with other evidence so far presented, that concerning the ways in which allotment holders organise themselves into federations, societies and associations for their common benefit is incomplete and imprecise. So many different local systems are in operation that it is virtually impossible to present a simple assessment of the position and difficult to determine the best method of acquiring a balanced picture. An outline of the many and varied types of organisation will make this difficulty clear.

504. Firstly, the insularity of the individual allotment holder, of which we spoke in Chapter 10, has resulted in many sites possessing no form of organisation whatsoever. The occupiers of the plots on such sites clearly see themselves as the tenants of separate parcels of land, having little or no connection with their neighbours—if, indeed, they know who those neighbours are! Secondly, there are many sites, notably in the private sector, which possess their own small associations owing no allegiance to a larger body. Again, in numerous small towns, and in the great majority of the rural parishes which provide allotment gardens, a single association will represent the allotment holders on several sites. Such an association will usually have its office on one of these sites, but occasionally occupies a separate building in the town itself. Finally, in most large towns, the organisations which represent individual sites will be part of a federation which links all the sites in the area and claims the right to represent the views of the movement in any negotiations which take place with the authority. But even this list is not exhaustive. In some areas the federation will not include all the associations which exist in the town; some remain aloof, preferring to fend for themselves rather than to join the more powerful organisation. In a few large towns, of which Coventry is a good example, two or more ‘town’ federations compete for the allegiance of the individual site associations. In relatively few areas, however, is membership of the local association obligatory; in most, it is quite voluntary, and the percentage of allotment holders who elect to join varies enormously from place to place.

505. To form a fair assessment of the scope and activities of the individual association we enlisted the help of N.A.G.S. in issuing a questionnaire to the secretaries of 185 associations affiliated to the national body. In selecting the associations to be canvassed, we excluded those in areas in which research students (who might be expected to include local associations in their studies) were already at work. The issue of these questionnaires brought to light a situation which served only to add to the confusion. We were already aware that over three-fifths of the associations affiliated to N.A.G.S. included among their members home gardeners who were not allotment holders, but in a few cases the association secretary returned our questionnaire with an explanation that there were no allotment holders in his association. In such cases, we were able to reissue the form to another association, and the 185 questionnaires eventually reached secretaries of associations which included a fair proportion of allotment holders among their membership. Of these questionnaires, 103 (55.7 per cent) were completed and returned to us.
506. The knowledge that the forms would be issued to associations whose responsibilities and spheres of influence were so variable persuaded us to confine the questions to those of a general nature which might be answered by every recipient; one obvious consequence of this decision was that the replies gave us little detailed information on the work of the individual associations. We discovered, however, that N.A.G.S. had recently issued its own questionnaire to affiliated associations and a summary of the information was made available to us. The majority of the answers given to N.A.G.S.'s questions closely conform with the information which we have received, and we have been able to resolve most of the discrepancies. Thus, in total, we have acquired sufficient information to enable us to examine the associations in some detail. A full summary of the data derived from our questionnaire is included at Appendix VII.

A. Trading

507. The evidence shows that, whatever form the allotment association now takes, and however wide its responsibilities may be, the great majority have found their raison d'être in the ability of an organised group to obtain goods at concessionary prices. As many as 86·4 per cent of associations operate schemes for the co-operative purchase of seeds and garden requisites, and 82 per cent are registered with the Ministry of Agriculture for the purpose of obtaining subsidies on lime and fertilisers. The associations affiliated to N.A.G.S. usually place their orders through it, and it arranges for the supplies to be delivered direct to the association concerned. It is, of course, this access to goods at discount prices which accounts for the readiness of home gardeners to become members of the local allotment associations in such numbers that only 35 per cent of the associations affiliated to N.A.G.S. draw their entire membership from the allotments movement. There can be no objection to the creation of a permanent link between home gardeners and allotment holders, but where the membership of an association consists predominantly of men who do not occupy allotments, and especially if the committee is composed of such people, then the further benefits which allotment sites derive from the association are likely to be small.

508. From the evidence provided by the many trading huts which we have inspected, it is clear that most associations regard the bulk purchase and resale of gardening requisites as their main, if not their only, function. We have seen huts stocked with fertilisers, seeds and implements of so many kinds that they must obviously have been ordered to replenish stock rather than to meet specific orders by individual allotment holders. Indeed, a large number of associations print periodically a list of items available for sale, and the trading hut then becomes a shop for the members on the site. We can see no objection to this system, but it is regrettable that, on so many sites, the allotment holders still see the association solely as a means of gaining a personal benefit, rather than as an organisation which, if properly constituted, directed and supported, might confer many benefits on the site.

B. Social activities

509. Throughout our enquiries, we have become increasingly convinced that a good association can promote a strong community spirit. The success of the Uplands statutory site in Birmingham (Plate 10), the Walthamstow Avenue temporary site (Plate 13), and the Iris Brickfield model site in Newcastle (Plate 8), to all of which we have previously referred, is due almost entirely to the
strength of their associations and, of course, their chief officers. This same conclusion has been reached independently by our research students, who, wherever they have found a site which differs from the norm in being a closely knit community, have drawn attention in their theses to the ability and strength of its association. Thus, of a temporary site in Wolverhampton it was said “the association is working hard in the hope that the authority will make the site permanent”, while on a private site in Grantham, the desire of the members to foster a corporate spirit has led the association to provide a communal hut from raffle and bingo profits. In Stoke-on-Trent, it was acknowledged that the secretary of an association could exert a considerable influence upon the condition of his site, and the success of a site in Coventry was ascribed to “its running itself as a self-governing body”. However, although lively associations which see it as their task to foster this community spirit do exist in considerable numbers, they are still very much in a minority. The answers to our questionnaire suggest that only 20.1 per cent of associations have a communal meeting hut on their sites, and the survey conducted by N.A.G.S. showed that 43 per cent of those associations had paid for and built the hut themselves (Plate 10). Why, we wonder, have those associations without a hut not done likewise? We were informed that 47.5 per cent of these use some other building for their meetings, while the remainder apparently meet in the open air on the site. Some associations, no doubt, would agree with the allotment holders on a site in Accrington who told a student that they could see no point in having a meeting hut, whoever built it. Many more, probably, take the same view as several in Crewe who impressed another student as being “very good talkers, but not very good doers”, and who were not prepared to appropriate to themselves what they regarded as the council’s responsibility. Yet the best form of help must be self-help, and to the great advantages which the possession of a meeting room manifestly provides, the provision of such a structure by the association itself must add a pride of achievement which can only bind its members still more closely together.

510. Where a communal hut does exist, it is used in every case for meetings of the association, and on 61.9 per cent of the sites for occasional talks on gardening matters. Some 19 per cent also make use of the hut for small flower or vegetable shows, but fewer than 10 per cent have established any form of club where the members can meet socially. Only 23 per cent of the associations affiliated to N.A.G.S. have established any form of social committee, and while 17 per cent provide some sort of winter programme, 27 per cent acknowledge that they do nothing to keep the interest of their members alive during the winter months.

C. The sites: general character

511. One of the aims of our questionnaires was to establish the extent to which an association affects the basic properties of a site—its popularity, vulnerability, status and standard of amenity provision. Unfortunately we discovered that few associations keep records in sufficient detail to enable a fair assessment to be made; 14.4 per cent did not know the age of their sites, 22.7 per cent could not say how the number of plots on their sites compared with the total in 1961, 41.7 per cent were unable to tell us how many plots had been vacant in 1961, and 41 per cent did not know how many tenants had left during the previous five years. In consequence, the information supplied allows us to draw only general conclusions.
512. Over half the sites on which associations have been established have been used as allotments for more than 30 years, and more than one in 5 is at least 50 years old. Of the sites provided by allotments authorities, 72.6 per cent are thought (by the associations) to be statutory. In the survey conducted by N.A.G.S., 43.4 per cent of all the member associations reported that their sites had suffered some “disturbance” in the cause of alternative development during the preceding ten years; by contrast, only 29.5 per cent of the associations which completed our questionnaire stated that their sites were smaller today than at their inception. We assume that the discrepancy between these figures relates to sites which have been ‘disturbed’ in connection with the laying of sewers or mains services without being permanently reduced in size. In any event, it is clear that the presence or absence of an association has little or no effect upon the chances of a site being eroded for development; but we have been unable to assess the degree to which an association can affect the possibility of a site’s closure.

513. N.A.G.S. found that only 7.9 per cent of the plots on the sites occupied by its member associations were vacant, whereas the national average is now almost 20 per cent.* On the other hand, our own questionnaire to association secretaries produced a figure of 13.2 per cent, and the analysis showed that the proportion of sites on which the number of vacant plots had increased since 1961 was only 36.2 per cent. It follows that, while we must regard N.A.G.S.'s figure with some scepticism, the incidence of vacant plots on the sites which have established associations is considerably lower than on those which have not. This does not necessarily imply that it is the existence of the association itself which accounts for the popularity of each site, for the relatively high proportion of statutory sites among those which have associations may be partly responsible. But 35.5 per cent of the associations claimed to have a waiting-list for vacant plots on their sites, and the conclusion that a site with an association is likely to be more popular than one without seems inescapable.

514. The answers to our questionnaire showed that the 10-rod plot is standard on 63.8 per cent of the sites included in the survey, and that 76.9 per cent of all plots on sites with associations are 10 rods or less in extent. These figures do not differ materially from the national picture, and there is further evidence to indicate that plots tend to be slightly larger on private sites. As many as 87.2 per cent of the allotment holders in these associations cultivate only one plot, and a mere 2.0 per cent have more than two. Since the ability of allotment holders generally to increase their holdings with impunity is in the main a reflection of the number of vacant plots available, these figures provide additional evidence of the relatively greater popularity of the sites where associations have been established.

515. Of the association secretaries who completed our questionnaire, 96.8 per cent assured us that their members were permitted to grow flowers on their plots, and 67.8 per cent thought that the entire plot could legally be devoted to flower cultivation; the corresponding figures for livestock-keeping were 32.4 per cent and 15.8 per cent respectively (Table VIII, Appendix VII). As we suggested in paragraph 252, a number of associations themselves restrict the growing of flowers and the rearing of livestock even where these would be permitted by the landowner. On 74.2 per cent of the sites no restrictions were imposed on the

* See paragraph 162.
sale of produce, and 69 per cent of the secretaries felt that the sale of produce should be freely permitted.

D. Leases and agreements

516. The analysis of the questionnaires issued to urban and rural allotments authorities has shown that 12.1 per cent of allotment garden sites are today leased to associations. In fact, 27 per cent of the associations included in our sample reported that they were the lessees of their sites. We discussed the practice of granting leases of sites to allotment associations in Chapter 7, and suggested that it had a number of undesirable features. It is clear that an increasing proportion of the country's allotment land is now being let in this way, although a number of authorities have questioned the legality of the system. The legal position is in fact extremely complex, and we would not care to express an opinion on its interpretation; but it would be advisable to refer briefly to the relevant provisions. Section 27(6) of the Act of 1908 accorded to allotments authorities the same power of letting allotment land to "persons working on a co-operative system" as might be exercised by a county council in respect of smallholdings. Section 67 of the Agriculture Act of 1947 repealed almost all the provisions of the Small Holdings and Allotments Acts which related to smallholdings, and did not include any provision to permit the letting of smallholdings to corporate bodies. It is very probable, therefore, that the specific power contained in the 1908 Act is now ineffective. But section 164 of the Local Government Act of 1933 gave local authorities a general power to let any land which they might possess and, so far as we are aware, this power, although restricted by subsequent legislation, is still retained.

517. Before taking a lease of an allotment site an association must achieve a legal status by applying for registration under the Industrial and Provident Societies' Acts and appointing trustees. Such registration renders the association liable to two new items of expenditure—income tax on its trading profit and the fee charged by the auditor who examines its accounts. In evidence to us, N.A.G.S. expressed the view that there were few associations at the present time whose officers possessed sufficient business acumen either to manage their affairs in such a way as to minimise the liability to tax, or to maintain a system of book-keeping which would satisfy an auditor. We accept that this is so. We feel also that the provisions of some of the leases which we have seen are too complex for the average allotment holder to understand fully.

518. Some allotments authorities have appointed local allotment associations to act as their agents or management committees. The contracts under which the association accepts such an agency (often in respect of every local authority site in the town) usually provide that it will collect the rents from individual tenants and account for them to the authority, issue tenancy agreements in a prescribed form, allocate plots, ensure the tidiness of the site and the cleanliness of any buildings thereon, evict bad tenants, fill vacancies, and generally manage the site. It seems to us that this practice has much to commend it, but it is obviously capable of misuse on both sides. Two such agreements submitted to us by large authorities were almost identical in the scope of the responsibilities undertaken by the association, but the one provided that the association's administrative costs should be covered by a refund of 2s. 6d. per plot let, while in the second the comparable figure was 1s. 3d. Moreover, since the size of the association's profit will depend principally upon its expenditure on maintenance and on the
number of plots which are let, it is doubtful whether necessary repairs and the eviction of bad tenants will be undertaken eagerly.

E. Finance and amenities

519. The financial structure of an association varies enormously with its area of responsibility; thus the Uplands association in Birmingham (Plate 10) which has for many years supplemented its funds by means of football sweeps and other activities, had assets in 1965 worth almost £30,000 and a membership of only 261. During that year, visits were made to members who were sick, floral tributes were provided, and Christmas parcels were distributed to old age pensioners. The association arranged several outings, held socials and a children's party and heard a number of lectures on gardening topics. It supplied paint for the sheds on its site and made a profit of £164 on its trading account. This association operates through seven sub-committees, including one responsible for finance. At the other end of the scale, there are many hundreds of associations whose income consists entirely of membership fees (if any) and the profit which accrues on their trading accounts. This profit is used to provide honòraría for the officers of the association, to sponsor one or two social events, or as a reserve. Since most of these associations lack a communal hut of any type, the cost of hiring a room in which to hold the A.G.M. or a flower show will itself eat into their meagre profits. Very occasionally, where funds permit, some maintenance of the site will be attempted, but N.A.G.S. admits that expenditure on maintenance is only likely to occur “where that is the responsibility of the association”.

520. Where an association is the lessee of a site or acts as the landlord’s agent, its financial structure is more complex. The terms of the extant leases are so varied in their financial content that no clear picture can be obtained, but the following systems occur most frequently:

(i) The rent for the site is set at a figure between £3 and £6 per acre. The association is then left to obtain the highest rent possible for each plot, and is usually made responsible for the maintenance of the entire site. Leases in this form were submitted by Bournemouth, Horsham, Leicester and Winchester.

(ii) The overall rent is somewhat higher than described in (i) but the allotments authority retains responsibility for part of the maintenance—usually the perimeter fence and gates. Agreements and leases in these terms were lodged by Bedworth, Newmarket and Stockton-on-Tees.

(iii) Similar to (i) or (ii), but with a clause restricting the rent which the association may charge for a single plot. Among others, Brighton, Eastleigh and Litherland have granted leases in this form.

(iv) The rent for the site is either made entirely nominal or set so low that the association (which in all such cases becomes entirely responsible for the site) can make a reasonable profit if all plots are let. Leases on these lines came from Caterham, Potters Bar and Swansea.

(v) A variety of attempts is made to align the rent for the site to the state of the lettings. Thus, an agreement by Beeston and Stapleford secures for the association a fixed allowance of 20 per cent of the rents paid over, while another from Benfleet (Essex) lays down that the payment due from the association will be 5s. per annum for each plot which is let.

206
In view of these wide variations, any attempt to assess the degree to which the existence of an association affects the standard of amenity provided on a site can be little more than a generalisation. Table 24 (Chapter 7) showed the incidence of each amenity on urban sites; if we now repeat these figures and set them alongside the corresponding figures returned by association secretaries, the position is as shown in Table 41. The figures in this Table require a little more elucidation. Since our sample was directed entirely to associations which are affiliated to N.A.G.S. and since a grant towards the cost of installing a piped water supply can only be claimed by an association through N.A.G.S., the figure of 79 per cent for piped water is bound to be high; the percentage of sites which possess piped water and have associations not affiliated to N.A.G.S. will be lower. In compiling this Table, we asked the association secretaries to indicate, in the case of each amenity which their site possessed, whether it had been provided by their landlord or by themselves. We found that, whereas 76-4 per cent of the amenities on statutory sites were provided by the allotments authority, 80 per cent of those on private sites had been paid for by the association itself. The low provision (11 per cent) of individual and grouped sheds on the sites included in the survey may well be due partly to a campaign by some associations to ban the jerry-built structures which deface so many sites and which are doubtless included in the figures of amenity provision returned by the allotments authorities; on some sites, individual lockers are also provided in the community hut.

521. The figures in Table 41 show conclusively that sites controlled by associations tend to possess a much higher standard of amenity provision than the remainder. Again, however, we cannot be certain whether it is the existence of the association which has improved the amenities, or the age and permanence of the site, both of which are likely to be higher than the norm. Some associations, moreover, have doubtless been able to insist upon the provision of certain amenities as a precondition of accepting a lease, while others, debarred as they generally are from distributing their profit among their members, have used it to provide trading huts rather than toilets or sheds. We are, nonetheless, satisfied that the presence of an association and a higher standard of amenity will increase a site's popularity, and we are equally certain that the two go hand in hand.

F. Condition of sites

522. The surveys conducted both by this committee and by N.A.G.S. included a number of questions designed to ascertain whether the type of allotment site...
on which an association was likely to flourish differed from those where no association had been formed. Again, the answers were largely inconclusive, but included some interesting statistical comparisons. Only 9 per cent of the association secretaries stated that their sites had poor soil, whereas 17·9 per cent alleged that the drainage was bad (Table XI, Appendix VII). In the random sample of allotment holders, poor soil and inadequate drainage was placed seventh in the list of difficulties which were a barrier to the successful cultivation of their plots. It would seem, therefore, that the condition of soil and drainage is no better or worse on sites with associations than on those without. We were told that 57·8 per cent of the sites included in our survey suffered from vandalism and theft while the allotment holders placed this second in their list of difficulties; again, there is little or no difference between the results of the two surveys. An important point which emerged from the answers to this question was that permanent sites, and sites with a better standard of amenity provision, are both more likely to suffer from vandalism than temporary sites and sites with few or no amenities. There is an apparent conflict between this point and the statement which we quoted in paragraph 409; it will, however, be recognised that neither ‘permanence’ nor the possession of amenities ensures that a site will look attractive.

523. A number of questions about the degree of interest in the site evinced by the local authority proved somewhat abortive, largely because of differences in the area of responsibility of different associations. Of the association secretaries who completed our questionnaire, 56 per cent considered that the landlord gave the site adequate supervision; but since this figure includes those sites in which the landlord has, whether by lease or contract, abrogated most of his responsibilities, the true figure will be much lower. Only 28·7 per cent, 25 per cent and 23·8 per cent felt that they were given adequate help with the control of pests and disease, the destruction of weeds and the preparation of vacant plots for new tenants respectively. It will be recalled that the problem of weeds from adjoining plots (Plate 5) was considered to be the greatest difficulty with which allotment holders have to contend, and it is clear that the existence of an association on a site does not change this.

G. Attitudes of mind

524. There are in this country today a small number of allotment associations which, within the limits imposed by the conditions under which they exist and operate, are engaged in a genuine and serious attempt to raise the standard of their sites. Both they and their officers deserve all the praise and encouragement which we can bestow. The majority, however, are concerned but little with the appearance of their sites, and their management capabilities appear to be minimal. There are, in our view, a number of reasons for this.

525. Firstly, the attitude of any association is essentially a reflection of the attitude of its members. We showed in Chapters 10 and 11 how little many allotment holders today care for the condition of their plots or their sites, and how low they esteem the corporate existence which a site can provide. In such circumstances, it is scarcely surprising that their associations have a similarly restricted outlook. Secondly, the fact that most associations are founded on what has become known as ‘trading’ is itself a considerable barrier to the attainment of more progressive ideas. The best associations in any sphere owe their origins to the desire of people who are already united by a common bond to
join together for the common good, and the *additional* activities in which they indulge are never allowed to obscure their primary purpose. Thirdly, and this is by far the most important aspect of the problem, an association is only as good as its officers. In every case in which we have been able to praise the efficiency and the spirit which activate a particular site today, we have found this same spirit and efficiency to be mirrored in the chairman, secretary and other officers of its association. Often, however, the officers of an association seem to be the wrong people. They are elected, presumably, because they are willing to serve; because men who have retired have more time to spare, they are usually elderly; and because they will normally be allotment holders of long standing, their views and outlook are only too often firmly rooted in the long-distant past. To them, the allotment is theirs by law and common charity; the condition of their site is the responsibility of the council, about whose intransigence they will complain to all who will listen. Student researchers all over the country have referred to the apathy, indifference and unhelpfulness of many associations which they have encountered; some have traced the decline of associations from the date when efficient officers have left. Allotment holders themselves have complained to us of the restricted outlook and inefficiency of their own association committees, and the evidence of our visits has shown all too often that this criticism is merited. We are convinced that strong, efficient associations with good and conscientious officers and progressive outlooks could be the salvation of many sites; but it is no less certain that weakness, indifference and a regressive approach can destroy them.
CHAPTER 13

THE NATIONAL ALLOTMENTS AND GARDENS SOCIETY LIMITED AND VILLAGE PRODUCE ASSOCIATIONS

526. The National Allotments and Gardens Society Limited and Village Produce Associations, known universally as N.A.G.S., is the only organisation which claims to represent the allotments movement nationally in England and Wales.* N.A.G.S. is registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts, and four years ago moved its headquarters from London to the readily accessible village of Flitwick, Bedfordshire. Its objects are defined in its rules in the following terms:—

"Securing the co-operative organisation of allotment garden, village produce, horticultural, small livestock and social welfare societies; securing improved legislation and the promotion of horticultural education to the public at large. Its objects shall be to carry on the business of publishers, accountants, booksellers and commercial and general advisers and dealers in garden supplies, including the supply of gardening requirements at reduced prices to unemployed persons, old-age pensioners, widows, blind and disabled persons."

N.A.G.S.'s affairs are controlled by a management committee which consists of the president and treasurer (ex officio members), one representative of each of twenty-three separate areas in England and Wales and three representatives of affiliated local authorities. The day-to-day administration is in the hands of a full-time secretary.

527. N.A.G.S. is in fact the natural successor to several former organisations, and was established as the National Allotments Society in 1930, the words "and Gardens" being added to its title by a resolution passed in 1947. During the period 1951-3, at the instigation of the Advisory Committee on Domestic Food Production, a sustained effort was made to bring into N.A.G.S. the numerous Village Produce Associations. This campaign was only partially successful, but while it was in operation, N.A.G.S.'s title was again expanded, this time to its present form.

528. All efforts to discover precisely how many allotment holders are linked to N.A.G.S. today have failed. The great majority of its members are acquired by the affiliation of local associations, many of which, as we have seen, include in their own membership people who are not allotment holders. In consequence, neither we nor, surprisingly, N.A.G.S. itself, can determine with any accuracy what proportion of the allotments movement it represents. Its total membership, however, has fallen from a peak of 296,098 in 1949 to roughly 170,000 today, a decline of some 42.6 per cent; this coincides so nearly with the proportional drop in the total number of allotments over the same period that one might conclude that the great majority of its members are in fact allotment holders.

529. It is clear from these figures that both in 1949 and at the present time N.A.G.S. has represented only a minority of the allotments movement of this

* The National Federation of Village Produce Associations (see paragraph 588) claims the allegiance of some 12,000 allotment holders in the rural areas of eight counties in the midlands and south.
country; indeed, in answer to a question included in our questionnaire, 43·7 per cent of the allotment holders in urban areas and 20·9 per cent of those in rural parishes stated that they were members of N.A.G.S. We must in due course examine some of the reasons for this apparent reluctance on the part of allotment holders to join N.A.G.S. Obviously, the smaller the percentage of allotment holders who owe allegiance to it, the less influence it can have on the movement as a whole.

530. It would be most unwise, however, to underestimate N.A.G.S.'s importance, both in the history of the allotments movement over the past 40 years, and in its contribution to allotment thinking today. It is, as we have said, the only national allotments organisation in England and Wales. It is the only concern which is in regular contact with Ministers about what it regards as the needs and the views of the allotments movement; it is the parent body through which application for grants to defray part of the cost of water installation must be channelled; and through its annual conference, its dissemination of various forms of gardening literature and its occasional national campaigns, it must exert some influence upon those allotment holders who are not among its members.

531. During the period covered by our inquiry, it has submitted to us three weighty pieces of written evidence and its representatives appeared before us in oral evidence on 29th May, 1968. In addition, members of the Committee of Inquiry have met its representatives informally on numerous occasions, and have been present at three of its annual conferences. We must pay tribute to the courtesy and co-operation which we have received from its officers throughout our enquiries, and particularly to the work of the late Mr. A. G. W. Measures, M.B.E. (chairman), whose death earlier this year was a tragic loss to N.A.G.S. Certain aspects of N.A.G.S.'s evidence have already been discussed in the relevant sections of this report, and will only be repeated where the arguments presented by it require a separate examination, but there is a great deal to which we have not yet referred. We shall examine these further arguments critically, recognising that they derive from a society whose duty it is to press the case of its members (as the society sees it) with all the strength it can muster.

A. Finance

532. Since most of N.A.G.S.'s problems and many of its professed opinions stem from lack of funds, we must begin by considering its financial structure. The major part of its income is derived from the contributions of its members. These contributions, which are laid down in its rules and are therefore only capable of being changed by a full meeting of members at its annual conference, are at present as follows:—

(i) In the case of an association, society or district body, 1s. per member per annum.

(ii) In the case of a local authority, 2 guineas per annum.

(iii) In the case of an individual, 5s. per annum.

(iv) In the case of a life member, a single payment of 5 guineas.

The life membership scheme was instituted in 1961, and well over 200 members have since been elected in this way; the income derived from their subscriptions is kept in a separate account and does not form part of the profit and loss account. Local authorities were first invited to become affiliated in 1937, and the membership is now 200, but these include only a handful of parish councils.
533. The decision to require an *individual* member to pay more than the man who gained membership through his local association was taken with the laudable aim of persuading allotment holders to establish associations on their sites. Whether it has succeeded in this we do not know; certainly, however, the number of allotment holders who have joined N.A.G.S. *as individuals* is very small indeed. The great majority of its members, therefore, and the bulk of its revenue, are derived from the affiliation fees paid by local associations. This fee was increased from 6d. to 9d. per member in 1959 and was raised to its present figure of 1s. per annum in 1962. In written evidence to us, N.A.G.S. stated:

"The fee is still very low, but to the association struggling hard to overcome the inherent attitude of a gardener who is interested only in his own small plot of land, and who cannot believe that the age-old right of a man who wishes to have an allotment will ever be challenged, the sum total of fees for a large membership that the association is asked to transmit to the national body must seem high, particularly when it is borne in mind that the movement itself was bred out of poverty. The attitude unfortunately persists to the present day."

534. Throughout our investigations, we have made no secret of the fact that we consider the capititation fee of 1s. per annum to be absurdly low. Quite irrespective of the restrictions which a fee of this size imposes on N.A.G.S.'s ability to be of benefit to the movement which it serves, it has a number of psychological aspects whose importance could scarcely be exaggerated. In the first place, it helps to preserve the image of the allotments movement as a form of charity whose beneficiaries are only able to support their national body to the extent of 1d. per month. Secondly, it suggests to the individual allotment holder that the value of N.A.G.S. is minimal. Finally, it implants in the minds of those who might otherwise be prepared to help the movement a strong conviction that the movement is not prepared to help itself.

535. In evidence N.A.G.S. pointed out that the increase in the fee agreed in 1959 which amounted to a mere 3d. extra per annum had resulted in a reduction in membership of some 2,000. It suggested that it was just as important that it should represent the majority of allotment holders as that it should increase its income. It might have added (but did not do so) that in many cases, a fee of 1s. represented at least 10 per cent of a member's rent, and that it would be unreasonable to ask for more! All these arguments, however, seem to us to miss the main point. Either the allotments movement *needs* a national organisation which on the one hand can protect its interests and on the other can assist the individual and his association in the successful management of their allotments, or it does not. It *cannot* need a national body which, through lack of funds, is incapable of filling either role satisfactorily. If an allotment holder in one part of the country is unable to see that the future of a site in another will ultimately affect his own, and that he should therefore be prepared to help N.A.G.S. to fight for its retention, the need for a national society disappears. If the allotment holder whose plot stands on a model site of attractive appearance cannot understand that it is to *his* benefit that those on other sites should be taught how to improve theirs, then it is unnecessary to have a national organisation able to undertake such instruction. It is, in our view, imperative that N.A.G.S. should resolve at once to increase its fees considerably. If, in consequence, some associations withdrew their allegiance, this would be both short-sighted and unfortunate; but the additional services which it would subsequently be able to provide would
almost certainly draw the majority back, and the withdrawal of some parsimonious associations would be no great loss either to it or to the movement as a whole.

536. Although its income from affiliated associations is so low, and its general financial position somewhat precarious, N.A.G.S. has for some years helped to induce local associations to amalgamate with larger groups by a system of rebates. Under this system a local urban or rural federation can claim a refund of 25 per cent of all fees paid by its member associations, and a further 8½ per cent will be refunded to a county organisation. In consequence N.A.G.S. will often retain only 8d. of the 1s. fee paid in respect of a member. It justifies this system of rebates on the ground that where the area officers are well versed in organisation and allotment law, they can attempt to do locally what ought to be done nationally if adequate staff and funds were available.

537. In the year ended 31st December, 1967, its gross income from affiliation fees (excluding life membership fees) amounted to £8,553, of which £1,643 was handed back by way of rebate. The total gross income from all sources was £10,555, which left it with only £8,912 (£10,555 less £1,643 rebate) to cover its expenses throughout the year. The seriousness of the situation is seen in the profit and loss account for 1967 which showed a deficit of £476 9s. 9d., compared with a profit of £111 in 1966.

538. During the past few years, N.A.G.S. has devoted a considerable amount of time and energy to an attempt to persuade Ministers to provide Government assistance to the allotments movement and, in the process, to itself. This campaign has largely been channelled in two directions. Firstly, it has sought to impress upon the Department of Education and Science that allotment gardening is no less entitled to receive a grant from the Exchequer than is any other form of recreation; and secondly, it has endeavoured recently to persuade both the Minister and the Minister of Agriculture that the time is ripe for a new campaign to increase the number of allotment gardeners in the national interest. Neither of these campaigns has so far met with any success, but both will be discussed comprehensively in later sections of this chapter. Our purpose in alluding to them at this stage is to emphasise that N.A.G.S. is very conscious both of the inadequacy of the service which it is able to give to the allotments movement and of the probability that without additional funds it will be unable to maintain even its present standard for much longer. It is also able to reflect that it has not always been in this unhappy position, for between 1947 and 1961 it received Government grants totalling £41,228; these payments, and the circumstances in which they were made, will again be considered later in this chapter. The grants were made subject to stringent and peculiar conditions which probably made it impossible for it to use the money to the best purpose, but their cessation in 1961 must have been a severe blow. It was almost certainly the imminent withdrawal of grant aid and its consequences, rather than rising costs or the growth of an 'affluent society' which forced N.A.G.S. to increase its affiliation fees in 1959 and 1962.

539. Until 1959, it employed a full-time administrative assistant and a national organiser, but the services of both were then dispensed with on the ground of economy. Its salaried staff now consists only of a full-time secretary and four assistants; even so, their combined salaries, which are by no means lavish,
represent over 50 per cent of the net income received from subscriptions. In its evidence, it describes "a typical day's work" at its headquarters as follows:—

"[We handle] about 60 letters of all kinds, of which 20 would be in connection with the various kinds of trouble in which allotment holders find themselves. In addition the girls would be engaged on duplicating material for allotment associations that use the duplicating service; making out orders for the various schemes such as the assistance scheme, the seed scheme and the insecticide scheme. Sending off such small items as badges, certificates of merit and many types of leaflets. Each month the Society's magazine must be packed for free delivery to secretaries of local associations."

Bearing in mind that much of the secretary's time is spent in travelling to different parts of the country to deal with problems which arise locally, it is scarcely surprising that N.A.G.S. should view the future with some trepidation, and should be anxious to increase its resources. We remain of the opinion that, whatever other alternatives are open to it, an increase in membership fees is the only long-term solution. We believe also that this must be done quickly, for an independent assessment of its activities leads inexorably to the conclusion that, fearing further reduction of its income, it often takes courses of action which are detrimental both to itself and the movement as a whole.

B. Interest in allotment gardening

540. In its written evidence, N.A.G.S. claimed to be able to "state categorically" that there was "no real decline in interest in the cultivation of allotment gardens". If this statement was intended to suggest that the fall in the number of allotment holders since the end of the last war is attributable entirely to negative or destructive attitudes on the part of those outside the movement, then the evidence which we have adduced in our report shows the claim to be spurious. Yet there is, in the same section of its evidence, material which indicates that this view is in fact taken, for it complains that the provision of allotments is today linked to the expressed rather than the potential need; that the planning legislation has prevented the reservation of land for allotments in development schemes; that allotment holders are discouraged by being moved "three or four times in as many years"; that there is no propaganda to encourage people to take allotment gardens; that many people do not know how to get an allotment; and that the advantages, both economic and from the standpoint of health, which the possession of an allotment provides are so self-evident that there must be a very large latent demand for them. It referred also to the survey carried out in 1942 by the Ministry of Agriculture which found that 96 per cent of those who then occupied allotment gardens intended to keep them "after the war" in support of its contention that a large number must subsequently have been deterred by outside factors.

541. Most of these points have been adequately covered in earlier chapters of this report. It seems to us that, while there is substance in a number of these contentions, they would together account only for a fraction of the numbers of allotment holders who have vacated their plots since the end of the war. One looks in vain in this catalogue for any reference to the discouraging effects produced by the poor appearance of many allotment sites and the apathetic attitudes of many allotment holders, or for any assessment of the effect of television and motoring on the free choice of the allotment holder himself.
542. There is however, other material in the same section of the written evidence which suggests that N.A.G.S.’s views may be less extreme. At one point, it is alleged that the decline in numbers is “not entirely due to gardeners having become fed up with digging”, and it is conceded that food is now cheap and there are many counter-attractions. Later in the same section, N.A.G.S. concludes that “no one knows whether there is a latent demand for allotment gardens because no one has taken the trouble to find out”.

543. In oral evidence, N.A.G.S. suggested that for the future each allotments authority should be required by law to provide a specific total area of allotment gardens calculated by reference to its population rather than to provide “a sufficient number”. In its view, the new requirement ought to be 2 acres of allotment gardens for each thousand population, a figure which would in many areas exceed the peak provision of the Second World War. It was pointed out to its representatives that, since the present overall provision in urban areas was down to 1 acre per thousand and 20 per cent of existing plots were acknowledged to be vacant, their proposal needed considerable further justification. In reply, they suggested that if, in future, allotment garden sites were properly landscaped and equipped the number of plots to the acre would decrease; they anticipated that many people would eventually be satiated with new synthetic leisure pursuits and would return to those recreations which had stood the test of time; they also felt that an organised campaign would effect a considerable increase in demand, and that some of those who had become attracted to gardening would then want a second plot.

544. They were then asked to what extent the demand for allotments in the future might be affected by changes in housing patterns and densities. If the present tendency in many areas to build houses with gardens rather than high-rise flats was maintained, would not the demand for allotments decrease further? They replied correctly that it was not always possible to cultivate the whole of a small home garden, which was needed for a variety of domestic purposes. The best form of economy in land use would be to build houses with small ‘patio’ gardens and to set aside alternative land for those who wanted more. Many people, moreover, had no wish to grow vegetables in their home gardens; to such people the allotment garden was their vegetable plot.

545. The effect of N.A.G.S.’s proposal on provision, if adopted, would be to require the urban authorities of England and Wales by law to provide some 80,000 acres of allotment gardens, which is twice the area provided today. In 1948, when the impetus of the wartime ‘Dig for Victory’ campaign had lost but little of its momentum, the total provision in urban areas was 66,325 acres; and it is suggested that this latter figure should be raised by over 20 per cent. The apparent irrationality of a proposal of this kind suggests that the question of provision has not been given the expert and objective consideration of which N.A.G.S. is capable and which the problem clearly demands.

C. Town planning and security of tenure

546. In several sections of its first piece of written evidence N.A.G.S. sought to prove that the security of tenure of allotment holders on both statutory and private sites was today illusory and, principally, that the clear intention of the law in this respect was being disregarded both by the Ministry and by local planning officers. The whole of its second item of written evidence consisted of
copies of correspondence (which in one case extended over several years) which had taken place in regard to proposals that three statutory sites in different parts of the country should be closed for alternative development. In oral evidence its representatives returned strongly to the theme of security which they again contended was being deliberately eroded.

547. In 1952, a delegation from N.A.G.S. complained to the then Minister that the planning legislation had adversely affected the security of the tenants of both statutory and private allotments in five different ways:—

(i) There was a general tendency for planning authorities to reduce the area of land used for allotments.

(ii) In some districts, there was too great a disparity between the area of land devoted to allotments and that used for other open space.

(iii) Some local authorities consistently refused to acquire land for statutory allotments which could be incorporated into the urban plan.

(iv) Some authorities were prepared to use for other purposes land shown on the town map as allotments before the Minister had confirmed the development plan.

(v) The policy of some authorities was to schedule allotment land for other purposes on the town map, even when its proximity to densely built up areas showed that it was needed as allotments. The alternative land then offered was sometimes unreasonably distant.

Much of N.A.G.S.'s argument in evidence to us was based on the proposition that the validity of these five complaints was even greater today than in 1952, and before we express an opinion on the merits of its contentions we must examine how it developed its case.

548. In regard to allotment gardens provided by allotments authorities, N.A.G.S. began by reminding us that tenants were already subject by law to several different periods of notice to quit, according to the status of the land and the purpose for which it was required, and by implication, it suggested that every allotment holder should be entitled to the same period of notice. In oral evidence it expressed the view that this period should be twelve months, expiring in the close season, and added that authorities should be able to plan sufficiently far ahead to avoid the need to insert a re-entry clause in a lease. We are in general agreement with the view that the question whether an allotment holder is entitled to a long or short notice to quit should not depend either on luck or on the whim of the local authority; but if an allotment holder elects to take a plot on a temporary site while vacancies exist on statutory sites in his town, he cannot expect to enjoy the same degree of security.

549. N.A.G.S. then went on to stress that in its opinion the allotments committee could only carry out its legal obligations effectively if all allotment gardens provided by the authority were controlled by that committee. It referred to the three circulars issued by the Ministry of Agriculture between 1954 and 1956, and stressed that the amount of statutory allotment land had declined continuously during that period. We have already given our interpretation of these circulars and expressed the view that they related to permanent rather than statutory allotments.* Certainly there is no legal obligation upon any authority

* See paragraphs 216 and 217.
to provide statutory allotments, and N.A.G.S.'s proposal implies that an authority should be unable to satisfy part of the demand for allotments by using land acquired (but not yet needed) for some other purpose. It is difficult to comment upon such a proposal in isolation, but it seems to us that if an authority is obliged (as it often must be) to acquire land for a variety of purposes in advance of need, then the general value and scarcity of land dictates that wherever possible it should be used efficiently in the interim period. If the authority can find a number of people who, recognising that their tenure will be temporary, nonetheless want to cultivate such land, it seems sensible that they should be allowed to use the area as a temporary allotment site.

550. Most of N.A.G.S.'s complaints in regard to security of tenure, however, were levelled against the planning legislation and the way in which it is interpreted. After pointing out that development plans normally employ the notations O/SA (statutory allotments) and O/A (private and temporary allotments) to denote allotment land, it alleged that there was a “good deal of confusion” about statutory allotments. It instanced the cases of Nottingham, which had recently admitted that a great deal of the land previously shown as statutory allotments was not in fact statutory at all, and Chester-le-Street, where it was now claimed that allotment land had been denoted O/SA on the town map by a "cartographical error". But, even where the designation on the town map is correct, N.A.G.S. contends that local planning authorities often transgress both the letter and the spirit of the law in making application for a change of notation on the map from O/SA to 'residential' or 'education'; and that the Minister is wrong to allow such a change before consent has been given to the alienation of the site. The correspondence included in its written evidence all took place before the change in procedure referred to in paragraph 199. Since copies of much of this correspondence were passed to us without the knowledge of the writers, we cannot quote it verbatim, but the burden of N.A.G.S.'s contentions was as follows:—

(i) that by resolving to take over a well-tenanted statutory site for development, an authority showed that it was 'anti-allotments';

(ii) that an authority should not apply for a change of notation on its town map until consent had been given to the alienation of the site;*

(iii) that if such an application were made before consent to alienation had been granted, it should automatically be rejected by the Minister.

551. In the context of efficient town planning, we cannot accept that any allotment garden site, whatever its state of cultivation, should be accorded complete protection by law against any attempt to take it over for other purposes. A degree of flexibility is essential in good town planning, and if the planner were required to operate in circumstances where certain areas of land were inviolate for all time, such flexibility would be impossible. The development plan of a town cannot possibly be made to revolve around its allotment sites. The ideal must surely be to plan for allotments, not despite them.

552. The contentions made by N.A.G.S. at (ii) and (iii) above have largely been overtaken by subsequent events. M.H.L.G. Circular 39 of 1967 instructed local authorities to apply for consent to the alienation of statutory allotment land before they made application for planning consent, while under the terms of the

* Under section 8 of the 1925 Act.
Town and Country Planning Act 1968 the amendment of a detailed town map will no longer require the Minister’s approval. We must, however, address ourselves briefly to these two contentions, since they play an important part in illustrating N.A.G.S.’s general attitude to the security of allotment gardens.

553. The question whether an authority should at the present time consider taking a statutory allotment site for other purposes ought, in our view, to depend upon a large number of factors. It should hinge upon the importance and urgency of the new development, the number of people who will suffer if it does not take place, the availability of alternative land for the development and its degree of suitability, the ease with which the allotment holders can be reaccommodated on a comparable or better site, and the popularity and general appearance of the site itself. Most of these factors are local, and will vary with every case; and it is therefore impossible to make a general pronouncement. It does seem to us that to contest militantly every proposed alienation of allotments land, regardless of the merits of the individual case, cannot further the development or the morale either of N.A.G.S. or of the allotments movement.

554. There are, however, two aspects of this same problem which cause us considerable concern. The first relates to the operation of the Education Act of 1944 and its subsequent interpretation. Under the terms of this Act a great deal of allotment land has been taken for a variety of educational needs and—because of repeated interruptions to the school building programme—much land has then been left empty for several years. N.A.G.S. stressed particularly the effect upon the allotment holder who sees land which he had been obliged to vacate lying derelict for so long a period, and we have much sympathy with its view. We are aware of at least one case in which an authority proposing to close a statutory site has offered as an alternative an area of land which was itself once a statutory allotment site and had been taken for education purposes several years earlier! We are satisfied that such a course of events is grossly unfair to the allotments movement. Secondly, we can see no reason why allotment holders in particular should be made to suffer unduly by being continually called on to provide land for urban developments which might have been catered for in other ways by far-sighted planning. If an unforeseen need for land arises it is quite wrong to demand that an allotment site should be used to satisfy this need simply because it is there and capable of easy development. Such unpredictable needs in the land use structure of a town should surely be borne by the community as a whole, not by a specific group of people.

555. In the case of the closure of allotment land provided by a private landowner, N.A.G.S.’s contentions and criticisms take a somewhat different form. Having condemned the appearance of many private sites which look untidy because “the insular character of gardening…does not usually tend to encourage pride in that part of the allotment site for which the tenant pays no rent”, N.A.G.S. explains that in following its normal practice of registering a formal objection against a planning approval it is seeking to bring to the attention of the local authority the fact that there are on the site “a number of persons who want to follow the recreation of gardening”. It then suggests to the Inspector taking the inquiry, that unless suitable alternative land is available, the authority’s obligation to ensure that the demand for allotments is satisfied provides sufficient argument for refusing or delaying the grant of consent to development, and that, ultimately, the authority may be obliged to acquire the site for allotments use. The argument on this point seems to us to be eminently sound, and in the context
of the existing planning and allotment legislation, its course of action is correct. But the eventual outcome of such cases, which produce situations as absurd as that which has arisen in Walton and Weybridge Urban District (see paragraph 341) indicate that the legislation itself is seriously at fault.

556. There is an obvious disparity between, on the one hand, the tremendous emphasis which N.A.G.S. places upon the need for security of tenure, and the great lengths to which it will go to challenge any attempt to take over allotment land even where alternative land is to be provided in lieu, and, on the other, the relative lack of importance which allotment holders themselves attach to their lack of security, according to their replies to our questionnaire. Our subsequent questions and investigations revealed that the key to this disparity lies in the power of rumour. We are assured by N.A.G.S. that the first rumours that a site is to be closed, however unfounded they may be, are sufficient to persuade allotment holders to surrender their plots, and that the mere appearance of a surveyor with a theodolite or ranging poles is often sufficient to “kill a site”. In oral evidence it regretted that it was unable to prevent this, for the allotment holder was more disposed to fear the local authority than to feel protected by N.A.G.S. It is apparent, therefore, that the primary motive which drives N.A.G.S. to devote so much time and energy to fighting the first rounds of the battle to take over an allotment site is the fear that even if the battle were won, its own ranks would be depleted by the defection of those who had been ready to listen to rumour.

557. We have seen for ourselves only too clearly the disastrous effect which rumour can have on the success of an allotment site, and the unwillingness of its tenants to spend time and money on the cultivation of plots which they believe to be threatened. But N.A.G.S.’s evidence on this point contains certain inconsistencies. It is curious that the same people who “cannot believe that the age-old right of a man who wishes to have an allotment will ever be challenged” (see paragraph 533), are so quickly deterred by the first rumours that their sites are to be closed. It is strange, also, that men who save themselves a considerable sum of money by producing their own food are unwilling to spend a few shillings on the purchase of seeds at the first whisper that they will not be able to harvest their crops. If N.A.G.S. were to devote part of the money which at present is spent on defending unsightly areas of allotments against the threat of closure to educating its members on other sites on the methods of making them more attractive before such threats arise, the effect might well be considerable.

558. In its criticism of the way in which the Ministry’s Allotments Section interprets section 8 of the 1925 Act, N.A.G.S. accuses the Ministry of failing to make it clear to the allotments authority seeking consent to the alienation of a statutory site that it is “concerned to see the perpetuation of the allotments movement”. It complains that the Ministry is prepared too often to “rely on the word of a senior official in the council offices as to whether the land is actually statutory allotments or not”. It suggests that the conditions imposed by the Ministry in regard to the provision of amenities on the new site ought to be carried out before the old site is closed. It also argues that it should be impossible for an authority to issue notices to quit before consent to the alienation of a site has been given. We indicated in Chapter 6 that both section 8 and its interpretation leave much to be desired. But if sites are almost empty when application is made, the Ministry’s views on the perpetuation of the allotments movement would seem to be irrelevant. The only alternative to a readiness to accept the
word of a council official would be for the Ministry to examine in every case the records of the transaction by which the council first acquired the land; and the argument about notices to quit loses its point if the site has already been ‘killed by rumour’.

559. The majority of N.A.G.S.’s contentions in regard to security of tenure and its recommendations for effecting an improvement in the present situation seem to us to fail to impinge on the kernel of the problem. In oral evidence and elsewhere, its representatives put forward a number of artificial solutions, such as stronger legislation, increased compensation or the nationalisation of allotment land, which would certainly ensure the perpetuation of the ‘anti-allotments’ attitude of which they complain. They allege that allotments authorities are reluctant to acquire land as statutory allotments, but claim that the rules relating to the disposal of statutory allotment land give it no real security. Security of tenure is important, but it cannot in our view be artificially imposed at this time. The *unwarranted* appropriation of good, well-tenanted allotment land is wrong in principle, and many authorities ought to be far more understanding than they are at present of the needs of the allotments movement; but, equally, the allotments movement in its turn cannot expect to have an effective role in urban planning unless it moderates its present defensive and uncompromising attitude and ceases to look on every local authority as an ogre determined to destroy it.

D. Recreation: the case for government assistance

560. N.A.G.S. agrees with our findings that allotment gardening should today be considered and evaluated as a recreation, and it argues that, for two reasons, allotment gardening is more entitled than most other forms of recreation to the provision of facilities and assistance. The first of these reasons is the value of the produce derived from allotments to the community at large, an aspect of its case which will be examined in our next section. The second argument relates to land use. In its evidence, it rightly states that open spaces in urban areas serve not only as recreation zones but also as lungs for the surrounding community. It goes on to point out that while some open spaces are available for general use, others—such as private sports grounds—are not, and suggests that public exclusion from some open spaces is accepted without demur; this also is true.

561. N.A.G.S. goes on to claim that in land use terms, the reservation of land for allotment gardens is more justifiable than for many other forms of recreation. To support this claim, it draws attention to a Table taken from *The Right to Dig*, written in 1951 by W. J. Gibson, who is now a vice-president of N.A.G.S. This Table purports to show the numbers of people whose recreational needs can be satisfied *at any one time* by using land in different ways, and is reproduced here as Table 42. In the course of our investigations, the figures included in Table 42 have been quoted frequently in defence of allotment gardening, and it is therefore necessary to examine them in some detail. When the Table was first published its author explained that in calculating the figures to be used for allotment gardens (apparently at a density of 16 plots to the acre) he had assumed that “on only 50 per cent of the plots” would the allotment holder’s wife and children help; he added that this figure was really too low, in view of the frequency with which whole families were to be found on allotment sites. This may have been the position in 1951, but the answers given by allotment holders in our questionnaires indicate that it is no longer true today. If one takes into account the figure of 13 plots to the acre (the national average for all

220
types of site), the fact that 6·4 per cent of allotment holders are single, and also that only 39·7 per cent of the wives of married allotment holders help on the allotment, the number of people likely to be accommodated at any one time on a 2-acre site drops by 50 per cent. Moreover, although in the case of sports such as football and cricket the maximum number of people who can use the land at any one time is also the norm, the number of occasions on which the tenants of every plot are to be found on their allotment site at the same time must be very few indeed; and it is scarcely pedantic to quibble with the premise that the nine members of a cricket team who are not at any one moment engaged in active participation in the game are thereby debarred from using the pitch!

Table 42

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation or game</th>
<th>Area in acres</th>
<th>No. of persons at any one time</th>
<th>Persons per acre*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Golf (18 holes)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1·20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricket</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4·33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18·00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>1¼</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19·55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>¼</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32·00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowls</td>
<td>¼</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>96·00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotment gardens</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>40·50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* With the consent of the author, two mathematical errors which occurred in the original table have been corrected in this column.

562. It seems to us, however, that the main problem with this Table and with the conclusions which we are invited to draw from it lies in the basic assumption that the assessment of the merits of various forms of land use should rest on the numbers who can be accommodated at any one time. The major difference between allotment gardening and the other forms of recreation listed in Table 42 is that the allotment holder requires the exclusive occupation of his land, while the remainder, generally speaking, do not. The number of people who can take their recreation on an 18-hole golf course at the same time may indeed in certain cases be as low as sixty, but the number of golfing enthusiasts who can use the same course to satisfy their needs must be several hundreds. In the case of the allotment garden, however, no one else may be permitted to use the plot at times when the rightful tenant is not in occupation. In assessing the value of a recreational area, what matters is the total hours of land use, not the numbers who can be accommodated at any one time; and in any such assessment it is noteworthy that while a football or cricket pitch can deteriorate through excessive use, intensive cultivation can only improve an allotment site.

563. It is unfortunate, therefore, that Table 42 was produced as evidence to us, since it leads inevitably to the conclusion that since an allotment site will satisfy the requirements of fewer people than most other comparable areas of open land, it is an uneconomic form of land use. Yet this is not so; no local authority would consider the advisability of converting all its football pitches or allotment gardens to bowling greens on the argument that they could then cater for the recreational needs of more people. Each authority will provide for the different forms of recreation consistent with the demand and with the availability of land, and the allotments movement has a perfect right to expect that it will be catered for on the same principle.
564. N.A.G.S. has for several years pursued with the Department of Education and Science a claim for grant assistance under the Physical Training and Recreation Act 1937. In its written evidence to us, N.A.G.S. suggests that the objective behind Government grants to recreation and the arts is to stimulate demand. It asserts that every grant seeks to overcome a reluctance on the part of the general public to participate by offering financial inducement towards provision, organisation and publicity. As an example, it states that half the cost of a swimming pool is available to any village which can raise the other half of the money required (a claim which the Department of Education and Science would now dispute) and that allotment gardeners feel "resentment that not one penny is given towards the cost of providing professional help so necessary to a recreation that is the subject of so much legislation and of so much importance to the whole community".

565. We understand that the application made to the Department of Education and Science has been rejected on the grounds that since N.A.G.S.'s objects are not the objects of the 1937 Act, the Department has no power to make a grant. The Department has taken legal advice on this point, and we cannot quarrel with its findings. Quite clearly, however, we must not let the matter rest without considering the case made by N.A.G.S. in the broader context. As we have stated, we find that allotment gardening is today a hobby or recreation, and there is no need to repeat our arguments on this point. It is, however, different from most other forms of recreation in two respects. Firstly, the provision of facilities for its enjoyment is secured by law, a fact which gives it a degree of protection which is not available to others and must to some extent weaken the case for Government assistance in other ways. Secondly, as N.A.G.S. itself is ready to admit, the average allotment holder makes a profit, whether actual or notional, from his recreation. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with the concept of a profitable hobby, but it becomes an important factor in assessing the claim to Government assistance. Quite clearly it would be wrong to spend the taxpayer's money simply in order to increase the individual's profit.

566. It follows from these two arguments that the case for Government assistance must depend ultimately upon the purposes for which the money would be used. In oral evidence and correspondence, N.A.G.S. has not presented a clear answer to this problem, though it has suggested four alternatives:

(i) It suggests that money might be made available to local authorities to enable them to improve their allotment sites. At present, any allotments authority is permitted to finance such improvements from its rates, or to borrow money for this purpose. There is no doubt that the availability of a grant would persuade authorities to spend more money on their allotments, but the co-existence of three different methods of financing the same operation would be quite impracticable. The amount of money available would be insufficient to help more than a few authorities, and in the light of current spending on allotments, any suggestion that the grant might be reserved for those authorities which had already reached their maximum permitted expenditure, would completely nullify its purpose. Similarly, the sum available would certainly be inadequate to allow those authorities which had spent minimal amounts on their allotments in the past to bring them
up to the requisite standards. It might be possible to devise some method of helping the owners of private allotment land to improve their sites, but in view of what we have said in Chapter 9, and since the improvements made to a site might well entail the appreciation of a capital asset to its owner, we see no point in pursuing this further.

(ii) It suggests that an annual grant should be made to N.A.G.S. itself to be used in the furtherance of its own work. We have given considerable thought to this proposal, which is far more complex than appears on the surface, and have concluded that while N.A.G.S. pursues its present policies, this suggestion should not be entertained. In the first place, the recreation which ought to benefit from any grant is gardening, not merely allotment gardening, and it could not be argued that it is the right organisation to administer a fund intended for the benefit of gardening as a whole. Secondly we have already said that the contribution paid by each member to N.A.G.S. is far too low and it would be quite wrong to use Government money to replace that which ought to be provided from its membership. Thirdly, any grant made must necessarily be designed to help the allotments movement as a whole, irrespective of whether the individual allotment holders are members of N.A.G.S. Unless and until the proportion of allotment holders who owe allegiance to it is increased, its claim to represent the entire movement is dubious. Lastly, much of the work to which it at present devotes a great deal of energy—that of opposing proposals to alienate allotment sites—is in our view inconsistent with the provision of a grant. The idea of providing Government money to enable N.A.G.S. to increase its opposition to Government decisions could not be entertained.

(iii) It proposes that money might be made available on application to local allotment associations which put forward considered schemes for advertising vacant plots, organising winter programmes or improving the appearance of their sites. We are not impressed by this proposal, although we acknowledge that our views might change if the character of many local associations changed first. The criticisms which we made of the local associations in Chapter 12 scarcely lead us to suppose that at this stage the majority would handle this competently and some of the items to which it envisages that the money might be devoted are in any event the responsibility not of the association, but of the allotments authority.

(iv) It suggests that the grant might be used for publicity work—that is, to urge upon the general public the attractions of allotment gardening as a recreation. If we felt that such a campaign would be intended as a short-term measure to find tenants for the 120,000 vacant plots which exist today, the idea would commend itself to us. But it is clear that the suggestion goes further, to the point where, in many towns, a successful campaign might well produce applicants in excess of the plots presently available. It is at this point that the present law which compels an allotments authority to satisfy the demand for allotment gardens operates to prevent any Government-sponsored campaign to popularise allotment gardening as a recreation. The Central Government could
scarcely be expected (except in times of national emergency when it is prepared to see parks and playing fields submit to the spade) on the one hand to urge economies in local government expenditure and on the other to provide money for a campaign which, if successful, would force some authorities to acquire land at residential values for recreational use by a minority group. It is when the possibilities are considered in this light that the fallacies in Table 42 are most apparent. Thus, if in consequence of publicity paid for by Government grant, 100 additional people in one town are persuaded to visit the local theatre, the authority need not build a second theatre to accommodate them, and is in fact involved in no additional expense whatsoever; but if, by similar means, 100 additional people are persuaded to apply for allotments, the authority must by law provide an extra 8 acres of land which, in N.A.G.S.'s view, should be within half a mile of the homes of the applicants.

567. There is, however, a fifth alternative purpose to which a grant might be applied—the field of education. Curiously, this possibility was never suggested to us by N.A.G.S., but it appears to us that any money applied to advising allotments authorities, allotment associations and allotment holders on how to improve the appearance of their sites, how best to organise and administer sites, how to recognise and control pests and disease and which plants will flourish best under different physical conditions, would be very well spent. It may be that such facilities are already available, and that they are at present simply not used; we will look at this further in Part VII of our report.

568. It will be apparent from what we have said in this section that we are not at present impressed by the case put forward for Central Government assistance to the allotments movement by way of unconditional grant. So long as the movement itself shows so little enthusiasm for change; so long as the allotment holders are prepared to contribute so little to their own salvation; so long as the faults and failings which we discussed earlier in this chapter are not eradicated, it seems to us that financial assistance would effect little real improvement and would merely perpetuate the poverty-stricken image of the allotments movement. In another section of its evidence, which deals with an entirely different matter, N.A.G.S. accuses others of failing to realise that "the best form of help is self-help". In many respects it could well urge the same principle upon its own members!

E. The economic argument: 'Dig for Britain'

569. In advocating the provision of allotment gardens as an important element in land use, N.A.G.S. devoted a considerable amount of space to its contention that the produce of allotment gardens continued to be of benefit to the national economy. Since this argument led it to conclude that allotment gardening merited more than its fair share of the land available for recreation, it deserves more than a cursory examination.

570. N.A.G.S. began by stating that "it takes about an acre of productive farm land to feed one person", that the total area of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is about 59.6 million acres, that the population is increasing at a rate of little less than half a million per annum, and that we now import about 50 per cent of our food. It went on to suggest that, while the gardener could never

224
replace the farmer, the former fitted neatly into the country’s agricultural pattern. Gardening, it contended, was more flexible than farming; whereas, during the last war, it had taken 4 years for the farming community to obtain a significant increase in output, the number of people cultivating allotments had risen from 600,000 in 1938 to 1,800,000 by 1940.*

571. In attempting to assess the value of the produce from a 10-rod plot, N.A.G.S. relied on a study by R. H. Best and J. T. Ward entitled The Garden Controversy, which had been issued by the Department of Agricultural Economics at Wye College in 1956. This had reported the results of three surveys carried out in Keighley (Yorks.), Somerset and Wye (Kent), which had suggested that the retail value of the fruit and vegetables harvested from a 10-rod plot was £60, £34 and £23 respectively. In the course of their studies, the authors had invited N.A.G.S. to express its own assessment, and it had replied that the average output would lie between £30 and £40 per plot. With increases in the cost of living in mind N.A.G.S. suggests from this evidence that “it seems reasonably safe to conclude that the value at present-day prices of the produce from a 10-rod plot cultivated by an average gardener is about £50”.

572. Since the figures provided by allotment holders in their answers to our questionnaire showed that the average value today is approximately £30 per 10-rod plot, the disparity is considerable. There are, however, a number of factors which N.A.G.S. has failed to take into account. The authors of The Garden Controversy were careful to point out that the allotments at Keighley and in Somerset which had been included in the surveys were “either used for demonstration purposes or were otherwise subject to the application of specialised knowledge”, and that the Keighley analysis had been made at a time when the retail price of some vegetables was very high. The survey at Wye, on the other hand, had covered allotment gardens under normal cultivation, and the authors in fact went on to suggest that the average value of the produce of allotment gardens (in 1956) might be taken as £300 per cultivated acre, or £19 per 10-rod plot, a figure which would be around £30 at present-day prices. There are many highly efficient allotment holders who regularly grow fruit and vegetables worth £50 on their 10-rod plots (10 per cent of those included in our survey reported that the value of their produce exceeded £50), but we are satisfied that our figure of “slightly less than £30” (see paragraph 363) for the average plot is about right. We recognise that N.A.G.S. is, in fact, in something of a dilemma on this point. On the one hand, it is clearly to its advantage in the argument under review that the value of allotment produce should be set as high as possible; but, on the other hand, it must realise that the greater the allotment holder’s profit, the more insignificant does his annual subscription to N.A.G.S. become.

573. The real point of the argument put forward by N.A.G.S. was that the produce derived from gardens and allotments is of greater monetary value than that grown on comparable areas of farmland. In support of this contention, it quoted an article which had appeared in the Economist of 5th February, 1955 and which had pointed to the “foolish” of building houses at greater densities in order to save agricultural land. This article did not refer specifically to allotments, and since it raised much broader issues than those argued by N.A.G.S.

*The number of allotments under cultivation did not in fact approach 1½ million until 1942, but the availability of new plots depended largely on action by local and national authorities. There was no shortage of potential gardens.
this is not the place to debate it. Expert opinion on housing densities, moreover, has changed several times since the article was written, and some of the views which it contains are no longer relevant.

574. There are, however, other findings which seem to support its case. In his *Agriculture and Urban Growth*, published in 1959, G. P. Wibberley took the figures included in *The Garden Controversy* as his base, and showed that in 1954–5 the retail prices of the produce of an acre of “better than average” farmland and an acre of domestic gardens devoted entirely to fruit and vegetables were £100 and £300 respectively. Since, at that time, only 14 per cent of the average home garden was used for the production of fruit and vegetables, the economic argument for a higher productivity per unit area from allotments than from most home gardens and farms seemed to be proved by these figures; but Wibberley added a number of caveats.

575. The economic crisis of July 1967 and the ‘We’re Backing Britain’ movement which it prompted, afforded N.A.G.S. an opportunity to press its claim that allotment gardening is of importance to the national economy. It immediately commenced a campaign entitled ‘Dig for Britain’ designed to persuade more people to take allotments in the national interest. A quarter of a million leaflets were distributed, a number of local authorities were persuaded to lend assistance to the scheme, and Members of Parliament and other public figures were canvassed for support. It is impossible to assess the degree of success which this campaign achieved but we have certainly seen an increase in the number of tenancies on some urban sites. In oral evidence N.A.G.S. told us that the response had been good. But there are no figures to show how many people were persuaded to take allotments and to continue to cultivate them entirely from patriotic motives. We also have in mind that whenever an appeal has been made to the general public to take up allotments for patriotic reasons many of the new tenants who have come forward have surrendered their plots as soon as the emergency is over. We therefore conclude yet again that something much stronger than patriotic and economic motive is now required to attract, and retain, new blood within the allotments movement.

576. One important aspect of the ‘Dig for Britain’ campaign which is more readily recognised than its success or failure is the attitude of the Government towards it. N.A.G.S. realised that it could not hope for a great measure of success without Government sponsorship, and a letter to the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food invited him to give the scheme his support. The Minister’s Parliamentary Secretary replied that, while the Government recognised the contribution which allotments made to the country’s food supplies, it was not able to sponsor the campaign. Some of the reasons which prompted this reply will be discussed shortly. At a later date, N.A.G.S. put a paper to the Select Committee on Agriculture, and a copy was sent to us to form the third piece of its written evidence. This paper contained much of the material which had appeared in its original evidence and which has formed the basis for this section of our report. In addition, however, it claimed that the initial stages of the ‘Dig for Britain’ campaign had been successful, instancing that one London borough had distributed 40,000 leaflets; the Borough of Dartford now had a waiting-list for every site; the County Borough of Rotherham proposed to display posters on its corporation ‘buses; and in many towns local tradespeople were advertising the campaign. It added that offers to display posters had been received from
greengrocers and the horticultural trade, and suggested that with imports of food now costing £1,500 million* any saving, no matter how small, merited consideration. It concluded by arguing that entry into the European Economic Community would raise the cost of all vegetables by some 12–14 per cent and that the price of those vegetables which could be grown by the amateur might rise by as much as 40–48 per cent.

577. Apart from those items on which we have already commented, there is little in N.A.G.S.'s argument with which we can quibble, and although some of the figures quoted may not stand close scrutiny, the points which have been made seem to us to be generally sound. It is when one seeks to draw conclusions from these contentions that difficulties begin to emerge. N.A.G.S. is quite definite in its view that the value of allotments—(and, consequently, the increased value of a greater number of allotments) to the economy is proved beyond question; but this contention seems to us to be too facile, though it cannot be denied that the raising of home and allotment produce reduces the demand for commercial horticultural produce and tends to keep down prices.

578. In the first place, while it must obviously be true that most urban expansion will reduce the total amount of agricultural land, Wibberley pointed out in the publication to which we referred in paragraph 574 that “the loss of agricultural land to non-agricultural purposes is proceeding at a smaller rate than the increase in production per acre made possible by the use of improved techniques of growing and greater skill in management”. This position is even more true today than it was ten years ago, and it follows that the continuing loss of agricultural land cannot, in itself, be a valid argument for a national campaign to increase the number of allotments at the present time.

579. Secondly, a number of allotment holders have told us in evidence that one of the attractions of their allotment is that they can use part of it to grow crops such as asparagus, which they would not otherwise be able to afford to eat in quantity, and we believe that a good many use part of their plot for this purpose. To this extent, the value of such allotment gardens to the economy must be restricted, for it is certainly debatable whether an increase in the home production of 'luxury' fruit and vegetables would permit a corresponding reduction in imports. It should also be noted that the cultivation of such crops may well have inflated the total market value of allotment produce as quoted by N.A.G.S.

580. Lastly—and here again N.A.G.S. is in something of a dilemma—the economic argument is based on the assumption that the whole purpose of the allotment garden is the cultivation of vegetables and fruit. In oral evidence, N.A.G.S. went so far as to suggest that the removal of all restrictions would effect a considerable increase in the proportion of his plot which the allotment holder was prepared to devote to flower cultivation, but there is no mention of flowers in the sections of evidence which comprise the ‘economic’ argument.

581. The views expressed on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture, in the letter referred to in paragraph 576, included a number of relevant observations. It was pointed out that, in the case of some vegetables such as main crop potatoes, this country was already self-sufficient; any increase in the production of such

* According to the Annual Abstract of Statistics, the total imports of vegetables and fruit in 1966 amounted to no more than £3143 million, of which a large proportion consisted of crops which could not be grown in this country (see paragraph 582).
crops would therefore produce no import saving and might cause over-production in the home market. Again, any increase in the area under cultivation might require additional imports of certain fertilisers, the cost of which would, to some extent, counterbalance any saving. There are, moreover, trade agreements with a number of countries by reason of which it would be difficult to reduce the size of the imports of certain crops, whatever happened to home production, without finding that exports of our industrial goods were restricted in return. Finally, the economic difficulties which exist today relate to a situation quite different from that during and immediately after the last war.

582. These are telling arguments, and there is more which might have been said. According to figures produced by the Ministry of Agriculture, the annual bill in respect of the importation of fresh vegetables is £43 million,* of which £22 million represent vegetables imported out of season. If follows that, even if the factors mentioned in paragraphs 578 and 579 are ignored, the absolute maximum saving which might be achieved by an increase in the domestic production of vegetables is £21 million. The total value of the crops currently grown on allotment gardens has never been assessed, but the calculation set out in Table 43 may serve as a rough guide to the value of urban allotment produce. In view

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 43</th>
<th>Estimated total value of urban allotment garden produce: England and Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acres</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total area of urban allotment gardens, 1967</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total area vacant (20 per cent)</td>
<td>8,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area devoted to flowers, livestock, non-horticultural uses, area not cultivated; at least</td>
<td>2,000 10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area devoted to fruit and vegetables</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of crops at £420 per acre†</td>
<td>£12.6 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† i.e. £30 per 10-rod plot at fourteen such plots to the acre.

of the large numbers of commercial allotments, a similar calculation for rural areas would be impossible. It seems to follow from this Table that even if the number of urban allotment gardens under cultivation was doubled, the resultant savings in imports could not exceed £12 million. We cannot believe that a national campaign designed to produce a saving of this magnitude would be justified, nor has it been shown that such a saving could not be achieved more economically by commercial growers on land of much lower value than urban allotments.

583. Finally, most areas of land which might be acquired for additional allotments will previously have been used for some other purpose, whether this be farming or public open space. Where a demand for allotments arises spontaneously, an allotments authority must by law do its utmost to satisfy it, but the position is somewhat different when one is considering the advisability of a national campaign. There are many urban areas in which additional allotment land could only be found either by turning again to the wartime sources, such as parks and playing fields, or by commandeering agricultural land which might itself have an export potential. Ultimately, the question whether, in any given set of circumstances, the country’s economic position warrants a national campaign

* The 1966 figure quoted in the Abstract of Statistics is £56.6 million.
to popularise allotments will be one of hard fact. But no campaign could ever be justified unless its sponsors were prepared from the outset to accept the consequences of its success. In present circumstances, the idea of cultivating parks and playing fields could scarcely be countenanced.

F. National Council for Recreational Gardening and Livestock Keeping

584. The National Council for Recreational Gardening and Livestock Keeping (hereafter referred to as ‘the National Council’) is the new title of the National Council for Domestic Food Production. It was established in 1951 on the recommendation of a committee appointed to consider “The Future Organisation of Domestic Food Producers”, and its original terms of reference were as follows:—

“To co-ordinate the work of the various national organisations engaged in domestic food production in England and Wales, to consider measures for its development and encouragement, to examine and advise on any proposals for Government assistance whether financial or otherwise, and generally to advise me [the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries] in the national interest on all matters relating to domestic food production for a period of three years from the date of appointment.”

The National Council’s life was subsequently extended for successive periods of three years, and in April 1961 it was established as a standing organisation. Its membership has fluctuated from time to time, but for practical purposes it may be taken to comprise representatives of the following organisations:—

N.A.G.S., the British Goat Society, the Small Pig Keepers’ Council, the National Domestic Poultry Keepers’ Council, the British Bee Keepers’ Association, the British Rabbit Council, the National Federation of Village Produce Associations, the National Federation of Women’s Institutes and the National Council of Social Service.

In addition, the National Council has always included a number of independent members, such as local authority representatives, appointed by the Minister, and its meetings have been attended by observers from interested Government Departments.

585. From its inception, the National Council has been under the chairmanship of one of the Parliamentary Secretaries of the Minister responsible for the allotments legislation, and that Ministry has provided its secretariat. It follows that the National Council has advised in turn the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Land and Natural Resources, and the Minister of Housing and Local Government.

586. At its first meeting in 1951, the National Council appointed a finance committee to consider applications for financial assistance made by the constituent organisations and to report its findings to the Minister; this committee was selected entirely from those members who would not benefit from the grants to be made. It was established from the outset that the object of financial assistance was to enable the individual organisations to become self-supporting and that, to this end, the National Council must expect the grants to be made on a gradually diminishing scale. The total grant-aid received by National Council members and the amounts awarded to N.A.G.S. are set out in Table 44. This Table shows that the finance committee (which from time to time was advised by the Ministry of Agriculture as to the maximum total sum which might be made
available), kept rigidly to the policy of reducing the total grant for each year. It shows also that although the sums paid over to N.A.G.S. declined considerably over the period, its percentage of the total grant showed a tendency to rise. *Prima facie*, it appears from the Table that it was less successful than the other member organisations in achieving self-sufficiency, but this impression would be completely false. In the first place, the two organisations which, apart from N.A.G.S., received the highest total grant have since shown themselves to be quite unable to function without financial support. Secondly, as N.A.G.S. has alleged, in its case the payment was made subject to stringent conditions which prevented it from using the grant to the best possible effect.

**Table 44**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total grant</th>
<th>Allocation to N.A.G.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£</td>
<td>Amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951–2</td>
<td>27,950</td>
<td>9,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952–3</td>
<td>24,300</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953–4</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954–5</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955–6</td>
<td>7,500</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956–7</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>2,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957–8</td>
<td>5,700</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958–9</td>
<td>4,750</td>
<td>1,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959–60</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>1,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960–1</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>1,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

587. It is not necessary to examine the full implications of these stringent conditions or to argue their merits. It is probably sufficient to state that throughout the period, the greater part of the grant was reserved for work in rural areas, and the finance committee was careful to ensure, by annual inspection of N.A.G.S.’s accounts, that it had been expended in this way. During and after the war, it had received an annual grant of £1,500 in respect of the invaluable services it was able to render in connection with the ‘Dig for Victory’ campaign and its aftermath, and the 1951–2 grant represented a continuation of this payment, together with a sum of £8,000 to cover the expansion of its work in rural parishes. By 1952–3, the finance committee concluded that N.A.G.S.’s affiliation fee of 4d. per annum was too low, and reduced the grant to £1,000 for urban and £5,000 for rural work. In considering its application for 1953–4, the committee found that of the sum allocated to rural work in the preceding year, £2,300 had in fact been spent on headquarters’ expenditure; it therefore reduced the grant to £3,000 (£2,500 for rural and £500 for urban expenses). The grants paid for the years 1954–5 onward require no additional comment.

588. N.A.G.S.’s endeavours to expand its sphere of influence in rural areas by taking over the County Garden Produce Associations which had been established during the war met with initial success. It was, however, unable to win over the members of the National Federation of Village Produce Associations which retained control in several counties and eventually became a member of the National Council. We have no knowledge of the background to the disagreement between N.A.G.S. and the National Federation, and have no desire to pass judgment on it. It does appear, however, that because of this dispute and its
consequences, much of the money spent by N.A.G.S. in its rural work was unproductive.

589. Several publications were produced by the National Council during this period, and provide a valuable insight into the thinking of its member bodies. The most relevant, however, is a statement entitled "Domestic Food Production", prepared by several of the National Council's members, including N.A.G.S., and published by the L.S.A. This referred at length to the continuing reduction in Government grant to the movement, and contained the following observations:

"The decision...to reduce grant aid progressively is now having the effect of severely hampering the work of the bodies concerned. The attitude of the Ministry is that if people interested in gardening and small stock keeping want a national organisation they should pay for it. While no one would quarrel with the principle that a voluntary organisation can hardly justify its existence unless it is mainly self-supporting, the application of this policy fails to take account of two considerations. These are (a) that when voluntary organisations carry out work of great importance in the national interest and are used by the Government to undertake important tasks from time to time, these functions merit continuing Government financial support, and (b) that it is a slow process converting an organisation which has been built up with public money into one which is self-supporting."

This paragraph appears to suggest that since the Government was anxious to secure N.A.G.S.'s aid at a time of national emergency, it should continue to give financial support to its activities when that emergency had passed. This is a novel viewpoint with which we have little sympathy. Since it was able to function without assistance before the emergency, there seems no reason why it should be unable to do so afterwards; similarly if the emergency produced an increase in membership, it seems reasonable to suppose that the extra work continuing in time of peace would be covered by the additional fees. It seems to us that the most important phrase in this leaflet is the comment that "no one would quarrel with the principle that a voluntary organisation [should be] mainly self-supporting".

590. After the cessation of Government grant-aid, the National Council's activities were severely restricted. In 1965, however, its title was changed to that which it now bears, and its terms of reference were amended to read:—

"To consider measures for fostering, for recreational purposes, gardening, livestock keeping and similar outdoor pursuits in England and Wales; to co-ordinate the work of the various national organisations in the movement; generally to advise the Minister of Housing and Local Government and, through him, other Ministers on all relevant matters, and to take appropriate action."

Since this change took place, the National Council's main activity has been concerned with the production (with Government sponsorship) and issue of a pamphlet, entitled Invest in Leisure, designed principally to ascertain what degree of interest in the activities of its member organisations could be stimulated among those people who have not previously considered taking up gardening or stock keeping as a leisure pursuit.

591. In evidence, N.A.G.S. expressed the view that the development of the National Council had not been in its interest, but since its argument on this
point related to its differences with the National Federation of Village Produce Associations, it may be discounted. We must, of course, say something of the National Council’s future in Part VII of our report, but the following observations seem relevant at this moment:—

(i) The National Council’s history is more illustrative of the animosity between its member organisations than of their harmony.

(ii) The intention that the National Council should have one representative for each activity seemed doomed from the start. For example, should a man who keeps chickens on an allotment look for advice to N.A.G.S. or to the National Domestic Poultry Keepers’ Council?

(iii) With one or two notable exceptions, the attempts by member organisations to anticipate the cessation of Government grant seem to have failed.

(iv) As we have previously indicated, the connection between gardening and stock-keeping seems to become somewhat tenuous beyond the sphere of food production.

G. Legislation and regulations

592. Inevitably, several sections of N.A.G.S.’s written evidence and many of the answers to our questions in oral evidence dealt with the provisions of the existing legislation; some of the views professed by it have already been included at the relevant points in this report, and we now propose to refer briefly to the remainder.

593. N.A.G.S. is in favour of a “total revision” of the allotment legislation. It bases this view not on the complexity, the obscurity or the antiquity of the present law—all of which it is prepared to admit—but rather on the argument that since it grew out of charitable legislation its revision would emphasise that allotment gardens are now “a most useful physical recreation, a safeguard in the event of national stress and an economic advantage to the whole community”. This unsystematic approach to problems which it ought, by its constitution, to keep under continuous review means that it has no realistic proposals to offer for modifying such vital legislative provisions as the requirement that an authority must provide “a sufficient number” of allotments, the division of allotments into their various categories, the ‘½-mile rule’ imposed by the Ministry and many more. We can only assume that it would be quite content to see all these provisions re-enacted in their present form.

594. On many minor legislative provisions, however, N.A.G.S.’s views are quite definite. It would wish to see the law relating to trespass on allotment sites (which operated only under the wartime Defence Regulations) restored, and in the case of damage caused by straying animals the onus placed on the owner to prove his innocence. Where allotment land is transferred to other uses (as opposed to being sold outright) it contends that a sum equal to the capital value of the land should be credited to the allotment account and used either to acquire more land for allotments or to improve existing sites. Allotments authorities should be required to keep a waiting-list of applicants for plots in order to show that they are coping with the demand, and a potential allotment holder should not be “discouraged” by finding that his application is “considered at the desk of a junior clerk”. It interprets the provisions of the 1950 Act relating to rent
as meaning that the tenant should be charged the equivalent of an *agricultural*
rent, but feels certain that many would be prepared to pay a higher but “reasonable” rent if “reasonable” amenities were first provided; it has not, however, defined the word ‘reasonable’ in either case. It also feels that (apart from bees) livestock should not be kept on allotment garden sites.

595. N.A.G.S. is content with the present upper limit of 40 poles included in the definition of an allotment garden. It recognises that the vast majority of allotment gardens are much smaller, but feels that a man with ample time to spare ought to be able to obtain a larger plot if he wishes to do so. In general, it believes that allotment holders, particularly old age pensioners, should be permitted to sell some of their produce, and that the definition of an allotment garden should be amended to permit a man to do this without turning his plot into an agricultural holding.

596. In regard to town and country planning, it advocates amendments to the law and the regulations to compel planners to recognise that allotment gardens are as important as other forms of open space, and that the use of land as allotments is not as wasteful as the provision of home gardens which may never be cultivated. It believes that the Minister responsible for allotments should decide how much land is to be reserved for allotment use in each new town or new development, and that when the boundaries of an allotments authority are extended the planning authority should be obliged to ensure that allotment provision caters adequately for each area of the town as well as for the town as a whole. The Ministry should also recognise that allotments often provide one of the few remaining types of open space within a town and as such are a social asset which ought not to be allowed to disappear.

597. In the field of private allotments, N.A.G.S. considers that the Charity Commission should immediately compile a detailed list of every charity whose object includes the provision of allotments, and should “bring up to date” any clauses in the terms of the charity which are outmoded. In the case of allotment sites owned by a local association, it would like the Registrar of Friendly Societies to accept a rule that shares in the association must be forfeited on death or if the plot is left uncultivated. It seeks by this method to overcome the situation where a man takes a plot with the sole purpose of leaving it derelict until such time as the site becomes so great an eyesore that planning consent will automatically be given for alienation of the site.

598. N.A.G.S. is generally content with the subsidies which are payable in connection with the installation of water supplies and the supply of lime and fertilisers, but feels that the conditions imposed by the Ministry of Agriculture in respect of such subsidies are unreasonable. Thus, it is sometimes unable to prevent a local association from commencing the work of water installation before applying for a grant, while a rule that lime must be spread within six months of delivery and a declaration made that this has been done “throws the responsibility on the secretary who may be acting in an unpaid capacity”. There is in this statement an indication of the *malaise* which afflicts both the local associations and N.A.G.S. The subsidy agreement permits the members of an association to obtain goods more cheaply than would otherwise be possible, yet N.A.G.S., referring to the simple and necessary condition which is attached to it, says of the local secretary that “he naturally resents the additional work and is particularly critical of the Ministerial attitude…” It also feels that the Farm Improvement Scheme, which provides money for various items of farm

233
expenditure, should be extended to allotment gardens, and that allotment associations should be able to obtain loans from the Agricultural Mortgage Corporation. It further alleges that some allotments authorities, which have used their borrowing powers as a means of acquiring land for allotments, have then fixed the rent to be paid by the individual allotment holder at a point sufficiently high to cover not only the interest on the loan, but also the capital cost of the new site. Although we know of no case where this has been done, we are aware of one or two authorities which are seeking to recover the cost of buildings from the tenants.

599. On compensation, N.A.G.S. accepts the rules relating to residual manures and the unused balance of rent. It considers that the compensation in respect of growing crops should be the equivalent of their market value, on the grounds that this is what the tenant must pay to replace them, and that this basis of compensation should apply equally to perennial crops whose cultivation is now often debarred by the terms of the tenancy agreement. It argues also that the tenant should receive adequate compensation for the cost of removing huts, greenhouses and fruit trees, especially since he will not always acquire a new plot immediately and may face problems of storage or deterioration. In oral evidence, it pleaded for additional compensation of an amount equivalent to four years' rent, as is now reserved for tenant farmers under the Agriculture Act of 1967. It suggested that such compensation would not only be justified where the allotment holder had spent many years in making a plot productive but it would also help to deter local authorities from closing sites without sufficient reason. According to N.A.G.S., compensation in respect of temporary disturbance caused by the laying of sewers or mains services is generally negotiated satisfactorily, but it claims to know of cases where the allotments authority has insisted that since the allotment holders were given sufficient warning not to plant their crops, little or no compensation should be payable.

600. Its representatives were divided on the question of which Government Department ought to be responsible for the allotments legislation and the efficiency of the allotments system. Some favoured the Ministry of Agriculture, others the Department of Education and Science. Their views seemed to hinge on whether they felt that their appeal for sponsorship of the 'Dig for Britain' campaign or their plea for grant-aid to a recreation stood the better chance of success. None felt happy about leaving the responsibilities with the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. Their experience in dealing with planners had apparently convinced them that their interests were directly opposed to those of that Ministry.

601. In our view some of N.A.G.S.'s opinions, as recorded in this section, are perfectly sound while others are less rational. The policy which dictates its attitude is in many respects consistent. It is that as much power as possible should be placed in the hands of Central Government, and that the powers of the Ministry (whichever it might be) should be strengthened and clarified. Where it is necessary to leave some responsibility with the local authorities, this responsibility should be circumscribed by more restrictive legislation. Such a policy flies directly in the face of much current thinking as epitomised by the report of the Committee on Local Government Management.* More important, perhaps, it indicates that N.A.G.S. has largely abandoned hope that relations


234
between the allotments movement and many authorities might achieve harmony of their own accord.

H. Publicity and prospects

602. N.A.G.S.'s written evidence describes publicity as "the life-blood of the Society". It produces an annual diary entitled The Gardener's Companion, the net profit from which fluctuates between £100 and £250, booklets and leaflets on such subjects as the organisation of the local association, and a number of leaflets on a wide variety of horticultural topics. It also possesses a small library of books and films which are freely available to members though far too little use is made of them.

603. Until the end of 1967, it issued a monthly journal which had latterly been called, quite simply, Garden. From 1965, this magazine had been produced by a commercial firm which aimed not only to increase its circulation significantly among members of N.A.G.S., but also to offer it for sale through booksellers to the general public. It was well presented, 'glossy' in design and forward-thinking in its outlook; it bore comparison with the best of the horticultural magazines available, and gave N.A.G.S. a considerable amount of good and much-needed publicity at a reasonable price. It was, however, destroyed by the apathy of the allotments movement itself. The publishers provided 3,500 free copies of each issue for distribution to the associations affiliated to N.A.G.S. and additional cut-price copies could be provided for members. Almost without exception, however, the free copy for each association was passed from hand to hand among those members who cared to read it, and few extra copies were called for. In consequence, the publishers were eventually obliged to withdraw from the unequal struggle to increase the journal's circulation. Whatever our judgment may be upon the commercial viability of the distribution arrangements, we may conclude that a characteristic apathy among its members played a part in depriving N.A.G.S. of a powerful means of publicity and of its most effective method of keeping local associations abreast of forward thinking on allotment matters.

604. In our discussions with representatives of N.A.G.S. we have formed the impression that they are fully alive to the poverty of the image which the allotments movement now presents to the outside world, and to the disreputable appearance of so many allotment sites. We are satisfied also that, within the limitations imposed by its acute shortage of funds and the intransigence of its membership, it is beginning to realise that the allotments movement cannot hope to survive unless both the image and the outlook are improved. Some of N.A.G.S.'s representatives have felt for many years that one of the prerequisites for the removal of the old, charitable image would be the abandonment of the term 'allotment', and in 1966 a move was made to delete this word from its official title. The move failed, but the process of critical self-appraisal had begun. In the same year, N.A.G.S. presented a stand at the Chelsea Show which illustrated an allotment garden composed mainly of flowers and lawn, with the vegetables relegated to an unobtrusive corner of the plot. In 1967, it managed, with commercial help, to transform an area of land behind its Flitwick headquarters into its concept of "the allotment of the future",* which combined

* A well-illustrated account of these model plots, which were officially opened by the Minister of State to the Minister of Housing and Local Government on 22nd August, 1967, appeared in the volume of Garden for September 1967.
vegetable cultivation with lawn, flowers and summerhouse. In written evidence, N.A.G.S. suggested that every allotments authority should be obliged by law to provide a minimum standard of amenities on all its sites. We were also assured in oral evidence that N.A.G.S. is doing all that it can to break down the insularity of the average allotment holder and to foster a strong community spirit on individual sites by organising competitions for the best-kept plots, holding educational courses and by other methods. It acknowledged that many allotment holders were still unaware of the educational facilities which local authorities were able to offer, but contended that the authorities did not themselves give sufficient publicity to the services which were available.

605. N.A.G.S. is a member of the International League of Allotment Holders, a federation of the allotment movements of twelve European countries. The 1969 biennial conference of the league was to have taken place in this country but N.A.G.S. could not raise the money required to enable it to act as host to the delegates, either from its own resources or elsewhere; this has certainly proved a great disappointment to members of its committee. In evidence, it referred to its membership of the international league with some pride; it saw the league as a means of allowing each country to compare the development of its own allotments movement with that achieved elsewhere, and readily acknowledged that “the style of allotments on the continent is superior to that found in Britain”. The ‘continental’ allotment will be discussed comprehensively in our next chapter, and we will not anticipate our evidence. It is interesting to observe, however, that in seeking to explain this continental ‘superiority’, N.A.G.S. was obliged first to establish why so few flowers are grown on allotments in this country. It stated that “the charitable background of the movement, its significant role in two world wars and an economic depression, have influenced the type of crop grown”. There is some truth in this, as we have already shown, but it seems to overlook the fact that, during the last war, the great majority of allotments on the continent were also devoted exclusively to vegetables and fruit and that, very soon after the war ended, the occupiers of those allotments eagerly returned to the cultivation of flowers and lawns. N.A.G.S. further argued that the continental idea of placing most allotment sites on the periphery of the town could not succeed in this country. It pointed out that vegetable plots should be as near as possible to the homes of the occupiers, and suggested that, in any event, allotments on the outskirts of a town would inevitably be surrounded by houses within a few years. It concluded this section of its evidence with the following observation:

“Some of the advantages of permanence enjoyed by the continental allotment holder allied to some slight amendments to existing legislation and an appreciation of the fact that the local authority must also play its part in improving that portion of an allotment site which is its responsibility…would quickly produce fully occupied sites to which there would be no objection from non-gardeners.”

This statement seems to us to be indicative of confused thinking. As we will show in our next chapter, the ‘permanence’ of the continental allotment site is due not to restrictive legislation but partly to its peripheral siting and partly to the beauty of its flowers, lawns and summerhouses. Yet, having just rejected peripheral siting on the ground that it is unsuitable for the cultivation of vegetables, N.A.G.S. now appears to suggest that if ‘permanence’ could be achieved without
peripheral siting, allotment holders would be prepared to make their plots attractive by growing flowers instead of vegetables.

I. N.A.G.S.’s annual conference

606. N.A.G.S.’s annual conference is usually held during the first half of June and extends over three days. The business of the first day consists entirely of a meeting of delegates from affiliated local authorities, the representatives of allotment associations being excluded.* On the remaining two days, the conference proper is invited to accept the annual report and to discuss a large number of resolutions submitted by member associations and accepted by the standing orders committee.

607. Representatives of our committee have been privileged to attend three successive annual conferences. We were pleased to accept N.A.G.S.’s invitations to be present, partly because we felt that such conferences must provide a most valuable insight into the workings of the allotments movement and the mind of the allotment holder, and partly because, since they are the only occasions on which N.A.G.S. is able to discuss collectively the vital issues which confront the allotments movement today, we expected to hear a forthright exchange of views and a series of important decisions which the association representatives could take back to their sites. In both respects we have been disappointed. Each year most of the conference has been devoted to discussing a series of resolutions which have often seemed to us to be vague, repetitive, poorly phrased and ill-conceived. Apart from the contributions from the platform, the standard of debate was generally low; many delegates had clearly given little thought in advance to what they intended to say, and their speeches wandered frequently from the item under discussion. Similar resolutions tended to appear on the agenda each year; the same ten speakers monopolised the rostrum, and almost the same speeches were made. Many of these were critical of the local authorities whose representatives sat in the hall and were occasionally stung to voice a mild protest. Few of the resolutions, and still fewer of the speeches, suggested that the allotments movement itself had any faults. Ideally, the conference should concern itself with discussing major topics presented by a series of competent, informed and forward-looking speakers, but the programme unfortunately decrees that such speakers may only be heard on the first day, when the great majority of the association representatives are not present, and the time available for discussion is negligible. In 1967 an address on “The Creation of Open Spaces and How to Safeguard Them” was followed by two critical comments and was then forgotten. It might legitimately have occupied the conference for a full day’s debate, for such a subject is more crucial to the future of the allotments movement than many of the resolutions which followed it.

J. Conclusions

608. At the end of its written evidence, N.A.G.S. wrote as follows:—

“The policy of N.A.G.S. is an aggressive policy; we fight to impress on people the lessons that have been learned from past crises through which our country has passed; to protect the right of a minority section who wish to follow a specific type of recreation...for which far less is done by officialdom than for other recreations;... our policy is to ensure that the need to provide

* Numbers of delegates, however, serve in both capacities.
far more land for gardens away from the homes of those who will cultivate [them] will not be overlooked by planners; the Society ... is a representative organisation fighting to protect the interests of tens of thousands of people who have never heard of us, but for whom we cherish the 'Right to Dig'."

These words have about them the ring of a crusade; but they have only impressed its members to the tune of Is. per annum! The secretary of N.A.G.S. expends a vast amount of time and energy in pursuit of these same ideals; but the response to the questionnaire which we sent to the members of affiliated associations showed that 30 per cent are not even aware that they are members of N.A.G.S. N.A.G.S. complains bitterly that its campaigns to secure "far more land for [allotment] gardens" fall on deaf ears, but to the best of our knowledge it has never fully considered why 20 per cent of existing plots are vacant. It alleges constantly that far less is done for the allotments movement than for any other recreation. Yet allotment gardening is still the only spare-time activity for which a man can require his local authority to provide facilities by law, and the only recreation whose interests are made subject to a statutory council committee; and we have no evidence to show whether N.A.G.S. has ever pondered the implications of this apparent paradox.

609. There are in its management committee many able men, some of whom have given their whole lives to the furtherance of the allotments movement, and among whom we have detected refreshing signs of a more modern and progressive outlook, a readiness to accept that the image of the movement must change and that N.A.G.S. must be ready to change with it. At the 1968 conference one argued cogently that each member should in future pay a fee of £1 per annum, but his words fell on deaf ears. The fact must be faced that N.A.G.S., like the local association, is only the sum total of its membership; and the outlook of the individual member must change radically if the influence of N.A.G.S. is to be increased.

610. Throughout Parts III and IV of our report, we have adduced much evidence to show that the allotment holder today has justifiable cause for complaint against many allotments authorities; but we have shown also that the allotment holder himself is far from blameless. It may be considered a failing, though a natural one, in N.A.G.S. that it stresses the one and minimises the other, seeing the spectre of development haunting every allotment site and rarely, if ever, asking why it is there. Even in its present financial state, it is not difficult to suggest changes which might be made. For example, if N.A.G.S.'s large management committee of twenty-eight representatives could be drastically reduced, the saving in costs* might be used to provide some form of incentive to members to improve the appearance of their sites. By such means the number of associations seeking affiliation would almost certainly increase, the image of N.A.G.S. and of the movement would be greatly improved and, in the process, many of the spectres might disappear. It should not be beyond the powers of an organisation with N.A.G.S.'s long and noble history to devise positive and imaginative schemes for the future.

* In 1967, the travelling expenses of N.A.G.S. committee members amounted to £734.
PART V

CHAPTER 14

ALLOTMENTS OUTSIDE ENGLAND AND WALES

A. Allotments on the continent

611. Although our terms of reference covered only England and Wales, we felt from the outset of our enquiry that a great deal might be learnt by taking a close look at the allotments systems which flourish elsewhere. The written evidence submitted to us included many letters which referred to the high standards of the recreational allotments on the continent, and we were able to see a film about one such site in Holland. We found that N.A.G.S. is a member of the International League of Allotment Holders (see paragraph 605), and a section of its evidence had dealt briefly with the difference between the approach to allotments in this country and on the continent. For these and other reasons we decided that in order to fulfil our task effectively we must make a short visit to the continent. It was obviously impossible to visit all the continental countries which are members of the international league, but during a brief tour in September 1966 we inspected sites and talked to officials in Holland, West Germany, Denmark and Sweden; a list of the municipalities included in the tour will be found in Appendix II.

612. Before we describe what we saw and ascertained, and seek to assess it in relation to the allotments situation in England and Wales, it is necessary that the evidence which follows should be put in its true perspective. In any discussion about ‘continental’ allotments, special prominence is usually given to the particular type of allotment which has now become known in this country by the generic term ‘chalet garden’, simply because it differs so markedly from the allotment garden of England and Wales. In the course of this chapter we will discuss the ‘chalet garden’ and its variations in some detail. At this stage it is sufficient to indicate that a chalet garden is essentially an allotment cultivated by its tenant as an attractive garden, according to his individual standards and design, with the emphasis on flowers, shrubs, lawn and similar features rather than on vegetables; and that the vast majority of such gardens incorporate a summerhouse or chalet of equally attractive design (Plates 22, 23 and 25–27). Although we had indicated that we were interested in all types of allotment, those responsible for our itinerary in each country decided that we should inspect only chalet garden sites. We do not question this decision, which may have been motivated either by a desire to show us something new or simply by a pardonable pride in what was universally regarded as the highest standard of attractiveness which any allotment site could achieve. But since, in consequence, the bulk of the detailed evidence in this chapter must be directed to an appraisal of the chalet garden system, it is important to recognise that in most countries on the continent the equivalent of the British allotment garden continues to exist alongside its more illustrious cousin. The ratio of ‘allotment gardens’ to ‘chalet gardens’ varies enormously. In Sweden, the ‘allotment garden’ has virtually disappeared, possibly because many workers in that country can now qualify for a retirement pension equal to 80 per cent of their former salaries. In Denmark, the ‘allotment garden’ is today largely confined

239
to rural areas. In West Germany, an edict of 1919 sought to ensure that some vegetables would be grown on every allotment, and although this law is now repeatedly disregarded, we were shown several examples in Hamburg where 'chalet gardens' and 'allotment gardens' flourish on the same site. In Holland, by contrast, the chalet garden represents only a minority of allotment provision. As many as 65 per cent of the allotments in urban areas (and rural allotments in Holland are very sparse indeed) are devoted almost exclusively to vegetables, and would fulfil all the criteria laid down for the British allotment garden. A further 10 per cent are railway allotments, and are generally reserved for railway employees. Only the remaining quarter are chalet gardens, and although this proportion is continually rising, Mr. P. Visser,* who has been largely responsible for organising and expanding the chalet garden system in Holland, has expressed the view that there will be a continuing need for the 'allotment garden' for many years to come. It was emphasised to us in Rotterdam that the dichotomy between the chalet garden and the 'allotment garden' is by no means as great as one might suppose. Not only does the local authority adopt the same system of administration for both types of allotment, but there has in recent years been an increasing tendency for the occupiers of 'allotment gardens' to graduate to chalet gardens by what is regarded as a natural form of development.

(1) Chalet gardens: history and development

613. The development of the chalet garden concept has by no means been uniform throughout the countries which we visited. In Denmark, the first organised garden colony, of 85 plots, was established in Aalborg in 1884 by Jørgen Berthelsen, a member of the Upper House of the Danish Parliament. In Germany, the city of Kiel provided small gardens for the poor in 1830, and this was quickly followed by similar provision in Leipzig, Berlin, Worms, Frankfurt, Königsberg, Dresden, Stettin and Danzig. In 1869, a series of children's plots, which had been provided in Leipzig around 1864 as an integral part of children's play areas, was converted to family gardens. The initial scheme was conceived as a memorial to a Leipzig physician, Doctor Schreber, who had been a great advocate of physical fitness among young people, and the plots soon became known as Schrebergärten (Schreber gardens). Unlike the gardens in Kiel, which sprang from charity for the poor, the Schrebergärten had from their outset strong associations with recreation, and similar small gardens quickly grew up in many parts of Germany. In Amsterdam, on the other hand, the allotments system did not begin until shortly before the First World War, when groups of individuals formed associations to rent land privately. During the 1920's, their numbers increased, and the tenants began to change the character of their plots by growing flowers as well as vegetables and, occasionally, building a summerhouse. In 1935, the city's new master-plan demanded the redevelopment of extensive areas and the disappearance of large numbers of allotments. It was then, for the first time, that the municipal authority decided to provide allotments itself to replace those which had been lost, and areas of land sufficient to allow 6 square yards per inhabitant were specifically designated in the master plan; the same process was repeated after the war when plans were drawn up to extend the city limits to the north and the south-east.

614. During the Second World War, the chalet gardens of Holland, Denmark and Germany were ruthlessly put under the plough in order to make way for the

* Chairman of the Dutch National Association of Folk Gardens.
essential cultivation of fruit and vegetables. When hostilities ceased, there was
in all these countries an immediate reaction against wartime austerity and a
determination among those who had occupied chalet gardens before the war to
reintroduce and extend the system as quickly as possible. Thus, the appearance,
layout and administrative systems of most of the sites which we visited are the
result of no more than twenty years of development; and the subtle variations
which exist not only between different countries but also between different towns
in the same country and different sites in the same town stem more from nuances
of emphasis than from history.

615. If the transition from 'allotment garden' to 'chalet garden' has been a
natural process, it is pertinent to ask at once why no similar development has
occurred in this country. There are several explanations, which will be discussed
in the course of this chapter. But we are convinced that a major part of the answer
lies in the complete absence of mandatory allotments legislation in every country
which we visited. The fact that every publicly provided allotment site, whether it
is composed of vegetable plots or of chalet gardens, exists as a result of voluntary
action by a local authority, has generated between the allotments movement and
the municipalities a spirit of harmony which has rarely existed in this country
and is conspicuously lacking today. Within this atmosphere, there is ample
room for experimentation with new ideas, which can be allowed to germinate
both in the town hall and on the site without a constant fear that they will offend
against some enactment. In Britain, the legislation has done much to preserve
the charitable connotation of early allotment provision; on the continent, the
absence of such legislation has allowed the principle of a recreational allotment
to be freely accepted. It is not without significance that while the 'guinea gardens'
of Birmingham (see paragraph 23 and Figure 2) and similar developments
elsewhere (which appear to have had something in common with the chalet
garden concept), were able to flourish before legislation sought to bring all such
schemes under the charitable allotments umbrella, we have no record of any
comparable provision since the first general Allotment Act, although some
private allotment sites retained the germ of the idea.

(2) Provision, planning and security of tenure

616. In view of the absence of legislation, it is not surprising that the provision
of all types of allotments varies greatly from town to town. In Rotterdam, where
allotments first appeared as recently as 1930, the total provision is as low as 0.6
acres per thousand population, or three-fifths of the average provision in urban
areas of this country. In Amsterdam, it is only marginally greater, and the total
acreage of allotments has fallen by 20 per cent since 1945; but the local authority
intends to provide more allotments gradually during the next 20 years, and
hopes to reach a target of about 1.5 acres per thousand by 1990. The city of
Hamburg suffers from an acute shortage of land; the number of allotments has
dropped by 50 per cent since the end of the war, and is now fairly static at 1.3
acres per thousand population. In Scandinavia, where land hunger is generally
less acute, Copenhagen has 1.8 acres of allotments per thousand population and
cheerfully predicts that allotment provision over the whole of Denmark may
reach 4 acres per thousand by the turn of the century. At Malmö (Sweden) we
were told that there is at present no set policy in regard to the numbers of allot-
ments to be provided; the current figure of 1 acre per thousand will almost
certainly increase.
617. The readiness of some authorities to plan for an increase in allotment acreage, and the ability of each town to consider its scale of provision solely by reference to the availability of suitable land, both stem from the fact that the demand for allotments, and especially for chalet gardens, is everywhere considerably in excess of those at present provided. Table 45 compares, for each of the major towns which the committee visited, the present and proposed provision of allotments with the apparent demand for them. In contrast to the generality of towns in England and Wales, the extensive waiting-lists shown in this Table are composed almost entirely of people who do not at present occupy an allotment of any description. In Amsterdam and Hamburg, each applicant for a plot is required to pay the equivalent of £1 per annum for the privilege of keeping his name on the waiting-list, and will almost certainly have to wait for several years before he can be accommodated. Thus, the municipal authority can be certain that if a new site is designated, every plot will be eagerly taken.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Number of allotments at present provided</th>
<th>Number of applicants on the waiting-lists</th>
<th>Provision in terms of acres per thousand population</th>
<th>Apparent demand in terms of acres per thousand population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rotterdam</td>
<td>5,400</td>
<td>5,400</td>
<td>0·6</td>
<td>1·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>0·7</td>
<td>1·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamburg</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1·3</td>
<td>1·4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copenhagen</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>1·8</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malmö</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1·0</td>
<td>1·2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

618. In each town, the reservation of areas of land for allotment sites is the planning officer’s task, and the provision of allotments forms an integral part of the town plan. Although this statement reveals a relationship between allotments and planning which is unknown in this country today, it is still quite inadequate to describe the degree of interest which the local planning officer takes in the allotments of his town. Throughout our tour, we formed the impression that the planner regards the provision and the effective siting of allotments as an important part of his work, not least because he is confident that the sites which he designates will add to the attractiveness of the town. Thus, in Amsterdam, a public exhibition of new planning techniques open at the time of our visit included as a matter of course several imaginative designs for allotment sites; in Hamburg we were told of the continuing process of rationalisation by which allotments, established many years ago by the haphazard methods so common in England and Wales, are being replaced at the rate of 400 plots per annum by the designation of new sites in more suitable localities; at Malmö we were shown a green wedge of land within the city which is being developed as an area for sport and recreation, and in which allotment sites will form a prominent feature. The officials in every town decided voluntarily and as a matter of course that we must talk either to the planning officer or to private planners engaged on the town’s development, and some of these planners were themselves chalet gardeners.
619. Wherever possible, each new allotment site is located either within a public park or adjacent to an area set aside for public recreation (Figure 23). One obvious advantage of this practice is that the site is then unlikely to be required for future development; but it is equally clear that in order to merit

Figure 23
This chalet garden site in Hamburg forms an integral part of an attractive recreational complex serving an area of tall flats. Pleasant pathways, bordered by grass and trees, lead to the neat gardens which are well screened by shrubs from the surrounding public open space and walkways. The rectilinearity of many German plots is much less apparent than the plan suggests as there are no formal divisions between adjacent plots (see Plate 25).

such a location, every site must achieve and retain a standard of attractiveness which matches its surroundings. As a direct consequence of this principle, the majority of new sites on the continent are located either on the periphery of urban areas or even in the green belt beyond. Such a practice is, of course, completely at variance with the system adopted in this country throughout the
present century, and with the current thinking of N.A.G.S. (see paragraph 605). On the continent, however, every authority was able to justify the peripheral siting of allotments on several counts:—

(i) Most of the recreational areas introduced by the authorities concerned were situated on the outskirts of the town and integration of the new sites was simple.

(ii) The land needed for the sites was relatively cheap; it was therefore possible to provide more allotments than would otherwise have been practicable.

(iii) A site located at some distance from the built-up area would almost certainly be less vulnerable to closure than one situated near the urban core.

(iv) The benefit to be derived from an allotment was always greater when it included an escape from the noise, bustle and close confinement of the city.

620. The practice of siting allotments on the periphery of a town provides a further key to the question which we posed at the beginning of paragraph 615. It will be apparent that, on the continent, the allotment holder’s ‘journey to dig’ is generally much longer than in England and Wales. In fact, apart from Hamburg, where the plots situated within each of the city’s seven ‘districts’ are now allocated only to applicants from the same ‘district’, very few sites have a ‘catchment area’ consisting of a specific part of the town. It is commonplace for the allotment holder to live 5 miles or more from his plot, and we heard of some who travelled 20 miles to their ‘allotment gardens’. It was natural, therefore, that once the policy of dispersing many sites to the periphery had been accepted, the move away from the former vegetable allotment should accelerate. Allotment holders now found that their plots were too far from their homes to make the cultivation of vegetables alone worthwhile; they wanted to spend longer on their plots when they arrived, and this persuaded them that they needed a summerhouse; they also began to take their families to the site instead of going alone. Thus, the development of the chalet garden concept received a further impetus.

621. It is quite impossible to discuss the security of tenure which is available to the allotment holder on the continent in the terms applied to allotment sites in England and Wales. We inspected one site in Denmark which is owned by a limited company in which the current allotment holders hold shares, but apart from the railway allotments, private sites generally seem to be very much in a minority. Occasionally, and especially in Scandinavia, a municipality will lease a site to a local association without the insertion of a re-entry clause, but the great majority of sites and plots are let on short-term tenancies only. In the absence of national legislation, there are of course no rules to restrict an authority which seeks to close any of its sites for alternative development, and it is no exaggeration to say that the future of almost every site which we visited must depend solely on the continued goodwill of the local authority. One might suppose from the evidence presented to us by N.A.G.S.* that, in these circumstances the allotments movement in each country would be perpetually disgruntled, and that the individual allotment holder would be reluctant to spend money on the upkeep

* See paragraphs 546–50.
of his plot. Such a view would be completely false: there are very few allotment holders in England and Wales who are as satisfied with their lot as those to whom we spoke on the continent, and on every site which we visited the average allotment holder willingly incurs expenditure many times greater than his counterpart in this country. The solution to this paradox is not difficult to find. Although the continental allotment holder cannot rely on legislation to provide him artificially with a security which his site may not deserve, his feeling of security is infinitely greater than that of his opposite number in England and Wales. This feeling derives from a wide range of factors:—

(i) The very fact that each authority appreciates the importance of establishing good allotment provision and administration is itself a guarantee that a site will not be alienated without due consideration of the possible alternatives.

(ii) The integration of allotment provision into town plans indicates that the areas designated for new sites will invariably be selected partly by reference to their viability in the town's future development.

(iii) The practice of incorporating allotment sites into recreation zones reduces the possibility that the area will subsequently be required for alternative use.

(iv) Open space on the periphery of a town is generally less vulnerable than that within the built-up urban area.

(v) The allotment holder realises that his municipality has spent a considerable sum on the initial preparation of his site and that its closure would involve further expense by way of (voluntary) compensation. He knows that local authorities do not lightly decide that capital expenditure can be wasted.

(vi) Finally—and this is undoubtedly the most important factor—the allotment holder is satisfied that the appearance of his plot and the attractiveness of his site are a credit to the town, and he is at pains to ensure that this will always be so. He knows that his site is regarded with favour, not only by the local authority and the town planner, but also by the general body of ratepayers who are perfectly prepared to subsidise the preparation and maintenance of what is to them a form of local park through which they are freely permitted to stroll.

622. For all these reasons, the average allotment holder on the continent is convinced, without any form of written guarantee or legislative protection, that the potential security of his site is at least equal to that of a public park; it may, indeed, be greater still, since his local authority must be well aware that a major part of the cost of maintaining a chalet ‘park’ is borne by the tenants and does not fall on the rates. This does not mean, of course, that allotment sites are never closed; but it ensures that if a site is alienated to another use both the displaced tenants and the town’s allotments movement as a whole are aware that the closure is inevitable and are prepared to accept it. Thus, a site in Rotterdam, which was shortly to lose a quarter of its plots to make way for a new major road, was said by its tenants to be “too large for easy management”. In Hamburg, the process of replacing old ‘temporary’ sites to which we referred in paragraph 618, is accepted by the movement as a genuine attempt to confer security of tenure, and one district of the city has lost 2,000 plots in this way. The former tenants have
been dispersed over a wide area, but the philosophic view is taken that if an allotment holder already travels 5 miles to his plot, it matters little if he must in future go in the opposite direction to a secure site. Similarly, on a site in Copenhagen which is scheduled for closure in 10 years' time, the tenants have already launched a 'demolition fund' to cover the costs of removal; and despite the relatively short period of 'site life' remaining there was at the time of our visit no difficulty in re-letting vacant plots.

(3) The chalet garden site

623. In paragraph 612 we pointed out that in the provision and administration of its allotments system the continental authority draws no distinction between the chalet garden and the allotment garden site. As far as we could ascertain, each country applies the same official title to both types of site,* and the selection and initial preparation of a new site are not affected by considerations of the way in which it is likely to develop. In practice, however, the risk that the site will not measure up to expectations is small, and the local authority can be confident that the combination of peripheral siting with an attractive layout will ensure that the site will eventually consist mainly of attractive chalet gardens.

624. As a general rule, the initial preparation of a new site involves three departments of the local authority; the planning division, which is responsible for designing the layout, the parks department, which devises the planting scheme, and the public works department, which undertakes the detailed work on the site. The design is often so individualistic that it becomes almost impossible to establish any universal criteria, but the layout of every site which we visited had been based on a number of primary considerations:—

(i) a sympathetic appraisal is made of the existing landscape character in order to retain or incorporate features which improve the visual quality of the site, both internally and externally. Where the area is dull and featureless, new and interesting land form may sometimes be introduced artificially. The survey will also take account of the size, shape and setting of the new site, which will often have a profound effect on the final design. Most continental sites are considerably larger than those in this country: the average site in Hamburg covers 12 acres of land, and the authorities in Amsterdam considered that the 'ideal' site should contain about 350 plots. There seemed to be a general view among local authorities that larger sites fitted more easily into areas of public recreation and were more amenable to effective treatment;

(ii) a large part of every site (usually between 30 per cent and 40 per cent of the total area) is devoted to public or communal walkways or grassed open space planted with ornamental trees and shrubs, and with seats for the passer-by to rest and enjoy his surroundings† (Plates 22, 23 and 25; Figure 23). The approach and entrance gates to the site are usually most impressive, being attractively landscaped with trees, shrubs and flower borders, while the main roads and paths within the site are invariably hard surfaced and durable. Included in the communal areas are spacious, but well-screened, car parking facilities, a children's play

---

* The allotments of Germany are now known as Kleingärten (small gardens); in Scandinavia they are termed Kolonihäuser (colony gardens), and in Holland, Volkstuinen (folk gardens).
† It is noteworthy that although almost every site is open to the general public the amount of vandalism is very small. The chalet garden site on the continent clearly validates the statement which we quoted in paragraph 409.
area and a community centre, which is often an imposing building containing a hall for group activities, committee room, cloakrooms, kitchen, office and often a shop provided by the local authority but stocked and managed by the site association (Plate 24);

(iii) the remainder of the site is divided into individual gardens, the size and shape of which are largely dictated by the sinuous pathways which meander between them, creating a variety of changing vistas. The individual paths are normally within, not around, each garden, so that it runs into its neighbour without the intervention of a strip of uncultivated ‘no-man's land’ or makeshift fence as is so often found in this country (Plates 23, 25 and 26). These pathways are informal in character, often being simply a number of stepping-stones or a winding strip of shingle. Every site is equipped from the outset with a piped water supply, often on the basis of one tap to every two plots.

Within these broad principles, the planner and landscape architect are given complete freedom to create an original and imaginative design, and Figure 23 illustrates a typical example of the attractive layout which invariably results from their efforts. Occasionally, and mainly in Scandinavia, the design is more unusual: among those which we saw the ‘cartwheel’ (or ‘layer-cake’) sites of Denmark, in which groups of wedge-shaped plots radiate from a central 'hub' providing access and car parking space, were especially interesting. One of the most attractive experimental sites included in our tour was undoubtedly that at Naerum, also in Denmark, where a planner has set a group of elliptical plots, each surrounded by a trim hedge, in an expanse of mown grass interspersed with mature trees (Plate 27). In general, the design of the majority of sites in every town might best be envisaged as the skeletal outline of an attractive park, leaving the equally attractive individual gardens to supply the detail and complete the picture.

(4) The individual garden

625. Before attempting the difficult task of describing the individual gardens found on continental sites, it is necessary to make two further points:—

(i) as a natural consequence of the principles of design discussed in the preceding paragraph, there is a wide variation in the size and shape of each plot, not only in the same town but also on the same site. In the centre of Copenhagen we visited an old site whose plots ranged between 25 and 100 square metres; this site is now reserved for old age pensioners and has a waiting-list containing 75 names. Elsewhere in the same city we were shown plots extending over 800 square metres, but in Amsterdam, Hamburg and Malmö, the plots average 300 square metres, though the fluctuations around this average are considerable;

(ii) in Germany, an attempt is made to pay lip-service to a law of 1919 which decreed that part of each plot must be devoted to the cultivation of vegetables. This rule is no longer taken very seriously, and the stipulated proportion of one-third for vegetables, one-third for fruit and the remainder for flowers, lawn and summerhouse has come to be regarded generally as a guide rather than a norm (Plate 25). Elsewhere, the only regulations which restrict the use to which an allotment may be put are
those imposed either by the local authority or the association on the site: these are two in number, and are applied universally:—

(a) apart from bees, no livestock of any description may be kept on the plot;

(b) if, without good reason, the appearance of the plot falls below an acceptable standard, the allotment holder will be summarily evicted.

626. It follows from all that has been said that when an applicant’s name reaches the top of the local waiting-list, he may expect to be awarded a plot of uncertain size and shape, situated several miles from his home on a site of attractive design and construction; and he will be permitted to cultivate it as he chooses. At first, he may decide to devote the major part of his plot to the cultivation of vegetables and fruit. If so, he will certainly be inspired both by the beauty which surrounds him and by the rule which requires that his land should be attractive, to relieve the monotony by planting ornamental trees and shrubs and installing a summerhouse of pleasing appearance (Plate 25). In course of time, however, he will almost certainly be encouraged by the distance which he must travel, by the advice of his colleagues on the site, and by the appearance of their plots, to transform his ‘allotment’ into a chalet garden (Plates 23 and 26).

627. Since, in complete contrast to what is found on allotment sites in England and Wales, every chalet garden differs from its neighbour, it is extremely difficult to offer a more precise definition than that provided in paragraph 612. The simplest method of describing a chalet garden is to depict it as a home garden, cultivated by an enthusiastic and proficient gardener, with the chalet taking the place of the house. Thus, almost every plot incorporates flowers, lawn, paved pathways, shrubs and small fruit trees, while vegetables, compost heap and cold frame are relegated to a distant corner where they will be screened by the chalet. But this picture of the chalet garden is deficient in several respects. Whereas the home garden is private, the chalet garden is constantly on view, and every tenant welcomes, and even covets, the admiration of the general public as they pass by (Plate 22), ensuring that his garden provides a blaze of colour for as much of the year as possible. Moreover, the knowledge that his neighbours are striving for the same admiration prompts him to engage in friendly rivalry to present the most attractive plot. Thus, many tenants will include pools, water-gardens, rock gardens, patios and similar features in their layouts (Plate 26) while others will even construct their gardens on two or more levels, with steps connecting the terraces. The absence of formal divisions between the plots enhances the beauty of the vista across each group of gardens. There is an impressive individuality and attractiveness in almost every plot, and each plot seems to complement and improve the quality of the whole site. In this short account it is impossible to do them justice, and no photograph could adequately depict what we saw during our visit; but from the many which we felt impelled to take we have selected Plate 26 as representative of the typical chalet garden.

(5) The chalet

628. By definition, presumably, every chalet garden must include a summerhouse or chalet. In most countries, the purchase, siting and erection of this structure were originally the responsibility of the tenants, but in every town the local authority now takes an active interest in all aspects of its provision. This
interest stems firstly from a feeling that, since the need for a chalet derives partly from its policy of peripheral siting, it has a moral obligation to assist each tenant to obtain one; and, secondly, from a realisation that an attractive site can quickly be ruined by the appearance of a confused jumble of structures of inferior design (compare Plates 11a and 27). We found that each municipality had devised its own rules, and Table 46 sets out the systems in operation in the major towns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Maximum size of chalet</th>
<th>Average cost (1966)</th>
<th>Method of payment</th>
<th>Method of construction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rotterdam</td>
<td>10 per cent of the area of the plot</td>
<td>£200</td>
<td>Loan from local authority repayable over twenty years</td>
<td>Chalets erected by local authority as a new site is laid out in accordance with a master plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>As Rotterdam</td>
<td>As Rotterdam</td>
<td>As Rotterdam</td>
<td>Tenant selects a design from a number of detailed specifications approved by the local authority and constructs his chalet accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamburg</td>
<td>13 square metres</td>
<td>£90–£120</td>
<td>Loan from local authority up to 70 per cent of cost, repayable over five years</td>
<td>Local authority provides a number of designs from which the tenant selects. Local authority also regulates the materials of which the chalet may be constructed. The tenant builds the chalet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copenhagen</td>
<td>30 square metres</td>
<td>£400</td>
<td>Loans available only to old-age pensioners. Other tenants rely on hire-purchase</td>
<td>Chalet constructed by the tenant, and sited according to the master plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malmö</td>
<td>As Rotterdam</td>
<td>£350</td>
<td>No loan facilities available. Tenants use hire-purchase</td>
<td>As Amsterdam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These systems have one common feature, in that they require the tenant to purchase his chalet. Throughout our tour the view was expressed that only by encouraging pride of ownership could one ensure that the chalet would invariably be well built and properly maintained, and we certainly saw abundant evidence of competition between gardeners to possess the finest chalet. The systems presented in Table 46 are not, however, rigidly applied, for we inspected a number of gardens where either the local authority or (more frequently) the site association has permitted the tenant to depart from the normal standards of cost or size or both. For example, on a coastal site near Copenhagen we found a number of
elaborate chalets, each of which covered about 80 square metres and had cost as much as £2,000; on another site, in Malmö, the tenants looked upon the chalets as their second homes. On both these sites, the garden appeared to be of secondary importance, and the whole area was reminiscent of the ‘holiday chalet’ sites which are found in this country today. Such sites were clearly exceptional and must be excluded from the true meaning of chalet gardens. The main feature of Table 46, therefore, is to show that, apart from Copenhagen, each authority operates a rigid control over the design, construction and siting of the chalet and, in two cases, over the materials which may be used. It is apparent also that the methods of payment adopted in Holland and in Hamburg ensure that very few gardeners will be unable to afford a chalet.

629. On the majority of sites, the chalets contain few amenities. We saw only two sites (in Elsinore and Malmö) where a supply of electricity is provided for the chalet, although we did meet one tenant elsewhere with his own wind-powered generator! We were told by some authorities that the absence of electricity was a deliberate policy, both because of the ugliness of cables and the disturbance which might be caused to other gardeners by radio or television. In Scandinavia, a small number of more expensive chalets were equipped with piped water, and in Malmö we visited a site on which many tenants possessed their own chemical toilet, which was emptied by the local authority. These, however, were the exceptions, and it must be acknowledged that, when considered as residential units, many chalets are somewhat primitive and offer few home comforts. It is therefore noteworthy that in the whole of our tour we found only one site where the gardeners and their families were not permitted to spend the night in their chalets during the summer months—and even there the rule is not rigidly enforced. It is today the general practice for the whole family to remain on its chalet garden throughout the summer week-ends, and often for the duration of the school holidays. No local authority frowned upon this practice which, we were informed, ensured that the tenant would devote more time to his plot and enabled the local association to extend the social life of the site by arranging evening functions.

630. We recognise that in this country the same practice would offend against the laws relating to public health and hygiene, and that at a time of acute housing shortage the idea that some tenants might be provided with a ‘second home’ could not be entertained. We do not regard the tenant’s right to stay in his chalet overnight as in any way essential to the success of the chalet garden concept, but without it two important adjustments would be necessary:—

(i) if the chalet were not to include sleeping accommodation, its size and cost should be capable of considerable reduction, and some of the figures quoted in Table 46 would then require amendment,

(ii) it is probable that the maximum distance which the tenant might be expected to travel to his plot would need to be more moderately assessed. It would certainly be unreasonable to expect him to make a return journey of, say, as much as 20 miles each day with his family unless he owned a motor-car.

(6) The local associations

631. It is no exaggeration to say that the degree of success achieved by every chalet garden site depends almost entirely on the strength, industry, efficiency and integrity of its association. Every site which we visited had been let en bloc
to its own association, of which all the tenants were members. It was emphasised that this practice was derived not from laziness on the part of the municipal authority, but rather from a realisation that the associations were, without exception, competent to undertake most of the administration of their sites. The responsibilities of the site associations vary from town to town and to some extent also from site to site, and the following list is by no means exhaustive:

(i) the association is invariably allowed to draw up its own list of stringent regulations with which every tenant must comply. These include rules to cover any special requirements referred to below;

(ii) the association will have agreed with the local authority for which aspects of the maintenance of the communal parts of the site each will be responsible. In general, the municipalities of Rotterdam and Hamburg have preferred to keep to themselves the duties of mowing the areas under grass, tending the flower beds and maintaining the condition of trees, roads, hedges and fencing, leaving the association in charge of administration and general tidiness. In Amsterdam and throughout Scandinavia, on the other hand, it is more usual for the association to assume responsibility for all aspects of general maintenance, and the duties of the local authority will often be limited to the removal of rubbish from the sites; in all such cases, the work performed by the association is recognised by a refund of part of the overall rent. Where an association has agreed to perform considerable duties in the sphere of maintenance, it is customary for each tenant to be required to devote a specified number of hours per annum to caring for the communal parts of the site. It was most encouraging to see on many sites groups of tenants working willingly and effectively on a rota system;

(iii) each association is in complete charge of the corporate and social life of its site. This entails the provision and serving of refreshments in the community centre—a duty which is often gladly undertaken by the tenants’ wives—and the management of a shop where one is provided. It also involves making arrangements for flower shows, lectures, demonstrations, discussions, film shows and other activities to be held either in the community centre or in a hall in the town itself;

(iv) when a tenant is obliged to surrender his garden, the usual practice is for his chalet to be valued and sold to the incoming tenant. The valuation is the association’s responsibility, and it is customary to appoint a sub-committee, including members of the building trade, for this purpose;

(v) on the majority of sites in each town the association undertakes the task of allocating vacant plots in accordance with the local waiting-list. This duty is made more difficult by the fact that every chalet contains sleeping accommodation: accordingly, most associations require to know each applicant’s name, age, address, occupation, the size of his home garden and the number and sex of his children;

(vi) the regulations made by every association stipulate that the attractiveness of the tenant’s plot must always reach an acceptable standard, and many also require him to participate in the corporate life of the site. The association is often quite ruthless in its interpretation of such rules and in its treatment of offenders. We were informed on some Dutch sites that every new tenant is regarded as being on probation
until he has shown evidence not merely of his intention to produce an attractive garden but also of his 'community spirit'. We suspected that, on occasion, the obligation to produce an attractive plot had helped to persuade some tenants to reduce the area which they initially devoted to vegetables.

632. It will be immediately apparent that the strength and efficiency of the continental chalet gardener's association far surpasses anything found among the allotment associations of this country. Some idea of the disparity between the two may be gained from a comparison between N.A.G.S., the only national voice of the 500,000 allotment holders of England and Wales, and the Federated Society (Landesbund Hamburg der Kleingärtner) which represents the 30,000 allotment holders of the city of Hamburg. The former, as we have seen,* has a staff of five; the latter has a full-time staff of twelve, including a horticultural adviser paid by the local authority, two rent collectors, two cashiers, two cleaners, caretaker, telephonist, secretary—and two editors for the Federation's own journal. The headquarters of N.A.G.S. is a former dwelling-house in rural Bedfordshire, while the Hamburg Federation owns a new and purpose-built set of offices on the outskirts of the town, erected at a cost of £14,000, the money being derived from tenants' subscriptions. Each member of N.A.G.S. pays an annual subscription of 1s., whereas in Hamburg the corresponding figure was 7s. in 1966 and was shortly to be increased. N.A.G.S.'s magazine Garden, though attractively presented, has recently ceased publication through lack of interest among its nation-wide membership; in Hamburg, by contrast, the Federation issues to its 30,000 members a thriving monthly journal giving advice on garden layout, the cultivation of individual species of flowers and vegetables, and news from the different sites. It also publishes an illustrated diary,† containing suggestions for work in the garden at different times of the year, and a whole variety of instructional leaflets, plans of chalets and lists of available films and speakers. While N.A.G.S. spends much of its resources on campaigns to prevent the closure of half-empty sites, the officers of the Hamburg Federation are able to tour the sites of the city, offering advice and help to their members on important matters and detecting at an early stage any signs of pests and disease which so often gain a hold unnoticed on sites in England and Wales.

633. We have shown that these differences spring largely from the different attitude of the man on the plot. There is little more that we need add, but one 'clue' to this attitude may lie in the composition of the allotments movement here and on the continent. In a survey conducted by the city of Hamburg shortly before our visit, it was discovered that on the new chalet garden sites the proportion of 'white-collar' workers was as high as 53 per cent,‡ and we found similar ratios on sites in Scandinavia. In Holland, the proportion of manual workers is higher, but on a temporary site in Amsterdam, where the association had decided to design and construct a new community centre (Plate 24), the architect who planned a magnificent octagonal structure as well as the builders, carpenters, plumbers and joiners who built it, were all plotholders on the site. It was apparent that the great majority of chalet gardeners on each site, including every officer of the association, were men and women who had always regarded

* See paragraph 539.
† N.A.G.S. also issues a diary.
‡ The corresponding figure in urban areas of England and Wales today is 30.6 per cent (see paragraph 352).
their plots as a recreation, and not (as happens so frequently in this country) men clinging nostalgically to ideas commensurate only with economic need.

(7) Finance and rents

634. We found on our tour that the systems of allotments administration, financial arrangements and rents charged varied so greatly from town to town that it would be advisable to examine each independently:—

(i) Rotterdam. As we have seen, the allotments system of Rotterdam has evolved only during the past forty years. We were, nonetheless, impressed by the vigour and enthusiasm with which the city council pursues a forward looking policy. It has developed several innovations, including groups of ‘children’s gardens’, where the offspring of allotment holders can tend their own little gardens and receive instruction in horticulture while their parents cultivate their plots on the same site. The city’s allotments are controlled by the Council of Physical Education, which is responsible for all active recreational pursuits, the day-to-day administration being left to a sub-committee on which the Rotterdam Allotments League is well represented. At the time of our visit the annual allotment budget amounted to £70,000, or 10 per cent of the city’s total expenditure on all types of recreation. During the five years 1965–70, the council expected to spend £266,000 on the acquisition of new sites, £51,000 on their improvement* and £22,000 on general maintenance. In return, the allotment holder pays an annual rent of 25s. for a 10-rod plot and a further £4 by way of subscription to his local and national societies; in addition, of course, he will almost certainly be purchasing his chalet.

(ii) Amsterdam. In Amsterdam, the system is managed by the Committee for Folk Gardens, on which the parks, planning and public works departments are represented, together with the federation of local allotments associations. Here, too, the local authority regards the development of its allotments system as a continuing process, and calculates that every new plot provided since the end of the war has cost the city £200. The basic rent had remained at 18s. per 10-rod plot since the mid-1930’s, but the authority proposed to increase it to £3 per annum in the near future, even though the maintenance of most sites was left entirely to the local association.

(iii) Hamburg. In Hamburg, the allotments are administered by the parks, cemeteries and allotments department in close collaboration with the society discussed in paragraph 632. The city cannot extend its boundaries, and most of the new sites are located in the middle ring of the urban area. The financial obligations and arrangements are similar to those of Rotterdam, although the land which is acquired for new sites can cost up to £10,000 per acre, and the city’s total outlay amounts to £220 for each new plot created. The cost of maintenance is £26,000 per annum (about 16s. per plot), while the basic rent of 17s. 6d. per 10-rods was at the time of our visit shortly to be increased.

(iv) Copenhagen and Elsinore. In Copenhagen, and indeed throughout Scandinavia, the history of the allotments movement owes less to charity

* Unlike most other authorities, Rotterdam will normally pay only 25 per cent of the cost of the community centre.
than elsewhere. It is probably for this reason that many sites are privately owned, rents are generally much higher than those in Holland and Germany, and the movement has progressed to the point where private planners are prepared to devote time to the preparation of new and exciting designs. One example of the forward thinking in the Danish allotments movement is the school for colony gardeners (the only such establishment in the world) which was founded outside Copenhagen in 1943. So great is the public esteem for the chalet garden that the Federation of Colony Garden Associations has its own representative on the Copenhagen City Council. The large number of private sites in the Copenhagen area makes a comparison between the authority’s financial commitment and those of other towns virtually meaningless, but the small town of Elsinore, which provides 300 plots, spends £2,000 per annum (including loan interest) on them. Each tenant pays between £4 and £5 rent for a plot of little more than 10 rods, and a substantial additional sum to his association.

(v) Malmö. The Central Association of Colony Gardeners of the city of Malmö has representatives on the Colony Gardens Advisory Committee, a consultant body appointed by the city council. At the time of our visit, the city was engaged in a comprehensive reappraisal of its allotments system, and had embarked on the replacement of several old sites near the city centre by new sites in an area of outstanding beauty which was to be developed as a recreation park. Over 80 per cent of the town’s allotment sites are owned by the authority, and each tenant pays a rent of between £4 and £6 per annum, together with a subscription of 25s. to his association. A proportion of the rent is handed back to the local associations to cover the costs of maintenance, and the balance is used to defray loan charges. It follows that, apart from any general repairs and renewals which may be necessary, the city of Malmö has no difficulty in balancing its allotment account.

The different ways in which local authorities approach the problems of allotment finance are shown in Table 47. It is noteworthy that in no case is the provision of allotments or the allotments movement subsidised by the central government concerned.

(8) Summary

635. We are very conscious of the fact that the foregoing account of the continental allotments system has done less than justice to a concept which is unknown in this country. It was manifest to us throughout our tour that the major criticisms which are levelled both by local authorities and by allotment holders against the allotments system of England and Wales, and which were summarised in Chapter 3 of this report, cannot be levelled at the continental chalet garden system. The insistence on the maintenance of a high standard of attractiveness, not only of the individual plot but also of the whole site, eliminated the complaint that allotments were an eyesore which reflected adversely on a town. The process of peripheral siting and the creation of recreational units for the entire family overcame the argument that it was wrong to let expensive urban land for individual use. The practice of permitting the general public to use the communal pathways provided an aesthetically pleasing amenity for the entire neighbourhood and enabled the authority to promote what were in reality supplementary areas of parkland cultivated without public expense. Finally,
the allotment holder was confident that his site, fully landscaped, well organised, and set in the middle of recreational facilities, was unlikely to be required for alternative development and was persuaded to spend more money on his garden by reason of this assurance.

636. We accept all of these claims without reservation, and it might, indeed, seem cheeseparing to be critical of a concept which is obviously so far in advance of our own. But it is precisely when one begins to consider the possibility of translating the chalet garden to this country as an alternative to the British allotment garden that the pitfalls become obvious. The chalet garden makes no concession to the man whose principal concern is to grow vegetables; and in a large town the distance will probably be too great for an elderly allotment holder to travel to his plot unless he is permitted to stay overnight when he arrives there. The essence of the chalet garden site is its communal existence, and it is arguable that the amateur gardener in this country is less gregarious than his continental counterpart. A far higher proportion of continental allotment holders live in flats than is the case in England and Wales (in Malmö, the proportion is as high as 85 per cent) and as we saw in paragraph 436, the chalet garden concept seems to appeal particularly to those who live in flats.

637. It was precisely because of our uncertainty whether the chalet garden system would operate as successfully in this country as it clearly does on the continent that we were delighted when Cardiff City Corporation accepted our suggestion that it might prepare a new site on chalet garden lines. Unfortunately, this project has not yet been completed, but the corporation has developed a plot on the existing Allensbank Allotment Site as a chalet garden (Plate 28). When this was opened by the then Minister of State in July 1967, it looked most impressive. The committee has also sponsored an illustrated article on the chalet garden system in the May 1967 edition of the magazine Garden, and the allotments committee of the City of Birmingham hopes to develop part of the Russell Road Site on imaginative chalet garden lines. N.A.G.S. has laid out two plots at its headquarters in Flitwick (which the Minister of State was again good enough to open) which effectively combine some of the features of the chalet garden with those of the British allotment (Plate 29), and the staff of the Garden Centre at Syon Park, Middlesex, have prepared and are maintaining a plot

Table 47
Allotment finance in selected continental towns: 1966

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Number of allotments provided</th>
<th>Local Authority expenditure</th>
<th>Tenant expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Net annual expenditure</td>
<td>Expenditure on maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotterdam</td>
<td>5,400</td>
<td>£ 70,000</td>
<td>£ 4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amsterdam</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamburg</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>110,000</td>
<td>26,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copenhagen</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>Not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elyanore</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malmö</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Both Amsterdam and Hamburg planned a substantial increase in these rents.
† Including contribution towards the salary of a horticultural adviser.
which incorporates certain features of continental allotments (Plate 30). By promoting some of these ventures, by offering advice in the case of others, and by instituting discussions on the merits of chalet gardens during many of our visits to local authorities throughout the country, we have endeavoured to introduce those interested in the allotments movement to the principles of a system which they had not previously known.

B. Allotments in Scotland and Ireland

638. In order to ascertain the position in Scotland, our chairman made a brief visit to Edinburgh in April 1968, and met the city's Director of Parks and Recreation. The total allotment provision in Scotland today is only one-seventh of an acre per thousand population, but there are waiting-lists for plots on several sites. The sites have for many years been known locally as 'garden allotments' rather than 'allotment gardens' and some present a most attractive appearance. On one such site, it is probable that the existence of a demonstration plot maintained by the parks department has raised the standard of the site as a whole, as well as setting an example for other sites.

639. We found on enquiry that the number of allotments in both Northern Ireland and Eire is now very low. In Belfast, for example, 600 allotments serve a population of some 400,000, and the local association has recently been wound up after an existence of some fifty years. In the whole of Eire the number of plots appears to be as low as 388, compared with 24,000 during the last war.
PART VI

CHAPTER 15

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

640. The relations between the allotments movement and authority are today at a lower ebb than at any time in the movement's history. This may appear to be a statement of the obvious, in that it was one of the main reasons for our appointment; but in Parts III and IV of our report we attempted to isolate the accusations which are levelled by either side and to assess the validity of each.

641. From the standpoint of the allotment holder, as represented by N.A.G.S., the background to many of the complaints and criticisms is the continued take-over of allotment land for other purposes. The decline in the numbers of allotments shows no sign of levelling out (Figure 4), and N.A.G.S. faces the prospect that if the fall continues unchecked, allotment gardens will eventually disappear entirely from both the urban and the rural scene. It is difficult for men who have been allotment holders for a major part of their lives to believe that others may not be so faithful to the movement or so ready to put up with the conditions which they themselves have accepted for so long; and they are therefore disposed to attribute the decrease in the number of allotment holders to many causes before they will acknowledge that lack of interest is now a major factor.

642. It is clear from the evidence, however, that since the last war, a large proportion of the allotment holders who have left the movement have departed for reasons quite unconnected with the present attitude of the authorities. A simple comparison will illustrate that this is so. During the twenty years between the two world wars, no fewer than five Acts of Parliament, designed to help the allotments movement, were passed into law; recurring economic depressions compelled the Government to issue an almost constant stream of literature intended to impress upon local authorities the need for a strong allotments movement; and large-scale urban redevelopment had scarcely begun. Yet, during this same period, the total number of allotments fell from c. 1,200,000 (1918) to c. 858,000 (1937). By contrast, the twenty years which commenced in 1945 saw the rise of an affluent society, the popularity of the motor-car and television as rival claimants for the spare time of millions, the cessation of government campaigns to popularise allotment gardening, and the development and re-development of large areas of land in the name of post-war rebuilding of bombed areas, slum clearance, industrial expansion and imaginative planning; yet the decline in the number of allotments during this period from c. 1,300,000 (1945) to c. 729,000 (1964) was only slightly more rapid than between the wars (Figure 4).

643. In the light of such figures, it is tempting to attribute the reduction in the numbers of allotment gardens entirely to the fall in demand. If such were the case, if allotment gardening were merely following in the wake of other leisure-time activities which have died a natural death in the face of changes in the structure and pattern of society, it would be both foolish and useless to seek to revive it. But the evidence which we have presented shows that such a viewpoint
would be both incorrect and irresponsible. Clearly, and for obvious reasons, the
demand for allotments is today much reduced; but it is equally certain that those
who claim that the demand has to some extent been artificially stifled have some
grounds for their contentions.

644. The concept of allotment gardening as a recreation is quite inconsistent
with the existing legislation. The present law is far too rigid to admit of changes
which are desirable or even necessary, and which are occurring as a natural
growth in some other countries unencumbered with obsolete legislative trappings.
The allotment garden of the 1950 Act was essentially the same as the urban
allotment of 1908, and the allotment garden today is, in many respects, identical
with that of 1950. The allotment, like everything else, must be capable of progress
and improvement, and any regulating laws must allow for this. The facilities for
other recreations which are not so shackled by restrictive legislation may be
adapted to cope with the demands of those whose continued allegiance requires a
constant improvement in standards; but when, quite recently, an allotments
authority sought to borrow money to effect a modest programme of improvement
to one of its sites, there was considerable doubt whether such improvement was
within the scope of the Acts. The legislation is in fact largely irrelevant to the
situation today, and many of the accusations which N.A.G.S. levels against the
authorities ought properly to be directed against the inflexibility of the law.

645. The attitude of the responsible Ministry has, for many years, been largely
proscriptive. This attitude has again been dictated by the law, which has accorded
Central Government a predominantly watching brief which it must often find
most frustrating. For instance, there is no machinery by which the many im-
portant considerations which affect the release of a statutory site may be ade-
quately explored, and no way in which the lessons learnt in one part of the country
may be applied to another. So long as the letter of the law is observed, and the
apparent demand for allotment gardens is satisfied by every allotments authority,
there is little that the Ministry can do.

646. There is no doubt that, consciously or otherwise, many allotments
authorities pursue policies whose effect can only be to reduce the demand for
allotments within their administrative areas. In some cases, no doubt, this policy
is dictated by a fear that they might find themselves obliged by law to provide
land in areas of short supply; in others, it follows the realisation that, if the run-
down of allotments sites can be effected, their take-over for other uses, considered
by the local authority to be more worthwhile, can be speedily implemented
'in the public interest'; elsewhere it results from a feeling, which is far from
groundless, that allotments form areas of dereliction in otherwise attractive
townscapes; in still more towns it stems from a belief that the provision of allot-
ments is today an unnecessary burden which they will shoulder grudgingly only
because they are obliged to do so. This attitude, however, derives largely from
a failure to subject the allotments system to the type of survey which is today
given as a matter of course to other activities; this failure in turn springs from a
reluctance to consider allotments as a feature of the life of the town, and as an
integral part of the town plan. As a result of this policy, whatever its basis,
sites are left open to vandalism and theft, vacant plots are left untended to dis-
courage newcomers and present incumbents alike, bad tenants are inviolate, no
thought is given to the suitability of areas 'selected' for new sites or to their
prospect of 'permanence', and the allotments committee is never allowed to
advance, but only to fight rearguard actions.
647. But the allotments movement itself must also bear a large share of the blame for many of the problems which we have discussed. The allotment holder today protests volubly about the alleged failure of the allotments authorities to listen to his pleas for security of tenure, but generally expects to find his plot almost at the end of his street; he complains about the reluctance of his landlord to spend money on his site while he himself remains unwilling to offer more than 1s. to his national society; he is angered by the problems caused by the weeds from nearby vacant plots but never pauses to reflect that his own disinterest in the site as a whole may well have helped to make and keep those plots vacant. He contends that allotment gardening has changed, that he is asking only to be allowed to enjoy his chosen recreation in peace, and that he is both misunderstood and maligned by those outside the movement; and yet, by his own intransigence, his conservatism, his readiness to clutter his site with ramshackle sheds, makeshift fencing and paraphernalia which would be promptly rejected elsewhere, he contributes in no small measure to the preservation of the sorry image which he so stoutly asserts is now out of date.

648. The future of allotment gardening must depend upon many factors, such as the continued availability of land, the readiness of allotment holders to accept that they have obligations to the ratepayers who provide the facilities for their recreation and, ultimately, on the extent to which it is right to compel public authorities to set aside land for recreation at all. But, in the final analysis, the most important consideration must be the size, strength and quality of the demand; and this can only properly be assessed in the context of what an allotment site should be today. Ultimately, the dilemma is simply this: millions enjoy the recreation of motoring today, but very few now drive veteran cars; nor can the real demand for allotment gardening today be deduced from the declining number of plot holders who are content with their veteran allotments.
PART VII
RECOMMENDATIONS
CHAPTER 16
THE FUTURE OF ALLOTMENTS

A. Public provision

649. Unless radical changes are made to the pattern of the provision and administration of allotment gardens, they will almost certainly disappear, partly because of the inability of a system geared to economic need to adapt itself to the new concept of allotment gardening as a recreation. If the image of allotment gardening could be improved, not only would many of the existing plot-holders take new heart but numbers of new adherents might well come forward.

650. For the future, therefore, there are three alternatives. Firstly, the allotments situation might be allowed to continue much as it is today, on the grounds that the difficulties and problems of allotment provision and administration were thought to be insoluble; the archaic legislation and outdated image of allotment gardening would then remain unchanged until such time as the demand for 'allotments' disappeared altogether. Secondly, this process might be greatly accelerated by a simple repeal of all existing allotments legislation, which would immediately remove from local authorities the obligation to provide allotment gardens of any type and, by restricting provision to the private sector, would solve most of the problems which the present regulations cause. Thirdly, an attempt might be made so to change the present law and the image which allotments produce in the minds of those both inside and outside the movement that the pattern for the future would be more in keeping with that of other recreations.

651. The first of these alternatives, that of laissez-faire, is no solution, for it does nothing to remedy the dissatisfaction of allotment holders, local authorities, and the general public with many facets of the present allotments situation. Either allotment gardening is deserving of public support and sympathy, or it is not; there is no practical or moral justification for a system which on the one hand caters for a possible resurgence of demand and on the other is so inflexible as virtually to ensure that the demand will continue to fall. The choice between the second and third alternatives rests on the answer to a simple question: granted that there will continue to be people who would wish to find their recreation in a modern equivalent of allotment gardening, should public authorities provide them with facilities? The answer must be a very definite "Yes". As the simplest method of presenting our justification of this decision, we propose to set down the points made by opponents of this view together with our answer to each.

652. The first allegation of the critics is that allotment gardens no longer serve a desirable or useful function in the community, either in urban or in rural areas. But no one disputes that gardening is one of the most worthwhile of all recreations. It is a pursuit which involves a wide range of muscular activity and provides a
healthy physical recreation for people of all age groups and occupations. It has considerable therapeutic value in terms of mental health, especially for those living in a crowded urban environment; it affords relaxation from the stresses of modern life and yet is also creative. It involves the use of numerous mental stimuli, powers of observation and planning, appraisals of beauty in form, scent and colour, the love of nature and the mystique of growing things. The creative aspect of gardening can operate at many levels, and can be as rewarding for those whose talent for creativity in other fields is limited by their lack of training or natural ability as it is for the expert horticulturist. Furthermore, it is a valuable outlet for the person who is naturally self-effacing. Gardening stands almost alone among the major recreations in providing its adherents with a tangible material return, either of fresh produce to eat or of flowers for the home, or both. While this economic return no longer constitutes a sufficient argument in itself, it remains an important additional factor for certain groups of people such as young married couples, old-age pensioners and widows. It is a recreation which can be practised by many classes of disabled persons, and since it will not normally entail much travelling, it is of benefit to those who either cannot, or do not wish to, travel far. Furthermore, it is a hobby which may be followed from a number of widely different motives, not least of which is the desire of many to eat fresh food which has been grown without the use of artificial fertilisers and pesticides. From the national standpoint, also, it seems important to maintain the strong gardening tradition which has always existed in this country against any future eventuality requiring sudden and drastic increases in our domestic supplies of food from non-commercial agricultural and horticultural sources.

653. Such, in our view, are the merits of gardening as a recreation. We acknowledge immediately that they attach to all forms of recreational gardening wherever they are practised, and that if every family possessed a home garden of sufficient size to satisfy its recreational needs, the need for and value of allotment gardens would not be proved by what we have said. It is, however, obvious that the prospect of everyone having ample garden space is exceedingly remote, and at a time when large numbers of people have little or no garden space at home, each and every one of the arguments which we have presented demonstrates the social benefit of allotment gardens. Such gardens, moreover, ought to possess one further attribute which others lack. At a time when traditional communal activity and the strength of ‘neighbourhood’ are generally tending to decline, they should introduce a strong community feeling, a spirit of healthy competition between individuals and between sites, bonds of companionship and co-operation, communal interest in the satisfactory maintenance of sites and a pursuit in which the whole family may be actively or passively involved. At the present time many of these features are conspicuously lacking. But if they can be engendered and extended, then the benefit which allotment gardens provide to those who are lonely or live alone and to retired people who may have no other incentive to induce them to mingle with their fellows, may be so great as to create an argument even for providing allotments instead of home gardens in certain cases.

654. The second criticism is that allotment gardens occupy valuable land which could and should be more usefully developed. If this argument is taken in isolation—and it has rarely been linked with other allegations—it must be capable of being applied equally to land used for all forms of recreation, since the only land use criterion distinguishing the allotment site from the playing field and
park is the number of people who can be accommodated on it. Those who use this argument—and they include many local councillors—are thinking of ‘value’ purely in commercial terms, whereas to the planner, values cannot always be stated in such terms. All acceptable development plans can now make provision for every recognised communal need, including various types of recreation. Authorities may differ regarding their assessment of the ratio of open to total space, but there is universal agreement that open space is needed as a ‘lung’ to enable a densely populated area to breathe more freely, in the psychological as well as in the physical sense. We cannot, of course, argue the case for one ratio of open space rather than another, but we must emphasise that if the provision of open space is recognised as essential to the physical and mental well-being of urban communities, then its utilisation should be available to as many members of the community as possible, and it should be used, as far as is practicable, for purposes which positively promote their general well-being. Although this concept also is now generally accepted, there are indications that certain groups of people, especially the young, are today obtaining an increasing share of the total available open space at the expense of others; and the evaluation of the uses to which open space should be put can often be coloured by considerations of prestige. We do not for one moment suggest that there cannot be sound planning arguments for using individual allotment sites for other purposes. Equally, however, it cannot be denied that the loss of an allotment site to development without its replacement reduces the total amount of open space in a town; and the translation of a site into a playing field or recreation ground reduces the facilities available for the middle-aged and elderly in favour of those provided for the young.

655. There is one further point which merits at least a passing reference in any discussion of land use. Since the end of the last war, as housing requirements and techniques have changed, there have been corresponding changes of attitude towards particular kinds of residential development, ranging from flats and maisonettes on the one hand to patio-type houses and houses with small gardens on the other. The acceptance of low to medium-density development in the outer suburbs of our large towns, and of high-density in the inner cores where the competition for land is intense, has left a deep imprint on the character of our towns across which densities may range from below 10 persons per acre to well over 100 persons per acre. We do not propose to explore this situation in detail, except in one respect which we feel could have far-reaching effects on the allotments system. On numerous occasions we have been made aware of a dilemma which confronts planners and architects today. The present trend in favour of building houses with small gardens is motivated partly by the natural desire of families to have the use of an area of land which will allow them some privacy, though in reality the latter is rarely achieved; on the other hand, a high proportion of those who occupy such properties do not want a garden and cultivate their plots only under duress and with the minimum of effort. Such households might well be happier with a small enclosed patio, thus releasing unwanted garden areas for other use rather than allowing them to lie derelict in individual control where, far from being assets to the community, they are so often an eyesore and an irritation. If the status of allotment gardening could be such that it could be regarded as the alternative to a home garden, it would be possible to introduce more flexibility into housing patterns. It might in some cases be possible deliberately to reduce the number or size of the home gardens and to set aside
part of the land so gained as allotment gardens for those who would like more land to cultivate. If this could be achieved, the use of land as allotments would need no further justification.

656. The third charge levelled against allotment gardens is that they very often constitute an eyesore (Plates 3 and 16) which is one of the obstacles in the task of creating an attractive townscape. This is often very true, but it is surely an argument for improving allotments, not for disposing of them. To the best of our knowledge, no one in this country has seriously examined the possibility of making an allotment site aesthetically pleasing, although a theoretical treatise on this very topic was published as long ago as 1936.* It is an exercise which would clearly require close co-operation between the gardener and the local authority and expert guidance from a landscape architect; yet, as we have seen, both co-operation and guidance are today conspicuously lacking. Moreover, many authorities, by their failure to evict bad tenants, their reluctance to charge reasonable rents and to spend money on the provision of amenities, and their readiness to allow allotment holders to erect unsightly structures on so many plots (Plate 6), tacitly condone the wretched appearance of sites to an extent which must seriously affect the right to use this appearance as an argument for their closure.

657. The fourth argument for abolishing the public provision of allotment gardens is that the allotment holder receives an unfair privilege at the expense of the rest of the community by paying an absurdly low rent for land from which he derives a profit. This argument would immediately lose much of its force if allotment rents were raised to a more realistic level. Moreover, many other facilities, including every recreational activity which local authorities provide, are subsidised to a greater or lesser degree; and while the value of the produce which the allotment holder grows complicates the case for subsidy, it does not invalidate it: the tenant of a council house is not asked to pay an economic rent simply because he elects to grow vegetables in his garden. The critic argues also that at a time when the value of urban land is so astronomical, it is wrong in principle that an authority should be required to provide a plot of land for the exclusive use of one man. It may well be wrong that allotments should be available on demand, and it is certainly wrong that a man should be able to ‘demand’ allotments of such size and quantity that they constitute a commercial holding, but the provision of allotment gardens is no less justified than is the inclusion of home gardens in an estate of council houses. Moreover, if allotment gardens could be improved to the point where an allotment site took on the character and quality of the continental sites which we discussed in Chapter 14, then each plot would become a family concern serving the recreational needs of several people, and the whole site might provide an aesthetically pleasing area for the inhabitants of the neighbourhood (Figures 24 and 25).

658. Lastly, it is suggested that the very existence of allotment sites is an obstacle to sound town planning. We are mystified by this argument, which has been put to us frequently. If its burden is simply that many sites are today in the wrong place, then we accept it unconditionally, for as we have frequently pointed out, most of them owe their situation to historical accident, and it would be surprising if a large number were found to be ideally placed from every point of view. The obvious solution to this problem is to move the sites, not to destroy

* Lady Allen of Hurtwood, How Allotments could be made an Amenity Asset to the Community.
them. We suspect, however, that the argument really goes much deeper than this, and that many planners are by now so convinced that the problem of allotments is insoluble that in the face of pressures from committees with a stronger voice and better image than that which speaks for allotments, they have difficulty in making a good case for reserving land for allotments in a new development scheme. Yet it must be apparent that the provision of new sites in the right place might, by allowing existing ‘bad’ sites to be phased out over a period of time, ease the problems of development elsewhere. We have seen so many cases in which a desirable development is feasible only because an allotment site is capable of being earmarked for the purpose that, on balance, we would have expected allotment gardens to be regarded more widely as an aid rather than a hindrance to good planning!

659. In this chapter we have examined only the arguments put forward by those who are opposed to the continued provision of allotment gardens by local authorities. We are not invited to consider the advisability of providing facilities for a recreation which is new and unknown, but rather to pronounce on the desirability of continuing a spare-time activity which, in this country, has a long and honourable history. In such circumstances, the onus should rest on those who would abolish allotment gardening to prove their case; and our conclusion must be that while they have produced valid arguments to show that allotment law and practice ought to be drastically reappraised, they have failed to justify the termination of public provision. Moreover, there are numerous arguments in favour of the continued provision of allotments which are not disputed. The cost of urban land must imply that where, as often happens, an authority is obliged to acquire land in advance of need, it should be used during the intervening period. Allotment gardens provide a useful land bank for the cultivation of food in times of emergency; they give a man who has no home garden a ‘stake in the land’; they effect a small saving in the imports of certain crops; they provide a better and more varied diet; and, above all, they provide a form of recreation which, despite all the difficulties which we have examined in earlier parts of our report, is still followed by almost half a million people.

660. For these reasons, we RECOMMEND that local authorities should continue to provide land divided into plots for gardening purposes.

B. Legislation

661. The allotments legislation is contained in seven separate Acts passed between 1908 and 1950; it is affected also, to a minor degree, by the provisions of numerous other enactments and regulations which have come into force over a period of almost a century. In considering what legislative changes should now be made, six alternatives appear to be open to us:—

(i) The existing legislation might be left as it stands.

(ii) The operative parts of the present law might be consolidated, without amendment or addition, into a single Act.

(iii) The process of consolidation might be combined with the incorporation of a number of minor amendments.

(iv) A new Act might be added to the existing legislation.

(v) The legislation might be repealed in its entirety and replaced by a single new Act.
(vi) The legislation might be repealed without replacement.

662. The first two of these alternatives we reject out of hand; for having concluded that allotment gardens or their equivalent should continue to exist, we see no point whatever in the preservation of legislation under which they seem bound to disappear. The third alternative requires a more detailed examination, if only because it commended itself to N.A.G.S., and the arguments against it apply equally to the fourth.

663. The allotments legislation has at least three major defects: it is over-complicated; it is in places ambiguous to the point of incomprehensibility; and it is now a complete anachronism. It is, in our view, unnecessary that the rules relating to allotments should require so much operative legislation; moreover, very many people, representing both local authorities and allotment holders, have pleaded before us that the process of adding new Acts to existing law has produced a situation in which it is often extremely difficult to follow the rules on any topic. One example of this will suffice. An allotments authority must refer to the 1908 Act to learn of its obligations, and to the Acts of 1922 and 1950 to discover their extent; it must turn back to 1908 to understand how it may acquire the land to fulfil those obligations, and on again to the 1925 Act to find the rules relating to the disposal of such land.

664. The ambiguities of the Acts are legion, and we have wrestled with some of them in earlier chapters. That seven Acts which purport to set out the law of allotments should fail to provide a definition of the word 'allotment' (except for certain specific purposes) is, to say the least, surprising, and the omission has introduced considerable difficulties in our investigations. Furthermore, does section 23 of the 1908 Act compel each authority to satisfy the demand for allotments or merely to provide "a sufficient number"? Ought section 33(4) of the same Act, which relates to the transfer of charity allotment land to an allotments authority, to be taken to mean that, on transfer, such land loses its charitable content? If a man who already occupies a 10-rod allotment garden applies for more land, is his allotments authority obliged by section 9 of the 1950 Act to provide it? Is section 12(1) of the 1950 Act, which empowers the occupier of land to keep hens or rabbits "in any place on the land" to be interpreted as giving an allotment holder authority to use his entire plot for this purpose? Why, indeed, does this section, which refers to the occupier of any land, appear in an Allotments Act at all? Is an authority permitted to allow an allotment holder to pay a lower rent simply because he is an old-age pensioner? On all these questions and many more we have received contrary opinions, and conclude that the meaning of much of the current legislation involves a degree of guesswork.

665. It might have been possible to contend with both the complexities and the ambiguities of the legislation if these had been the only objections to it. Far more serious, however, is the fact that the current law is largely irrelevant to the allotments situation today. It is based throughout on the principle that allotment gardening is an economic necessity either to the gardener, or to the nation, or both. It enshrines, and at times emphasises, the image of the allotment as a form of charity which society must provide for the labouring poor. It perpetuates the ill-feeling between allotment holders and authority by imposing a series of rules which might have been designed to protect the one and annoy the other. It fails completely to envisage that a time might arrive when the function of allotment
gardening might change. Its inflexibility is such that the concept of allotment gardening as a recreation can neither be written into it nor added to it. For all these reasons, we conclude that the adoption of either the third or the fourth alternative would solve no problems and would merely add to the confusion.

666. We believe that the fifth of our six alternatives is the best answer, and it would, indeed, have earned our recommendation even if we had deemed it unnecessary to propose many changes in the existing structure. It is fitting that a new concept of allotment gardening should be accompanied by new legislation, and that the repeal of the existing law should signal the rejection of its former image. The new Act might well incorporate a number of the less objectionable features of the present law, but the changes which are required are far too comprehensive to be achieved by a simple adaptation of the Acts of 1908 to 1950.

667. The last of the possible alternatives, which implies that authorities might be left simply with permissive powers to provide land for allotment gardens, is bound to be attractive both in the context of present-day liberal thinking, and in the light of our visit to the continent, and we have given it long and serious consideration. It must, we are confident, be the ultimate solution, towards which everyone connected with the provision and occupation of allotments must work. It is implicit in our concept of allotment gardening as a recreation that it should achieve parity with other forms of recreation for which facilities are provided by the local authority; and we are bound to acknowledge that the continued existence of compulsory legislation not only militates against this campaign for parity but may also perpetuate in the minds of those outside the movement the idea that the allotment holder cannot himself present a satisfactory case for fair treatment.

668. We are, nevertheless, satisfied that the time to sweep away compulsory legislation completely has not yet arrived. In the first place, there seems to be an element of paradox in the suggestion that although it has apparently been necessary to compel authorities to provide allotments at times when national or individual economic stress might have been expected to exert sufficient persuasion in themselves, such compulsion ceases to be needed when those incentives disappear. There are, however, other and more cogent arguments. We said in Part III of this report that there are today many urban authorities which are 'anti-allotments' in the sense that they regard allotment provision as a cross which they are prepared to bear only because the law says that they must. We believe that in most of these cases, this attitude is by now so ingrained that the removal of all statutory obligation would inevitably precipitate the closure of all their allotment sites. Moreover, although the proposals which we will make are designed specifically to enable allotment gardening to achieve that parity to which we referred in our preceding paragraph, this cannot be attained overnight. There will be a long period of gestation during which it will be necessary for the lessons learnt in one area to be adapted to others, and this cannot be done unless a degree of compulsion is retained. Finally, the body corporate of allotment gardeners is relatively inarticulate and weak in bargaining power. Part of the failure of so many allotments committees to exercise any real influence on the allotments situation in their areas has always been caused by the inability of most co-opted members to withstand the powerful financial and prestige forces which often operate within and upon local authorities. The allotment holder, therefore, has a right to expect continued protection against such elements.
until such time as the strength of his movement is sufficient to enable it to stand alone.

669. We therefore RECOMMEND that:

1. Until such time as the new concept of allotment gardening has achieved parity with other recreations, local authorities should be obliged to provide facilities in accordance with our subsequent recommendations.

2. All existing allotments legislation should be repealed and replaced by a single new Act incorporating such of our recommendations as require legislative backing.
CHAPTER 17

THE ALLOTMENT IMAGE

670. The depressing picture which the average allotment garden site produces in the minds of the great majority of people today deters some from applying for an allotment when they might otherwise do so (see paragraph 431), and impels numbers of disillusioned allotment holders to leave the movement (see paragraph 425). It generates in many allotments authorities a feeling that squalid conditions are a necessary feature of allotment gardening and, consequently, that allotment sites must inevitably remain an eyesore within the town; and this, in turn, prompts some authorities to condone the continuing reduction in demand and sometimes even to accelerate it. It often produces in the general public, and especially in those who live near untidy allotment sites, a degree of hostility towards the movement which increases the reluctance of the authority to subsidise its allotments from the rates. The total effect is a vicious circle which, by depressing the image of allotments still further, would eventually destroy them. It follows that, in any proposals for the continued provision of allotment gardens, a vast improvement in this image, designed to enable the recreation to take its rightful place in the life of the community, must be of paramount importance.

671. So radical a change cannot be achieved without a measure of disruption. It will require the goodwill of the allotments authority and the allotments movement, the protection of new legislation, the support of the general public and the guidance of experts in several fields. In some degree, our recommendations must be of a general nature, capable of adaptation to suit local circumstances which are bound to differ from place to place, but, at the same time, a large proportion of what we have to say is so basic that it must affect the situation over the whole of England and Wales.

A. Legislation

(1) The term ‘allotment’

672. Although the vast majority of allotment holders profess themselves satisfied with the continued application of the words ‘allotment’ and ‘allotment garden’ to their plots of land, and although a resolution designed to remove these words from N.A.G.S.’s title was rejected at its annual conference in 1966, we are convinced that a change is essential. The conservative attitude of the allotment holder appears to us to be motivated partly by inertia, and partly by a justifiable pride in the long traditions of the allotments movement, even though some can see that its old image is now out-dated.

673. There are two reasons why a change of title is necessary. Firstly, the original concept of the allotment as a charitable dole of land had by 1908 so impressed itself on the minds of the general public that the authors of the Bill of that year saw no need to incorporate a definition of the word. The Act was, after all, designed to help the “labouring population”, and the theme of charity was therefore to be preserved. Nothing in the subsequent legislation has destroyed this connotation, and many people have told us that, even today, they regard allotments as a form of charity. It seems a forlorn hope that this form of recreation can achieve a new image while this view remains. Secondly, we believe
that the retention of the term ‘allotment’ would imply that the new concept was merely an attempt to improve or ‘top dress’ the old. The extent of the changes in outlook and policy which appear to us to be necessary is so great that all fetters of the past should be severed.

674. Of the many suggestions put to us, the name which seems to us to be the most apt is ‘LEISURE GARDEN’. It signifies that the land is provided primarily for purposes of recreation, and that it is intended for cultivation during the occupier’s spare time. This new name will, of course, replace only the allotment garden. Since we see no reason to change the image of the commercial allotment, and will not propose that it should feature in the new legislation, it seems unnecessary to coin a new name to include it.

675. We therefore RECOMMEND that the new Act should be described as “The Leisure Gardens Act”, and that those authorities charged with the responsibility of providing leisure gardens should be known as ‘leisure gardens authorities’.

(2) Definition

676. We have shown that the current definition of an allotment garden, as expressed in section 22(1) of the 1922 Act and amplified by Section 12(1) of the 1950 Act contains several ambiguities which must be removed in the new legislation. But it also includes a number of features which we consider to be inappropriate to the new leisure gardens image.

677. Although, in oral evidence, N.A.G.S. sought to establish that the upper limit of 40 poles contained in the present definition should be retained, we were not impressed by its argument. The great majority of allotment garden plots today are 10 poles or less in extent; the responsibility of most urban authorities is now restricted by section 9 of the 1950 Act to the provision of allotment gardens which do not exceed 20 poles; and we are certain that a garden of 40 poles must be held by its occupier primarily for commercial purposes with little or no element of pure recreation. We therefore feel that the upper limit should now be reduced to 20 poles, leaving the authority free to provide gardens of any smaller size that it thinks fit.

678. The requirement that the allotment garden must be devoted wholly or mainly to the cultivation of fruit and vegetables is totally out of keeping with the new image. It is curious, if largely academic, that since this condition was not included in the Acts of 1908 and 1919, an allotment holder was not restricted in the growing of flowers on his allotment until 1922. We have on numerous occasions lamented the absence of flowers from allotment gardens today, and although we are assured that only a minority of allotments authorities now impose any limitation on their cultivation, there is little doubt that the effect of the present definition has been to restrict the use of allotment gardens largely to those who want to grow fruit and vegetables. To a man who looks on gardening as his recreation, outmoded restrictions on the cultivation of flowers, herbs or ornamental shrubs and trees seem irksome and unnecessary.

679. By reason of section 12(1) of the 1950 Act, the occupier of an allotment garden is now permitted to use at least part of his plot for the rearing of hens and rabbits. We have discussed in Chapter 11 the almost insuperable problems caused by the indiscriminate mingling of plots devoted to livestock and to horticulture, and the difficulty of making a site which contains livestock attractive
Figure 24

A description of this statutory site (Russell Road/Moor Green Farm, Birmingham) with its rectilinear plot layout is given in Appendix X. The same site, after proposed conversion to a leisure garden site, is shown in Figure 25 (opposite).
THE IMPROVEMENT OF AN ALLOTMENT GARDEN SITE.
PHASE II: DESIGN FOR LEISURE, GARDENING.

NOTATION
- Boundary of site
- Chalet gardens
- Vegetable gardens
- ** Model plant
- Surfaced road
- CP Car parks
- Passing place/delay by
- Turfed walkways incorporating shale palms
- Trees (deciduous/evergreen)
- Trees (coniferous)
- Shrub
- Suggested fruit/ornamental trees
- Community centre
- PL Children's play area
- Summerhouses
- * Garden sheds
- * Water tap

Figure 25

This imaginative design for the conversion of an existing statutory site (Figure 24, opposite) into a leisure-garden site adjoining public open space is described in Appendix X.

271
or even tidy. We have also found that the great majority of allotment holders, and N.A.G.S., resent the presence of livestock on their sites, and we have declared that we can no longer find sufficient justification for expecting the adherents of two such recreations to share the same facilities. We are therefore firmly of the opinion that the rules relating to leisure gardens must include a complete ban on the keeping of livestock. We are conscious of the fact that the repeal of section 12 of the 1950 Act may have wider implications, in that it permits the keeping of certain livestock on "any land", but we can concern ourselves only with allotments. In any event, we doubt very much whether the national situation which persuaded Parliament in 1950 to continue a wartime regulation which permitted people to break their covenants, has any further relevance today.

680. The rule that the produce of an allotment garden must be used for home consumption will clearly require amendment if the occupier of a leisure garden is permitted to grow non-edible crops. Moreover, we have already indicated that the present requirement is both pointless and unworkable, and one might feel disposed to remove all restrictions on the sale of produce. Yet there are two possible objections to this. Firstly, there is, in certain quarters, a fear that it might lead to a proliferation of roadside stalls from which some gardeners would sell their vegetables. We are certain that this possibility may be discounted; the maximum size of the leisure garden plot, the motives which prompt a man to apply for such a garden, and the amount of spare time which he is able to devote to his hobby suggest the amount of public selling which may take place will be no greater than at present. Secondly, there are those who argue that a right to sell produce would bring the leisure garden within the scope of the agricultural holdings legislation. This argument seems to us to be quite unfounded. The leisure garden is no more designed to be used for trade or business than is the allotment garden today, and the omission of any restriction on sale from its definition would in fact remove the present anomaly whereby the occupier of land which is let as an allotment garden can claim the protection of the agricultural holdings legislation by proving that he has sold some of his produce.

681. These arguments, therefore, lead us to **RECOMMEND:**

1. That the definition of a leisure garden in the new Act and elsewhere should be as follows:—

   "A leisure garden is one of a group of contiguous plots of land, each not exceeding twenty poles in extent and not attached to a rateable dwelling, provided by a leisure gardens authority for recreational gardening by the occupier and his family."

2. That the occupier of a leisure garden should not be permitted to use any part of his plot for the keeping of livestock (except bees).

**B. Planning aspects**

682. The blame for the general failure of town planners to reserve suitable land for allotment gardens in their development schemes does not lie principally with the planners themselves. The exclusion from the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 of any provision which would compel them to do so, and the Government decision to ignore the recommendation of the A.A.C. that section 3 of the 1925 Act should be brought up to date, may to some extent have persuaded them that such consideration was no longer necessary, or was left to their own judgment. The continuing decline in the numbers of allotment holders has probably led many to believe that new sites might well remain empty, and the extra cost of carry-
ing out a development by stages has deterred them from setting aside land for allotments which might never be occupied. The Ministry’s interpretation of section 8 of the 1925 Act has effectively prevented planners from replacing bad statutory sites by new and better ones unless the old site is actually needed for development and a new site can be found which complies with the ‘three-quarters of a mile’ rule. The stubborn attitude of allotment holders who do not accept that a transfer from a bad site to a good one will be in their interest has created major problems for the planner and the allotments department who wish both to plan new and better sites and to consider the views of the present tenants.

683. Nonetheless, while it would be wrong generally to fault the local planning machinery for the fact that consideration of allotment needs has rarely featured at an early stage of development schemes introduced since 1947 (although a small number of sites may still have appeared in the right place largely by accident), it is beyond dispute that this situation must be rectified. Both the success of a site, and the prospect of making it attractive to the eye, require as a first principle that it shall be in the right place; and this is the planner’s responsibility.

(1) Types of site

684. The history of allotment gardening and the restrictive legislation under which it has developed have combined to produce and preserve the impression that every urban allotment site must look the same and serve the same purpose. The new concept, on the other hand, will admit of an almost unlimited variety. At one end of the scale, there will be a continuing need—at least for the foreseeable future—for a number of sites in the middle ring of our larger towns and located as nearly as possible to areas of high-density housing development. Such sites will be intended primarily for the elderly, the disabled, and those with insufficient spare time to enable them to travel far. They will probably be devoted mainly to the cultivation of fruit and vegetables, and the introduction of flowers, ornamental shrubs and grass will serve largely to screen the vegetables and to relieve the monotony of row crops. At the other extreme, the way will be open to the development of the chalet garden, approaching the continental sites described in Chapter 14, but incorporating worthwhile British features. These sites will probably, though not necessarily, be situated on the periphery of the town, and will be provided for those who want an attractive garden rather than a functional vegetable plot. Between these two extremes, one would envisage the creation of some sites on which each plot will present an attractive combination of flowers and vegetables, and of others which are designed deliberately to accommodate different types of plot on the same site (Figure 25).

685. Nor does the range of possibilities end here. We saw in Chapter 10 that there are in many blocks of council flats tenants who regret their lack of garden space; some of these are elderly, and would be unable to travel far to a leisure garden site. There must, we are certain, be many instances in which the monotonous, threadbare areas of land which so often surround these blocks could be redesigned and landscaped to incorporate clusters of gardens, with small plots let to enthusiastic tenants (Figures 26 and 27 and Appendix XI). Such gardens would, of necessity, be reserved for a restricted clientele, and would not be entitled to the name “leisure garden”. They would, however, be complementary to a town’s leisure garden system, and could easily be linked to it in many ways. The communities of gardeners on such sites might conveniently be affiliated to local leisure

* See paragraphs 426–36.
Figure 26

An impression of a small garden area subdivided on a cartwheel plan into individual plots for the use of flat-dwellers, particularly retired or partially disabled persons who might not be able to travel to more distant sites. This special type of communal garden with its emphasis on beauty is more fully described in Appendix XI.
garden associations, and so be made to feel that they belong to the body corporate of leisure gardeners in the town.

686. We do not suggest that all these different concepts will be necessary in every town, and it is quite possible that authorities will be able to envisage further alternatives suitable for their own areas; our purpose is only to suggest that the new concept is capable of the widest adaptation.

Figure 27
An impression of a group of raised flower beds incorporated within a small enclosed area to serve the special needs of the elderly or infirm occupying blocks of flats, maisonettes or old people's homes. Such gardens, which could be conveniently tended without excessive stooping, would not only be close to the tenants' homes but would also make the view from their windows more attractive and personal.

(2) The Town and Country Planning Act 1968

687. It is our firm conviction that the establishment of leisure gardens should receive equal consideration with the facilities for other recreations in any reappraisal of a town plan. We have carefully considered N.A.G.S.'s suggestion that separate legislation should be enacted to ensure that this must be done, as was also recommended by the A.A.C. in 1950. We are mindful that the Town and Country Planning Act 1968 has effected a considerable change in the law relating to the revision of development plans; the Act's fundamental purpose is to afford the planner far greater freedom from control by Central Government, and we
cannot believe that the imposition of new regulations would be compatible with this purpose. It is, moreover, our confident belief that the prospect of being able to satisfy its ‘allotment’ obligations by the provision of areas which are visually attractive will be sufficient in itself to persuade an authority that leisure gardens are a desirable feature of new development schemes. For these reasons, we are unable to support N.A.G.S.’s proposal.

688. A town’s leisure gardens should form one of the normal elements of its total open space provision, along with parks, playing fields, children’s playgrounds, gardens of rest and other amenity areas. All of these attract the use of leisure time, and the preparation of plans for extensive areas permits the selection of tracts of land which are suitable for specific purposes within an overall design which is aesthetically pleasing. We feel that, within the terms of the Town and Country Planning Act, a structure plan prepared by a local authority might incorporate a brief but precise definition of its leisure gardens policy, and we suggest that a note to this effect be included in any advice issued by the Minister on the compilation of structure or local plans. If this were done, the preparation of the local plan would then become the stage at which the detailed selection of sites should take place in accordance with the general policy and standard of provision already determined. This local plan, of course, will not normally be submitted to the Minister, but we are satisfied that the planner will be ready and able to make his selection in accordance with the principles of siting which we will outline in our next section.

689. We therefore RECOMMEND that leisure gardens authorities should be urged to include in any structure plan proposed for their areas a brief statement of their policy in regard to the provision of leisure garden sites.

(3) The siting of leisure gardens

690. In offering our views at this stage of our recommendations as to the features to be looked for in choosing a site for a group of leisure gardens, we are conscious of the fact that we have yet to demonstrate the various circumstances in which the provision of new sites should become necessary. There are two reasons why this apparent reversal of cause and effect seems advisable. Firstly, the efficient siting of leisure gardens is a necessary preliminary both to their attractiveness and their success; and the rationalisation of each local allotment situation, entailing as it must the contraction or expansion of some sites and the replacement of others, is of primary importance in the new concept. Secondly, many of our subsequent recommendations, especially those relating to security of tenure, standards of provision and aspects of administration, would be meaningless if every site were inappropriately located.

691. Many of the points which we have to make are self-evident and we know that there will be few, if any, areas of land which possess all the desirable attributes and are available for selection. We have considered the advisability of setting these qualities down in their order of importance; we felt, however, that it would be regrettable if a site which possessed most of our list of virtues was rejected merely because it lacked the first.

692. We therefore urge and RECOMMEND that in selecting a new site for the establishment of leisure gardens, regard should be paid to as many as possible of the following points:—

1. Ideally, most leisure garden sites should be attached to areas set aside for public recreation, preferably parks or playing fields. There are four
advantages in such a siting. Firstly, it might reduce the cost of preparing the site by enabling the plotholders to use certain facilities, such as toilets, which already exist within reasonable proximity in the public area. Secondly, it might be possible for the caretakers, wardens, or rangers of the recreation area, if such persons exist, to include the leisure garden site in their supervisory duties, in order to reduce vandalism and theft. Thirdly, if the site developed on the lines of the chalet garden concept to the point where every plot was a microcosm of beauty and attractive design, it would be simple to integrate it fully with the public open space and allow the general public to have the pleasure of walking through it to the recreation area. Lastly, and this is by far the most important argument, it would permit a flexibility in land use whereby any temporary vacancies on the site could be handled in the best possible way by grassing down the plots and adding them to the open space until they were again needed.

2. The site should have as much security of tenure as possible. We will, of course, discuss security more fully in due course, but it is important in this list of desirable features to indicate that if a choice must be made between two areas of land of the same general standard, the one which is less likely to be required for development in the near future should always be preferred; similarly, if the land is rented, the site held on the longer lease or tenancy should be selected.

3. The site should be suitably situated to serve the needs of those who might be expected to use it. In many cases this will mean that it should be near an area of high population density where the residences have little or no garden space. We do not, however, accept that this ideal should today be sought at the expense of either of the two preceding stipulations, and a more secure site attached to a recreation complex should always be preferred to an insecure site which stands alone, provided that the former is readily accessible by public transport from its ‘catchment’ area.

4. The physical character of the site should be good or, if not, should be capable of being made so. This applies particularly to the topsoil, and enough soil of good quality should always be added where inadequate depth or other deficiencies are found. In general, made-up (tipped) sites should be avoided unless the material has been allowed to settle for a suitable period and ample new topsoil has been provided and chemically analysed for its suitability. Careful consideration should also be given to known microclimatic conditions, and areas subject to excessive frost or strong winds should be avoided where possible. Alternatively, the possibility of providing adequate protection by earth sculpture or the planting of shelter belts should be examined before the site is chosen. Areas of land which are known to be subject to periodic flooding should always be rejected, and an efficient drainage scheme must be applied in advance to land which easily becomes waterlogged.

5. Finally, if a choice is still available, the site which offers the best chance of becoming an area of attractive appearance should be preferred. In general, land which has a gentle slope to the south may be more suitable than an area which is completely flat; similarly, land which incorporates some interesting features, such as trees, a pond or varying landforms, has more potential than sites which are flat and featureless. Regard should
also be paid to the great difficulty of providing an attractive vista within areas which contain electric pylons (Plate 17), power cables or substations, and to the pointlessness of seeking to site attractive leisure gardens in the vicinity of establishments such as gas works and factories emitting smoke and fumes.

C. Aesthetic considerations

(1) Landscaping and amenities

693. The selection of a site in accordance with the principles set out in the preceding section is the first step in the creation of a pleasant and successful group of leisure gardens. A great many existing allotment garden sites will be found to possess these same basic criteria, and we must now consider the methods by which such sites both old and new can be transformed into garden areas which will become and remain an attractive feature of the townscape, acceptable alike to the plotholder, the potential plotholder, the general public, and, we trust, the local authority.

694. It is obvious that the scope of the improvements which might be effected must depend in large measure on the extent to which the site possesses security of tenure; clearly, no authority can be expected to expend a great deal of time, energy and money upon a site which will probably be required for development in a year or two's time. This is not the place to discuss security of tenure in extenso and the comments which follow should therefore be read on the basis that the sites under review will have been accorded a degree of security equivalent to that possessed by land used for other recreations.

695. We will deal first with those parts of the site which are principally the responsibility of the local authority as landlord. Each site should be subjected to a programme of landscaping and improvement under the guidance of a landscape architect with the dual object of making the appearance of the site from beyond its perimeter as pleasing as possible, while increasing the attractiveness of the interior of the site for the benefit of the plotholders, both existing and prospective. In the case of a site which is already in use as allotment gardens, it is highly desirable that the existing tenants should be consulted about, and invited to comment on, the outline plan at each stage, and the landscape architect must be prepared to listen sympathetically to their suggestions. It is particularly important that the programme which is finally adopted should cause as little disturbance as possible to the plotholders. The form which the landscaping should take locally must to some extent depend on the character of the site and on which of the roles outlined in paragraph 680 it is most likely to fulfil. But certain features will be common to them all and are illustrated in Figures 24 and 25:

(i) Although there is nothing intrinsically wrong with rectilinearity, there is no reason why a leisure garden must be oblong in shape; the extreme formality which is so characteristic of the allotment garden site and which shows a complete lack of imagination in design must be avoided at all costs.

(ii) The rigid adherence to the standard 10-rod plot should end. The plots on a leisure garden site should be of several different sizes and shapes; this change will not only admit much more flexibility of design, but will also cater for the many people who do not want and cannot cope
with plots of the size which they are obliged to take today. Thus, one might envisage the creation on some sites of ‘Ladies’ plots’ or ‘Veterans’ plots’ of smaller size.

(iii) The traditional method of separating each plot from its neighbour by means of a path, which on so many old sites has quickly become weed-infested no-man’s land, should in general be discouraged. The plots should be divided (if necessary) by other means, such as stepping-stones, a well-trimmed hedge or ornamental shrubs, leaving each plotholder free to construct such paths as he may need within his plot; the maintenance of the path will then become his personal responsibility.

(iv) The theory that the parts of the site which are not cultivated by the individual plotholder should be reduced to a minimum (a relic of the period when the cultivation of vegetables on as much land as possible was highly desirable) is no longer valid. Those responsible for the landscaping must feel free to experiment and to allocate a reasonable proportion of the land for communal use, without at any time losing sight of the fact that its primary purpose is the provision of individual gardens. The maximum ratio of communal area to that assigned to the plotholders will occur on chalet garden sites and should be of the order of 30:70. While it may be somewhat lower on other types of site it should still be substantial; most of the consequent reduction in the numbers of plots will be recouped by variations in their size to which we have already referred.

696. To provide a practical illustration of the kind of improvements that might be made to an existing allotment garden site, the present features of a large statutory site (Russell Road/Moor Green Farm) in Birmingham have been presented in Figure 24 and the same site after proposed treatment is shown in Figure 25. It should be emphasised that the design for leisure gardening, prepared by Elizabeth Driver, seeks to present a range of possible treatments for different sectors of the site, each of which has its own individual character, rather than to apply a single definitive theme throughout the entire site. A more detailed account of the elements of the design and its underlying principles is provided in Appendix X, together with a description in general terms of the factors which should be considered when selecting programmes of improvement for individual sites. The scale of the improvement would necessarily differ with the size of the site, its ultimate purpose and the number of existing features which could be deemed suitable for retention. In general, however, the number and standard of activities to be provided should accord with the designs of the landscape architect, so that it would be possible at an early stage to compose a master plan for the improvement of each site. This plan should then form the basis for its subsequent development.

697. The provision of amenities designed for the use of the individual tenant is bound to present a difficult problem. For some sites, the erection of a toolshed, locker, greenhouse or summerhouse on every plot might form an integral part of the master plan; on others it might be possible to leave some plots unequipped; on still more, the plan might be sufficiently flexible to allow each tenant to signify what type of amenity, if any, he requires. Some authorities will prefer to erect toolsheds in groups or clusters, as depicted on Plate 12, while others would feel that the appearance of the site would be improved if they were built on the
individual plots (Plates 28 and 29). A further problem will arise in connection
with the cost of these amenities. For the purpose of Appendix X, it has been
assumed that all structures on the leisure gardener’s plot will be both designed
and erected by the local authority. In the early stages of the development of the
new ‘image’, it is probably advisable that this procedure should be widely adopted,
but it is beyond argument that the gardener is likely to maintain his shed, summer-
house or greenhouse more efficiently if it is his own property; and this will be
still more probable if he has designed and built it himself. This possibility involves
financial considerations which we will examine in Chapter 20, but we would
certainly not debar any tenant from presenting to his authority his own design
for an attractive hut or summerhouse.

698. We RECOMMEND, therefore, that no tenant should be permitted to erect
any form of structure on his leisure garden without the prior approval of the planning
authority, and such approval must cover design, materials, size, colour and location.

(2) Maintenance: the association

699. As we pointed out in paragraph 525, the existence of a strong association
of allotment holders with energetic and enlightened officers, imbued not only with
official authority but also with an inherent love of allotment gardening, seems able
to produce a site which is both viable and popular (Plates 2, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13).
A weak association, on the other hand, which does not command the respect of the
local authority, and whose officers are concerned mainly with the trading side
of the site’s activities, will generally present a poor image to those outside the
movement, and will take so little interest either in the success or in the appearance
of its site that it might be far better to have no association at all.

700. The communal nature of the leisure garden site and the coincidence of
interest among its plotholders are major factors in the justification of the leisure
garden concept. For this reason, and because there could be no justification for ex-
pecting the leisure gardens authority to undertake every aspect of the maintenance
of a site, it is in our view desirable that a strong association should exist separately
on each leisure garden site. But if, exceptionally, the individual sites in a town were
too small to warrant this, one would favour a combined organisation which drew
its officers from every site under its control.

701. We recognise that the promotion of such associations, which must depend
ultimately on the emergence among leisure gardeners of a sense of community and
of pride in the appearance of their sites, may be a difficult task. To a certain
extent, however, the initial treatment of a site and the provision of new and
better class amenities may be expected to generate a certain enthusiasm among the
existing plotholders, while the improved image will help to bring into the move-
ment men and women who are likely to be influenced by altruistic motives. We
considered whether it would be advisable or practicable to compel every leisure
gardener to join his local association, but decided that this would only be feasible
where the association was placed in complete control of the site; in general,
we feel that an association composed of reluctant members should be avoided.
Instead, we hope that the suggestions which we make in the following paragraphs
will so change the outlook and attitude of plotholders that good associations
with full membership will arise spontaneously on many sites.
702. Our proposals for the maintenance of the communal parts of the site are based on a number of factors which may appear to be, but are not in fact, in conflict:

(i) The greater the responsibility which is placed on the plotters, the more efficient their organisation is likely to be.

(ii) There are many aspects of maintenance which the plotters are more qualified than the authority to undertake.

(iii) The authority must retain overall responsibility for the condition of the communal parts of the site.

(iv) There are several aspects of maintenance which could be carried out better and more cheaply by the authority.

Our general conclusion is that where the association is sufficiently strong it should be held responsible for all maintenance except that which involves capital outlay or requires expert knowledge. Its members would, therefore, undertake the maintenance of grass verges, flower beds, shrubs and areas of lawn, and would keep the communal buildings clean and tidy.* The authority should take responsibility for the maintenance of the perimeter hedges or fences, the entrance gates and the roadways; it should also be liable for any repairs to motor mowers or other equipment and to any communal buildings which it owns. The part played by the members of the association in maintenance would be recognised by a financial arrangement with the local authority. We will discuss these points further in Chapter 20.

703. It is advisable, in this context, to consider briefly the practice of leasing allotment sites en bloc to associations, and the parallel system of appointing associations to act as the landlord’s agents. To the extent that both place on an association a great deal of the responsibility for the success of a site, they are to be commended; and there is no doubt that many sites administered in this way are among the best in the country today. However, we have two reservations about extending either system of management in the future. Firstly, in the initial period during which the new concept is to be established, the expert knowledge and guidance of the landscape architect, the planner and the horticultural officer will be far more necessary than in the past; an enlightened authority is likely to be more aware than the association as to what it is trying to achieve. Secondly, it is difficult to draft a lease in terms which will ensure that the landlord continues to retain overall responsibility for the administration of the site, and we are convinced that such responsibility must rest with the authority. On balance, therefore, while we are prepared to leave the final decision to the discretion of each authority, we are persuaded that the appointment of an association to act as agent has less objection than the grant of a lease to an association.

704. We propose to leave until later a discussion of the appropriate levels of rents and other outgoings which the tenant of a leisure garden should expect to pay. We must, however, stipulate at this point that it will be necessary in future to charge realistic rents which vary not only by reason of the security of tenure and the standard of amenities provided, but also by reference to the amount of maintenance which falls on the leisure gardens authority. If, because of the failure of the gardeners on a particular site to form themselves into an association strong and willing enough to undertake simple maintenance aided by mechanised

* See paragraph 885.
equipment the authority is obliged to take full responsibility for the communal parts of the site, the rent charged for each plot must clearly be higher than elsewhere. Similarly, if an association which has undertaken some responsibilities subsequently gives evidence that it is incapable of carrying them out, the individual rents must be increased. But if an association shows that it can maintain its site assiduously and effectively, then those plotholders who elect to remain outside the association and its corporate activities will be required to pay higher rents. It seems to us that such proposals which are quite equitable may be expected to have the effect of establishing viable associations on many sites which might otherwise lack them.

705. We therefore RECOMMEND:—

1. That leisure gardens authorities should take all possible steps to promote the formation of strong associations on all leisure garden sites in their areas.

2. That the maintenance of the communal parts of each site should be shared between the leisure gardens authority and the local association on a basis which will ensure that each will be responsible for the tasks for which it is best fitted.

3. That while the ultimate responsibility for the condition of the communal areas should rest with the leisure gardens authority, it should be permitted to enter into any arrangement with the local association which it thinks fit.

4. That the part which the association and its members play in the maintenance of the site should be reflected in the rent which is charged.

The leisure gardener and his plot

706. The problem of persuading the typical allotment holder that the new image places upon him certain responsibilities in regard to the attractiveness of his plot should not be insuperable. The great improvement in the appearance of the communal parts of the site will undoubtedly inspire some to emulate its example, while others who have professed that their indifference only matches that of their local authorities will no longer be able to rely on this excuse. The rigid control on the erection of structures to which we have referred will remove one of the major causes of unsightliness, and a substantial increase in rents will reduce the numbers who find it cheap to neglect their gardens. Furthermore, to the extent that the more attractive image of the leisure garden will bring into the movement people who are at present deterred by the poor appearance of many sites, it must be expected that the higher standards of the newcomers will be apparent in the cultivation of their plots; and the removal of all restriction on the crops which they may grow will assist in this process.

707. We must expect, however, that there will, for the foreseeable future, be some gardeners who will obstinately remain unimpressed by the improvements which they see around them. Such men will no doubt seek to continue their practice of filling their plots during spring and summer withserried rows of vegetables, leaving them virtually untended from autumn to spring, littering them with sagging poles and general rubbish, and ignoring the corporate life of the site. We have debated whether it is either desirable or necessary to regulate the manner in which the gardener should cultivate his plot. Since the keynote of many of our recommendations is the removal of long-standing restrictions, we would be most reluctant to impose more; but until such time as plotholders generally accept
that the possession of a garden confers a privilege which demands something in return, we cannot afford to jeopardise the success of the new concept by allowing a few recalcitrant gardeners to ignore the changes which have taken place.

708. We therefore RECOMMEND:—

1. That every leisure gardener should be strongly and repeatedly urged, both by his association and by his local authority, to make his plot attractive by incorporating flowers or flowering shrubs at strategic points within and around the plot, especially where it meets a main pathway through the site.

2. That if, after due warning, a gardener is not prepared to do this, he should forthwith be required to move to a plot in a part of the site which is distant from the main pathways and should be reminded of the need to honour his undertaking to keep the appearance of his plot up to the standard required; the part of the site to which he is moved should be suitably screened by the planting of hedges or small shrubs.

3. That every tenant of a leisure garden should be obliged to sign a written agreement incorporating the following rules:—
   
   (a) The plot shall be used as a leisure garden and for no other purpose whatsoever.

   (b) The plot shall be cultivated properly and assiduously, and shall at no time be neglected.

   (c) The tenant shall not bring onto his plot any contrivance or apparatus of unsightly appearance, and shall immediately remove therefrom any equipment about which justifiable complaint is made.

   (d) The tenant shall plan the layout of his plot in such a way as to give no cause for complaint to the tenants of neighbouring plots or the general public. In particular, any compost or rubbish shall be temporarily stored at the end of the plot furthest from the main pathway and shall be suitably screened.

   (e) The tenant shall, when instructed to do so, take immediate steps to control and eradicate any disease or pest with which his soil, crops, or structures are found to be infested or infested.

   (f) The tenant shall, without the written consent of the local authority, erect any building on his plot; if consent is given he shall, in constructing the building, observe any conditions as to function, siting, size, design, materials and colour which may be imposed. No building erected on the plot shall be used for the purposes of trade or business.

   (g) The tenant shall not burn any waste material on his plot except at such times as the landlord shall, in writing, specify.

709. It is in our view essential that these rules, which should be included in any revised set of model rules issued by the Ministry, are rigidly enforced. Where a local association is considered to be sufficiently strong to undertake some of the responsibility for the upkeep of a site, it may be authorised to appoint its own officers to ensure that each tenant maintains his plot according to these rules. The association must, however, be made clearly to understand that its own effectiveness will be assessed by reference to the degree of efficiency which it exhibits in this respect. It is vital that every leisure gardener should understand
that he cannot expect to contravene his agreement—and, particularly, his undertaking not to neglect his plot—with impunity. The rules outlined above should not be regarded either as exhaustive or unchangeable; we see no reason why each authority should not be permitted to interpret them to suit its own leisure gardens policy.

710. We therefore RECOMMEND:

1. That the Minister should issue a new set of ‘model’ rules to each leisure gardens authority, based on those outlined above and incorporating others which we will suggest in due course; and

2. that an authority should in future be permitted to make its own rules, on the lines of those issued by the Minister, without the need to obtain the Minister’s consent.

711. On many allotment garden sites today, theft, vandalism and damage caused by straying animals are a major factor in quenching the enthusiasm of the individual allotment holder and in rendering nugatory any attempt to keep the site clean and tidy. It will be recalled* that N.A.G.S. has advocated certain changes in the law in this respect, but such changes would place leisure gardens in a privileged position which we have sought throughout to avoid. A general improvement in the standards of oversight maintained by the local authority, stouter boundary fencing of better quality, the availability of park rangers or members (e.g. retired persons) of the local association to spend some time on the site when most of the tenants are at work, and a general increase in the number of tenants to be found on the site at any one time, will all help to alleviate the problem; and, as we pointed out in paragraph 409, there are those who believe that vandalism is largely confined to sites which already present an unattractive appearance.

712. We therefore RECOMMEND that the new Act should include a section imposing a maximum fine of £20 on any person convicted of causing damage to a leisure garden, its crops, fences, buildings or appurtenances (provided that a notice to this effect is displayed at or near the site.)

713. In the context of assisting the leisure gardener towards a realisation of his responsibilities, two further important points must be made. Firstly, there can be no doubt that the provision and maintenance of a ‘model’ garden, either in a public park or on a suitable vacant plot, can inspire some to try to match its standards and also attract the interest of those outside the movement (Figure 25). During the last war the Hyde Park Allotment was of great assistance in this way, and the changing face of allotments with the introduction of flowers, landscaping, new designs and better amenities needs equal publicity. The plots already on view at the Syon Park Garden Centre, Hounslow (Plate 30), Flitwick (Plate 29), Cardiff (Plate 28), and elsewhere will help enormously, but, unless more authorities are prepared to provide plots on similar lines, many allotment holders will almost certainly approach the new concept with no clear idea of their objectives.

714. Secondly, it is essential that adequate educational facilities should be made available to all leisure gardeners, and that their existence should be known. Horticultural experts will have two roles: they will be able to influence the character of a site greatly by advice, demonstrations and lectures, especially during the winter months; and they will supervise the detection and elimination of pests

* See paragraph 594.
and disease. In the case of smaller authorities, the county agricultural education officers may be sufficient for this purpose, but we are certain that a large municipal or county borough will need a trained officer of its own.

715. We are satisfied that the application of the suggestions and recommendations which have been made in this chapter, extended and adapted as necessary to suit local needs, will create and maintain a pattern of leisure gardens which merits security of tenure. The case for security of tenure will be examined at the beginning of our next chapter, but it seems necessary to indicate here that every possible means should be used to convince the leisure gardener that, in the future, a single unkempt plot will weaken the security of the whole site.
CHAPTER 18

STANDARDS OF PROVISION AND SECURITY OF TENURE

716. In Part III of this report we discussed both the security of tenure and the standards of provision of allotment gardens today. Nowhere, however, were we able to consider these two vital topics together. They are not linked in the legislation, and none of the evidence put to us even suggested that there was a close connection between them. Yet throughout our deliberations we have found it impossible to regard them as separate subjects. If it was right to enact section 8 of the 1925 Act in order to give the allotment holder some security, then it must be wrong to permit a local authority to satisfy the demand for allotments within its area without providing a single plot which enjoys the protection of that section. If the demand for ‘secure’ allotments is greater than the demand for temporary plots, which demand is an authority required by law to satisfy? If lack of security reduces the demand for plots and thereby increases the dereliction of a site, can an authority which provides no statutory sites claim to have genuinely satisfied the demand at all? These and other considerations have led us to the view that our examination of the two subjects must be combined.

717. Before considering security of tenure from several different angles, there is one point to be made. Whatever the final decisions on security may be, we consider it absolutely vital that the tenant of every leisure garden should at all times be aware of any proposals which may adversely affect the future of his site, particularly where these proposals emerge from a revision of the urban plan. The recommendations which we make will clearly stand little chance of success if the gardener continues in the future to be influenced by sinister stories associated with the sudden appearance of surveyors on a thriving site, or listens apprehensively to unwarranted rumour simply because he is kept in ignorance of the true facts. We hope to make proposals in due course designed to improve the channels of communication between the local authority and the tenants of its leisure gardens, which we feel will be of great assistance in ensuring the general success of the leisure gardens system in each town. But one of their most important roles will be to ensure that, whether a gardener has ample security or only very little, his first intimation of any impending change will come in the form of a full, frank and timely statement from his landlord.

718. The problem of security of tenure really involves finding the answers to a series of interdependent questions, the first group of which examines the case for security against the background of the new leisure gardens concept. Will the leisure gardener need security of tenure? Will he deserve it? What amount of security will he need and deserve? Can this amount be provided within existing planning frameworks? We have seen that the average allotment holder today does not appear to regret his lack of security as deeply as N.A.G.S. would have us believe, and as long as there is no actual threat of imminent takeover, it is doubtful whether his insecurity has any great effect on the assiduity with which he cultivates his plot. The development of the leisure garden image, however, implies the progressive improvement of each plot, and the readiness of the gardener to spend more for a smaller economic return. It would be unreasonable, therefore,
to expect him to co-operate in this venture unless he felt certain of being able to retain his garden for a considerable period of time.

719. The question whether the gardener will deserve security is more difficult to answer in advance. The majority of leisure gardeners, like the majority of allotment holders, will be people who have very little garden at home and, since the gardens of council houses are not regarded as potential areas for development, the leisure gardener will have a right to expect that his garden will possess a similar implied security. We recognise that the two are not precisely parallel, in that the home gardener is gardening as an individual, whereas the leisure gardener will continue to deserve security according to the way in which he interprets his corporate responsibilities, both in the cultivation of his own plot and his role in ensuring the success of the entire site.

720. Although the security of the leisure garden site will be important to the plotholder, it will clearly be vital to the local authority which provides it. The readiness and, indeed, the right of an authority to spend money on the improvement of any area of land bear a direct relationship to the length of time for which the land is likely to remain in its present use. No authority could therefore reasonably be expected to incur capital expenditure in respect of a site which was scheduled for development in a few years' time; even the possibility of future development creates a natural reluctance to spend money. Many authorities today are inclined to regard the majority of their allotment sites as ripe for development, and this attitude accentuates the problem still further. This arises the dilemma that a new concept, whose success will require a measure of security, is being presented in an atmosphere which suggests that most allotment sites are expendable. It follows that until the climate of opinion changes, it will be necessary to devise a means of creating security by rule of law.

721. In the context of flexible town planning, no open space, whatever its present use, can be regarded as sacrosanct and incapable of being taken for other development. Nor would it be advisable to decree that a leisure garden site must possess complete security, even if such were possible. It is no less important to ensure that leisure gardening does not surpass other recreations in its privileges than that it should be allowed to match them. We conclude, therefore, that the ultimate aim must be to accord to the leisure garden site the same degree of security—neither more nor less—as that given to land devoted to other recreations; and we see no reason why this should not be possible.

722. The second group of questions relates to the operation of section 8 of the 1925 Act, which purports to give the allotment holder on a statutory site some security today. Has it worked successfully in providing security for statutory allotments? Does it give the right amount of security? Does it in fact afford any security at all? Might it be adapted to the leisure gardens concept?

723. In our opinion, section 8 has little relevance to the allotments situation today, and still less to the future of the leisure gardens movement. It has, we believe, three major defects. Firstly, it is essentially an artificial method of awarding security of tenure, since it is based not on the intrinsic merit of an allotment site or the validity of the claims made on it, but rather on the difficulty of finding an alternative site near at hand, and the considerable length of time which it takes the Ministry to examine each application for consent to alienation. This same artificiality has proved to be the allotment holder's worst enemy, in that it has
dissuaded many authorities from formally appropriating land to allotments use. In other words, the law designed to provide allotment holders with security has itself ensured that the majority of them remain insecure!

724. Secondly, the security offered by section 8 is largely illusory. It does not ensure that any site, however viable, will continue in allotment use. It does nothing to ensure that either the amount or the proportion of statutory allotment land in any town will remain constant. It guarantees that most allotment holders fortunate enough to occupy a plot on a statutory site will always have an allotment within walking distance (three-quarters of a mile) of their homes, but might compel them to change sites more than once in the process. Such 'security' would be pointless in a system whose aim must be to confer security on each individual plot and on each individual site.

725. Lastly, the security provided by section 8 is based on false principles. Ideally, in our view, any provision designed to offer security to allotment sites should operate in such a way that, whereas the alienation of a poor site is comparatively easy, the appropriation of a strong and viable site is made as difficult as possible. But section 8 does not work in this way. At present if one authority is seeking to take over a half-empty site, which is badly situated and has poor soils, in order to build a new school which is urgently needed, while a second requires the alienation of a strong, viable and fully tenanted site to construct a playing field whose superior claim to the land is questionable, both must expect to meet with precisely the same degree of difficulty. Indeed, if the latter is able to provide an alternative site in the neighbourhood while the former cannot do so, the consequence will be even more deplorable. Not only will the half-derelict site remain while the flourishing site disappears, but the animosity of the general public against a system which allows the perpetuation of derelict eyesores against the pressures of urban development will be increased.

726. The final question, therefore, must ask what should replace section 8 of the 1925 Act. The only suggestion put forward in evidence came from N.A.G.S. which argued that the compensation payable to a displaced allotment holder should be raised to a sum which would deter an authority from closing a site unless the grounds for doing so were overwhelming. We have given this proposal careful consideration, but find it quite unacceptable. It is, if anything, more artificial than the system which it is designed to replace. While there may be a case in equity for a revision of the rules relating to compensation, there can be no possible justification for using the threat of large payments to allotment holders as a means of ensuring the retention of a site which those same allotment holders may have rendered unfit for preservation.

727. We have said that the security of leisure garden sites must achieve parity with that of other areas of recreation. The security of a municipal bowling green or tennis court will sometimes be protected by law; but it will be justified by entirely different circumstances. Firstly, it is usually in the right place, and so attracts adequate numbers of the right people. Its site will have been selected with due regard both to its accessibility for those who will wish to use it and to the improbability that the land will be needed for other purposes. Secondly, the authority will have spent a considerable sum on its preparation and maintenance, and will ensure that its investment remains secure. Thirdly, the general body of ratepayers who do not use the facilities are nonetheless prepared to accept that they should be provided. The briefest examination of these principles shows
that the third derives largely from the second, and the second from the first; and it is therefore perfectly fair to assert that the 'security' of many municipal recreations is matched by their sound location and adequate capital investment.

728. It follows from this assessment that in order to give leisure gardens the degree of security which they need and deserve, it is necessary firstly to ensure that they are sited with as much care as other recreational facilities, and secondly that they are then subjected to a full programme of improvements on the lines laid down in the previous chapter. There are a great many allotment garden sites today, both statutory and temporary, which either accidentally or (more rarely) by design do in fact possess some of the attributes which we listed as essential in Chapter 17, while lacking others. Many allotment holders, we know, would prefer to continue to cultivate their present insecure plots rather than to move to new and more secure sites, and a direction to the effect that every leisure garden must be sited in accordance with the above principles would be unfair. It would also be unfair and needlessly expensive for those 'allotment minded' authorities which over the years have made a genuine effort to ensure that their sites will be 'in the right places'.

729. We propose, therefore, that leisure gardens should be designated as either 'Established' or 'Non-established' by reference to the life expectancy of each site at the date of its selection and the resultant scale of improvements which may be offered to it. Sites of both categories should be selected with as much regard as possible to the stipulations made in paragraph 692, but every established site must possess two additional properties. Firstly, in order to ensure that the authority will be able to exercise control over it for a period long enough to justify an extensive programme of improvements and a considerable capital outlay, it must either be owned by the appropriate leisure gardens authority or held by it under the terms of a lease which at the date of selection has a period of at least twenty-one years still to run.* Secondly, it must, again at the date of selection, be viable within the framework of the urban plan. This means, essentially, not only that there is no immediate prospect of the land being required for any other purpose, but also that in the opinion of the planning officer and his committee, leisure gardening would constitute a proper and effective use of the land in question for both the short and the long term. It follows from this that a non-established leisure garden site will be one which, either because its future use is outside the authority's control, or because it will (or may) be needed for an alternative purpose within the next few years, or because it is badly situated or is of poor physical character, cannot merit much attention or expenditure. The life expectancy of such sites will be very variable, but as a general rule, we would expect the readiness of the local authority to spend money on them to bear a direct relationship to the length of time for which they are likely to remain in leisure garden use.

730. It is clear that both types of site could be found among existing allotment gardens, and also that both could be created on land hitherto used for other purposes. Generally speaking, statutory and temporary allotment sites might be expected to become established and non-established leisure garden sites respectively, but this is by no means certain. Many statutory sites, no doubt

* It is to be hoped that the great majority of established sites will be created on land which is owned by the appropriate leisure gardens authority, and that where it is necessary to negotiate a lease of land for this purpose, every effort will be made to secure a term considerably in excess of the minimum.
would be considered to be vulnerable, while some temporary sites might comply with the highest standards of security laid down. Moreover, we will in due course make proposals designed to allow some private sites to be brought within either of the two categories. Our next task, however, in accordance with the principles which we have outlined, must be to ensure that each authority will include a quota of established sites in its provision and will institute a full programme of improvements upon them.

731. Before we examine the proper standards of provision which each authority should undertake, and consider how these should be related to security of tenure, it is necessary to decide whether any changes should be made in the categories of local authority which are at present responsible for providing allotment gardens. Throughout our enquiries we have been impressed by the way in which the allotment situation can differ widely between areas which are in close proximity to each other, and it might seem sensible that the obligation to provide leisure gardens should rest on the smallest local authority with power to acquire land. Our only doubt concerned the designated areas of new towns, where allotment provision has often been on a haphazard and irregular basis; but since we understand that during the period of the town’s development the existing urban and rural authorities retain their open space responsibilities, they must obviously remain in overall charge of the leisure garden situation. We would, however, expect the Minister to remind the Development Corporation of each new town at an early stage of the need to reserve land for leisure gardens in accordance with the principles of siting set out in paragraph 692. The existing authorities, moreover, must clearly understand that they have audity to ensure that the master plan includes sufficient leisure garden sites to cater for the target populations of their respective administrative areas.

732. We have seen that, in general, the allotments situation in rural areas during the past twenty years has been much more stable than in the towns. The numbers of allotments, both commercial and recreational, have certainly declined, but the fall has been regular and accountable, and has rarely produced the friction and hostility so characteristic of the situation in urban areas. Only 30 per cent of rural parishes now contain allotments of any class (Figure 9), while the proportion of the demand which is satisfied by private provision is relatively high (Figure 7) and the percentage of allotment holders who occupy several plots is constantly increasing. No less than 60 per cent of those rural parishes which do provide allotments show a profit on their allotment accounts which they must be anxious to maintain. These facts suggest strongly that the comparative peace of the rural allotment scene is due not so much to the continued obligation to satisfy the demand as to an inherent stability; this impression is confirmed by the fact that the removal in 1950 of the obligation to provide ‘commercial’ allotments produced neither an avalanche of closures nor an outbreak of discontent. It has seemed to us, therefore, that the arguments in favour of relaxing the rule which compels parish councils and meetings to provide allotment gardens where necessary are substantial.

733. At this stage, however, we face again the dilemma that the designation of local authority areas has produced a situation in which many civil parishes are essentially ‘urban’ in size and character, while many small towns have decidedly ‘rural’ attributes. Since there is a natural tendency for the allotments situation in each locality to be affected more by the character of the area than by its administrative status, the arbitrary relaxation of the present rules in respect of one class of
authority would be both unfair and unrealistic, and we prefer to rely on the population figures for each area to determine its obligations. We propose to recommend, therefore, that the obligation to provide leisure gardens should not extend to any authority with a population of less than 5,000: such authorities, however, should retain permissive powers to provide them if they so wish. We propose, too, that the same powers, without obligation, should be extended to the city of London and inner London boroughs, for there is no purpose in imposing on these authorities a new obligation which they could not possibly sustain.

734. We present this report at a time when the structure of local government is under detailed examination. It is impossible at this stage to predict what the outcome of this reappraisal will be, and although the indications point to the emergence of new types of authority with larger administrative areas, we cannot base our recommendations on speculation. We therefore propose that if changes in the pattern of local government do take place, the proposals which we have made in the preceding paragraphs should be adapted as follows:—

(i) The leisure gardens authority for each area should be the organisation responsible for the provision of open space in that area.

(ii) If an amalgamation of existing leisure gardens authorities includes areas which would at present be exempt from compulsory provision under the proposal made in paragraph 733, the new authority should retain the exemption (and the permissive powers) in respect of those areas, so long as the special condition on which exemption is granted continues to apply.†

735. We have been unable to understand the reason for the powers at present held by the Ministry and by county councils to provide allotments if the designated allotments authority fails to do so. It seems to us very strange to impose a firm obligation on a local authority and to assume almost immediately that it might fail to fulfil it. We suggest that these powers, which have almost certainly never been used, should now be abandoned.

736. Under the existing legislation, every allotments authority is required to provide “a sufficient number” of allotment gardens to satisfy the demand within its administrative area. At the present time, the total provision (all classes) in urban areas (with which we must now be principally concerned) amounts to approximately 1 acre per thousand population. Of this total, the official statistics suggest that 76.5 per cent is provided by allotments authorities and the balance privately. We have computed in Chapter 5 that 30 per cent of all allotment land is statutory and 46.5 per cent temporary, but we acknowledge that an unknown proportion of the latter may still have a degree of security without statutory‡ status. One plot in five is now vacant, while 27.6 per cent of current allotment holders occupy more than one plot. It must therefore be assumed that land of all classes occupied by allotment gardeners today totals less than 0.8 acres per thousand population, and that less than one-third of this land is statutory. It is

* The council of any such authority whose area has considerable growth potential (including those that form part of the designated area of a new town) must recognise that it will incur certain obligations if its population eventually exceeds 5,000.

† The Report of the Royal Commission on Local Government in England (Cmd. 4040) has now been published (June 1969). The details of our proposals will clearly need to be adapted to whatever new pattern of local government may emerge, but we see no reason to alter the principles outlined above.

‡ See paragraph 141.
against this background that our proposed changes in the law relating to provision must be judged.

737. At this point we must consider the vital question whether the law which seeks to equate the supply of allotments with demand for them should be continued in much the same form in the new legislation. Since the arguments to be examined are both numerous and complex, it needs to be established at the outset that, in our view, a genuine demand for leisure gardens ought to be satisfied to the extent that land is available. But the present law appears to compel authorities to satisfy the demand whether land remains readily available or not, and it is this provision which we must now look at in some detail.

738. N.A.G.S. addressing us on behalf of the allotments movement, has accepted that allotment gardening is a recreation, and demands that it should be given the same recognition as other forms of recreation. When, however, one realises that there is no other recreation for which facilities sufficient to cope with the demand must be provided by law, one sees that allotment gardening has been given preferential treatment in the provision of land, if not in amenities. N.A.G.S. makes the valid point that the removal of the present obligation to provide allotments would allow unsympathetic authorities to extinguish all their sites; its fear that this would be the final outcome impels it to resist any relaxation of the present rigid rules.

739. There are in fact two arguments in favour of extending to allotment gardening a privilege which is denied to other recreations. The first is that local allotment movements are often poorly organised, poorly represented, inarticulate, and opposed by powerful pressure groups within a town; they therefore require greater legislative support. But better articulation and organisation does not enable the golfer to demand that his authority should provide a golf course, and the support which is given to allotment gardens ought to be directed to the achievement of parity rather than superiority. The second, and more cogent argument is that since a local authority must be held partly responsible for a housing policy which may by restricting home garden space, increase the demand for allotments, it bears a greater moral obligation to satisfy the demand than it does in the case of other recreations. There is clearly some substance in this assertion, but it can easily be overestimated: for instance, it will be seen from Appendix IV and Figures 11 and 12 that provision is generally lower in the congesed towns of the north-west than in the south-east. We have already suggested that authorities ought to satisfy the demand, where this is possible, and the argument in these paragraphs therefore seeks to determine whether they should be legally bound to do so. Furthermore, no one has suggested to us that allotment gardens should be provided only for those whose home gardens are below a certain size; as we saw in Chapter 10, the uses to which home gardens are put are so varied that the effect of housing policies on the demand for allotments is at best highly speculative.

740. On most of our visits to different parts of the country, we have talked to local planning officers about the problems which allotments present in their particular areas. Almost invariably, they have made the point that planning has now passed beyond the stage at which a directive to provide enough allotments to meet an unpredictable demand can be absorbed into the existing urban plan without great difficulty. They acknowledge that the idea of planning for allotments is the only rational solution to the difficulties which haphazard siting produces, but point out that unless they are told specifically how many allotments they should provide, such a solution is impracticable. This opinion has the
support of the Ministry's planning division, and we feel that it has considerable force. Under the present law, a planning authority engaged on the land allocation for a major new development has two alternatives; it can either reserve land to meet a demand which may never arise, or it can assume that allotments will not be needed and face the risk of having to find a spare—and often quite unsuitable—piece of land at some future date. The only yardstick is the 'target' of 4 acres per thousand population recommended by the A.A.C. which is now so absurdly unrealistic. Whichever solution is chosen, the planner can expect to incur either the disapproval of his authority for over-lavish provision or the annoyance of the allotment holders for providing sites which are basically insecure. This is in many ways an over-simplification of the position, and we do not for one moment condone what has often been the 'obvious' answer of allowing allotment holders to use land which is unsuitable for any other purpose—and often unsuitable for allotments! But, at the same time, we understand the complexity of the problem in planning terms, which is bound to intensify if, in the future, new sites acquire a minimum standard of amenities before they are offered to tenants for use. The full integration of leisure gardens into the town plan is a fundamental part of our proposals for the future. We have shown that this must help the allotments movement as well as the leisure gardens authority; and if such integration necessitates a change in the rule which relates the supply of allotments to the demand for them, it must constitute a very powerful argument for such a change.

741. One of the most substantial justifications for changing the law at this time is that while there is ample evidence to suggest that the demand for the new-style leisure garden will be greater than for the present allotment garden there is no way of knowing how high it will rise. The improvement in the image and more careful siting are both likely to increase the demand, though not necessarily from among the declining numbers of 'traditional' allotment holders. On the other hand, our proposals for a general rise in the level of rents and the fact that many gardeners must travel further to their plots may tend to reduce it, in the short term at least. The level of demand will be affected by trends in house designs and urban densities, by increased leisure, by changes in the patterns of leisure activity itself, by the increasing proportion of middle-aged and elderly people in the total population, and by many other factors. It is difficult to accept that the new concept, whose popularity at the outset must be a matter of some speculation, justifies the retention of the law that a garden must be provided on demand.

742. There are other arguments, all pointing in the same direction, which can be discussed more briefly. The evidence which we found on the continent showed that there is no more successful way of ensuring that a tenant will cultivate his plot with diligence and with an eye to its attractive appearance than to show that there is someone else ready and anxious to take it over from him. Yet, the present law is such that even if a tenant were evicted for his failure to look after his plot, he could immediately demand another! Similarly, the attempts by a number of authorities to stifle demand artificially, which arouse such intense feeling on the part of the allotments movement, stem frequently from the difficulty which they find in meeting it; if it were no longer necessary for such authorities fully to satisfy the demand, much of this ill-feeling might disappear.

743. We offer one final thought on this question, which we would earnestly request N.A.G.S. and the allotments movement as a whole to examine most
seriously. The demand for allotments has never been static since the Act of 1908 became law, and there is no reason whatever to suppose that the demand for either allotment gardens or leisure gardens will remain constant in the future. If, ideally, it were possible for every town to provide and maintain enough sites, each endowed with maximum security, to cater for the current demand, then a fall in demand could only be dealt with in a limited number of ways. The authority might retain in allotment use every site provided at time of peak demand, in which case vacant plots would multiply on most sites, the public would continue to base its picture of allotment gardening on the proliferation of derelict eyesores, and 'security' would become as meaningless as it is today. Alternatively, the authority might institute a system whereby its allotment holders were moved from plot to plot and from site to site in order to maintain the appearance and full tenancy of some sites while empty sites were used temporarily for other purposes; in that event, there would be no security whatsoever.

744. It is our firm conviction that the most important principles underlying the concept of the leisure garden are that it should be given every opportunity to flourish, that each authority should be able to direct its energies to the substantial improvement of a reasonable number of sites rather than the partial improvement of many, and that, as soon as possible, the level of provision should be determined, as with other recreations, by pressures within a town rather than by the imposition of law. In this context, we consider the arguments which we have adduced to be sound, and we therefore propose to recommend that the obligation imposed upon leisure gardens authorities should be restricted to the provision of a specific total area of leisure gardens, and that they should be both permitted and encouraged to exceed this total voluntarily if the demand so warrants.

745. We have examined at length the various ways in which the size of the obligatory provision might be assessed. At the outset, we thought that it might be calculated by reference to the average size of home garden available to each inhabitant of a local authority's area. We discovered, however, that very few, if any, local authorities are at present aware of this figure which may vary widely from one part of a town to another and its determination would be so difficult a task that we were compelled to discard the idea.

746. We also considered the possibility of relating provision to the amount of public open space available in a town. Here the objections were several. There is no obvious reason for selecting public open space as the yardstick; the amount of public open space provided is often adjusted to take account of large areas of private open space or extensive facilities for indoor recreation; and, generally speaking (see Appendix IV), the need for leisure gardens may well arise in inverse ratio to the extent of other open space.

747. Our next step was to make a series of complex calculations designed to establish whether net housing or net population density might be used as a yardstick to determine the appropriate provision. While there was some evidence, as might have been expected, to suggest that the current demand for allotments tends to increase as either density rises, the relation between the two was far from consistent. It was, moreover, difficult to accept that the forces which influenced the demand for allotment gardens and those which would affect the demand for leisure gardens would be precisely the same.
748. A further possible alternative would have been to prescribe in the legisla-
tion a maximum and a minimum obligatory provision, each calculated simply
on a basis of acres per thousand population, and to offer a number of criteria
which would be used to determine where, between these extremes, the obligation
of each authority should fall. However, as we saw in Chapter 7, the current total
provision in urban areas varies between nil (67 towns—Figure 10) and 15
acres per thousand in Wolverton. It was immediately obvious, therefore, that the
maximum and minimum figures would need to be pitched so wide as to be
meaningless, or the new law might permit many towns with high provision to
commit wholesale slaughter of viable allotment land.

749. To all these proposals, there was one fundamental objection, namely that
the intention behind each was to offer a precise total provision to each authority
rather than to require a quota of secure leisure garden sites. We realised that
it would be quite impossible to legislate for a fixed percentage of secure sites
within a stipulated total provision, for, not only would such a formula be far too
rigid, but it would, in many towns, compel the existing allotment holders to move
from site to site as authorities sought to close one site in favour of another; and
it would be taken, quite wrongly, to imply that the ultimate aim of making every
site secure was no longer viable.

750. We have set out the stages of our deliberations on this subject at some
length because of our wish to justify to N.A.G.S., and to the allotments movement,
our final decision that each leisure gardens authority (apart from those referred
to in paragraph 733) should be required by law to provide half an acre of estab-
lished leisure gardens for each thousand of its population,* and that the provision
of established and non-established sites in excess of this figure should be left to
the discretion of each local authority. This proposal is based on a realistic
assessment of the present situation and of the possibilities for the future, and takes
account of the following points:—

(i) The success of every established leisure garden site will necessitate a
constant demand for plots.

(ii) If a choice must be made, the future of the allotments movement will
be more assured by a measure of competition for plots than by a glut.

(iii) The figures which we included in paragraph 730 suggest that our
proposal will cause no great reduction in the number of allotment
holders, and by a vast improvement in security of tenure and amenities
should stem the presently accelerating decline.

(iv) The proposal will enable each authority to rationalise its allotments
system, and this essential task would have been quite impossible if a
formula for compulsory provision had been set so high that many
authorities would be obliged to retain all their present sites.

(v) In the current climate of opinion, some relaxation of the obligations
imposed on local authorities is justified in itself. On the continent, the
fact that allotment provision is voluntary is held to be a major factor in
producing a harmonious relationship between allotment holder and
authority, and we are convinced that a similar relationship could and
must be achieved without delay in this country.

* This form of wording denies to local authorities the right to include private sites, commercial
sites or livestock sites in calculating their totals. These will be discussed later.
751. The evidence in Part III of this report indicates that there will be some authorities which will be able to claim that a provision of half an acre per thousand population would be unreasonable in their areas. The number of such authorities should not be large, but it will be necessary to include in the legislation an 'escape clause' by virtue of which they will be able to make application to the appropriate Minister for exemption from the legal requirement. Each applicant should be required to explain precisely why it considers that it should not be obliged to meet its statutory obligation, and to indicate what lower provision of established sites it considers should be substituted. Since it will be necessary for the Minister to examine each case on its merits, and since much will depend on local circumstances, we do not propose to offer more than general guidance as to the points which we would expect to be taken into consideration:—

(i) No application for exemption should be entertained from an authority which has not completed the appraisal of its present allotments situation in accordance with the principles which we will discuss in our next chapter.

(ii) In general, an authority whose area has consistently included allotment gardens of any category in excess of half an acre per thousand should be unable to gain exemption.

(iii) A contention that a low demand for allotment gardens implies a low demand for established leisure gardens should be treated with caution. An authority making such a contention should be required to show why the demand for allotment gardens has been lower than in other areas.

(iv) An acute shortage of land capable of being adapted to meet the requirements of established sites laid down in paragraphs 692 and 729 should generally be accepted as a ground for exemption. A claim based on this factor should, however, be examined in the light of the relaxation of the rules regarding distance of travel to which we have already referred, and of the amount of public open space available in the town.

(v) In all cases where a claim is allowed, the Minister should impose on the authority concerned a revised formula for the provision of established sites, and should also require it to re-apply for exemption at reasonable intervals. It should also be open to the Minister, in exceptional circumstances, to impose on an applicant the duty of providing non-established sites to make up the deficiency to the legal formula.

752. The proposals which we have made in this chapter are complex. We are convinced, however, that they are workable and provide a firm basis for the assimilation of leisure gardening into the life of the community. We therefore RECOMMEND:—

1. That leisure gardens should be designated either 'established' or 'non-established' by reference to their apparent security of tenure. An established site must:—

   (a) either be owned by the leisure gardens authority or be within its control for at least twenty-one years after establishment;

   (b) be viable within the current urban plan;

   (c) be sited with due regard to the factors listed in paragraphs 692 and 729.
A non-established site should be selected with as much regard as possible to the factors listed in paragraphs 692 and 729.

2. That the council of the city of London and of every county borough, London borough, municipal borough, urban district and rural parish and the parish meeting of any parish without a council should be constituted by law a leisure gardens authority.

3. That the city of London and inner London boroughs, and all leisure gardens authorities with populations below 5,000 should be under no obligation to provide leisure gardens. They should, however, have permission to do so.

4. That the extent of the legal obligation imposed on all other leisure gardens authorities should be the provision of half an acre of established leisure gardens for each thousand of their populations. All authorities should be permitted and encouraged to provide both established and non-established sites in excess of this requirement where a need exists or arises.

5. That the law should include an escape clause permitting an authority to make application to the Minister for exemption from the legal requirement and for the imposition of a lesser obligatory provision.

6. That established and non-established leisure garden sites should be denoted on the town map by the symbols OS|EG and OS|NG respectively.
CHAPTER 19

LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

A. The transitional period: allotment gardens to leisure gardens

753. The transition from allotment garden to leisure garden will involve, for each authority, a complete and accurate appraisal of its present allotments situation and an estimate of future trends in the light of proposals for the development and redevelopment of different parts of the town. We consider that this should be the task of an impartial and expert leisure gardens advisory committee. For authorities which will be obliged to provide leisure gardens, it may be necessary to include a reference to the appointment of such an advisory group in the legislation; but we strongly urge every authority which has hitherto provided allotment gardens to review its present provision on the lines set out in this chapter before deciding upon its plans for the future. An authority need not await the passing of new legislation before appointing its advisory committee, since its task will be difficult and, in some cases, lengthy. In the case of new towns, it might be more convenient for a single advisory committee to consider the whole of the designated area. The appointment of the committee might properly be deferred until the growth of the town is sufficient to enable the eventual demand for leisure gardens to be assessed.

754. Ideally, the advisory committee appointed by each leisure gardens authority should comprise:—

(i) one or more elected members of the local authority, preferably selected from those who have previously evinced a sympathetic interest in the administration and viability of the local authority's allotments system;

(ii) two representatives of the local allotments (leisure gardens) movement. These, too, should be chosen with considerable care; it is essential that they should be able to speak effectively for all the allotment holders in the town, and that they should not be biased in favour of the retention of particular sites rather than others;

(iii) the allotments (leisure gardens) manager or superintendent or his representative. Where no such person at present exists, it will be necessary to appoint someone specifically for this purpose and to ensure that he is fully conversant with the allotments situation in the town;

(iv) the parks director or superintendent or his representative;

(v) the planning officer or his representative;

(vi) the appropriate agricultural/horticultural education adviser or his representative.

In brief, the initial task of this advisory committee will be to prepare a report for examination by the appropriate council committee* setting out its considered assessment of the way in which the authority should fulfil its statutory leisure gardens obligations and its recommendations for additional voluntary provision.

755. At the outset the advisory committee must be given detailed information concerning every statutory and temporary allotment site provided by the authority; the area of each site, its location and physical character; the number of plots

* See paragraph 773.
which it contains, and the number which are vacant; the number of allotment
holders who use it, and the catchment area from which the majority are drawn;
the extent to which it is used for non-horticultural purposes; and the strength and
efficiency of any association which exists upon it. It will also need to know the
location, size, condition and tenancy figures for private allotment sites, in order
to determine the extent to which they help to satisfy the demand in a particular
area. The evidence suggests that in some towns even this information will not be
readily available, and the need to obtain it is bound to extend the period of time
before the advisory committee can be expected to report.

756. The advisory committee should begin by examining the qualifications of
each site provided by the authority to be designated an established leisure garden
site. In all cases, the first task will be to consider whether the site complies with the
stipulations made in paragraph 729 regarding security of tenure, or whether it
might acquire such security if other features demonstrated that 'establishment' was
warranted. Where an existing site, whether statutory or temporary, is
already scheduled for closure, establishment will normally be impossible unless
the authority is prepared to change its mind. It is, however, our hope that if, in
its report, the advisory committee is able to show that a scheduled site is worthy
of establishment, the authority will be prepared to look again at the possibility of
retaining it. Where a temporary site is rented from its owner, the committee
might, if other factors were favourable, recommend that application be made for
a long lease of the land.

757. Having in this way separated those existing sites which are suitable for
establishment, the advisory committee should then look closely at the constituent
features of each. It should ascertain whether the site is well supported, and
whether it is too large or too small. This is a difficult problem which will really
require a study of the town's facilities as a whole under the guidance of the planning
officer. It should be borne in mind, firstly, that since the improvement of a site
will probably involve a reduction in the number of plots, present vacancies of
the order of 15–20 per cent can be absorbed without difficulty; secondly, that the
demand for plots on an established site may well increase; and, thirdly, that if the
eventual outcome of the reappraisal is a reduction in the total number of plots
provided by the town, the vacancies on the sites which are selected to remain will
soon be filled.

758. If an individual site has shown consistently that it is less popular than
others in the town, the committee should then seek to ascertain why this is so.
Is it inaccessible to areas of high-density housing? Is the soil of poor quality,
hard to work or infested by pests or disease? Is it liable to flooding? Is it badly
drained, shaded by surrounding trees or man-made structures, or subject to
adverse microclimatic conditions? Does it suffer excessively from vandalism?
Is it administered by an inefficient association? If any of these faults are present,
can they be cured or alleviated or must the idea of establishment be discarded?

759. In respect of those sites which still remain on its provisional list as being
worthy of establishment, the committee should then consider whether any have in-
trinsic features which would facilitate or hinder effective landscaping. In this con-
nection, it will be necessary to take into account not only the presence of electric
pylons (Plate 17) or similarly obtrusive structures, but also the size of the site
and the number of plots which it contains, since this will affect the scale of the
improvements which would be practicable. It is obvious that both this operation
and those suggested in the preceding paragraph will entail inspection on the ground. It would be wrong to reject a site out of hand either because it contained objectionable features or because it was very small, but if the committee felt it necessary to choose between two sites in close proximity to each other, a careful assessment of the scope of each for improvement would be advisable.

760. The committee should then turn to those sites which it has rejected for establishment and consider for each the advisability of retaining it as a non-established site or of taking it out of allotment use. The same criteria (with the exception of the degree of apparent security) should be applied, but the committee should take into account additional factors such as the danger that the close proximity of a non-established to an established site may, by reason of lower rents, draw some tenants from the latter.

761. The committee will now have divided the existing statutory and temporary sites into three categories as follows:—

List A will contain those sites which have all the necessary qualifications for establishment, though possibly with a recommendation for the contraction of some and the expansion of others;

List B will include sites which are considered worthy of retention for differing periods of time as non-established sites;

List C will represent sites which, for various reasons, ought to be discarded.

It should now examine the town map, and with the benefit of the planning officer's knowledge of present and future developments, ascertain whether there are any areas of high-density dwellings which will not be adequately served by sites on Lists A or B. If so, it should reappraise the possibilities for any sites in or accessible to those areas which it has hitherto rejected and, if it is still unable to recommend any of these for establishment, should note that a new site will be required.

762. The committee should next review the total areas of Lists A and B by reference to the present and projected population of the town and its estimates of probable demand. It should also examine the relative sizes of the two lists to determine whether the provision of established sites is disproportionately low. In its examination, it should be guided by the following considerations:—

(i) Ideally, the total area of established sites should be considerably in excess of that of non-established.

(ii) The expense of landscaping and improving an established site might be an argument against a provision which is likely to exceed the demand.

(iii) It would clearly be inadvisable to close a popular site for which no other use is at present envisaged.

If the committee considers that the total proposed area is excessive by reference to its estimate of demand, it should make a careful selection of those sites which are least worthy of their place. Generally speaking, this process will involve the transfer of a site from List B to List C, but this will not always be the solution.

763. Where the committee believes that the total areas on Lists A and B are inadequate or grossly disproportionate, and in every case in which the total of List A falls short of half an acre per thousand population, the committee must consider the advisability of acquiring new sites. It should assess the relative merits for its own area of each type of site listed in paragraph 684, bearing in
mind those already included in Lists A and B. If it concludes that the acquisition of new land will be necessary or justifiable, it should first ascertain whether there is any viable and well sited private allotment land which might be obtainable under the procedure which will be discussed in Chapter 21. If there is no such land available, or if the total will still be insufficient, it will be necessary to look for new land conforming as far as possible to the qualifications for siting set out in paragraph 692. The committee might at this stage consider also the advisability of recommending the creation of one or more areas of communal gardens of the types described in paragraph 685 as an adjunct to the proposed leisure gardens pattern.

764. The committee's report should show clearly which sites it considers should become established and non-established leisure gardens, and should indicate why each choice was made. It should also show, again with reasons, which sites should be closed. It should state what consideration has been given to the provision of new sites and its proposals thereon. Finally, it should seek to justify fully any decision that the total area of established sites should fall short of the legal requirement.

765. It is imperative that, as soon as the report has been presented, copies should be available (via the representatives on the committee) to every association in the town. It is particularly important that the local allotments movement should understand which established sites will be owned by the local authority and which will be held on a long lease. Wherever possible, the allotment holders who occupy plots provided by the local authority should be invited to attend a meeting at which the committee's proposals are explained and its members could be questioned about them. The members of the local associations will have no immediate opportunity to criticise or comment on the report, but they must, of course, have the right to make representations to the council on their reaction to the proposals. It will, of course, be open to the council committee, and eventually to the full council, to accept or reject the report as they think fit. Both must have the right to seek further elucidation from the councillors, officers or representatives involved, of any points included in the report, or to ask the advisory committee to reconsider its recommendations. By these means a final report will be prepared and accepted by the council of each leisure gardens authority.

766. In every case in which the council has accepted proposals that it should designate established leisure gardens to the extent of half an acre or more per thousand of its population, it should transmit to the Minister* a copy of the final report, together with a list of all its established sites, showing the area of each, and a map showing their location for registration purposes. In such cases, the Minister would have no right to amend the report, but would be free to comment on it if he thought fit.

767. Where a council has accepted a report proposing the establishment of a smaller total area, the report might form the basis of its claim to exemption, which should be submitted on the lines set out in paragraph 751. When the revised total area of established sites has been agreed, a list, together with a map, should again be sent to the Minister for registration.

* See Chapter 24.
768. We therefore RECOMMEND:—

1. That each leisure gardens authority charged with the duty of providing established leisure gardens should be required by law to appoint a leisure gardens advisory committee, composed as shown in paragraph 754, to make an appraisal of the local allotment situation.

2. That leisure gardens authorities with no legal obligation to provide such gardens should seriously consider the advisability of appointing a similar committee.

3. That the leisure gardens advisory committee should approach its task in the way explained in paragraphs 755–65.

4. That when an agreed report has been accepted by the leisure gardens authority and, where necessary, by the Minister, each authority should be required to transmit to the Minister for registration a list of its established leisure garden sites and of any non-established sites provided by Ministerial direction, together with a map showing the distribution and classification of the sites.

769. Every leisure gardens authority should be required to institute a programme of improvements for each of its established sites. In the case of sites which are very small, and contain only a handful of plots, the programme will inevitably be restricted. In the great majority of cases, however, no restriction will be necessary (see paragraph 759), and detailed suggestions as to the scope of the programme are contained in Chapter 17 and Appendix X. The programme of improvement should begin as soon as practicable after the registration of a site.

770. We recognise that because of possible restrictions on capital expenditure (which we will deal with later) and other factors, there will be many cases in which the programme of improvement may need to be spread over several years. This is unfortunate, both because it must defer the time when leisure gardens can be accepted as a desirable part of the urban scene, and because it raises a question of security. Since the security of an established leisure garden will depend partly on the money which has been spent on it, the repeal of the current legislation will be followed by a period of unknown duration during which many existing statutory sites will have lost their present ‘security’ and acquired little in return, except the label ‘established’.

771. In practice, there are really two separate periods to be considered. Firstly, between the time when the new Act which we have proposed becomes law and the date when the established sites to be provided by each authority are registered, no site would have any security;* and it is conceivable that some authorities might take the opportunity of closing many of their former statutory sites in the hope of persuading the Minister that they had a valid claim to exemption from the new statutory formula. In the period after registration, however, it is difficult to believe that many local authorities would go to the considerable trouble of disposing of established sites and acquiring new ones† in the hope of reducing the apparent demand in their areas; we feel, therefore, that these possibilities can be overcome by means of a few simple precautions.

* Although the existing allotment holders will still be entitled to notice, this might have been given before the new legislation.
† See paragraph 798.
772. We therefore RECOMMEND:—

1. That every leisure gardens authority should be required, as soon as practicable after its established sites have been registered, to commence for each a full programme of improvement, on the lines of Appendix X to this report.

2. That, until an authority has obtained registration of its established sites, none of its existing sites which previously enjoyed the protection of section 8 of the Allotments Act 1925, may be taken out of allotments use without the consent of the Minister, which should be given or refused as though that section had not been repealed.

3. That, after an authority has registered its established sites:—
   (a) it should be required to advise the Minister of any changes in the names or areas of its established sites, irrespective of whether such changes require Ministerial approval (see paragraph 798); and
   (b) in considering any claim which such an authority may subsequently make for exemption from its legal obligation, the Minister should take into account the full extent of the changes made to the registered sites since registration was first effected.

B. Administrative machinery

773. In Chapter 7 we explained at some length why we consider that allotments and, of course, leisure gardens, should no longer be the province of a separate council committee. It seems to us to be so self-evident that leisure gardens policy should be determined by the committee responsible for parks and recreation that we see no reason to include it in the legislation. Each authority should be left to decide for itself whether it wishes to appoint a sub-committee to look after its leisure gardens, or prefers to consider its policy at meetings of the full parks committee.

774. It follows that the overall responsibility for the administration of a town’s leisure gardens system should rest with the department responsible for parks. Only in this way can those officially in charge of the leisure gardens be assured of access to the considerable resources of staff, vehicles, machinery and specialised knowledge which are essential to the efficient management and maintenance of a number of sites. Where, exceptionally, a parks department does not exist, the administrative machinery should be in the hands of a department, such as estates or public works, which has sufficient manpower and equipment to undertake the task.

775. Where an authority has provided enough sites to justify such a post, the administration of its leisure gardens should be in the hands of a manager, who will be responsible to the director of parks. In large authorities every attempt must be made to ensure that the manager is a skilled horticulturist with practical experience in the supervision of parks, gardens or allotments. The manager will be a key figure in both the administration of the sites and the improvement of relations between the man on the plot and the authority. Among his duties, and those of the staff under his control, the following should always be included:—

(i) Making frequent visits to each site, especially at week-ends, in order to give practical help and advice regarding treatment of the soil, cultivation of crops, and control of pests and disease.
(ii) Organising lectures, demonstrations and other events, especially during the winter months, and flower shows in summer.

(iii) Maintaining at a high standard those parts of each site which are the authority's responsibility. These will normally comprise the perimeter fence, gates, roads, water pipes, flowers and grass in the communal areas, trees, shrubs, hedges and communal buildings (Figure 25).

(iv) Rotovating and keeping clean or grassing down all vacant plots until they are re-let.

(v) Maintaining an attractive layout and planting programme for the model leisure garden, if provided (Figure 25).

(vi) Organising competitions for the best kept plots and sites in the town.

(vii) Maintaining an efficient system of liaison with the management of the town's combined leisure gardens association and through it with the national body of the leisure gardens movement.

(viii) Attending meetings of the individual site associations, and ensuring, where appropriate, that the site maintenance for which they are responsible is of a satisfactory standard, and that stipulated action against gardeners who neglect their plots is being taken.

(ix) Creating and maintaining an efficient central administrative organisation to cover the collection of rents, the disbursement of available funds, the preparation and maintenance of waiting-lists and the advertisement of vacant plots.

(x) Attending regular meetings of the advisory committee to consider important proposals affecting the town's leisure gardens system.

(xi) Liaison with the authority's salvage department to ensure that rubbish accumulated at an appropriate (and adequately screened) part of each site is regularly collected.

776. The disappearance of the allotments committee will mean that no leisure gardeners will serve as co-opted members on the responsible council committee. But in our view, the formation of a strong association on each site, through which a highly efficient town association should emerge, the liaison and co-operation between the leisure gardens manager and every association in the town, and the continuance of the advisory committee on which leisure gardeners are represented, will together give the leisure gardener far more influence on council policy than the allotment holder has exerted in the past.

777. We therefore RECOMMEND:—

1. That the statutory allotments committee should be abolished.

2. That leisure gardens authorities should be encouraged to formulate their leisure gardens policy through the committee responsible for parks and recreation. The day-to-day administration of the system should be in the hands of the parks department or of a section, such as estates or public works, with adequate resources and manpower.

3. That every leisure gardens authority which provides established sites should be urged to appoint a competent leisure gardens manager whose duties would include those listed in paragraph 775.
C. Tenancies

778. We have indicated that the improvement of an existing site should pay heed to its attractive features and should be accomplished with the minimum of inconvenience to the plot-holders. The process of landscaping, the introduction of variations in the size, shape or disposition of plots, and the need to screen any plots which remain devoted entirely to vegetables (Figure 25) may involve a considerable reallocation of the available land. We believe that, before leisure gardens are advertised generally, every tenant of an existing allotment garden provided by his local authority should be invited to apply for such a garden and to indicate whether he would prefer to take a plot on an established or on a non-established site. If his present site is to be retained in either capacity, and he wishes to remain there, every effort must be made to accommodate him; if his site is to disappear, or if he is anxious to move from his present site, he must be given a plot on a site readily accessible to his home and, where possible, on the site of his choice. The allocation of plots, especially on new sites, will thus require considerable skill and diplomacy on the part of the leisure gardens manager. Where the total number of leisure gardens to be provided is smaller than the number of allotment holders who apply for them, we consider that preference should be given to those who have occupied their gardens for the longest periods; any persons who cannot be so accommodated should be ‘settled’ on an adjacent site.

779. There must, however, be one exception to these general rules. Certain new sites, especially those situated within a recreation complex or on the periphery of a town, will seem to lend themselves naturally to the chalet garden concept. The leisure gardens manager should be at liberty provisionally to reserve such sites for those applicants, whether from within the present allotments movement or outside, who express the desire to rent a chalet garden rather than a leisure garden intended primarily for vegetables and fruit; and only if there are insufficient applicants for chalet gardens should vegetable gardeners be admitted to a selected part of the site. Since, however, the ultimate object of all our proposals is to achieve on every leisure garden site an improvement which is as great as possible and as rapid as possible, the converse of this proviso cannot be accepted. Thus, an existing allotment holder who expresses the wish to have a chalet garden should not be obliged to move to a new site. If he remains where he is, and introduces a summerhouse, flowers and lawn, his example may inspire others on the site to emulate him.

780. In order, therefore, to assist the leisure gardens manager in his task of allocating the plots at his disposal, we RECOMMEND that after existing allotment holders have been made aware of the proposed changes in the nature and status of every site (see paragraph 765) they should be invited individually to answer the following questions:

1. Do you wish to apply for a leisure garden?
2. Would you prefer a plot on an established or non-established site?
3. On which of the town’s sites in the selected category would you like a plot?
4. Do you wish to devote your plot mainly to vegetables and fruit, or would you like to convert it into a chalet garden?
If you wish to concentrate on vegetable and fruit growing, would you be prepared to incorporate shrubs and flowers within or around part of your plot?

781. While we must accept that the provision of established leisure gardens intended primarily for the cultivation of vegetables and fruit will continue to be necessary, we would regard the adaptation of plots to the chalet garden concept as a desirable form of progress, which ought neither to be retarded nor reversed by subsequent events. Moreover, since the occupants of chalet gardens may wish to introduce ‘permanent’ features such as a patio, rockery, small pond or even steps into their layout, the reconversion of such plots to vegetable gardens might be both difficult and expensive. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the piecemeal conversion of plots into chalet gardens would lead in some towns to a situation where an acute shortage of vegetable plots resulted from the growing popularity of chalet gardens. These considerations lead us to RECOMMEND:—

1. That if the occupier of a plot on an established leisure garden site desires to convert it into a chalet garden, he should in general be permitted to do so.

2. That the authority should thereupon either replace any structures which the tenant will no longer require with a summerhouse of appropriate design or provide plans which will enable the occupier to erect his own summerhouse to accord with the authority’s master plan for the entire site.

3. That once a plot has become a chalet garden, the responsible authority should not normally countenance any suggestion that it might be reconverted into a vegetable garden.

4. That, where such action seems necessary in order to meet any need for vegetable gardens within the town, an authority may require an applicant for a chalet garden who already occupies a vegetable plot on an established site to move either to a new site or to another plot on his present site which has already been converted.

782. The degree of security which an established leisure garden site should possess, the rules of procedure (which we will shortly introduce) for the closure of such a site and, above all, the installation of machinery designed to keep tenants informed of proposals which might affect their security of tenure, will greatly reduce the emphasis which N.A.G.S. is able to place on the length of notice which an allotment holder has a right to expect. Cases must, however, continue to arise where, either because of a revision of the urban plan or through an emergency which could not have been foreseen, it becomes necessary to close a viable site. In these circumstances, the period of notice given to the tenants should not on the one hand be unreasonably short, and on the other should not compel the authority to defer an essential development for an inordinate length of time.

783. In the case of an established site which has been selected in accordance with the principles which we have laid down, we can envisage few situations in which the urgency of a projected development will be such as to make it impossible to give each tenant twelve months’ notice, expiring in the ‘close season’. The re-entry clause which is so common a feature of allotment tenancy agreements today seems to us to be appropriate only to sites which owe their location to accident rather than design, and the fact that it is frequently invoked in connection with developments which cannot possibly be commenced within the ensuing
twelve months shows how necessary it is to amend it. We consider that a shorter period of notice should never be necessary where an established site is to be taken for building construction, industry or open space. Where the land is required for roads or sewers, the minimum period of notice should be six months, again ending in the 'close season', and should always be conditional on the alternative facilities explained in paragraph 792 being available at the end of that period. These periods of notice should be prescribed by law and included in every tenancy agreement.

784. Non-established sites will fall into two categories: sites which are rented by the local authority, either for a fixed period of time or for an indefinite period terminable by notice, and sites in the authority’s ownership which are destined ultimately for other purposes. In the case of sites held for a fixed term, there is no reason why the rules appropriate to established sites should not be applied; and an authority which intends to seek a renewal of such a lease or tenancy should invariably commence negotiations more than twelve months before the present contract is due to expire, in order to avoid giving the tenants notice unnecessarily. Wherever possible, authorities should not offer as leisure gardens rented land held on terms which permit the landlord to obtain possession at less than twelve months’ notice. Where land held on less advantageous terms is sublet as non-established leisure gardens, and in every case in which land earmarked for other purposes is used temporarily as leisure gardens, the minimum period of notice should be six months, irrespective of season.

785. While it is important that every leisure gardener should receive as much warning of the impending closure or contraction of his site as the circumstances allow, it is equally vital that action against those gardeners who infringe their written undertakings should be taken promptly and decisively. Each tenancy agreement should therefore contain clauses to the following effect:—

“If, in the opinion of the leisure gardens manager, acting where necessary on the advice of officers of the association, the tenant has neglected his plot or has otherwise contravened any provision in this agreement without good reason, he shall be given written notification of the allegation made against him and shall be allowed a period of one month in which to conform to his undertakings. If, at the end of this period, the leisure gardens manager, with the advice of the association, considers that the tenant has made insufficient efforts to rectify the position, he shall be given one month’s notice to quit his plot, and such notice shall be irrevocable.

A tenant who receives notice to quit under the preceding clause may, before such notice expires, remove from his plot any items which he has placed there. He will, however, forfeit all claims to compensation on the termination of his tenancy.”

786. These provisions must be rigidly applied, irrespective of whether there is a waiting-list for plots on the defaulter’s site, but they must also be applied with scrupulous fairness. Since the tenant will have given a written undertaking, he is entitled to receive both the warning and the notice in writing, addressed to his last-known place of abode. Care must always be taken to ensure that warnings are not issued to gardeners who are known to be ill or otherwise temporarily incapacitated of honouring their agreements; the formal warning should be so worded as to permit the recipient to offer valid excuses. The fact that a gardener has moved out of the administrative area of the authority which has provided
his leisure garden should no longer be regarded in itself as sufficient ground for requiring him to surrender his plot; but if it is known that while his former authority has a waiting-list for plots on his site, there are vacancies on a site of similar status near his new home and controlled by his new authority, he may be given the normal twelve months' notice to quit his plot.

787. Since the responsibility for the tidiness of plots which either are vacant or are not properly cultivated by their occupants will fall on the leisure gardens manager and the local association, the officers of every association should, without the need for compulsion, impress on their members the need to report as soon as possible any circumstances which may affect their ability to cultivate their plots. Where an association is informed at a sufficiently early stage of an illness which is likely to be protracted, it should be normal procedure not only to allocate among its members the task of keeping the plot tidy and attractive in appearance, but also to harvest any growing crops on behalf of the tenant.

788. We therefore RECOMMEND:—

1. That the new legislation should prescribe the following minimum periods of notice to quit:—

   (a) generally, both for established and non-established sites, twelve months ending between 28th September of one year and 6th April of the next;

   (b) where the site, or part of it, whether established or non-established, is required for roads or sewers, six months ending between 28th September of one year and 6th April of the next;

   (c) where the site is held by the leisure gardens authority on lease or tenancy, the maximum period of notice prescribed in the lease or tenancy agreement;

   (d) where a non-established site is required for the purpose for which the land was originally acquired by the leisure gardens authority, six months, irrespective of season;

   (e) where a tenant is considered to have contravened the terms of his agreement without sufficient cause, one month’s warning followed by one month’s notice, irrespective of season.

2. That a tenant who moves outside the administrative area of his leisure gardens authority should not automatically forfeit his right to retain his leisure garden.

789. It is today the normal practice for allotments authorities to invite allotment holders to pay in February of each year all or part of the rent due for the ensuing twelve months. The reasons for this present practice are obvious, and in a situation where each authority is required to equate the supply of allotments with the demand for them it has much to commend it. Under the new legislation, however, the supply of leisure gardens will be determined above a statutory minimum by voluntary provision, and the extent of the measures which the leisure gardens manager will wish to take during the winter months to advertise his gardens ought to be determined largely by the vacancies which are likely to occur for new tenants. The constant and systematic treatment of any vacant plots, which is so essential a feature of the improvement in the appearance of every site, will be an onerous task, and it seems sensible to ensure that the manager
will receive as much warning as possible of vacancies which are likely to occur so that he may take prompt and adequate steps to fill them; for it is doubtful whether a manager whose publicity campaign has produced at the beginning of the planting season a long list of people waiting for plots which are not available will be in any happier position than one who discovers that he must try to fill a large number of newly vacant plots in a few short weeks. Furthermore, the advisory committee will wish to consider in the autumn whether the total provision for the coming year should be increased or decreased, and the planner will require early notification of the need to provide new sites, whether established or non-established. Finally, we feel that a tenant who was obliged to pay in the autumn part of his rent for the ensuing twelve months might be more disposed than at present to give his garden some attention during the winter months.

790. For the above reasons, there would seem good cause to change the present practice, provided that certain safeguards were incorporated, and we RECOMMEND:

1. That each tenancy agreement should require the tenant to give the same period of notice of his intention to surrender his plot as is to be given by the leisure gardens authority in the case of notice to quit.

2. That leisure gardens authorities should give early consideration to the advisability of requiring the tenants of their leisure gardens to pay all or part of the rent due for the ensuing twelve months in September/October of each year.

3. That where such a system is adopted, a tenant who is unable, for good and sufficient reason, to cultivate his plot during the following summer, should be entitled to a refund.

D. Closure and contraction of sites

791. Proposals for the closure or contraction of a leisure garden site may arise in several different ways, depending to some extent on the status of the site in question. The list which follows is probably exhaustive:

(1) A council committee may seek to appropriate all or part of an established site for another purpose.

(2) A council committee may decide that a non-established site is now required for the purpose for which it was originally acquired.

(3) The authority’s tenancy of a site may be approaching termination, either through lapse of time or through notice to quit.

(4) It may be submitted by the responsible committee or by the leisure gardens manager that the demand for leisure gardens in the town has fallen to the point where existing provision is excessive.

(5) It may be claimed by the planning officer that, following a redistribution of the town’s population or for other reasons, a particular site is now wrongly situated.

(6) The leisure gardens manager may feel that, in spite of repeated warnings, the tenants on a particular site have shown so little concern for the appearance of their individual plots or the site as a whole that its continued existence damaged the image of leisure gardening in the town.

Every proposal, in whatever form it emerges, should be referred in the first instance to the advisory committee. The committee’s deliberations will take a
different course according to the type of site involved and the nature of the proposal for its closure or contraction, and it will be advisable to consider in turn each of the alternatives listed above.

792. The first will be confined to established sites, since council committees are unlikely to seek to take over from the leisure gardeners land which the council does not own. It must be assumed at the outset that the council committee has taken account of the money which has been expended on the site in question, and considers its need to be so urgent that it is prepared to justify the apparent waste of capital; if not, it will be necessary for the advisory committee to include financial questions in its examination of the proposal. The advisory committee will have the benefit of the planning officer's advice on the urgency of the proposed development, the possibility of finding an alternative area of land suitable for it, and the prospects of acquiring new, appropriately situated and suitable land to replace the existing site. It will need to satisfy itself, with the help of the horticultural adviser, of the suitability of any area suggested as a replacement, and to consult the planning officer and the leisure gardens manager as to whether, in the light of present and future trends, an alternative site would in fact be needed. It may find it necessary to discuss with the local association the viability of the present site and the accessibility of its proposed replacement. Finally, before making its recommendation to the parks committee or its sub-committee, it should examine the urban plan to ensure that the closure and replacement of the site will not create an imbalance in the town's leisure gardens pattern which might deprive the inhabitants of some areas of reasonable access to established and non-established sites.

793. In the second instance, there can be no question of refusing to allow the site to be closed, and the advisory committee's deliberations will be restricted to considering, again with appropriate advice, whether the site should be replaced and, if so, which alternative area of land might be suitable. In this context, it should wherever possible reject land which is itself liable to be needed for other purposes in a year or two's time. The same process will obviously apply also to the third of our cases.

794. In the fourth case, the advisory committee will need to examine the demand for leisure gardens over the previous few years, to inspect the current waiting-list for plots, and, as far as possible, to estimate future trends. It should consider whether the apparent reduction in demand is due to the lack of progress being made with improvement schemes on this and other sites, to shortcomings in publicity, or to other factors of a temporary nature. It should assess the extent to which the town may have an imbalance between established and non-established sites, or between the different types of established sites, and whether a correction of this imbalance without the loss of one or more sites would rectify the position. It should seek to discover whether a reduction in the number of plots on several sites, to be achieved either by grassing down a group of plots or by incorporating them into an associated recreation zone, would be preferable to the complete closure of one site. It may also wish to consult with the town's association as to the reasons for the decline in interest. If, ultimately, it decides to recommend the closure or contraction of one or more sites, it should determine which sites should be released by reference to the procedure laid down in paragraphs 753–72.

795. The fifth case is likely to require the replacement of an existing site, and the advisory committee should generally be guided by the planning officer and
the leisure gardens manager. There are, however, two points which ought always to be taken into account. Firstly, if the site is used mainly for the cultivation of vegetables and fruit would it merit conversion into a chalet garden? As we have seen, such a site need not be so near to the centre of population which it is designed to serve, and conversion would normally be much cheaper than replacement. Secondly, could the site be sold in order to provide capital for the replacement? It should certainly not be allowed to lie fallow, to become both an eyesore and a financial embarrassment.

796. The final proposition requires the advisory committee to find the answers to a series of questions. Why are the tenants on this particular site intransigent? Is their association, if any, ineffective, and can it be improved? If the most persistent offenders were given notice to quit, would the remainder take the hint? Is there sufficient competition for plots on this site to enable more public-spirited gardeners to be drafted in? How much of the responsibility for the apparent dereliction rests with the local authority? Does the site have adequate amenities? What will become of the site if it is closed? Will it then appear more derelict than ever?

797. At the conclusion of its deliberations, the advisory committee should make its recommendation to the appropriate council committee and, if necessary the proposal should be considered in full council. The council and its committee will, as previously, have full authority to accept or reject the advisory committee’s proposals, or to refer them back for further elucidation. In reaching a final decision, however, the council will need to be guided by certain safeguards to be included in the new legislation. These seem to us to follow naturally from our proposals for the provision of established and non-established sites, and may be proffered without further explanation or justification.

798. We therefore RECOMMEND:—

1. That leisure gardens authorities should be required by law to refer all proposals for the closure or contraction of leisure garden sites to their advisory committees.

2. That all decisions affecting the future of non-established sites may be taken by the council of the authority concerned or by a committee to which it has delegated powers to deal with leisure gardens matters unless, exceptionally, the authority has been charged by the Minister with the duty of providing a minimum area of non-established sites (see paragraph 751).

3. That, in the case of authorities which are under no statutory obligation to provide any leisure gardens (see paragraph 733), all decisions affecting the future of those which have nonetheless been provided should rest with the authority concerned.

4. That where an authority, to which the law of compulsory provision applies, wishes to dispose of or reduce the size of an established site (or a non-established site in the case quoted at 2 above):—

   (a) if the loss of the area concerned would not reduce its total provision below the statutory half an acre per thousand population, it should be permitted to reach a final decision both on disposal and on replacement without reference to higher authority;

   (b) if, although the loss would reduce its provision below the statutory figure, a new established site of sufficient size to cover the deficit
can be ready for occupation by the displaced plot holders before the old site is closed, the authority should again be responsible for the final decision;

(c) if, in case (b), the authority considers that it cannot replace the site, believes that there is no need to do so, or finds it impossible to make the new site available in time, it must make application to the Minister, supported by the report of the advisory committee, for a permanent or temporary reduction in its statutory obligation and obtain the Minister’s consent to a revised total provision (whether permanent or temporary) before taking any steps to close the site;

(d) if the authority is one which has previously been granted exemption from the statutory obligation, rules (a) and (b) above should apply with the substitution of the figure currently imposed by the Minister for the statutory half an acre per thousand population. If such an authority is unable or unwilling to continue to meet its obligation, it must obtain consent to a further reduction in its obligatory provision before taking any steps to close the site.

E. Expansion

799. The evidence put to us in the course of our enquiries strongly suggests that in many areas, the demand for established leisure gardens will exceed the statutory provision. It is highly desirable, therefore, that the responsible council committee, the advisory committee and the leisure gardens manager should keep the position under constant review and should be prepared to recommend to the council the voluntary expansion of the town’s provision in any case where such expansion seems to be necessary. It is particularly important that no land which might be ideal for this purpose and which becomes available should be ignored merely because the present situation appears to be generally satisfactory; this is especially so where land becomes available adjoining public open space or a new recreation complex on the periphery of the town. Where the waiting-list for plots is unduly large, the availability of suitable land would appear to justify expansion without argument; but even where the list is small, the advantages of making preparations well in advance for the eventual closure of fully tenanted non-established sites should never be ignored. The number and situation of leisure garden sites should never be thought of as something static for all time; it should respond gradually to changes in demand and in the social habits of the community, and ultimately should be so integrated with the general provision of recreational facilities that as the demand for one form of recreation declines, the available land can be allocated to those whose popularity is increasing.
CHAPTER 20

FINANCE

800. Consideration of the financial aspects of our proposals for leisure gardens involves complex questions relating to the acquisition and disposal of land, the provision and maintenance of amenities, general maintenance of the sites, salaries and wages of staff, rents and rates to be charged, powers to borrow capital, rate subsidies and exchequer grants. The answers to some of these questions can be little more than generalisations, since the cost of many items will become apparent only when each authority has determined its leisure gardens policy and is seeking to put it into effect. We deem it advisable, however, to discuss all these different factors together in this one chapter, in order that the merit of our general proposals may be assessed against their possible cost, both in the short and the long term.

A. Acquisition and disposal of land

801. Under the present allotments legislation, as amended by divers Acts, allotments authorities have power to acquire land for the provision of allotments either by agreement or compulsorily, and either within or outside their boundaries. They have similar powers in regard to the hiring of land for allotments, although no example of compulsory hiring has been recorded during the last decade*. They may, with Ministerial consent, acquire land in advance of need, provided that they have reason to suppose that it will eventually be required for allotments purposes. They may also, again with consent, appropriate to allotments use land acquired for other purposes.

802. We consider it essential that these same powers, mutatis mutandis, should be re-enacted in the new legislation. One small amendment, however, seems desirable. The power to hire land compulsorily and the extension of compulsory powers to land outside an authority's administrative area, are both in accord with the need to satisfy the demand for allotments at all costs. Neither power seems to us to have much relevance today, and both might be omitted from a new Act without adversely affecting our major proposals.

803. We therefore RECOMMEND:—

1. That leisure gardens authorities, apart from those which will be under no obligation to provide leisure gardens, should have power:—

   (a) to purchase land within their administrative areas for the purpose of providing leisure gardens either immediately or in the future either by agreement or compulsorily;

   (b) to hire land within, and to purchase or hire land outside, their boundaries for use as leisure gardens, by agreement with the owner and any other local authority in whose area the land is situated;

   (c) to appropriate to leisure gardens use land acquired for other purposes.

2. That authorities which have no obligation to provide leisure gardens should have the same powers, apart from that of compulsory purchase.

* See Table 13, paragraph 184.
804. At the present time, any proceeds derived from the sale of land acquired for allotments must be applied firstly to discharge any debts in respect of other allotment land or to acquire, adapt or improve other land for allotments; any surplus may then be directed, with the Minister's consent, to any other purpose for which capital may normally be applied. The allotments movement has complained bitterly that the disposal of surplus allotment land has rarely produced much tangible improvement in the condition of an authority's remaining sites; but while the substance of this allegation is correct, it tends to conceal the true situation. We saw in Chapter 5* that, for every acre of statutory allotment land which has been sold during the past decade, 2 acres have been appropriated by other council committees. Section 24(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1959†, decrees that "on an appropriation of land for any purpose by an authority . . . such adjustment shall be made in the accounts of the authority as may be requisite in the circumstances". We have no reason to doubt that such an adjustment is invariably made; unfortunately, the credit which has accrued to the allotment account in this way has in the past been seen all too often as a means of reducing the size of the rate subsidy during subsequent years.

805. In the great majority of cases in which allotment land has been sold, the proceeds have been applied to reduce the debt outstanding in respect of other allotment land. Thus, the extent of the benefit which the allotment account has derived has been restricted to a reduction in the loan charges payable and, again, has often resulted merely in a smaller call on the rates. Where, exceptionally, the proceeds of sale cannot be used in this way and an authority has certified that they are surplus to allotment requirements, the Minister has usually found it impossible to reject an application for permission to use the money for general purposes. In a few cases, therefore, the considerable proceeds from the sale of statutory allotment land have been of great benefit to a town's financial provision while many of its allotment sites have remained eyesores.

806. If our recommendations are accepted, a leisure gardens authority will in future be required to provide a number of established sites and to carry out an extensive programme of improvement on them. Some authorities will be able to convert many of their existing statutory sites into established leisure gardens, while others will find it necessary to acquire new land. Some existing sites will be sold, while others will doubtless be appropriated to different uses. At a time when finance for this type of project is likely to be in short supply, it would be absurd for an authority to use the proceeds of sale of an allotment site to reduce or discharge its debts, only to find, when it sought to borrow money for its programme of improvement, that the limit had already been reached.

807. We therefore RECOMMEND:—

1. That leisure gardens authorities should be obliged by law to apply the proceeds of the sale of any statutory allotment land or established leisure garden site to the acquisition of new land for leisure gardens or to the improvement of other sites, or, with the Minister's consent, to any other purpose, including the reduction of their debts in respect of other allotment land.

2. That, upon receipt of an application for consent as above, the Minister should seek from the authority concerned an assurance that it continues to

---

* See footnote to paragraph 147.
† 7 and 8 Eliz. 2, c. 53.
provide established leisure gardens to the extent required by law or by the
Minister and has completed its programme of improvements upon them.

808. In the long term the proposals which we have made in Chapters 18 and 19
should result in an overall saving of capital in land acquisition. The aim of all our
proposals is to set in train a process by which the great majority of the leisure
gardeners in a neighbourhood will ultimately be drawn to local sites which are
well situated and become fully tenanted; and this process will release for other
purposes land which is less viable. Moreover, as time goes on, there will be a
growing tendency for sites to be moved to places where they can be combined with
recreational areas and, in many cases, to the periphery of a town. When this
happens, more valuable land will be released in favour of land which is cheaper.

809. Changes of such magnitude, however, cannot be achieved overnight.
They must emerge from a gradual process of education by which the leisure
gardener is encouraged to accept that his new found security, together with beauty
and good accessibility, are more important than profit and close proximity. At
the outset, the financial implications of our proposals are difficult to assess. They
will depend on the proportion of land designated as established leisure gardens
which is already owned by each authority, whether it is already being used as
allotments or not. They will be affected by the readiness of authorities to exceed
the minimum standard of provision, and by the numbers of authorities which are
granted exemption from this standard. They will vary with the extent to which
authorities are able (or prepared) to sell those sites which are to be closed. They
will also be influenced, to a considerable degree, by the amount of private allot-
ment land which has been included in the new provision by purchase or lease.*

B. Landscaping and amenity provision

810. The capital element in the programme of landscaping and improvement
which is to be undertaken in respect of every established site, and the improve-
ments which are offered to those non-established sites which possess sufficient
security to warrant them, will together constitute a major item of expenditure
which will be met in part by increased rents. There will be a small saving in the
case of existing sites which already possess some amenities of an acceptable
standard, and for new sites which are so closely integrated with recreational zones
that the leisure gardeners will be able to share a number of communal facilities
which are already available. The transaction carried out by the county borough of
Grimsby, and referred to in Table 28 and paragraph 265, indicates that it is not
always necessary to provide the finance needed to improve a site from sources
outside the allotment account, but it must in general be accepted that there will,
in the short term at least, be a considerable increase in capital expenditure on the
improvement of leisure garden sites. It may be necessary, for economic reasons,
to spread this expenditure over several years.

811. The cost of providing the communal facilities for each site will fall almost
entirely on the leisure gardens authority, and although the individual gardener will
pay a higher rent on a well-equipped site, there is no more reason to expect this
rent completely to cover capital expenditure and depreciation than there is to
require those who use a council bowling-green to buy the clubhouse. We said in
paragraph 566 that we cannot support the suggestion that Exchequer grants
should be available to local authorities for this purpose; similarly, any attempt

* See paragraph 763 and Chapter 21.
to extend the Farm Improvement Scheme to cover allotment/leisure gardens, as suggested by N.A.G.S., would merely involve payment of grant in a roundabout way. In the past, however, the allotment holders on a considerable number of sites have built and paid for their own rather primitive amenities when their landlords have failed to do so, and authorities might wish to consider the possibility of inviting their leisure gardens movement to assist in the improvement programme in return for a proportionate reduction in rent. It should, however, be clearly understood throughout that the overall responsibility for the landscaping and amenity improvement of every established site rests with the authority concerned, and a reluctance on the part of the gardeners to assist must not be proffered as an excuse for delay. Nor should shoddy workmanship or cheap materials be accepted as the price of co-operation.

812. The system by which the Ministry of Agriculture has been prepared to grant-aid the installation of a water supply on allotment garden sites has proved to be generally satisfactory, and should be extended to include leisure gardens. The rules under which the grant is payable are generally satisfactory, but for the future we would like to see two alterations to the current practice. Firstly, it seems desirable that the minimum size of site which may qualify—at present 4 acres in urban areas—should be reduced, especially since the smallest obligatory provision will, in future, be as little as 2½ acres.* It is important that each leisure gardens authority should feel free to select its sites by reference to their quality, irrespective of their size, and we suggest that grant-aid should in future be available in respect of the installation of water on sites of 2 acres and above in both urban and rural areas. Secondly—and this stems from a suggestion made to us by the city of Leeds—our proposals will necessitate the modernisation, extension or renewal of water supplies installed on some sites many years ago. It seems to us that the case for offering grant-aid towards the cost of such improvements or replacements is just as strong as for a new installation.

813. The financial implications of providing amenities designed for use by the individual plotholder, ranging from toolsheds or lockers to greenhouses and summerhouses present a greater problem. There seem to us to be three basic requirements—that the standard of each and every structure shall be uniformly high; that no leisure gardener shall be asked to pay more than is reasonable; and that the progressive improvement of each site shall accord with the overall plan prepared at its inception.

814. In paragraph 697 we accepted that each authority must be left to decide what types of structure should be erected for the use of the individual plotholder on its established sites, and, ultimately, whether these should be owned by the tenants or by the authority itself. But whatever system is adopted, the application of the principles set out in the preceding paragraph indicates that the financing of such amenities should invariably accord with the following rules:—

(i) If an authority is to retain the ownership of a particular structure, the tenant should be asked to pay a fair additional rent. He should not be expected to pay a sum sufficient to enable the authority to recoup the whole of its capital outlay. We discuss later in this chapter what the additional rent should be.

* i.e. half an acre per thousand for a population of 5,000.
(ii) If the tenant is to purchase a structure from his authority, he should be permitted to do so by means of a hire purchase agreement which will complete the transaction in a reasonable period of time.

(iii) If a tenant is permitted to buy and erect his own structure in compliance with specifications accepted by his authority, the authority should again be prepared, if the tenant so desires, to pay the initial capital cost and to allow him to sign a contract of hire purchase.

(iv) The standard of design and material which an authority adopts or accepts should on no account be debased on the grounds that some tenants cannot afford to rent or buy a structure. Such cases should be covered either by reductions in rent (see paragraph 829) or by providing space in the community centre where some tenants without toolsheds may be allowed to store their equipment.

C. Borrowing powers

815. The matters referred to in sections A and B of this chapter will require in total considerable capital outlay extending over a period of several years. While part of this expenditure may be defrayed from the sale of land no longer required, the major portion must clearly be derived from other sources. It is essential therefore that the powers contained in section 53(4) of the 1908 Act of borrowing for the purpose of “acquiring, improving and adapting” land for allotments should be extended to leisure gardens by the new legislation. If the same form of words is used, it should be emphasised in the Act itself that the word “adapting” will henceforth include expenditure on drainage, soil treatment and landscaping, including earth sculpture and the planting of hedges, ornamental shrubs and trees, while the term “improving” must allow for the cost of providing roads, boundary fences or hedges, gates, buildings and all other amenities covered in this Part of our report.

816. It must be anticipated that the sums which leisure gardens authorities will need to borrow for the purpose of fulfilling their obligations will in the short term greatly exceed those which have been authorised in the past. Although we recognise that both the total amounts available for loan in each financial year and the capital expenditure of local authorities generally are likely to be as severely restricted in the future as in the past, we would earnestly impress upon the Minister the need to implement our proposals with the least possible delay. These are, of course, based on the position as we see it today, and it is no exaggeration to suggest that allotment gardening is now declining so rapidly in public esteem that the task of improving its ‘image’ will become progressively more difficult if implementation is delayed.

817. It is envisaged that loans for leisure garden purposes will ultimately be granted under the general powers which local authorities possess in regard to open space and recreational areas. Initially, however, it will be necessary for the Minister to maintain a separate account of loans sanctioned for leisure gardens, and to devise some system under which the funds available can be distributed fairly between authorities which apply for them. The aim should be to ensure that each authority is able to progress steadily in its programme, rather than to allow some to complete their improvements quickly at the expense of others.

818. We understand that when loans are sanctioned under the existing legislation, no attempt is made by the Minister to ascertain whether the allotments
authority concerned does in fact borrow any or all of the capital which has been authorised. In consequence, it is at present virtually impossible to estimate with any accuracy the extent to which the total sum borrowed in any year falls short of the limit imposed by Treasury directive. Since we must anticipate that applications for loan sanction will for a number of years reach a much greater total than the sum now available, it seems necessary to ensure that in all cases in which consent is given borrowing does in fact take place.

819. We therefore RECOMMEND:—

1. That leisure gardens authorities should be permitted to borrow for the purpose of acquiring, adapting or improving land for leisure gardens.

2. That the maximum total sum made available for this purpose should be as generous as possible.

3. That in granting consent to an application for loan sanction, the Minister should require the authority concerned:—

(a) to borrow the sum specified within six months or to make a further application;

(b) to inform him immediately of any decision that the sum authorised, or any part of it, will not be required.

D. The revenue account

820. The major items debited to the leisure gardens income and expenditure account will in most cases comprise the cost of maintaining those features of each site for which the authority retains responsibility, the cost of administration, including salaries and wages, the rents payable in respect of sites not in the authority's ownership and the interest paid on loans used for the purpose of acquiring or improving leisure garden sites. The 'income' element in this account will consist almost entirely of rents received, either in respect of individual plots and their amenities or for entire sites which are let direct to associations.

821. It is this account which, under the present legislation, must not in any year incur a deficit of an amount in excess of the product of a 2d. rate. We examined this rule comprehensively in Chapter 7. It is clear that there is no ground for its retention and that the same objections could be applied to any other figure which might have been selected in substitution. Leisure gardens provided by local authorities constitute a recreational facility, and in keeping with every other such facility, they merit a degree of subsidy from the rates. If this principle is accepted, it becomes quite unnecessary to lay down either a maximum or a minimum total expenditure which may be incurred; each authority should be urged simply to regard its leisure gardens as part of its recreational provision and to budget for them accordingly. Moreover, once the limitation on the size of the annual deficit is removed, we can see no reason to insist that an authority must maintain a separate leisure gardens account. Some will doubtless continue to do so, while others will choose to show their leisure gardens expenditure separately within their general open space and recreation accounts. Each should be free to adopt the method which it considers the most appropriate.

822. The sums expended by leisure gardens authorities on each of the items mentioned in paragraph 775 will in future be considerably greater, pro rata to the total area provided, than at any time in the past. With efficient management, better facilities for maintenance and careful planning, this increased expenditure
will be abundantly reflected in the service which each authority is able to give to its tenants, and must therefore be balanced by increases in the rents which they are asked to pay. We have already emphasised in Part IV that the basic rents paid in most towns today for the right to occupy an allotment garden are totally inadequate. We therefore propose that every leisure gardens authority should operate a differential rents scheme under which each tenant will pay over and above a basic minimum an additional sum calculated by reference to the structures, amenities, facilities and services which the authority provides for him. Although this may mean that a tenant will often pay a different overall rent from his neighbour the system is so clearly equitable that its principles must soon come to be accepted. At a time when interest rates, labour costs and the prices of equipment change so frequently, it is difficult to offer a firm assessment of how the basic and supplementary rents payable should be calculated, but the proposals made in the following paragraphs represent our views at the date of submission of this report, and should be considered as guide lines.

823. We consider that the basic rent payable for the tenancy of a leisure garden, on an established or non-established site where the authority assumes responsibility for most items of general maintenance (see paragraph 702), should lie between 3s. and 4s. per pole (30s. to 40s. per annum for a 10-rod plot). The difference between these two extremes should take account of factors such as the adequacy of the drainage, the quality of the soil, and the nature of the maintenance carried out by the local association; and it follows that, generally speaking, the basic rent on established and non-established sites will tend towards the upper and lower limits respectively.

824. On an established site, this basic rent should be increased as the process of landscaping is completed and each new amenity is provided until the tenant of a plot on a fully fledged site on which the authority has effected all the improvements specified in Appendix X will be required to pay approximately 10s. per pole, or £5 per annum for a 10-rod plot. Although such a rent will represent a considerable increase on most rents charged today, it will still amount to no more than 2s. per week. On a non-established site the increase above the basic figure will be much smaller, and will depend on the number and kind of amenities which the authority is prepared to install. It is important to recognise that the gardener will in effect pay a higher rent not for security of tenure, but for the better amenities which security will bring. There is accordingly no justification for charging the tenant on an established site a rent in excess of the basic figure until the process of improvement is well under way, unless it is decided to retain certain worthwhile features which the authority has previously provided.

825. This basic rent is intended to take account of the work of the landscape architect, the authority's responsibilities for general maintenance and the provision of all communal amenities. It does not, of course, cover the provision by the authority of toolsheds, greenhouses or summerhouses for the individual plot, and the tenant who requests that such items be provided (or who assumes the tenancy of a plot where they already exist) must expect to pay a fair supplementary rent for each item*. These structures will probably vary so much in construction and price that it is very difficult to suggest the levels of rent which

* Where a tenant has provided his own structure, or has purchased this from the leisure gardens authority (see paragraph 814), he should clearly not be required to pay such supplementary rent.
might properly be charged. In general, however, the annual supplementary rent should be sufficient to cover the interest which would have been payable if the capital outlay had been borrowed, possibly with a small additional payment for depreciation. On this basis, a tenant might expect to pay 30s. per annum for a toolshed costing £20, £3 per annum for a £40 greenhouse, and about £9 per annum for a summerhouse worth £120. We must repeat, and cannot stress too strongly, our conviction that a tenant should not be required to reimburse the authority for the cost of the structure, even over a period of several years, unless it is then to become his property.

826. The figures quoted in the preceding paragraphs are intended only as a general guide, and cannot be incorporated in the legislation. Their effect is summarised in Table 48. If, as was suggested in paragraph 780, existing tenants are invited at the outset to indicate the type of site on which they would like to occupy a garden, they must obviously be made aware that while the rent on a non-established site will probably remain at about 30s. per annum, they must expect eventually to pay £5 or more on an established site and £14 or more to rent a complete chalet garden on which the structures have been provided by the leisure gardens authority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic rent</th>
<th>Established site</th>
<th>Non-established site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For plot on ‘unimproved site’ ...</td>
<td>30s. – 40s.</td>
<td>30s. – 40s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For plot with full communal amenities provided by authority ...</td>
<td>£5</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supplementary rent*</th>
<th>Established site</th>
<th>Non-established site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addition for individual shed costing (say) £20 ...</td>
<td>£1 10s.</td>
<td>£1 10s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addition for greenhouse costing (say) £40 ...</td>
<td>£3</td>
<td>£3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addition for summerhouse costing (say) £120 ...</td>
<td>£9</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* See footnote to paragraph 825.

827. In order to apply these principles to sites which are leased or rented to leisure garden associations, we must assume for the moment that the terms of the lease do not require the association to undertake additional maintenance or perform any services on the authority’s behalf except that of collecting the individual rents. In such a case, the total rent payable by the association should be somewhat less than that which would have been charged if each plot had been let direct by the authority to an individual leisure gardener;† and since the responsibility for filling vacant plots must always rest with the authority, the lease should be worded in such a way as to make allowance for unlet plots.

828. The practice of executing block leases of sites, of which we expressed general disapproval in paragraph 239 is now seen to create further problems in regard to rent. It will obviously be extremely difficult to grant a lease of an established site to an association until all necessary improvements have been completed, since the total rent chargeable will be continually rising as more amenities are added. Moreover, unless every ‘personal’ structure which might be permitted is already on the site before the lease is drawn up (in which case such

† Taking into account those gardeners (if any) who have obtained a reduction in their rents. (See paragraphs 829 and 830.)
structures may be taken into account in assessing the overall rent) it will be necessary for each tenant to negotiate individually with the council and to pay his supplementary rent direct to the authority.

829. We must now turn to the different circumstances in which tenants might be allowed to pay a reduced rent for their plots. There will undoubtedly be cases of genuine hardship, where the case for a reduction is overwhelming, and authorities must obviously be entitled to make concessions without the ambiguity of the present law. Moreover, the considerable increases in rents which tenants of leisure gardens will be required to pay point to the need to institute a general practice of accepting payment by two instalments. We must, however, again emphasise that under our proposals, a tenant of a plot on a fully equipped and landscaped site need pay no higher rent than 2s. per week; and the most modest estimate of the 'profit element' in allotment gardening is many times this figure. If it became general practice in deserving cases to allow tenants to occupy plots virtually free of charge, the fear would still remain that the man who 'gets something for nothing' may not value it. We therefore propose that the maximum reduction permitted in such cases should be of the order of 50 per cent.

830. Where the leisure gardens authority has not itself provided all the amenities and improvements for a particular site, there is a clear case for a pro rata reduction in the basic rents charged. This situation is likely to arise in one of three ways:

(i) If an existing site which is to become an established leisure garden site contains substantial amenities which have been provided by the allotment holders and which are considered to be worth retention.

(ii) If the tenants of a new site are to be required to share some of the facilities, such as a community centre or toilets, available in a nearby recreation centre.

(iii) If the tenants have assisted, by contributing materials or labour, in the provision of the amenities.

In all such cases, the rents to be charged should be abated to a level which fairly reflects the part played by the authority and the association in improving the site.

831. The most obvious case for a reduction in basic rent will occur on those sites where the association accepts responsibility for items of general maintenance which would otherwise have fallen on the authority. We repeat here that such transfers of responsibility should generally be both sought and welcomed, provided that:

(i) the association is competent to carry out its duties efficiently;

(ii) the association does not assume responsibility for items which could be managed more cheaply and effectively by the authority, or for items which might involve capital expenditure; and

(iii) it is accepted that the final responsibility for the successful management of the site rests with the authority.

In every case, the terms of the agreement should follow direct negotiation between the association and the leisure gardens manager. In this way, the association will be able to discuss and determine the precise limits of its responsibilities, and to appreciate the standards of maintenance which will be acceptable to the leisure gardens manager. It will be necessary to assess the approximate saving in
administration and other expenditure which will result from the transfer of responsibility to the association; the total basic rent of the site should then be reduced by the same amount, with a small additional discount to cover the notional saving in rate subsidy.

832. Except in the case where every plot on a site is let to a member of the association, it will be necessary to ensure that the benefit of the basic rent reduction accrues only to those tenants who have shared in the administrative and maintenance work (see paragraph 704). It seems to us that the only method of achieving this will be to require every plotholder to pay his full rent; the agreed rebate will then be retained by the association to use as it thinks fit.

833. It will be the task of the appropriate council committee to determine the appropriate rent for each plot and each site within the framework of our recommendations. In our opinion, leisure garden rents should be periodically adjusted far more freely than have allotment rents in the past. The committee should keep its rents under constant review, and should be prepared to amend them not only by reference to movements in costs and general expenditure, but also to change the value of the rate subsidy if this seems desirable. The council committee must be free to take all factors, including local issues, into account, but in view of the complexity of the suggestions which we have made, it would be advisable to illustrate by some examples the methods of assessment which should be adopted. In Table 49, it is assumed that every plot is 10 rods in extent, and that all amenities have been provided, installed and paid for by the authority.

Table 49

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of methods of assessment of rent in 1969</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example 1.</strong> Non-established site with no amenities and moderate soil quality. The authority is responsible for the maintenance of main paths, fences and grass verges. Each tenant pays 30s. per annum basic rent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example 2.</strong> Established site, fully equipped, with good soil and drainage. Communal areas and buildings maintained by the authority. Each tenant pays £5 per annum basic rent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example 3.</strong> As in example 2, but each tenant rents (a) a toolshed, or (b) a summerhouse. Each tenant pays (a) £6 10s., (b) £14 per annum basic and supplementary rent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example 4.</strong> Established site, fully equipped, with an association responsible for aspects of administration and maintenance which are estimated to save £50 per annum. Each tenant pays £5 per annum basic rent, and a rebate of (say) £60 is retained by the association.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example 5.</strong> Established site, fully equipped, with 100 occupied plots. Site leased to association which is responsible for administration and maintenance, the estimated saving being £80 per annum. Basic rent for the site will be approximately £500 per annum with a rebate of (say) £100 per annum paid to the association.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* If, in this example, any tenants have been granted a reduction in their rents, it will be necessary either to reduce the total basic rent or increase the rebate accordingly.

834. Despite the recommendation of the A.A.C. in 1950, the question of the rating of allotment sites and the buildings thereon has never been satisfactorily resolved. Since the number and quality of the structures on leisure garden sites will be far higher than in the past, it is, in our view, necessary to replace common practice by legal provision. In calculating the rents which should be paid by plotholders, we have assumed throughout that they will cover all payments to public authorities, and we therefore propose:—

(1) that structures on the individual plots, which will normally be of a temporary nature, should not be rated; and

322
(2) that any general or water rate levied in respect of the site itself or any
communal buildings thereon should be borne by the authority.

In order, therefore, to regulate the revenue account of each leisure gardens
authority, we RECOMMEND:—

1. That the obligation resting on each authority to maintain a separate allot-
ment/leisure garden account should be removed.

2. That every leisure gardens authority should be permitted to incur in the
administration of its leisure gardens system a loss to be recovered from its
rates under the same rules as operate for other municipal recreations.

3. That the tenant of a leisure garden should be required to pay a fair rent,
calculated by reference to the standard of amenity, both communal and
personal, with which he is provided, and to the amount of administrative
and maintenance work performed by the authority on his behalf.

4. That every tenant of a leisure garden should be permitted to pay his annual
rent in two instalments.

5. That each authority should have power to allow a reduction of up to 50 per-
cent in the rent of any tenant who, in its opinion, merits concessionary
treatment.

6. That no tenant of a leisure garden and no leisure gardens association should
be required to pay a general or water rate in respect of a plot or site or any
structure thereon.

E. Compensation

835. The different rules under which compensation becomes payable by virtue of
the present legislation when an allotment gardener gives up his plot were set out
in Chapter 2 of this report. They vary according to the terms of his tenancy
agreement, the circumstances in which he leaves, the length of notice he is given,
the time of year at which it expires and the use to which he has put his plot. They
are in part complicated, ambiguous and anomalous, and while they may serve as
a general guide for the future, it is essential that the rules incorporated in the new
Act should be both fair and easy to understand.

836. A tenant who receives notice to quit on the grounds that he has contra-
vened the terms of his tenancy agreement should be entitled to no compensation
whatsoever. He must, however, be permitted, at any time before the expiry of the
notice, to remove from the plot any structure which belongs to him and any
trees, bushes, shrubs, flowers and crops which he has planted. The right of his
landlord to claim compensation from such a tenant (section 4 of the 1950 Act) in
respect of any deterioration of the land caused by the tenant's failure to maintain
it properly should be retained; the amount of such compensation should continue
to be the cost of making good the deterioration.

837. A tenant who surrenders his plot voluntarily, whether he has given his
landlord the period of notice required by his agreement or not, should be entitled
to no compensation except in the circumstances explained in paragraph 839.
The same rule should apply in the case of a tenant who dies. In both cases,
however, the tenant or his personal representative should be permitted to remove
within a period of one month following the expiry of his notice or his death any
structure which belongs to him and any crops which he has planted. A clause to
this effect should be included in the tenancy agreement.
838. On a non-established site, each tenant will be well aware throughout his tenancy that his plot will eventually be required for other purposes or that it will sooner or later be handed back to the landowner. In accordance with our recommendations, he will be kept fully informed of any changes of plan which might affect the length of his tenure. Thus, he will cultivate his plot in the knowledge that his tenure will be relatively brief, and will have no right to compensation for disturbance when it comes to an end.

839. In the case of an established site, however, the tenant will have every reason to assume that his tenure will continue for as long as he wishes, and will plan his garden accordingly. Where it becomes necessary to give him notice to quit, therefore, we consider that he is entitled to compensation in respect of disturbance, irrespective of the length of notice he is given or whether he is offered an alternative plot. In equity, similar compensation should be paid to the representatives of a tenant who dies before the notice already given to him has expired, and to the man who surrenders his plot voluntarily during the same period. We consider that in all these cases the amount of compensation payable should be equivalent to one year’s rent, excluding any supplementary rent payable for personal structures.

840. The tenant of any leisure garden, whether established or non-established, who is given notice to quit for any reason other than breach of his tenancy agreement, should receive compensation as at present in respect of residual manures and crops in the course of cultivation at the date on which the notice expires. If, however, a tenant’s crops are at that date almost ready for harvesting and his garden is not required at once, he should be permitted to cultivate his plot without further payment of rent until the crops are gathered; his compensation will then be restricted accordingly. The present rule by which a tenant may be forbidden to cultivate crops, such as strawberries, asparagus and rhubarb, which continue in production for two or more years is quite absurd; we consider that a tenant should be at liberty to grow such crops and should receive compensation in respect of them.

841. If the tenant of an established leisure garden wishes to plant small ornamental trees, bushes or shrubs in his plot he may of course do so and, on being given notice to quit, will be entitled to compensation for any such ‘improvements’ which he has provided, unless:—

(i) the notice to quit expires during the close season; and

(ii) he is immediately offered and accepts the tenancy of an alternative plot to which they may be transplanted by his leisure gardens authority.

If the tenant of a chalet garden wishes to incorporate into his layout ‘permanent’ features such as a small pond, steps or a rockery, he may do so. He should, however, only be entitled to compensation in respect of these improvements if they have been constructed with the approval of the allotments manager. Such approval for the incorporation of features considered suitable should not be withheld unless the site is scheduled for early closure. Where compensation becomes payable in either of these two cases, it should be calculated on the basis of the value of the ‘improvements’ to an incoming tenant; in default of agreement each case must be submitted to arbitration.

842. Compensation for improvements in the form of structures (toolsheds, greenhouses and summerhouses) presents a more difficult problem; it will of
course arise only where such structures are the property of the tenant. If the owner is to transfer to another plot without delay, we consider that the authority should be responsible for dismantling the structure, transporting it to the new plot and for re-erection, or replacement, including the provision of a suitable concrete base and any ancillary features; in these circumstances there would be no right to further compensation. If, however, a gardener who owns a structure of any type on his present plot is not taking the tenancy of a replacement (either because no plot is available or because he is unwilling to accept it) we think that he should be allowed to choose between two alternatives. He may either claim compensation for disturbance equivalent to the notional annual rent which would have been charged for a structure of the same type provided by the leisure gardens authority, and may then remove his building from the site; or he may require the authority to purchase the building, its base and any ancillary features at their current valuation. In either case, if agreement cannot be reached, the matter should be submitted to arbitration.

843. We therefore RECOMMEND:—

1. That if the tenant of a leisure garden receives notice to quit for breach of his written agreement, he should not be entitled to any compensation.

2. That, in such a case, the leisure gardens authority should be entitled to compensation from the tenant of an amount equivalent to the cost of restoring the land to a standard suitable for further occupation.

3. That, except in the case referred to at 4 below, no compensation should be payable in cases where a tenant has voluntarily surrendered his plot, or has died.

4. That, where the tenant of an established leisure garden is given notice to quit for any reason other than breach of his agreement, he should be entitled to compensation for disturbance of an amount equal to one year’s rent, exclusive of rent payable for personal structures. Similar compensation should be payable in the case of a tenant who dies or who surrenders his plot during the period of notice.

5. That a tenant of any leisure garden who receives notice to quit for reasons other than breach of his agreement should be entitled to compensation in respect of residual manures and crops including flowering plants, both perennial and annual, in the course of cultivation, unless he can be allowed to harvest such crops after the notice has expired.

6. That a tenant of an established leisure garden should receive compensation in respect of ornamental trees, shrubs and bushes planted by him, on the basis of their value to an incoming tenant unless they are transplanted successfully to a new plot.

7. That a tenant of a chalet garden should receive compensation in respect of permanent features constructed with the consent of the leisure gardens manager on the same basis as at 6 above.

8. That where a tenant of a leisure garden is given notice to quit a plot containing a structure owned by him, then:—
   (a) if he is moving to a new plot, the structure should be transported and re-ereected by and at the expense of the leisure gardens authority; and
(b) if he is not moving to a new plot, he may elect either:—

(i) to receive compensation equal to one year’s notional rent, and to remove his building from the site at his own expense;

or

(ii) to require the authority to purchase the structure and its ancillary features.

F. Government grants

844. We examined the case made for assisting the allotments movement by means of Exchequer grants in Chapter 13. It is unnecessary to repeat the arguments put to us by N.A.G.S. and others, but it may be advisable for future reference to summarise our general findings. These were:—

(1) Although allotment gardening should be regarded as a recreation, the existence of a profit element renders it less entitled than other recreations to Exchequer grant. This argument will gradually become less valid as rents increase and changes in the land use of plots reduce any economic motive involved in leisure gardening.

(2) Before a grant was made available, it would be necessary to establish the special purpose which it was intended to fulfil. To provide grants for purposes which are already adequately catered for by other means would be pointless and confusing.

(3) There could be no justification for offering financial assistance to the allotments movement unless and until the movement showed a far greater readiness than in the past to help itself.

845. There is, we feel, a strong possibility that the facilities available for the education of leisure gardeners, associations and local authorities in the efficient administration, management, cultivation and aesthetic development of leisure gardens will prove to be inadequate. It is at present impossible to be certain whether this will be so. It will clearly depend upon many factors such as the number of gardens which are provided above the statutory formula both at the outset and in the future; the efficiency, skill and vision of leisure gardens managers; the amount of time which horticultural advisers are able to devote to leisure gardens; the readiness of N.A.G.S. and other organisations to help and encourage and, above all, the readiness of leisure gardeners to set high standards and to seek advice.

846. In Chapter 23 we will examine the possibility that the allotments movement may require temporary financial assistance during the initial period when it is seeking to adapt itself to the leisure gardens image. The case for a permanent grant has not been made, but in the light of what we have said in the preceding paragraph, we RECOMMEND that the new Act should permit the responsible Minister to keep the position under review, and give the Minister discretion to make grants for educational purposes.
CHAPTER 21
PRIVATE ALLOTMENT GARDENS

847. In Chapter 9 we demonstrated that the continued existence of large areas of private allotment land has to some extent militated against both the rationalisation and the modernisation of the allotment situation in this country. We do not deny that private allotment provision has a long and honourable history, nor do we overlook the fact that some private sites today rival any offered by allotments authorities in both attractiveness and popularity. But if they are considered in relation to the present allotments situation, private allotments generally are seen to have important defects. Their owners, without exception, are under no statutory obligation to provide allotment land, and in an age of inflated land values the number of private allotments will decline rapidly. They are never subsidised, and any improvements made to them must be provided and carried out by the allotment holders themselves. They are in very many cases subject to overriding charitable trusts, and do much to preserve the image of charity which still permeates the entire allotments movement.

848. In the context of our recommendations, these defects resolve themselves into a single dilemma. If we were to accept that the existence of a large group of private allotment sites within its administrative area could be used by a leisure gardens authority as a basis for obtaining partial exemption from its statutory obligation to provide established leisure gardens, we would be accepting a situation in which such an authority would then be able to watch (or even to engineer) the systematic closure of private sites in the knowledge that it need not immediately replace them. Moreover, even if many of its private sites continued to function, the attempt to create a new image for the few established leisure garden sites in the area would inevitably be thwarted by a proliferation of sites subject to no law and outside the scope of the programme of improvements. If, on the other hand, we were simply to deny leisure gardens authorities the right to claim exemption on this basis, the consequences might be no less unfortunate. Not only would the private sites again defeat every attempt to improve the image, but, in addition, while some private sites in their areas might be ideally suited to become established leisure gardens, authorities would be compelled to acquire new land which might never be needed. It is obvious that the only solution to this problem is one which will allow local authorities to take over the management of good and viable private sites and will ensure that, in future, the number of sites outside the control of each leisure gardens authority will be reduced to a minimum.

849. Even so, the solution cannot be simple, nor can the problems posed by all types of private allotment land be approached in the same way. Many private sites in rural areas are used commercially, and are indistinguishable from the commercial allotments provided by parish councils. Large areas of charity allotment land, the residue of the ‘poor’s’ allotments and fuel allotments of the early nineteenth century, have not been used as allotments of any type for very many years. The future of such land will be considered in our next chapter; we are concerned here only with those private sites which, by their similarity to the present concept of the allotment garden, might be expected both to compete with
the new leisure garden for the allegiance of the allotment holder and, by their immutability, to jeopardise the success of any attempt to improve the image of allotment gardening.

A. Charity allotments

850. Within this category, there are two groups of charity allotment sites—the field gardens which sprang originally from the General Inclosure Act of 1845, and those sites which owe their existence to acts of private generosity. The Charity Commission has contended that the application of the *cy près* doctrine in all such sites today implies that they should not, generally speaking, be retained as allotment gardens; instead, the trust should be revised in each case so as to provide a greater income for the original beneficiary class.

851. We do not quarrel with the view that the *cy près* doctrine applies to every allotment site governed by a charitable trust, but we suggest that the Commission’s interpretation of that doctrine tends in this instance to be too narrow. There can be little doubt that the primary purpose of the field garden was to benefit the poor, but in the case of the site provided by a private individual, the donor’s intention is more difficult to define. He might, we acknowledge, have intended his bequest to be held in perpetuity for the alleviation of poverty; but, equally, he might (as we suggested in paragraph 324) have wished to ensure that his land would be used for the provision of allotments. He might, indeed, have been motivated solely by concern for the well-being of his local community, and have chosen to express this concern by the provision of allotments where others might have elected (say) to endow a school. There is evidence, also, that the Commission’s present interpretation of the *cy près* doctrine has not always commended itself to others. Thus the Royal Commission on Common Land, reporting in 1958,* recommended that all field gardens should now be vested in the appropriate allotments authority, and there is no doubt that many charity sites were transferred to local authorities under section 33(1) of the 1908 Act after the Act of 1919 had deleted all reference to “the labouring population”.

852. It seems to us essential that, in deciding which areas of land would be the most suitable for selection as established and non-established leisure gardens (see paragraph 763), the advisory committee appointed by each authority should be able to consider the merits of all undeveloped land in the area; but that it should be compelled to reject land which is actually in use as allotments, simply because such land is subject to charitable trusts, would be unthinkable. We are of the opinion, therefore, that whatever the correct interpretation of the *cy près* doctrine may be, a means must be found of placing any charity site nominated as a future leisure garden site under the control of the appropriate authority.

853. Accordingly, we **RECOMMEND**:—

1. *That where the council of a leisure gardens authority has accepted the advice of its advisory committee that an existing allotment site subject to a charitable trust should be included as an established leisure garden site either in its obligatory provision or in its voluntary additional provision, it should be able either:—*

   *(a) to require the trustees of the charity to transfer the ownership of the site without payment but subject to a condition that it*

---

*Cmnd. 462, paragraphs 376 and 377.*

328

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
will not be taken out of leisure gardens use for a period of (say) twenty-five years; or

(b) if the Commission’s interpretation of the cy près doctrine is held to apply to every such site, to require the same trustees to execute in its favour a renewable lease of the site for a term of at least twenty-one years at a fair rent."

2. That where such a council has decided to convert an existing charitable allotment site to a non-established leisure garden site, it should be able to require the trustees to grant a renewable tenancy of the site to the local authority at a fair rent.

B. Other private sites

854. We indicated in paragraph 852 that all private allotment garden sites, irrespective of whether they are of charitable origins, must be regarded as available for selection as leisure gardens. Sites owned by British Rail or the National Coal Board are, perhaps, less likely to meet the criteria of accessibility necessary for acceptance as established leisure garden sites, and many will no doubt be rejected by advisory committees for establishment because of their ugly environment. In all such cases, however, the possibility that they might be suitable as non-established sites must be borne in mind.

855. Some of the sites which are owned by the tenants themselves, either individually or as shareholders in a limited company, are among the best private sites in the country (Plate 14). Others, on which many of the plots have been taken in the belief that the area might eventually commend itself to a speculative builder, are a disgrace. Many of the first group would seem to lend themselves naturally to the treatment which we have recommended for established leisure garden sites while others will be more suitable as non-established sites.

856. The allotment sites referred to in this section differ from charity sites in one important respect—their owners have decided that their land shall be used as allotment gardens for the time being and not, as in the case of a charitable trust, in perpetuity. Such owners ought not to be subject to any constraints beyond those applied to the owners of other (non-allotment) land, and it will therefore be necessary for a council which has designated any such sites as leisure gardens to obtain control of them by purchase, lease or tenancy either by negotiation or by the use of its compulsory powers.

C. General

857. The acquisition of some private sites by purchase or transfer, the assumption of responsibility for others on a non-established basis, the continuing decline in the extent of private allotment land, and the attraction of the better standard of site provided by local authorities will no doubt eventually reduce the number of private allotment sites which remain in urban areas to the point where their existence need not affect the provision made by the leisure gardens authority itself. In the case of those private sites which remain, we would strongly urge on both owners and occupiers alike the wisdom of applying to their sites as much of our programme of improvement (including the adoption of the name ‘leisure garden’)

* In view of the increased rents which the council will be able to charge its tenants (see Chapter 20), this rent will inevitably increase the income of the charity concerned.
as their resources will permit; and if, despite all the proposals we have made, substandard sites of the type described in paragraphs 483 and 494 still remain in allotment use, we consider it essential that local authorities should make full use of their powers to ensure their closure.

858. In the light of our proposals in this chapter, we RECOMMEND that no leisure gardens authority should be granted total or partial exemption from its statutory obligation to provide established leisure gardens on the argument that there are private allotment sites within its area.
CHAPTER 22

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS AND OTHER ALLOTMENTS

859. The implementation of the proposals which we have so far made will necessitate the insertion of the term "leisure garden" among the exceptions specified in the legislation relating to agricultural holdings and the simultaneous deletion of the term "allotment garden". This substitution will have two effects. On the one hand, it will remove much of the confusion which has always arisen between the two sets of legislation. The definition of a leisure garden, with its insistence on the recreational aspect, its removal of restrictions on the cultivation of flowers and certain other crops, and its omission of all reference to the sale of produce, should obviate the possibility of any leisure gardener being able to claim that he occupies an agricultural holding. On the other hand, the narrowness of the same definition will create a new problem for some, in that those who have hitherto used their allotment gardens for purposes (such as keeping stock) outside the scope of the new legislation may have to adopt new objectives or find themselves dispossessed. Our terms of reference require us to consider the future of allotments of all types, and we propose to devote this chapter to an examination of the prospects for those allotments which will be excluded from the new legislation.

860. As a first principle, we RECOMMEND that the term "leisure garden" should be substituted for the term "allotment garden" wherever the latter occurs in the legislation relating to agricultural holdings.

A. Livestock

861. Although we are convinced (and have recommended) that livestock of all types should be rigorously excluded from leisure gardens, we can see no objection to permitting the keeping of bees, provided that the hives on any site are not too numerous. Naturally, any beekeeper who takes a plot on a leisure garden site will be subject to the same penalties for any failure to cultivate it properly as his neighbour, and we suggest that the number of hives on any one plot should be restricted to four.

862. In some parts of the country, the rearing of livestock on allotment garden sites has by now become traditional, and our proposal that stock keeping should be prohibited on leisure gardens will deprive many pig and poultry keepers of the facilities for practising their hobby, at least on leisure garden sites. Although the arguments for such a ban are overwhelming, we recognise that, unless alternative facilities are made available, our proposal will be a hardship to many and, possibly, a source of some embarrassment to a number of local authorities. In the light of our recommendations for the obligatory provision of leisure gardens we have been obliged to consider whether it would be right to compel local authorities to provide sites for the keeping of livestock.

863. We have reached the conclusion that it would not. In the first place, stock keeping is not a natural extension of the use of the home garden, especially in urban areas, and the demand for facilities does not arise, as it does in the case of most allotment gardeners, from a shortage of garden space at home. There is
therefore less of a moral duty on the local authority to satisfy any such demand. Secondly, we are convinced that, except in the case of the pigeon fancier, this demand often arises among those whose principal incentive is the expectation of a considerable profit, and we consider that it would be quite wrong to compel authorities to cater for a demand which arises for this reason. Thirdly, there can be little doubt that, on whatever scale he practises his hobby, the stock keeper occupies an agricultural holding, and urban authorities should not be obliged to offer land which will possess the extra security which that status accords. Lastly, since, in our experience, the presence of livestock almost always generates untidiness, we cannot compel any authority to set aside land in the knowledge that its use might well keep it below acceptable standards of hygiene and appearance.

864. It is nonetheless desirable that each authority should have the power to provide one or more sites intended for the keeping of pigeons or other livestock if it chooses to do so. Such sites should be chosen with considerable care; they ought ideally to be near enough to the homes of prospective tenants to encourage the frequent visits which the satisfactory tending of livestock entails, but unobtrusive enough to ensure that their innate untidiness does not become offensive to the general public. It would be in order for an authority to decide that an existing allotment garden site which has in the past been used extensively for pigeon or stock keeping, but which is considered unsuitable for retention as a leisure garden, might serve as a site reserved for one or more forms of livestock.

865. There are a number of points of varying degrees of importance which we would urge any authority considering the provision of a site for livestock to bear in mind:—

(i) Such a site ought on no account to be termed a 'leisure garden'. It will not be controlled by the Leisure Gardens Act, nor will it fall within the definition contained in that Act. It is absolutely essential that the progress of leisure gardens towards their new image should not be frustrated by their association with other types of provision which are not subject to the same stringent rules. The title 'stock allotment' coined by the L.S.A. has no intrinsic fault, but it seems desirable to dissociate such sites even from any private (vegetable) allotments whose tenants may cling nostalgically to their former title. We doubt in fact whether any title other than 'livestock site' or, where appropriate, 'pigeon site' is either necessary or desirable.

(ii) Since the provision of such sites will be quite voluntary, all factors affecting tenancy, including degrees of security of tenure and the means of guaranteeing it, will be entirely in the hands of the parties concerned. Authorities should, however, realise that few people, however enthusiastic they might be, would be prepared to purchase expensive stock and equipment for a site scheduled for early closure.

(iii) Arising out of the last point, it must be realised that, in future, the plots on most livestock sites (except, possibly, those used for the keeping of pigeons) are likely to fall squarely within the definition of agricultural holdings. It is desirable that, before committing itself to a final decision to provide a site, an authority should be aware of the rules relating to security and compensation which operate in respect of such holdings.

(iv) The dichotomy between the leisure garden and the livestock site will render it unnecessary to preserve the fiction that every stock keeper is
a keen gardener with an additional hobby! That this is generally untrue is apparent from the barren wastes which surround the pigeon lofts, chicken coops and pig styes on many sites in the north (Plates 16, 17 and 18). If each authority were to limit the size of its livestock plots to the minimum necessary to keep the animals or birds in hygienic conditions, it would be possible to accommodate far more tenants on a single site.

(v) Although we have commented unfavourably on the general condition of some sites which are today devoted mainly to stock keeping, we are satisfied that a successful and presentable site can be created; but it will require considerable care in its selection, design, construction and management. The L.S.A. has considerable experience in this field and, as is evident from the theoretical design which forms Figure 22 of this report, has already devoted some thought to the aesthetic side of stock keeping in urban areas. We would like to feel that an authority which decides to provide a livestock site will seek the L.S.A.'s advice and assistance, and we express the hope that it will be able and ready to help.* The general public has the right to insist that sites devoted to livestock, whether publicly or privately owned, should not be unsightly, evil-smelling and fly infested.

(vi) In view of our conviction that gardening and stock keeping are separate hobbies with only a tenuous link between them, authorities should realise that any livestock site created must be additional to, not a substitute for, its obligatory leisure gardens provision.

866. We therefore RECOMMEND:—

1. That a tenant of a leisure garden should be permitted to install up to four hives of bees on his plot.

2. That every leisure gardens authority should be permitted, if it so decides, to set aside areas of land for the keeping of pigeons or small livestock; such areas should be known as 'livestock sites'.

3. That no authority should be granted total or partial exemption from its statutory obligation to provide established leisure gardens by reason of the fact that it has provided livestock sites.

B. Multiple holdings

867. During periods when the popularity of allotment gardening has been declining, the practice by which tenants of allotment gardens are able to extend their holdings almost at will by absorbing neighbouring plots as they fall vacant has constantly increased. Local authorities have often been reluctant to take vacant plots out of allotment use and subsequently to face a possible upsurge in demand which the law would require them to meet; at the same time, too, they have not been prepared to consider alternative methods of dealing with the situation when it seemed possible that demand might eventually disappear entirely. Under such circumstances, many authorities have condoned the practice of multiple holdings as the only alternative to dereliction.

* As this suggestion stems from our Recommendations, we have not been able to consult the L.S.A. in regard to this. Its ability to help will undoubtedly depend on the number of calls on its services which authorities choose to make.
868. In future, the problem of dealing with vacant plots should cause far less concern. It must be anticipated that in many areas the demand for leisure gardens will frequently exceed the supply, and that new tenants will be waiting to take over each plot as it falls vacant. But if demand should fall persistently in any area, despite the maintenance of high standards of amenity, the simplified procedure by which non-viable sites may be reduced in size or closed will enable reductions in demand to be dealt with promptly and effectively. Perspicacious siting may also make it possible to absorb some vacant plots into neighbouring open space. Similarly, the pattern of improvements applied to each site will offer opportunities for plots which are temporarily unoccupied to be treated in various ways and added to the site's communal area.

869. Nevertheless, occasions may arise when there is a considerable increase in vacancies on a particular site which cannot be filled from the waiting-list and where, for some reason, the leisure gardens authority is unable or unwilling to find one of these obvious solutions. In such circumstances, the possibility of adding to the holdings of one or more of the remaining tenants must again be considered. We can see nothing intrinsically wrong in letting two or more leisure gardens to one man if an authority wishes to do so, provided that a number of conditions are observed:—

1. Within the limit of the maximum size of the individual leisure garden prescribed by law, each authority must decide for itself the size of its leisure gardens, and no tenant will have the right to demand more than one plot.

2. No tenant should be permitted to occupy two or more plots provided by his authority, whether on the same site or not. If by so doing he prevents an applicant from obtaining a plot. In the case where a prospective tenant applies for a plot on a fully tenanted site on which an existing tenant already occupies more than one plot, the latter should be required to surrender a plot on the earliest reasonable date.

3. The tenant who occupies several plots will almost invariably wish to cultivate them mechanically, to devote them entirely to vegetables or fruit and to sell much of his produce. This is likely to cause problems relating to access, appearance, and the agricultural holdings legislation. All of these should be taken into account and suitable precautions adopted when the special tenancy is granted.

4. To the extent that each multiple holding represents a commercial venture, it is undesirable that the administrative and other expenditure relating to such a holding should be subsidised from the rates. Consideration should therefore be given in every case to the possibility of increasing the tenant's rent for all but the first plot to the point where it equals the average annual expenditure in respect of his plots.*

870. We therefore recommend:—

1. That a leisure gardens authority should consider the advisability of allowing an applicant to occupy more than one leisure garden only if:—
   (a) there is no waiting-list for plots on the site; and

* Example: An authority's total annual expenditure in respect of a non-established site containing 106, 10-rod plots for which each tenant pays 30s. basic rent is £300. A tenant who occupies 10 plots would pay £28 10s. 0d. basic rent (i.e. 30s. for the first plot plus £27 for the other nine).
(b) it was first examined and rejected the alternative methods of dealing with vacant plots set out earlier in this Part of our report.

2. That any tenant who occupies more than one leisure garden should be required by the terms of his tenancy agreement to surrender any number of them on 1st April or 1st October next after being called upon to do so, provided that he may retain a single plot. If and when this occurs he should not be entitled to any compensation in respect of the plots given up.

3. That any tenant who occupies more than one leisure garden should be required to pay an economic rent for all but his first plot.

C. Commercial allotments

871. In the case of most urban authorities, the obligation to provide allotments was restricted by the 1922 Act to the provision of allotment gardens, and this limitation was extended to all authorities by the Act of 1950. It is not clear whether authorities have retained the power to provide other types of allotment during the period subsequent to the passing of these Acts, but we presume that under the general powers of the Local Government Acts an authority would be entitled to let any land in its possession on any terms it thought fit.

872. What is certain, however, is that since 1922 and 1950 urban and rural authorities respectively have been under no obligation to continue to provide what we have described throughout this report as 'commercial' allotments, or to replace any such sites which it was necessary to close. We have received no evidence to suggest that this change in the law has produced hardship or that rural authorities have shown any tendency to close commercial sites unnecessarily. Indeed, as we have seen, many authorities regard them as a valuable source of income which can be used for the benefit of the parish as a whole.

873. We see no reason to disturb this present situation, but two important points must be made. Firstly, in accordance with our proposals in the preceding section of this chapter, we feel that every parish council and meeting which provides commercial allotments should take steps to ensure that they are not operated at a loss. The parish is in these cases acting as a landowner who hires out his land for farming or market gardening as a commercial transaction, and has just as much right to seek the best possible rent. Secondly, the repeal of the existing legislation will deprive the tenants of commercial allotments of certain rights to compensation on the termination of their tenancies. Almost invariably, however, they are covered by the agricultural holdings legislation which would appear to give them a greater degree of protection than that which they will lose, and it seems unnecessary and inappropriate to include them in the Leisure Gardens Act.

874. We therefore RECOMMEND:—

1. That no change should be made in the law and practice relating to allotments which are not allotment gardens.

2. That every authority providing such allotments should be urged to let them at an economic rent.

D. Fuel and 'poor's' allotments

875. In many parts of England and Wales there exist today extensive but often inaccurately recorded areas of fuel allotments and 'poor's' allotments, created
either at the time of enclosure a century or more ago or provided by some act of charity during the same period. They have withstood the passage of time and the depredations of urban sprawl and, as we saw in the account of the present situation in the urban district of Walton and Weybridge (see paragraph 341), are still capable of causing considerable problems.

876. The vast majority of these areas have not been used as allotments for many years; they are not included in the statistical returns of allotments and are usually regarded by the local inhabitants as common land, open space or areas of public recreation. Their identity as allotments has often been lost, and they produce no income. It was in these circumstances that the Royal Commission on Common Land recommended in 1958 that all such allotments should become common land, and should be registrable as such under a Commons Registration Act. The subsequent Act, however, made no reference to these allotments, and the Charity Commission, in its circular letter of 28th August, 1968 to local authorities, went to considerable lengths to explain that they were not entitled to registration. It used the argument to which we referred in Chapter 9 that “rights of common cannot be vested in a fluctuating class”.

877. We have no doubt that the Commission’s interpretation of the law is technically correct, but the law itself seems to be quite absurd. While these lands may originally have been set aside for the benefit of the poor, they have invariably been used, de facto if not de jure, by all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, often for very many years. During this time, they have rarely, if ever, produced income which can be distributed among the beneficiary class, and in many areas it would now be almost impossible to determine who was entitled to benefit. The Commission has no accurate knowledge of the extent or location of many of these allotments, and must rely on the trustees of each to come forward with schemes for revision of the trusts. Very often such schemes will require that land which has been open for centuries shall be used for industry or housing and in the process the amount of open space in the area will be depleted. Trustees are frequently unaware of the status of the land for which they are responsible, and of the options open to them, and it is probable that many of them will never consider submitting a scheme for the Commission’s approval. In such cases, the damaging link between allotments and charity will be preserved by reference to land which is not being used as allotments and which the Commission insists ought not to be so used except by “the poor”. In these circumstances it seems to us to be sensible that these areas of land should be preserved as open space.

878. We therefore RECOMMEND:—

1. That the leisure gardens advisory committee appointed by each authority, should be entitled, if it so desires, to recommend that a fuel or ‘poor’s’ allotment should be designated as a leisure gardens site; and

2. That further consideration should be given urgently to the possibility of amending the law in such a way as to enable fuel allotments and ‘poor’s’ allotments which have habitually been used as areas of public recreation to become either:—

   (a) common land, registrable under the Commons Registration Act of 1965; or

336
(b) public open space, vested in the appropriate local authority, with safeguards to ensure that if the land is sold or developed within (say) twenty-five years, a sum equivalent to its value will be invested on behalf of the beneficiary class named in the original trust.
CHAPTER 23

THE LOCAL ASSOCIATION AND THE NATIONAL SOCIETY

879. One of the major problems which confronts the allotments movement today is the breakdown in so many sites of the corporate spirit which flourished during periods of national economic need and throughout two world wars. Many associations have been established on the narrow basis of the advantage to be gained by bulk purchase of garden requisites. Moreover, although (or, possibly, because) its officers have given a lifetime of loyal service to the allotments movement, they tend generally to be conservative in their approach and oblivious to the pressing need for improvement. It will be obvious from what was said in Chapter 13 that, in our opinion, this conservatism permeates the entire movement through to N.A.G.S. itself, and that while allotment holders throughout England and Wales bemoan the 'stigma of charity' which is still attached to them, they continue to feel that society has a moral obligation to minister to their needs without expecting very much in return.

880. In this Part of our report we have emphasised continually the importance of breaking down this insularity and changing this passive approach, for we are certain that the success or failure of the leisure gardens movement will depend ultimately on the strength of purpose and progressive outlook of its societies and associations. In paragraph 701 we rejected the possibility of compelling every leisure gardener to join his local association; to the arguments which we there advanced we can now foresee the added danger that such a rule would almost certainly produce organisations which, secure in the allegiance of their membership, would see even less need for modernisation than they do at present. While there is nothing wrong in principle with the idea of letting a site en bloc to a sound association which will in turn sub-let plots only to its members, the prosperity of every association must ultimately depend on its own intrinsic merit.

881. We recognise, therefore, that the suggestions which we will make in this chapter as to the corporate organisation of the leisure gardens movement must take the form of advice and encouragement rather than compulsion, and that we must in the end rely upon the 'persuasion' of our earlier recommendations, coupled with the innate good sense of the individual gardener, to achieve success.

A. The site association

882. We have urged on each leisure gardens authority the need to promote the formation of a strong and viable association on every established leisure garden site. We have made several recommendations designed to ensure not only that associations will come into being, but also that the majority, if not all, of the plot-holders on each site will join them. We believe that the newcomers drawn into the movement by the higher standards to be provided will bring with them a greater sense of community than that which now exists.

883. The function of every site association, expressed in its simplest terms, will be to co-operate with the local authority, and especially with the leisure gardens manager, to ensure the success of its site. It is important to realise that success in this field will not be achieved merely by observing a set of rules and correcting any
tendency to fall below acceptable standards. It is something which will require effort and experimentation, where any promising new idea is taken up and given every opportunity to flourish. The successful site will be more than a carbon copy of its neighbour. Basically, however, the quest for success will on every site have two quite distinct facets. The first of these covers good administration and maintenance, in which the respective spheres of responsibility of the association and the local authority will have been agreed by negotiation. It is important to recognise that this agreement cannot absolve either party from its moral obligation to help the other wherever possible; just as the leisure gardens manager will advise the association if its performance is unsatisfactory, so the association should automatically bring to the notice of the manager anything in his sector which appears to need attention.

884. In the sphere of administration, an association might, if it felt sufficiently confident, accept responsibility for any or all of the following tasks:—

(i) Collecting individual rents and transmitting them to the local authority.
(ii) Advising any tenant who acts in contravention of his tenancy agreement, and reporting to the authority any failure to respond to such advice.
(iii) Receiving applications from individual tenants for permission to improve their plots or erect structures, for reductions in rent or any other relevant matter, and passing these to the authority with its recommendations.
(iv) Acting as the authority’s agent in issuing tenancy agreements.
(v) Maintaining the waiting-list and finding tenants for vacant plots if it believes that this task will present no real difficulty.

885. A site association might also undertake the following duties in the sphere of maintenance, provided that it is supplied with the necessary equipment* and is reimbursed for the cost of any materials which it needs and provides:—

(1) Mowing and trimming grass verges, communal grassed areas and any vacant plots which have been grassed down.
(2) Cleaning, painting and general maintenance of communal buildings, including toilets.
(3) Care of the water supply system, including the taking of adequate frost precautions during the winter.
(4) Promoting the tidiness of roads and pathways, and removing weeds as necessary.
(5) General responsibility for the neatness and tidiness of the site.

Only in exceptional circumstances should an association assume responsibility for the upkeep of the perimeter hedge or fence, the gates, roads and paths, the children’s play area (if any) or the flowers, shrubs and trees planted by the local authority as part of its landscaping programme. The proper maintenance of these items may well require frequent capital expenditure which would be beyond the resources of most associations. On the majority of sites, old-age pensioners might welcome an offer of payment from the association’s funds in return for general maintenance work on the site. Such people would generally be able to devote adequate time to their tasks and, as we pointed out in paragraph 711, the presence of

* An association which administers a large site should not be expected to undertake these tasks without the aid of mechanised equipment.
gardeners on the site throughout the day would probably reduce the incidence of vandalism and theft. In cases where such an arrangement is not possible, the most efficient procedure under which an association can operate any programme of maintenance would seem to be by allocating duties to groups of members on a rota system. Such a system, if operated fairly, should not involve any member in tasks which would occupy more than a total of one hour per week, even where the association is responsible for all the items listed in this paragraph.

886. The second prerequisite of a site's success is the emergence and preservation of a high standard of camaraderie and fellowship among gardeners who share a common interest. The task of creating this esprit de corps will fall almost entirely on the association, and although it may be engendered by co-operation in matters of general maintenance, it cannot flourish without determined effort by all concerned.

887. The scope of the programme which an association is able to introduce for its members will depend on a number of factors such as the size of its site and the number of established sites in the town. It will depend also on such domestic questions as whether the community centre is licensed. We hold no firm views on this subject, although we have been told that the possession of a licence can lead to the deterioration of a site where the tenants spend too much time at the bar and too little on their plots. In some areas, no doubt, it will be necessary for an association formed on one site to assume responsibility for the whole of a town’s leisure gardens system especially where the individual sites are small. In such a case, many of the duties referred to in our next section will fall upon it. But every association, no matter how small it may be, might be expected to undertake the following tasks:—

1. Arrange for refreshments to be available to members in the community centre at certain times of day.*
2. Stimulate discussion in the centre on topics of interest to the tenants of the site.
3. Arrange for visits to be made to members who are sick; keep their plots clean and tidy and, if necessary, harvest the crops on their behalf.
4. Hold a series of meetings at which both complaints and suggestions for further improvements to the site may be put forward and discussed.
5. Ensure that arrangements are made for bringing together the members from time to time during the winter months.
6. Combine with associations of neighbouring sites to organise visits, competitions, flower shows and other social functions.
7. Organise, if necessary in conjunction with other associations, the bulk purchase of gardening supplies for its members and applications for lime subsidy.

888. One of the major problems which must confront every association is whether to admit to membership people who do not occupy leisure gardens on the site. In the past, such people have been drawn into an allotment association largely by the prospect of obtaining horticultural advice and cheap garden requisites,

* This is a further duty which might conveniently be undertaken by old-age pensioners (see paragraph 885).
and could not be expected to think deeply about the problems of the site itself. Quite frequently, these 'outsiders' have eventually outnumbered the allotment holders in an association. If this were to happen on a large scale in the future, the success of many sites might at once be placed in jeopardy. On the other hand, any link, however tenuous, between the leisure gardens movement and others is to be encouraged, and we suggest that an association should be prepared to admit non-leisure gardeners to associate membership. In this way, they would be able to enjoy the advantages of membership without being able to vote or hold office, and so influence site affairs from without; through such outside contacts new recruits to the leisure gardening movement might well be enlisted.

B. The town and county associations

889. It is in our view essential that where several associations have been formed in a town to represent the interests of particular sites, whether established or non-established, they must also be part of a federation which can speak for every site provided by the leisure gardens authority. It is desirable, though not essential, that the office of this federation should not be located on a leisure garden site.

890. The federation will have three main functions. Firstly, it will be the channel through which the local authority, through its leisure gardens manager, will transmit information of interest to site associations in the town. Since it will be able to view the town's leisure garden pattern as a whole, it will be able to assess impartially the merits of any proposal for the closure or contraction of one site and the expansion of another, and to explain to the site associations concerned the principles involved. At the outset, especially, the federation will be expected to play a major part in explaining to the general body of allotment holders what the proposed leisure gardens pattern will comprise, and how the intended changes will affect each of them as individuals. Secondly, the federation will be responsible for bringing to the notice of the national society any matter which appears to be of more than local significance, or any complaint which seems to require action at national level. It will also be the vehicle by which information, advice and assistance are passed down from the national society to the man on the plot. Lastly, the federation must be in constant touch with the leisure gardens manager in order to assist him in his task of organising lectures, demonstrations and shows. It should be able to take some of the administrative work from his shoulders and to ensure that every leisure gardener is made aware of forthcoming events in good time to participate in them.

891. It is less necessary, perhaps, that a combined association should represent each county; but if a county show is held, it is desirable that the leisure gardens movement should exhibit. A county association responsible for the movement in a large and densely populated area might also be able to ensure that the gardeners of each town were aware of important developments in others, that at least one meeting per year was held at which they could all come together, and that opportunities for mutual visits arose.

C. The national organisation

892. The suggestions and recommendations which we have made in this Part of our report point conclusively to the need for a strong national body which will be truly representative of the leisure gardens movement throughout England and Wales. This organisation, we believe, should have five principal functions:

(i) Liaison. It should keep in close and regular contact with the leisure gardens section of the Ministry; it should be advised of any proposed
changes in Government policy towards leisure gardens, such as the availability of finance, and should be able to make representations. It should be invited to discuss in advance the contents of any publications (e.g. on planning matters) which might affect the leisure gardens movement, and should also report to the Minister any local action or proposals which it regards as a breach of the letter or spirit of the law sufficiently flagrant to warrant Ministerial intervention. It might also be consulted, if the Minister thought fit, about the basis of applications made by local authorities for exemption from the statutory provision of established leisure gardens.

(ii) Publicity. The national organisation should be able to institute its own publicity campaign, designed to keep the general public aware of the leisure gardens movement and of the advantages of recreational gardening generally. It should publish a magazine containing up-to-date advice on cultivation, suggestions for the well-being of sites and the layout of garden plots, correspondence and general information. It should also conduct an urgent investigation into any report that the leisure garden ‘image’ in a particular locality was making little or no progress.

(iii) Advice. The organisation should be able to offer advice (including legal advice) to any member who requires it, and should be ready to discuss with adequate knowledge questions concerning tenancies, rents, compensation and other matters which are raised by local associations or individual members. It should also be prepared to assist the leisure gardens manager of any area in persuading plotholders of the need to form site associations, and should issue to every site association a guidebook showing how best it might manage its affairs, with advice on a wide range of points.

(iv) Education. The national society should give a strong lead to the movement by the regular provision and issue of literature on horticultural matters. It should also prepare and issue on loan films, film strips and slides on all important topics affecting the leisure gardens movement, and should build up an extensive library of books with postal borrowing facilities, and ensure that every association is aware of what is available. Not least, it should make certain that new ideas which have proved successful in one part of the country are fully promulgated elsewhere.

(v) Progress. The organisation will be in a unique position to encourage the movement to progress towards the new image in many different ways. It might, for example, organise and judge both regional competitions and a nation-wide competition for the best-kept site, or that which has shown the greatest improvement during the year; it might offer prizes for the best design of toolshed, summerhouse or community centre; it might stimulate interest among landscape architects to find imaginative designs for sites and structures; it might make an annual award to the authority which has done most to foster good relations with the movement, or has effected the greatest improvement to its sites.

893. As we saw in Chapter 13, there is at the present time a curious situation in the national organisation of the allotments movement, in that N.A.G.S. is itself a member of the National Council, an advisory body under Ministerial chairmanship. While this may well have been a satisfactory arrangement at a time when

* See paragraphs 584–91.
emphasis was centred on the production of food, it is difficult to see how it continues to be justified today. There is no reason whatever why organisations interested in gardening and stock keeping should not form a federation if they so wish, but we cannot accept the proposition that an organisation which purports to represent the leisure gardens movement can only 'advise' the Minister through a council on which it is greatly outnumbered by members having no connection with leisure gardens. Similarly, if the national organisation is allowed to negotiate with the Minister direct, then the relevance of the National Council as an advisory body seems negligible. In our opinion, therefore, the National Council for Recreational Gardening and Livestock Keeping should now be abolished.

894. In the light of the constructive criticism which we have directed towards N.A.G.S. in the course of this report, it is pertinent to ask at this juncture whether N.A.G.S. itself will be able and prepared so to reorganise and modernise its structure and outlook as to qualify it to become the national organisation for the leisure gardens movement. We believe that it undoubtedly has the capacity to shoulder this responsibility and make this major advance. It combines a basic soundness of structure with vast experience, and we have noted in its progress at Flitwick, in oral evidence and in private conversation with its president and officials the beginnings of an extended vision. We take the view, therefore, that N.A.G.S. should be given every opportunity to adapt itself to the leisure gardens concept and to the role which we have suggested it should fill.

895. In order to assist N.A.G.S. in its task, we would proffer a number of suggestions which it should consider as a matter of urgency:—

(i) With the passing of the new Act, its name should be changed to the National Leisure Gardens Society Limited and its stated aims amended as necessary.

(ii) Its policy of seeking to persuade local authorities to affiliate should be pursued with far more determination. In this connection, we anticipate that the advantages to be gained both by N.A.G.S. and local authorities from affiliation will be more apparent than in the past.

(iii) Its committee of management is unwieldy. One member representing each of the nine economic planning regions covering England and Wales, with the addition of local authority representatives, might well be ample.

(iv) Its annual conference should include more papers on important topics, each followed by questions and/or discussion. The number of resolutions, almost overwhelming in the past, should be drastically reduced. If, in future, a day is devoted to a discussion of local authority aspects it should form an integral part of the conference, and should be open to all delegates. Those attending might also take part in several parallel sessions or symposia devoted to special topics of importance.

(v) It should appoint a group of sub-committees with the responsibilities indicated by the sections of paragraph 892, together with one responsible for finance, to consider how it might best fulfil the several functions set out in that paragraph.

(vi) It should examine its financial structure to determine what savings might be effected by the changes which we have outlined, and how its accounting system might be adapted to suit its new image.
(vii) It should immediately take active steps to induce those associations not now affiliated to join what must become a truly national organisation.

D. Financial Structure

896. We have indicated that membership of any organisation within the leisure gardens movement should remain on a voluntary basis, and although there is bound to be an interim period during which allegiance will fluctuate, we are confident that the measures we have advocated, the pressures which will be brought to bear, and the variety of responsibilities suggested in this chapter will ultimately convince the great majority of leisure gardeners that it will be to their considerable advantage to join the local association, and will also satisfy most associations and local authorities of the benefits of affiliation to the national society. Consideration of the financial structure of the movement may therefore be based on the assumption that most leisure gardeners will eventually owe allegiance to associations established at site, town, county and national level. Even so, it is difficult at this stage to estimate the cost to each organisation of performing the functions detailed in this chapter, but the proposals which follow are offered as a general guide.

897. The site association should be able to pay small honoraria to officers whose duties are particularly time-consuming or onerous. It should also be able, if it so wishes, to pay a small retainer to an old-age pensioner who is prepared to undertake general duties and to spend extra time on the site in order to reduce vandalism. It will need some working capital to organise refreshment facilities, to stock its store, to cover items of capital outlay, and for other contingencies. Most associations will continue to make a reasonable profit on their trading accounts and may also receive from their authority a substantial rebate in respect of work performed on its behalf.

898. Where a ‘town’ federation is formed, its officers should expect to receive more substantial honoraria in keeping with their extra responsibilities, and will probably require a small income to cover their clerical and administrative duties. If the federation occupies premises outside the leisure garden sites, it may well be necessary to find a means of paying the rent. As yet, we have made no proposals designed to provide it with income. The county organisation ought not to find its duties burdensome, and apart from a small amount of clerical expenditure its disbursements will probably be restricted to travel expenses and the cost of hiring a hall for its meetings.

899. If the national society is to perform efficiently the functions which we have outlined, it must be anticipated that its expenditure will show a considerable increase. Its administrative staff must be enlarged, and the scope of its services will be greatly extended. It ought, indeed, to be in a position to employ specialist horticultural officers. Some of its proposed functions are sufficiently flexible to permit them to be expanded or contracted according to the money which is made available, but it is most essential that in considering its initial reorganisation it should have an approximate idea of the funds which will be at its disposal.

900. Apart from the obvious fact that the financial contribution which the allotment holder today makes to the efficiency and success of his movement is ridiculously low, our investigations have led us to two important conclusions. The first of these is that the advantage to the allotment holder (and to the leisure gardener) of membership of an association at every level must rise in direct relationship to the value of his interest in the movement. Thus, a gardener on a site which
is doomed to early closure will have less reason to call on the services of his association than one whose plot is more secure. Similarly, an association on a non-established site with no community centre will not be able to offer its members the same facilities as an association on a fully fledged established site. Our second conclusion is that, in order to be effective, membership of an association at site, town, county or national level must involve each member in a direct payment to the relevant organisation. Much of N.A.G.S.'s inability to impress on the allotments movement the merit of the work which it has done has probably stemmed from the common practice of paying the affiliation fee from an association's trading profit; and in consequence, as we have shown, some 30 per cent of its members are unaware that they even belong to it!

901. These conclusions lead us to the view that, in future, every leisure gardener who joins an association should be required to pay an overall membership fee which varies with his basic rent. At the outset, when the rent for a 10-rod plot on most sites will be in the region of 30s. to 40s. per annum, we consider that the overall membership fee should be 10s.; of this, the site association might retain 2s. for its own purposes, allowing 2s. 6d., 6d. and 5s. to be transferred to the town, county and national organisations respectively. On an established site, the overall membership fee should be increased as the work of improvement progresses, reaching a maximum of £1 for a 10-rod plot on a site with full amenity provision; this would be distributed in the ratio of 4s., 5s., 1s., and 10s. to the four organisations involved.

902. As we have said, these figures can be little more than estimates of the probable need. If a site association finds that it can reduce the membership fee without restricting either its own activities or the sums paid over to the other organisations it may always do so; and the question whether the individual gardener ought to pay separately for some of the organised functions (such as socials, dances, shows or lectures) is a matter to be settled locally. It is worth noting, however, that on the basis of its present membership N.A.G.S. might expect an immediate income from fees in the region of £30,000 to £40,000 per annum. If, on the implementation of our proposals, 20,000 acres of established leisure gardens are created with provision at the rate of twelve 10-rod plots to the acre, it might eventually achieve an annual income of £100,000 from established sites alone.

903. The evidence which we have submitted as to the basis on which the individual association today retains its allegiance to N.A.G.S. strongly suggests, however, that if it succeeds in increasing its affiliation fee large numbers of its member associations will immediately leave. Many of these will no doubt reapply for membership as soon as the national society has completed its reorganisation and can demonstrate its ability to fulfil the functions which we have outlined for it. We are confident also that many newly formed associations will soon swell its ranks. But we cannot view with complacency the prospect that during the period when N.A.G.S. is attempting the considerable task of implementing our suggestions, its income may be even less than the present inadequate figure. It seems to us essential that the staff necessary to publicise the new concept should be available from the outset and, for this reason, we have come to the conclusion that some temporary assistance, particularly to support the educational work involved in promulgating the new image, should be made available to N.A.G.S. during this difficult period.
904. We therefore RECOMMEND:—

1. That site, town and county associations should operate on the basis of the suggestions made in this chapter.

2. That home gardeners should be admitted only to associate membership of local associations.

3. That consideration should be given to the advisability of disbanding the National Council for Recreational Gardening and Livestock Keeping.

4. That N.A.G.S. should be given every opportunity to reorganise its structure and activities on the lines set out in this chapter.

5. That the annual subscription paid by each plot holder for overall membership of the leisure gardens movement should vary between 10s. and £1, of which 5s. to 10s. should be transferred to the National Society.

6. That, after N.A.G.S. has substantially increased its affiliation fee, a sum of not more than £3,000 per annum should be made available to it for a period of three years in order to assist in its initial reorganisation and particularly to support the educational work involved in promulgating the new image. The grant should be conditional on an undertaking to expend it only on the matters outlined in section C of this chapter.
CHAPTER 24
THE MINISTER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

905. The reasons why the responsibility for the administration of the present allotments legislation passed from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food to the Ministry of Land and Natural Resources and eventually to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and the Secretary of State seem to have been largely fortuitous; but, despite the conflicting opinions expressed by the representatives of N.A.G.S., we have no doubt that it has found its proper home. For the future such a home will be still more appropriate, for not only will leisure gardens constitute an important element of a town's recreational open space, but the siting, security and design of established sites will be so much a part of local planning that it would be unthinkable to transfer such responsibility to a Department which has no planning oversight.

906. We therefore RECOMMEND that the responsibility for the implementation and administration of the Leisure Gardens Act should rest with the Minister of Housing and Local Government and the Secretary of State.

907. Clearly, the Minister will need to establish a separate unit to undertake this work. We have no intention of suggesting the number and status of the officers who might be involved, nor would we be competent to do so. We will, however, indicate in this chapter the range of responsibilities which we consider that the unit should undertake.

908. The Minister will have overall responsibility for the implementation of the new legislation and general oversight of the procedures by which the allotment garden of the past will be transformed into the leisure garden of the future. This task will have several quite distinct aspects. Firstly, we cannot expect the transformation to be effected without teething troubles and upheaval. Leisure gardens authorities and the national society must be free to consult the Minister on any matters of difficulty, seek an interpretation of points of law, and look for advice on any special local circumstances which emerge in the course of the appraisals of their allotments systems. Secondly, although we have no reason to doubt the necessity for any of our recommendations, the changes which we have proposed are so radical that some may well require amendment or adaptation in course of time. We consider, therefore, that the Minister should endeavour to keep the broad national picture under review and should not hesitate to make any changes, either in law or practice, which experience shows to be advisable. Thirdly, we envisage that the Minister should in future play a more active part in the development of the leisure gardens concept than he has in the allotments situation during the past decade. This does not mean the institution of any form of national campaign, for the task of ensuring that sufficient tenants come forward will clearly rest with the national society and the local authorities. Rather, it implies that the Minister's attitude towards the new leisure gardens system should never be merely the rigid application of a set of rules, perpetuating the inflexibility which has characterised the old allotments system for so long; instead, we would like to think that, in course of time, circulars and other publications expounding new ideas in siting, landscaping, design and general administration will be issued as regularly as official bulletins on many aspects of planning.
909. On the planning side, it will be necessary for the Minister to examine how new developments in the science of town planning at both local and national levels might affect leisure garden patterns and systems. He should, for example, consider how new ideas in housing might affect the need for each type of leisure garden and should be ready to advise the authorities concerned on any adjustment which might be necessary to the nature and balance of their provision. Similarly, he should keep in close touch with local planning officers during the gradual integration of leisure garden sites into the planning scheme and be prepared to offer advice and help where necessary.

910. Officials of the Ministry should also maintain close contact with the national society and should hold regular meetings with its officers at which proposed changes in policy and matters which it wishes to raise at national level can be sympathetically discussed. It will also be necessary to assess periodically the progress which the society is making in its own reorganisation and to offer advice. Quite apart from these meetings, officials should always be available to hear the society's suggestions or complaints, and decide what action, if any, should be taken.

911. The section of the Ministry responsible for leisure gardens should have access to machinery for investigating complaints made by the national society, following representations by local associations, of irregularities on the part of local authorities in their interpretation of the law. Any charge of undue dilatoriness in implementation, lack of consideration for the existing allotment holders, negligence or prejudice in the selection of sites, or matters of similar gravity, should be examined impartially, with the assistance where necessary of the Regional Land Commissioner, the Ministry's own Inspector or officials of the planning sections of the appropriate regional office.

912. We have expressed the hope that the total capital made available each year to local authorities for the acquisition and improvement of land for leisure gardens will be considerably in excess of that authorised in the past, and we would expect the Minister, where necessary, to make as strong a case as possible for these additional funds. Although our proposals in Chapter 20 were designed to ensure that no capital would be wasted or unused, we recognise that the allocation of the total sums authorised will present a difficult task. In particular, since the acquisition of new leisure garden sites is pointless unless they can be promptly and adequately treated, the Minister may find it necessary in some years to restrict the sum available for acquisition in order to allow sufficient capital for improvements to existing sites; this in turn will affect the number of applications for compulsory purchase powers which can be entertained.

913. Under our proposals, the Minister will acquire a new and important responsibility, namely that of scrutinising requests for exemption from the statutory formula for provision and, where any such request is granted, of determining the revised formula which the authority concerned will be obliged to meet. This will be a continuing duty, for it must be envisaged that some authorities which are able initially to meet their quota will subsequently find it virtually impossible to do so, while the future development of other towns which have been granted partial exemption may create a new or increased need for leisure gardens which could and should be met. It is highly desirable, therefore, that no single decision on such points should be regarded as final, and furthermore, that every case in which partial exemption has been allowed should be reviewed at regular and reasonable intervals.
914. We turn finally to the vexed question of statistics, which have in the past been collected under so many different systems and definitions and with such variable degrees of accuracy and completeness. We have recommended that at the outset, every established leisure garden site, whether provided compulsorily or voluntarily, should be registered by the local authority with the Minister and that subsequent changes should be notified as they occur. We consider that, from the Minister's standpoint, the process of registration should involve the preparation and maintenance by the Ministry of a card index system which would show for every local authority the name of each site, its area, date of establishment and the approximate number of plots which it will contain. Authorities should not be required to inform the Minister of changes in the number of plots on a site which do not affect its total area.

915. Hitherto, the collection of annual statistics by the Minister has been justified mainly by the legal requirement that he shall present to Parliament each year a report of the allotments situation—although such a report has not in fact been presented since 1937. We have reason to believe that the provision and occupation of leisure gardens in the future will have a far greater stability than is shown by the recent history of allotments, and it would appear that, once the leisure gardens concept has been introduced, the annual request for statistics and, consequently, the annual report, will no longer be necessary. The Minister, however, could scarcely fulfil the functions listed in this chapter without an accurate knowledge of the leisure gardens situation on a national basis, and we take the view that leisure gardens authorities should be asked to provide a number of statistics every five years. The request for statistics should be sent to every authority, including those which are under no statutory obligation to provide sites. The return form should ask each authority to state, for established and non-established sites separately, the amenities available, the total areas and numbers of plots provided and the number of plots vacant. It should require similar particulars in respect of any private sites devoted wholly or mainly to horticulture. The Minister will wish to compare the returns made for established sites against his card index, and to use the statistics generally to help him decide whether any broad changes in national policy are necessary.

916. If our recommendations are accepted, therefore, the Minister will lose several of the functions which he has exercised in respect of the allotments legislation. On the other hand, he will assume new responsibilities which will induce him to participate more actively in the development of the new system, and will give him a positive role in ensuring its eventual success.

917. We therefore RECOMMEND:—

1. That under the new legislation, the Minister should have power to issue regulations, advice and suggestions as he sees fit.

2. That in considering requests by leisure gardens authorities for loan sanction, the Minister should endeavour to achieve a balance between the money made available for acquisitions and improvements respectively.

3. That the new Act should require every leisure gardens authority to provide details of the total provision in its area at the outset and every five years thereafter, and to report to the Minister any changes in the composition of its established sites.

4. That the Act should not require the Minister to make a separate report to Parliament of his activities in pursuance of its provisions.
CHAPTER 25

THE WAY TO A FUTURE

918. The allotments movement today stands at the crossroads. The poverty of its image, the anachronisms of the law under which it operates, and the lack of imagination in the administrative systems imposed upon it, have not only combined to deter many who might have swollen its ranks but also threaten to undermine the allegiance of some of its most fervent disciples. The numbers of allotment gardeners decrease every year, and whole sites are closed without replacement, while the proliferation of vacant plots adds continually to the general air of dereliction and serves only to increase its deterrent effect on newcomers. Thus, the movement finds itself drawn inexorably into a process of accelerating decline which, if unchecked, must eventually destroy it.

919. The paradox of this situation is that, while large tracts of allotment land disappear or lie barren, while local authorities see little point in providing new sites which may subsequently prove to be either unnecessary or unsightly, there exists in our towns and cities an unknown but growing number of people who would like a small plot of land to cultivate as they choose. In eighteenth-century Birmingham such people would doubtless have coveted one of the 'guinea gardens' (Figure 2), which then surrounded the city and on which "the cultivation of flowers was carried to great perfection", but today very few of them would seriously consider the possibility that the allotment garden might satisfy their need for a place to cultivate and a place to relax.

920. At a time when society places so much emphasis on recreation and on attractive urban environments, this group of people is entitled to expect that, within the restrictions imposed by scarcity of land, it will receive consideration equal to that accorded to the allotments movement; and we believe that there is a need for the development of a system of better-class gardens to cater for them. But any attempt to introduce a new system of this kind within the present allotment framework would be doomed to failure. Whether the decline of the old type allotment gardening continued unabated, or whether its antiquated machinery was overhauled sufficiently to permit it to creak along protestingly for a few years longer, the perpetuation of its wretched image would quickly stifle any new concept. In the long term the only satisfactory solution lies in so improving the image, standards, attractiveness and popularity of allotment gardening that it may cater for a new generation which seeks to create beauty both individually (on the plot) and collectively (on the site). If this can be achieved, the needs of the 'present-day guinea gardener' will be satisfied, while the infusion of new blood and higher standards and aspirations into the allotments movement will improve its numbers, quality and prospects of survival. It is to this end that all our proposals are directed.

921. In the process of expounding the new image, we have rejected some of the principles which the allotments movement has tended for so long to regard as

sacred. In the light of present economic circumstances, sound planning principles and intense pressures on urban land, we have discarded as impracticable, unwarranted and in some respects anti-social the view that there must always be sufficient allotment gardens in each town to satisfy the current demand. We have also rejected the idea that every man who wants an allotment garden should be able to find a vacant plot virtually at his doorstep. We have expressed doubts whether the allotments committee is the best means of ensuring an efficient allotments system, whether the statutory allotment site possesses any real security, and whether all the blame for the troubles with which the movement is today afflicted rests with the local authority.

922. It is possible that our reappraisal of old principles, set alongside the novelty of the proposals which we have made to replace them, may make it difficult initially for N.A.G.S. and the allotments movement generally to accept our recommendations without reservation. We would therefore invite all who are anxious to see the movement flourish in the future to consider carefully the points which follow. The past few years, which have seen N.A.G.S. in almost continuous conflict with local authority, have shown that no legislation, however stringent, can protect a system against progress or its own inadequacy. They have produced a situation in which the allotment holder is, by his own admission, openly disliked in some areas and grudgingly tolerated in many more. They have demonstrated the vulnerability of every site, whatever its status. In these circumstances, to pretend that nothing was seriously wrong would be to court disaster; to paper over the cracks would not conceal for long the basic faults in the structure, and to try to protect the allotment holder by means of new and more stringent laws would ensure that his recreation could never be accepted as an integral part of the life of the urban community. A legal and administrative system founded partly on charity and partly on economic need, whether individual or national, could never be expected to cater equally well for an attractive recreation, and the change in emphasis clearly demands the evolution of a new concept. But this new concept must not sweep away every feature of the old; rather should it spring from it, incorporating what remains good and sound, rousing what is dormant and developing what has been retarded. This is what we have tried to express, and what we hope the movement can achieve.

923. It is equally possible that some local authorities will be no less sceptical of our proposals. Their notion of the allotment holder as a man who is prepared to accept and subscribe to squalor as the price of municipal charity dies hard, and the idea that he would be eager to co-operate to the full in the development of the new image may not be easy to adopt. We are certain, however, that to take such a view would be both pessimistic and misguided. We have been encouraged by discerning in the latter stages of our investigations clear evidence of a growing realisation among many allotment holders that they cannot continue as they are and that the prosperity of the movement must ultimately depend on their willingness to change their outlook and attitudes. In the initial stages, however, there are bound to be some whose insularity, complacency and general indifference will be proof against the obvious benefits to be gained from the new concept. This should not matter, for as the general image changes, as a healthy spirit of competition emerges both among individual gardeners and between entire sites, and as associations strengthen and horizons extend, so the laggards will be shamed into doing better.
924. These are important points, for the development of mutual confidence, co-operation and frank discussion between the allotments movement, its associations, local authorities, planners and Central Government forms a cornerstone of all that we have proposed. If this can be achieved, all that we envisage is possible. But if the present allotment holder continues to profess that society has an obligation to provide him with a vegetable plot without asking anything in return, if he suspects that every suggestion made by his local authority is designed to worsen his position, if he fights every proposal to close a site without examining its merits, then the new concept of the leisure garden can never succeed. If, conversely, local authorities cannot break away from their view that the allotment holder is a 'second-class' citizen in receipt of an unfair privilege in the form of a dole of land, if they carry out their legal obligations grudgingly and with the minimum of effort, if their planners fail to respond to the proposals we have made, then the image of the leisure garden will be no better than that of the allotment garden today. We have in a sense invited the warring factions to call a truce, and to parley over a blueprint which we are confident can lead to a lasting and worthwhile settlement of their differences, but its success will demand frankness, fairness, goodwill and determination from all concerned.

925. Even if this spirit of co-operation is forthcoming, the length of time which the transformation will take must depend on many factors of which the most important will be the availability of finance and of suitable land. It will obviously hinge also on changes in patterns of urban development, and on the emergence of new forms of recreation and the decline of others. It will be affected to some extent by the future progress of individual prosperity and possibly by economic crises or other forms of national emergency. But the fact that the full realisation of the new concept of leisure gardening with its attendant new image and emphasis on beauty may take time is no reason for doubting its intrinsic merit or its eventual achievement. We are confident that the proposals which we have made are desirable, practicable and sufficiently flexible to withstand any setback which may arise.

926. We are told that the four-day working week may soon be a reality and that we will have more leisure time than at any period in our history. It seems doubtful whether people will be prepared to spend even longer than now fretting in traffic jams on overcrowded roads, or mesmerized by their television sets, and there is bound to be a constantly increasing demand for open-air facilities near at hand to relieve the boredom of idleness. The young may be catered for by playing fields and sports grounds, provided that sufficient land is available. But among those whose days of active participation in sport are over, there will be many in all classes of society whose leisure hours will be spent with their families on their own chalet garden away from the congestion of the city centre, while the elderly and the disabled will be able to meet on an inner ring of attractive leisure gardens, content in the knowledge that they will be left in peace to enjoy land specially set aside for their recreational and social needs. The general public, too, being permitted to stroll along the neat pathways and admire the interest and beauty of the well-tended gardens, will see the leisure garden as a welcome extension to the town's open space and may even come to envy the spirit of companionship which they find there.

927. When that time comes, leisure gardening will take its place on equal terms among the recreations provided by each municipal authority. The level of provision will be maintained by pressures within the town itself, by considerations of
good planning and, possibly, by a justified pride in the contribution which such sites can make both to the appearance and the community spirit of the area in which they are situated. At this stage, it is possible that leading public figures will come forward to champion the movement at both local and national levels, as others now champion alternative forms of recreation. Ultimately, and as a final token of the success of the new image, it should be possible to repeal the mandatory legislation which has given the allotments movement protection for so long, and so complete a process by which the ‘allotment image’ will have disappeared for ever and the movement’s charitable heritage will have become merely a part of its history.
SUMMARY OF MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Allotment gardening should in future be considered primarily as a recreation (paragraphs 358–70). Local authorities should continue to provide land for the purpose of recreational gardening (paragraphs 649–60) and until such provision has achieved parity with that made for other forms of recreation, a measure of compulsion should be retained (paragraphs 661–9).

2. All existing allotments legislation should be repealed and replaced by a single new Act, incorporating such of our proposals as require legislative backing (paragraphs 661–9). The responsibility for the administration of the new Act should rest with the Minister of Housing and Local Government and the Secretary of State (paragraphs 905 and 906).

3. The term ‘allotment garden’ should be abolished and replaced by the name ‘leisure garden’, and the new Act should be known as the ‘Leisure Gardens Act’ (paragraphs 672–5). The term ‘leisure garden’ should be substituted for the term ‘allotment garden’ wherever the latter occurs in other legislation (paragraphs 859 and 860).

4. The definition of a leisure garden in the new Act and elsewhere should be as follows (paragraphs 676–81):——

“A leisure garden is one of a group of contiguous plots of land, each not exceeding twenty poles in extent and not attached to a rateable dwelling provided by a leisure gardens authority for recreational gardening by the occupier and his family.”

The occupier of a leisure garden should be permitted, if he so desires, to keep up to four hives of bees on his plot (paragraphs 861 and 866), but all other forms of livestock should be strictly prohibited (paragraphs 679 and 681).

5. All leisure garden sites should be designated as either ‘established’ or ‘non-established’ sites. An established site should be defined as a site whose use will be within the control of the local authority for a period of at least twenty-one years from the date of establishment and which, at that date, is viable within the current urban plan (paragraphs 716–30 and 752).

6. The council of the city of London, and of every county borough, London borough, municipal borough, urban district and rural parish, and the parish meeting of every parish without a council, should be constituted by law a leisure gardens authority. Inner London boroughs, and all leisure gardens authorities with populations of less than 5,000, should be excluded from the obligation to provide leisure gardens; they should, however, have permissive powers to do so (paragraphs 731–4 and 752). The power given to county councils and to the Minister to provide allotments if an allotments authority fails to do so should be abolished (paragraph 735).

7. All other leisure gardens authorities should be obliged by law to provide established leisure garden sites to the extent of half an acre for each thousand of their population. Every leisure gardens authority should be permitted and encouraged to provide established and non-established sites in excess of this statutory obligation where a need exists or arises (paragraphs 744–50 and 752).
8. Those leisure gardens authorities charged with the duty of providing established leisure gardens should be required at the outset to appoint a leisure gardens advisory committee. Authorities which have hitherto provided allotment gardens but will have no obligation to provide leisure gardens should be strongly urged to appoint a similar committee (paragraphs 753, 754 and 768).

9. The initial task of the advisory committee should be to conduct a full appraisal of each authority's present allotments systems in order to determine which existing statutory and temporary sites should be retained as established or non-established leisure garden sites (paragraphs 755–62) and whether new sites of either category should be acquired (paragraph 763). Throughout its deliberations, the committee should pay due regard to the need for different types of leisure garden site (paragraphs 684–6), and to the basic principles of siting set out in this report (paragraphs 691 and 692).

10. The statutory allotments committee should be abolished (paragraphs 230–5, 773 and 777). Leisure gardens authorities should be urged to formulate their leisure gardens policy through the council committee responsible for parks and recreation, appointing a sub-committee for this purpose if they so wish (paragraphs 773 and 777). The report of the advisory committee should be presented to the committee or sub-committee responsible: this committee should be entitled to accept or reject the report as it thinks fit (paragraphs 764 and 765).

11. Where a leisure gardens authority, on the advice of its advisory committee or otherwise, considers for any reason that it should not be required to provide established sites to the extent laid down in the new Leisure Gardens Act, it should be permitted, in accordance with an appropriate section included in that Act, to make application to the Minister for exemption from the statutory requirement and for the imposition of a lesser obligatory provision (paragraphs 751 and 752). Where such a claim is allowed, the authority should be required to reapply for exemption at reasonable intervals (paragraph 751).

12. When each leisure gardens authority has decided—with the agreement of the Minister where necessary—which areas of land are to be designated as established and non-established sites, it should be required to furnish particulars of its established sites and of any non-established sites provided by the Minister's direction to the Minister for registration (paragraphs 766–8).

13. Until an authority has registered its established sites, it should not be permitted to take any of its statutory allotment sites out of allotments use without the consent of the Minister. Such consent should be given or withheld in accordance with the procedure now adopted under section 8 of the Act of 1925 (paragraphs 770–2).

14. If a leisure gardens authority has included in its areas of established leisure garden sites any private allotment site which is subject to a charitable trust, the trustees of the charity concerned should be required either to transfer the ownership of the site to the authority subject to safeguards against its subsequent alienation, or to grant the authority a long lease of the site (paragraphs 850–3). Where such a site is needed as a non-established leisure garden site, the trustees should be required to grant a tenancy of the land to the authority at a fair rent (paragraph 853). No leisure gardens authority should be granted exemption from its statutory obligation to provide leisure gardens on the sole

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online. Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
argument that there are private allotment sites within its area (paragraphs 857 and 858).

15. Leisure gardens authorities which are obliged by law to provide leisure gardens should have power to purchase land within their administrative areas for the purpose of providing leisure gardens either immediately or in the future, and either by agreement or compulsorily. They should also have power to hire land within, and to purchase or hire land outside, their boundaries for use as leisure gardens by agreement, and to appropriate to leisure gardens use land acquired for other purposes (paragraphs 801–3). Authorities which are not obliged to provide leisure gardens should have the same powers, apart from that of compulsory purchase (paragraph 803).

16. It is essential that, as soon as possible, each authority's leisure garden pattern should be integrated into the town plan as one of the normal elements of open space provision. Authorities should be urged to include in any structure plan for their areas a brief statement of their leisure gardens policy (paragraphs 687–9). A leisure garden site should be shown on a town map by the symbols OS/EG or OS/NG (paragraph 752).

17. A leisure gardens authority which is under no obligation to provide sites should be permitted to close or to reduce the size of any sites which it has in fact provided without reference to the Minister (paragraph 798). All authorities should be permitted to deal with their non-established sites without reference to the Minister (paragraph 798).

18. Where an authority which is obliged to provide a quota of established leisure gardens proposes to close a site or to reduce it in size, it should be required first to refer the proposal to its leisure gardens advisory committee for consideration (paragraphs 791–8). If the proposed closure or contraction ...ll not reduce the authority's provision of established sites below its obligatory total area, or if it is prepared, before the closure takes effect, to provide a new established site of a size sufficient to cover the deficiency, the authority should be permitted to make its decision without reference to the Minister (paragraph 798). [But see Recommendation 20].

19. If such a closure or contraction would reduce an authority's provision of established sites below its obligatory total area and it is unable or unwilling to make up the deficiency before the closure takes place, it should be required to obtain the Minister's consent to a permanent or temporary reduction in its quota before taking any steps to close the site or to reduce its size (paragraph 798).

20. All leisure gardens authorities should be required to inform the Minister of any changes in the composition of their established sites. They should also be required to make a full return at the outset and quinquennially thereafter, of all established and non-established sites provided by them, and of any private allotment sites within their administrative areas which are used for horticulture. The Minister should not be required to make a separate report to Parliament of his proceedings under the new Act (paragraphs 914, 915 and 917).

21. As soon as practicable after registration has been effected, all leisure gardens authorities which provide established sites should be required to institute for each of them a full programme of improvement on the lines laid down in paragraphs 693–6 and Appendix X of this report (paragraphs 769 and 772).
Each programme should be devised under the guidance of a landscape architect (paragraph 695) and, in the case of sites previously in use as allotment gardens, the existing tenants should be invited to comment on the proposed new design for their site and to suggest amendments to it (paragraph 695). For non-established sites, authorities should be urged to make improvements commensurate with the anticipated life of each site (paragraph 729).

22. All leisure gardens authorities should be permitted to borrow for the purpose of acquiring, adapting or improving land for leisure gardens (paragraphs 815–9). The maximum total sum made available for this purpose should be as generous as possible (paragraphs 816 and 819). In considering requests for permission to borrow, the Minister should ensure that the total sum available is allocated fairly between purchase and improvement (paragraphs 912 and 917). In granting a request, he should require each authority to borrow the sum specified within six months and to inform him immediately if any part of it is no longer required (paragraphs 818 and 819).

23. Leisure gardens authorities should be required by law to apply the proceeds of sale of any statutory allotment land or any established leisure garden site to the acquisition of new land for leisure gardens or to the improvement of other sites or, with the Minister’s consent, to any other purpose. Before granting such consent, the Minister should seek from the authority concerned an assurance that it continues to provide established leisure gardens in accordance with its obligations, and that it has completed its programme of improvements upon them (paragraphs 804–7).

24. Authorities should not be obliged to maintain a separate leisure garden account. Every leisure gardens authority should be permitted to incur in the administration of its leisure gardens system a loss to be recovered from the rates under the same rules as operate for other municipal recreations (paragraphs 820–2 and 834).

25. Every leisure gardens authority which provides established sites should be urged to appoint a competent leisure gardens manager (paragraphs 775 and 777). The day-to-day administration of an authority’s leisure gardens system should be in the hands of its parks department or of a section, such as estates or public works, which has adequate manpower and resources (paragraphs 774 and 777).

26. As soon as an authority has decided upon its leisure gardens pattern for the future, its existing allotment holders should be invited to a meeting at which the proposals for each site can be fully explained (paragraph 765). Every allotment holder should be invited to indicate whether he would like a leisure garden on an established or a non-established site before plots are generally allocated (paragraphs 778–80).

27. The tenant of a leisure garden should be required to pay a fair rent, calculated by reference to the standard of amenity with which he is provided and to the amount of administrative and maintenance work performed by his authority on his behalf (paragraphs 822–7 and 834). At the present time, this basic rent should vary between 30s. to £2 per annum for a 10-rod plot on a site with poor amenity provision and £5 per annum for a similar plot on an improved established site with full amenity provision (paragraphs 823 and 824).
28. Every tenant should be permitted to pay his annual rent in two instalments and each authority should have the power to allow up to a 50 per cent reduction in rent to any tenant who, in its opinion, merits concessionary treatment (paragraphs 829 and 834). No tenant or association should be required to pay a general or water rate in respect of any land forming part of a leisure gardens site or any building thereon (paragraph 834).

29. Every tenant of a leisure garden should be obliged to sign a written agreement which would require him, inter alia, to cultivate his plot properly and assiduously (paragraphs 706–8). The Minister should issue a new set of model rules to each authority; an authority should then be permitted to make its own rules, on the lines of those issued by the Minister, without the need to obtain the Minister’s consent (paragraphs 709 and 710).

30. Every leisure gardener should be strongly and repeatedly urged to make his plot attractive by incorporating flowers or flowering shrubs at strategic points. If a gardener is not prepared to do this he should be required to move to a plot in a part of the site which is distant from the main pathways and is suitably screened (paragraphs 706–8).

31. No leisure gardener should be permitted to erect any form of structure on his plot without the prior approval of his leisure gardens authority (paragraph 698). Each authority should be permitted to decide what forms of structure will be suitable for the plots on its established sites and should be prepared either to provide toolsheds, greenhouses and other structures for tenants to rent (paragraphs 814 and 825–6) or provide facilities to enable applicants to purchase their structures by hire purchase agreement (paragraph 814). Where an authority chooses to allow its tenants to provide their own structures, it should exercise control over design, materials and siting.

32. If the occupier of a leisure garden on an established site wishes to convert it into a chalet garden, he should normally be permitted to do so, and his authority should be prepared to replace any existing structure on his plot by a summerhouse. Once a plot has been converted, a suggestion that it should again become a vegetable plot should not normally be countenanced (paragraph 781). An applicant for a chalet garden should, however, be required to move to a new plot or a new site where such action appears necessary in order to maintain a sufficient number of vegetable plots in the town or on a particular site (paragraph 781).

33. No tenant should be allowed to occupy more than one leisure garden if there is a waiting-list for plots on his site. Any tenant who is permitted to hold two or more plots should be required to pay an economic rent for all but the first and to surrender all but one when called upon to do so (paragraphs 867–70).

34. The occupier of a leisure garden, whether on an established or non-established site, should normally be entitled to twelve months’ notice, expiring in the close season (paragraphs 782–4 and 788). In certain circumstances, this minimum period should be six months (paragraphs 783, 784 and 788) and a tenant who is considered to have contravened any of the terms of his tenancy agreement should be entitled to one month’s warning followed by one month’s notice (paragraphs 785–8). A tenant who moves outside the administrative area of his leisure gardens authority should not automatically forfeit his right to retain his garden (paragraphs 786 and 788).
35. A tenant of a leisure garden who receives notice to quit for breach of his written agreement should not be entitled to any compensation (paragraphs 836 and 843); the same rule should normally apply where a tenant dies or voluntarily surrenders his plot (paragraphs 837 and 843). Where a tenant of an established leisure garden is given notice to quit for any reason other than breach of his agreement, he should be entitled to compensation for disturbance of an amount equivalent to one year’s basic rent (paragraphs 839 and 843).

36. The tenant of a leisure garden who is given notice to quit for any reason other than breach of his agreement should be entitled to compensation in respect of residual manures and crops (including flowering plants and perennial crops) unless he can be permitted to harvest his crops after the notice has expired (paragraphs 840 and 843). He should receive compensation for ornamental trees, shrubs and bushes unless they are successfully transplanted to a new plot, and in respect of permanent features constructed with the approval of the leisure gardens manager (paragraphs 841 and 843). In the case of any structure owned by the tenant which cannot be moved to a new plot, the tenant should be permitted either to require the authority to purchase the structure or to receive compensation in lieu (paragraphs 842 and 843).

37. Every tenant should be required to give the same period of notice of his intention to surrender his plot as is to be given by his leisure gardens authority in the case of notice to quit (paragraph 790). Leisure gardens authorities should normally require payment of part of the rent due for the ensuing twelve months in September or October of each year, on the understanding that if a tenant is subsequently unable, for good and sufficient reason, to cultivate his plot, he should be entitled to a refund (paragraphs 789 and 790).

38. Leisure gardens authorities should take all possible steps to promote the formation of strong associations on their leisure garden sites (paragraphs 699–701 and 705). The maintenance of the communal parts of each site should be shared between the leisure gardens authority and the local association on a basis which will ensure that each is responsible for the tasks for which it is best fitted (paragraphs 702–5 and 885). An association which undertakes such maintenance should receive a rebate of rent commensurate with the value of its work to the authority (paragraphs 831–3).

39. Associations of leisure gardeners should be formed at site, town, county and national level; each should have the separate functions detailed in this report (paragraphs 879–91 and 904). Each member should pay an overall subscription of 10s. per annum in the case of a non-established and £1 per annum for an established leisure garden (paragraphs 896–902 and 904).

40. Consideration should be given to the advisability of disbanding the National Council for Recreational Gardening and Livestock Keeping (paragraphs 893 and 904). N.A.G.S. should be given every opportunity to reorganise its structure and activities as shown in this report (paragraphs 892–5 and 904). After N.A.G.S. has substantially increased its affiliation fee, a sum of not more than £3,000 per annum should be made available to it for a period of three years in order to assist in its initial reorganisation (paragraphs 903 and 904), and particularly to enable it to promote educational work.

41. Although the case for an Exchequer grant to the leisure gardens movement has not been made, the new Act should permit the Minister to keep the position
under review (paragraphs 560–8 and 844–6). The Act should also allow him to issue regulations (paragraphs 908 and 917) and to call for statistics every five years (paragraphs 915 and 917). The law which renders anyone convicted of causing damage to an allotment liable to a fine of up to £20 should be re-enacted in its present form to apply to leisure gardens (paragraphs 711 and 712).

42. Every leisure gardens authority should be permitted, if it so desires, to set aside special areas of land for the keeping of pigeons or small livestock (paragraphs 861–6). No authority should be granted total or partial exemption from its obligation to provide leisure gardens by reason of the fact that it has provided sites for livestock (paragraphs 865 and 866).

43. No change should be made in the present laws relating to allotments which are not allotment gardens (paragraphs 871–4). Every authority providing such allotments should be urged to let them at an economic rent (paragraphs 873 and 874).

44. A leisure gardens authority should be entitled to appropriate a fuel allotment or a ‘poor’s’ allotment to be a leisure gardens site, if it sees fit, on the same basis as for other charity allotment land. Further consideration should be given urgently to the possibility of amending the law so as to allow fuel and ‘poor’s’ allotments not required as leisure gardens to become either common land or public open space (paragraphs 875–8).
This photograph portrays the standard 'geometry' of a strongly two-dimensional, unlandscaped allotment garden site, emphasising particularly its rectilinearity. Tidy and well cultivated, the site, which adjoins a group of flats, has an attractive setting amid open space bordering the river Avon. Some order has been introduced in the disposition of huts, but the structures themselves detract from the general quality of the site. Unsightly corrugated iron sheeting has also been used by some tenants to strengthen the serviceable wire mesh fencing. Car parking space is provided on the right. (Percy Estate, Warwick: temporary site established 1954.)

This high-standard site has many commendable features, including the incorporation of attractive trees both within, and on the periphery of, the site; well-constructed roads with strong concrete verges bordered by flowers and shrubs; a pleasant community hut; protected water-points; neat plot-identification numbers. A curving road would have looked more attractive, and stricter weed-control along the verges of the road is required, but one would welcome more sites of this quality. (Wheelers Lane, Birmingham: statutory site.)
Where such dereliction occurs, one cannot blame householders whose windows overlook so dismal a site for complaining, nor the general public for pressing for such valuable land to be used more efficiently. This site is not named, as it could be found in so many parts of the country!

Problems of vandalism may make it expedient that allotment sites be surrounded by strong fences, but need so many of these be so ramshackle and incorporate such a motley range of materials from hawthorn hedge to wooden fencing, corrugated iron sheeting and even old bedsteads? (Hearsall, Coventry: private site).
Plate 5

The difficulty confronting the keen gardener of maintaining a high standard of cultivation on a plot flanked by weed-infested vacant plots is clearly shown. Note also the clutter of structures on part of this site. (French Barn Lane, Blackley, Manchester: statutory site.)

Plate 6

"...here has been no limit to improvisation on many allotment sites. Here an Anderson shelter has been pressed into post-war service as a toolshed, with a crate-like annexe! Alongside, a length of corrugated iron sheeting 'screen' a compost heap."
Plate 7

These wooden huts, although not inspiring in either design or construction, reveal the aspirations of some of our present allotment holders for a summerhouse or chalet in which they can do more than just store tools and seeds. The striving for beauty is also seen in the brave show of flowers bordering the neatly trimmed hedge. (Victoria Jubilee, Birmingham: private site.)

Plate 8

This fully tenanted 'model' site, which serves an area of terraced housing, has good roads edged with stone and a neat association building (not shown here). Random erection of sheds is not allowed, but greenhouses are installed on a quarter of the plots. Screening of the site by tree planting on the periphery would be an advantage, both aesthetically and to block the 'wind funnel' between the long terraced street and the central road of the site. (Iris Brickfield, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: statutory site.)
Plate 9

This rather formal 'model' site has concentrated on an orderly disposition of plots and structures, but the standard pattern greenhouses lie regimented along the straight central road. The general view is spoiled by water butts, piles of tools, seed boxes, compost heaps and weeds that border the roadway. A piped water-supply (bottom left) is provided. (New Weelsby, Grimsby: statutory site.)

Plate 10

His fine association headquarters, set amid attractive flower-beds, trees and shrubs, is approached by a wide road bordered by slab pathways. The building, which has a very large car-park alongside, was provided entirely from the site association's own funds. (The Uplands, Birmingham: statutory site.)
Plate 11(a)
Allensbank allotment site in Cardiff c. 1950, showing a clutter of huts and greenhouses in one sector. The site had been established 1916-17.

Plate 11(b)
Allensbank in process of conversion to a 'model' site c. 1952.
Plate 12

Allen Bank, Cardiff, after its conversion to a 'model' statutory site opened in 1954. The formal rectilinear pattern of roads and plots has been relieved by the planting of trees and shrubs, and large compact groups of sheds have been established with a few individual structures here and there. Strong unobtrusive fencing surrounds the site but screening of the houses and factories would be an advantage.

(Photographs 11(a), (b) and 12 by courtesy of the Director of Parks and Almots, Cardiff.)
Plate 13

The enthusiasm and determination of the association committee and the loyal support of plot holders have here produced a very neat and progressive site. The general public cannot fail to be impressed by the well kept approach road, bordered by lawn and flowers. But even here, many of the individual sheds detract from the general quality of the site. (Walthamstow Avenue, Waltham Forest: temporary site.)

Plate 14

Many long-established private allotment sites have a distinctive appearance, with neatly trimmed hedges separating the well tended plots and breaking up what would often otherwise be a monotonous two-dimensional landscape (see Plate 1). Mature fruit trees and concrete paths, central to each plot, are also often found on private sites. (Tennyson Road, Coventry: private site.)
Plate 15

This impressive pigeon crec, with its crenellated roof and black and white paint, dominates one end of the allotment garden leaving a large area in the foreground for some miserable vegetables in a weed-infested setting. The dustbin, half buried by the heap of rubbish, further accentuates the feeling of neglect on that part of the plot that should be well cultivated. (Backer House
Allotment Site: South Shields. Photograph by courtesy of the Borough Engineer.)

Plate 16

This depressing view, which should be considered together with Figure 21, shows a slum of pigeon crees, poultry huts and sheds occupying a long narrow strip bordering a railway. Two rees on the bank to the right are in fair condition, but many plots boast little or no cultivation. (Deans Hospital, South Shields: temporary site.)
Plate 17

This allotment garden site in Lancashire is now dominated by poultry keeping, several tenants having more than one plot each. Beyond the weed-infested abandoned plot in the foreground can be seen a varied assortment of poultry huts, some housing batteries of hens. The decrepit fencing within and around the site adds to the general untidiness. Little wonder that the Electricity Board felt that the addition of a pylon and overhead cables could not further impair the site! (Huncoat, Accrington: statutory site.)

Plate 18

This unprepossessing stock allotment with its motley array of styes and poultry huts, caravans and old cars, corrugated iron fencing and tracts of bare earth, forms an appalling foreground for the houses and flats on the hill. (Blackley, Manchester: statutory site leased to the Land Settlement Association, Ltd.)
Plate 19

This 'model' stock allotment, developed from an old allotment garden site as a joint venture by the Land Settlement Association and the Worsley U.D.C., was opened in June 1967. The site combines pig and poultry keeping with traditional allotment gardening in a tidy, formal manner. There is a great need for tree planting to screen the dismal background of reservoir, spoil heaps, pylons and factory chimneys. (Blackleach, Worsley, Lancs: 'stock' allotment.)

Plate 20

This commercial allotment, devoted to rows of bush fruits, occupies about one acre and is well sheltered by tall unkempt hedges. The simple wooden shed serves both for the storage of tools and the packing of produce. (Bluntisham, Huntingdonshire.)
In areas of high-rise and low-rise flats, those who feel the need for a piece of ground to cultivate may well turn to an adjacent allotment site. But many flat-dwellers, in common with householders, decry the untidy appearance of many sites. Similarly, allotment holders on attractive sites may well desire greater privacy and feel that the periphery of their sites should be screened from vistas of back-yards and lines of washing. (Broad Lane, Kings Heath, Birmingham: statutory site.)

In Amsterdam a pleasant and well-maintained approach road, bordered by neat lawns, separates in an informal way the chalet garden (Volkstuin) site on the left from attractive open space on the right. Trees, shrubs, low hedges and flowers are much more prominent than vegetables, which are discreetly screened on each plot. The general public are encouraged to pass by and admire the garden layouts.

(Photograph by courtesy of Dienst Publieke Werken, Amsterdam.)
Plate 23

As there are no formal boundaries between the plots extensive vistas of trees, shrubs, flowers and lawns are offered on this beautifully maintained site in Amsterdam. The neat summer-houses, with vegetables at the rear, are here more rigidly aligned than on many Dutch sites. (Photograph by courtesy of Dienst Publieke Werken, Amsterdam).

Plate 24

This large community centre, serving the Ons Buiten site of 600 plots in Amsterdam, was designed by an architect plotholder and built by members of the site association. Besides a large hall and stage, it incorporates cloakrooms, offices, kitchens and a shop.
These neat plots (Kleingärten or Schrebergärten) in Dortmund are typical of those on many sites in Western Germany. Associated with a pleasantly curving pathway, they incorporate row vegetables, fruit and flowers, a small lawn or patio, and a simple summerhouse in an orderly, though somewhat formal, design. The rectilinearity of many German plots is much less apparent than Fig. 23 suggests, as there are no formal divisions between adjacent plots. (Photograph by courtesy of Miss Mary Mitchell, F.I.L.A.)

The emphasis in this attractive garden (Kleingarten) in Hamburg is on a lawn, sunken garden, flowers and shrubs. Vegetables and fruit are relegated to a secluded part of the plot. The neat summerhouse with its small paved area for sitting out is approached by stepping-stone pathways. No formal fence or hedge separates the garden from its neighbours.
Plate 27

On this gently sloping site at Naerum in Denmark, Professor Sørensen established forty-eight chalet gardens (*Kolonihave*) each contained within a neatly trimmed elliptical hedge. The well-mown grassy areas between each plot serve as pleasant pathways and play spaces for children.

Plate 28

This view shows the demonstration leisure garden, established on the Allensbank Allotment Garden Site in Cardiff on the day of its opening by the Rt. Hon. Fred Willey, M.P., Minister of State to the Minister of Housing and Local Government, in July 1967. It incorporates an attractive summerhouse in natural wood, a lawn, flower-beds, ornamental trees and shrubs, and vegetables in a suitably screened area. Further planting and screening has since taken place.
Plate 29

The two demonstration leisure gardens at N.A.G.S. headquarters, Flitwick, Bedfordshire were officially opened by the Rt. Hon. Fred Willey, M.P., Minister of State to the Minister of Housing and Local Government, in August 1967. The emphasis is on beauty, recreation and cultivation. Vegetables and bush fruits are still prominent, but the neat little summerhouses, bordered by flowers, invite the tenant and his family to spend some of their time relaxing in pleasant surroundings. The opportunities for local authorities and associations to experiment with other imaginative designs are innumerable.

Plate 30

This demonstration plot, incorporated in the Gardening Centre displays at Syon Park, shows the general public that allotment gardens need no longer be so uninspiring. The design, which incorporates vegetables, fruit, flowers, a lawn and a greenhouse, is rather formal and rectilinear but offers a much-needed challenge to the imagination of present-day allotment holders. The well-made paths were made deliberately wider than normal to allow for the circulation of a large number of visitors.
APPENDICES
APPENDIX I

REFERENCES

Chapter 1: Historical survey

1. Reports of Commissioners Concerning Charities (1819–40) (32 vols.).
8. Ibid., section 31.
9. Ibid.
11. Relief of the Poor Act: 22 Geo. 3, ch. 83.
13. Poor Relief Act: 1 and 2 Will. 4, ch. 42.
17. Ibid.
23. Jones and Mingay, op. cit.
24. Ibid.
29. Jones and Mingay, op. cit.

13 361

31. Ibid., p. 87.

32. Aris's Gazette (1765).

33. Aris's Gazette (1812).


38. Hasbach, op. cit.


40. Commons Act: 39 and 40 Vict., ch. 56.


42. Smith, N. R., Land for the Small Man (1946), p. 3.

43. Representation of the People Act: 48 and 49 Vict., ch. 3.

44. Allotments Act: 50 and 51 Vict., ch. 48.


47. Frome Wilkinson, op. cit.


51. Local Government Act: 56 and 57 Vict., ch. 73.

52. Cd. 4974 (1887).

53. Small Holdings and Allotments Act: 7 Edw. 7, ch. 54.

54. Fabian Society, Small Holdings, Allotments and Common Pasture and How to get them by the Act of 1907, Fabian Tract, No. 134 (1907).


57. Ibid., p. 133.


60. Land Settlement (Facilities) Act: 9 and 10 Geo. 5, ch. 59.


63. Small Holdings and Allotments Act: 16 and 17 Geo. 5, ch. 52.

64. Agricultural Land (Utilization) Act: 21 and 22 Geo. 5, ch. 41.
66. Defence Regulation 62B.
67. Defence Regulation 61.
70. Town and Country Planning Act: 10 and 11 Geo. 6, ch. 51.

Chapter 2: The operative legislation

All but one of the references in this chapter relate to one or more of the Acts listed in paragraph 52. The list which follows incorporates first the year of the relevant Act and, second, the appropriate section(s) of that Act. Thus, 1922 : 14 would signify section 14 of the Allotments Act of 1922.

1. 1922 : 3.
2. 1925 : 1.
3. 1908 : 27(3).
4. 1908 : 61(1).
5. 1922 : 22.
6. 1950 : 12.
7. 1908 : 23(1).
8. 1908 : 61(4), 1922 : 22(1).
9. 1908 : 36.
11. 1908 : 23(1).
12. 1908 : 23(2).
14. 1908 : 24(2) and (3).
15. 1908 : 24(4).
16. 1908 : 25(1).
17. 1925 : 5.
18. 1908 : 39(1).
19. 1908 : 41(1).
21. 1908 : 53(4) and (5).
22. 1925 : 2.
23. 1919 : 22.
24. 1908 : 33.
26. 1908 : 45.
27. 1908 : 32(1).
29. Ibid.

13* 363
30. 1908 : 32(2).
31. 1908 : 29.
32. 1908 : 49(1).
33. 1922 : 14(1).
34. 1922 : 14(4).
35. 1922 : 14(2), 1925 : 12.
36. 1908 : 59.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. 1922 : 16(1) and (2), 1950 : 11(1).
40. 1950 : 10(1).
41. 1922 : 17(1).
42. 1919 : 21(1) and (2).
43. 1908 : 54.
44. 1908 : 28(1).
45. 1908 : 28(3).
46. 1908 : 27(3).
47. 1908 : 27(4).
48. 1908 : 27(5).
49. 1950 : 12(1).
50. 1922 : 19(1).
51. 1908 : 30.
52. 1922 : 1(1), 1950 : 1(1).
53. 1922 : 1(1).
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. 1922 : 2(8).
59. 1922 : 2(3).
60. Ibid.
61. 1950 : 3.
62. 1922 : 4(1).
63. 1922 : 2(9).
64. 1950 : 4(1).
65. 1950 : 5.
66. 1908 : 47(1).
67. 1922 : 3(5).
68. 1908 : 47(4).
69. 1922 : 3(1) and (2).
70. 1922 : 3(5).
71. 1922 : 10(1) and (6).
APPENDIX II

A. PRINCIPAL VISITS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE

1. England and Wales

Urban

Aberdare 12.9.67
Birmingham 19.4.66
Bristol 13.4.66
Cardiff* 25.5.66
Coventry 13–14.7.66
Gainsborough 26.8.66
Gosport† 25.4.67
Grantham 23.8.66
Grimsby 24.7.68
Hemel Hempstead (N.T.) 24.7.67
Leicester 24.8.66
Manchester* 20.4.66
Newcastle-upon-Tyne* 11.7.67
Nottingham 25.8.66
Peterlee (N.T.) 12.7.67
Portsmouth 21.7.66
Redditch (N.T.) 26.6.67
Sheffield 13.7.67
South Shields 12.7.67
Waltham Forest 5.4.67
Wolverton† 28.6.68
Worksop† 26.8.66

Rural

Holbeach 23.8.66
Huntingdonshire and West Cambridgeshire† 5.7.67

2. Continent

Amsterdam, Rotterdam (Holland)
Hamburg (Germany)
Copenhagen, Elsinore, Sollerød, Naerum (Denmark)
Malmö (Sweden)

* By invitation.
† Unofficial.
B. NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS SUBMITTING WRITTEN EVIDENCE

The following national organisations submitted written evidence:—

Community Council of Lancashire
Country Landowners' Association
Federation of Edinburgh and District Allotments and Gardens Associations
Garden Community Association
Institute of Landscape Architects
Institute of Park and Recreation Administration (Inc.)
Land Settlement Association Limited*
National Allotments and Gardens Society Limited, and Village Produce Associations*
National Association of Parish Councils
National Federation of Women's Institutes
National Vegetable Society
Royal Horticultural Society
Royal Medico-Psychological Association
Urban District Councils Association

A total of 200 other organisations submitted written evidence, but we regret that it is impossible to name them all.

C. GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS SUBMITTING WRITTEN EVIDENCE

The following Departments submitted written evidence:—

Charity Commission
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Ministry of Land and Natural Resources*

* Also gave oral evidence.
### D. STUDENT THESSES COMPLETED IN CONNECTION WITH THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>University or college</th>
<th>Study area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miss M. Pickup</td>
<td>University of Leicester</td>
<td>Accrington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. J. E. Glover</td>
<td>Birmingham College of Education</td>
<td>Birmingham (N.W.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. P. J. Dymott</td>
<td>Birmingham College of Education</td>
<td>Birmingham (S.W.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss M. Darnley</td>
<td>Birmingham College of Education</td>
<td>Birmingham (S.E.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. B. N. Boots</td>
<td>University of Bristol</td>
<td>Bristol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss D. M. Jones</td>
<td>Birmingham College of Education</td>
<td>Bromsgrove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss P. Hawkesworth</td>
<td>Birmingham College of Education</td>
<td>Burton upon Trent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. R. J. Craddock</td>
<td>Birmingham School of Planning</td>
<td>Coventry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss J. Williams</td>
<td>University of Leicester</td>
<td>Crawley (New Town)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. W. Heath</td>
<td>Worcester College of Education</td>
<td>Crewe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss V. Charlesworth</td>
<td>University of Nottingham</td>
<td>Doncaster/Rotherham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. R. Bourne</td>
<td>Worcester College of Education</td>
<td>Droitwich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss T. Schofield</td>
<td>University of Bristol</td>
<td>Erith (Bexley)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. R. Studd</td>
<td>Birmingham College of Education</td>
<td>Felixstowe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. J. G. Woolmer</td>
<td>Kesteven College of Education</td>
<td>Grantham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. B. Price</td>
<td>Worcester College of Education</td>
<td>Ipswich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss A. Hooper</td>
<td>Coventry College of Education</td>
<td>Leamington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss B. Ward</td>
<td>Worcester College of Education</td>
<td>Leatherhead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss R. Tarrant</td>
<td>Worcester College of Education</td>
<td>Lewisham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss P. J. Kidd</td>
<td>University of Edinburgh</td>
<td>Liverpool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss S. Chown</td>
<td>Birmingham College of Education</td>
<td>Maidstone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. T. Fowler</td>
<td>Worcester College of Education</td>
<td>Malvern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss J. M. Payne</td>
<td>Birmingham College of Education</td>
<td>Manchester (S.E.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. D. G. Porter</td>
<td>Shenstone College of Education</td>
<td>Newcastle-under-Lyme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. C. Williams</td>
<td>University of Newcastle</td>
<td>Newcastle-upon-Tyne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. N. B. Kelson</td>
<td>Birmingham College of Education</td>
<td>Newport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss S. E. Hartley</td>
<td>Coventry College of Education</td>
<td>Normanton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. N. J. Beynon</td>
<td>University of Nottingham</td>
<td>Northampton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. M. Warner</td>
<td>Worcester College of Education</td>
<td>Norwich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. R. Jackson</td>
<td>University of Oxford</td>
<td>Oxford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. R. G. Moore</td>
<td>Shenstone College of Education</td>
<td>Redditch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. A. Hill</td>
<td>Coventry College of Education</td>
<td>Rochdale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss A. Barnett</td>
<td>Birmingham College of Education</td>
<td>Rugby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss J. B. Castles</td>
<td>Shenstone College of Education</td>
<td>Shrewsbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss M. Mortimer</td>
<td>University of Leicester</td>
<td>Slough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. A. W. Harvey</td>
<td>Coventry College of Education</td>
<td>Smethwick (Warley)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. B. L. Clarke</td>
<td>Coventry College of Education</td>
<td>Solihull</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss S. Harrison</td>
<td>University of Southampton</td>
<td>Southampton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss P. Barry</td>
<td>University of Nottingham</td>
<td>Stoke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. M. L. Smith</td>
<td>Coventry College of Education</td>
<td>Sunderland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. P. Elliott</td>
<td>Worcester College of Education</td>
<td>Swinford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss A. Downes</td>
<td>Coventry College of Education</td>
<td>Warrington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. P. J. Oakes</td>
<td>Bordesley College of Education</td>
<td>Warwick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. T. F. Bartram</td>
<td>Birmingham College of Education</td>
<td>West Bridgford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. D. F. Morris</td>
<td>Coventry College of Education</td>
<td>West Kesteven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. D. J. Browett</td>
<td>Birmingham College of Education</td>
<td>Whitchurch (Brent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. R. Timbrell</td>
<td>Worcester College of Education</td>
<td>Wolverhampton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. A. Hickling</td>
<td>Worcester College of Education</td>
<td>Worcester</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### E. ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.A.C.</td>
<td>Allotments Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.S.A.</td>
<td>Land Settlement Association Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.A.G.S.</td>
<td>National Allotments and Gardens Society Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.A.P.C.</td>
<td>National Association of Parish Councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Council</td>
<td>National Council for Recreational Gardening and Live-stock Keeping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

367
APPENDIX III

QUESTIONNAIRE ISSUED TO URBAN AUTHORITIES

Table I
Scope of the analysis by type of authority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Authority</th>
<th>Effective issue</th>
<th>Number presumed to have allotments†</th>
<th>Completed questionnaires</th>
<th>Percentage response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County boroughs</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>84·15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London boroughs</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>71·43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal boroughs</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>61·45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban districts</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>56·48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>60·91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Allowing for amalgamations and boundary changes.
† According to the returns made to the Ministry in 1964.
Table II

Changes in the total number of allotment plots between 1945–65 and 1961–5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in the number of plots</th>
<th>Percentage of towns showing each variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statutory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 25% increase</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–25% increase</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–10% increase</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No change</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–10% decrease</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–25% decrease</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–50% decrease</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50% decrease</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in the number of sites</td>
<td>1945–65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statutory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 25% increase</td>
<td>35·6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–25% increase</td>
<td>5·7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–10% increase</td>
<td>1·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No change...</td>
<td>33·6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–10% decrease</td>
<td>2·7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–25% decrease</td>
<td>10·7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–50% decrease</td>
<td>8·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50% decrease</td>
<td>2·7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100·0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table III
Changes in the total number of allotment sites between 1945–65 and 1961–5
Table IV
Towns possessing each class of allotment site: 1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class(es) of site</th>
<th>Percentage of towns possessing each</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statutory ONLY</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory and temporary ONLY</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory and private ONLY</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary ONLY</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary and private ONLY</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private ONLY</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All three classes</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No statutory sites</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No temporary sites</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No private sites</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: This analysis excludes towns without allotments.

Table V
Sizes of allotment plots by class of site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sizes of plots</th>
<th>Percentage of plots of each dimension on sites of different classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statutory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 rods or less* ...</td>
<td>82.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–20 rods ...</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–40 rods ...</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 40 rods† ...</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In the light of these figures, it is scarcely surprising that 82.8 per cent reported that their 'standard' allotment garden plot was 10 rods or less in extent.
† i.e., above the maximum size of an allotment garden. It is almost certain that all such 'plots' represent amalgamations of allotment gardens in the occupation of a single tenant.

Table VI
Allotment provision in terms of acres/1,000 population at various dates, with estimates for the future

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total allotment provision in terms of acres per thousand population</th>
<th>1945</th>
<th>1951</th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1961</th>
<th>1965</th>
<th>1970–1</th>
<th>1980–1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 4.0 ...</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0–4.0 ...</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0–3.0 ...</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5–2.0 ...</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0–1.5 ...</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5–1.0 ...</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 0.5 ...</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Each authority was asked to state the planning officer's estimate of provision in 1970–1 and 1980–1. As many as 40.4 per cent and 49.2 per cent of those authorities which completed the questionnaire felt unable to offer figures for 1970–1 and 1980–1 respectively.
Table VII
Comparative provision in terms of acres/1,000 population: 1945–65

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total allotment provision in terms of acres per thousand population</th>
<th>Provision in 1965 of towns falling within each group in 1945</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 4·0...</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3·0–4·0...</td>
<td>10·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2·0–3·0...</td>
<td>24·6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1·5–2·0...</td>
<td>7·7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1·0–1·5...</td>
<td>12·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0·5–1·0...</td>
<td>1·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 0·5...</td>
<td>100·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 4·0...</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3·0–4·0...</td>
<td>10·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2·0–3·0...</td>
<td>24·6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1·5–2·0...</td>
<td>7·7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1·0–1·5...</td>
<td>12·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0·5–1·0...</td>
<td>1·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 0·5...</td>
<td>100·0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: The Table covers only those authorities which were in existence and possessed allotments both in 1945 and in 1965.

Table VIII
Restrictions on the cultivation of flowers and the rearing of livestock on allotment gardens

| Percentage of towns permitting different proportions of the plot to be used for each purpose |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Banned completely | Up to 25% of plot | 25–50% of plot | No restriction | Total |
| Flowers... | 3·9 | 19·6 | 2·1 | 73·4 | 100·0 |
| Bees... | 55·4 | 44·6 | — | — | 100·0 |
| Pigeons... | 68·0 | 18·0 | — | — | 100·0 |
| Poultry... | 43·6 | Not separately assessed | — | — | 100·0 |
| Goats... | 78·8 | Not separately assessed | — | — | 100·0 |
| Pigs... | 69·1 | Not separately assessed | — | — | 100·0 |
| Rabbits... | 59·5 | Not separately assessed | — | — | 100·0 |

NOTE: A number of authorities reported that the possibility of growing flowers or of keeping livestock on allotment gardens had never been raised. Of those authorities (43·3 per cent) which operate a complete ban on livestock keeping, 3·1 per cent rely on local bye-law, while the remainder have made regulations to control the practice. A total of 26·1 per cent would permit a tenant to devote his entire plot to one or more kinds of stock.
### Table IX

**Annual rents of allotment gardens**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rent per rod</th>
<th>Percentage of towns (1) now charging such rents</th>
<th>Percentage in each group which consider their present rents to be inadequate (2)</th>
<th>Percentage which consider rents in each group to be merited (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6d.....</td>
<td>6-0</td>
<td>32-0</td>
<td>4-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6d to 1s. .....</td>
<td>27-2</td>
<td>25-0</td>
<td>22-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1s. precisely .....</td>
<td>25-4</td>
<td>18-9</td>
<td>23-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1s.–1s. 6d. .....</td>
<td>13-1</td>
<td>32-8</td>
<td>9-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1s. 6d. precisely .....</td>
<td>10-4</td>
<td>21-4</td>
<td>9-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1s. 6d.–2s. .....</td>
<td>9-7</td>
<td>14-8</td>
<td>13-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2s.–3s. .....</td>
<td>6-5</td>
<td>7-1</td>
<td>11-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 3s. .....</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>4-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>100-0</strong></td>
<td><strong>---</strong></td>
<td><strong>100-0</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:**

(1) This analysis excludes those towns which lease all their sites to allotment associations, and the handful of towns which charge different rents on different sites.

(2) A total of 22.7 per cent consider that their present rents are too low; 24.7 per cent allow old-age pensioners to pay a reduced rent.

(3) Some 26 per cent of urban authorities charge an additional rent for piped water. In the majority of cases this is less than 2s. 6d. per annum, irrespective of the size of the plot.

### Table X

**Local authority gross expenditure per allotment acre**

(Statutory and temporary sites only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gross expenditure per acre</th>
<th>Percentage of towns incurring such expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1d. .....</td>
<td>26-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1d.–6d. .....</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6d.–2s. 6d. .....</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2s. 6d.–10s. .....</td>
<td>4-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10s.–£1 .....</td>
<td>4-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£1–£5 .....</td>
<td>30-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£5–£10 .....</td>
<td>20-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over £10 .....</td>
<td>10-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>100-0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100-0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table XI

**Local authority net expenditure on allotments in terms of penny rate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of call on rates for allotments</th>
<th>Percentage of towns incurring such a deficit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIL .....</td>
<td>30-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 0-25d. .....</td>
<td>38-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-25d.–0-5d. .....</td>
<td>17-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5d.–0-75d. .....</td>
<td>6-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-75d.–1d. .....</td>
<td>4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-1d.–1-5d. .....</td>
<td>2-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5d.–2-0d. .....</td>
<td>0-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 2-0d. .....</td>
<td>0-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>100-0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100-0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

373

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
Table XII

Local authority administration of allotment gardens

| Percentage with a smallholdings/allotments committee | 60·2 |
| Percentage with a smallholdings/allotments committee (1) | 4·8 |
| Percentage of towns in line (a) above where the allotments committee is a full council committee | 66·2 |
| Percentage wherein the allotments sub-committee operates under:— |  |
| (i) Parks committee | 23·2 |
| (ii) Estates committee | 7·4 |
| (iii) Public works committee | 0·8 |
| Percentage requiring every tenant to sign a written agreement | 71·8 |
| Percentage requiring written agreements for plots on statutory sites only | 5·0 |
| Percentage of towns having a separate section dealing with allotments work only | 1·8 |
| Percentage of towns employing officers on allotments work (2):— |  |
| (i) Three or more officers | 18·5 |
| (ii) Two officers | 13·0 |
| (iii) One officer | 18·3 |
| (iv) None | 50·2 |
| 100·0 |

NOTES:

(1) Only those county boroughs which have provided smallholdings might have established a smallholdings/allotments committee.

(2) For the purpose of computing the figures for line (h), an officer spending part of his time on allotments work was deemed to represent half a unit.

Table XIII

Local authority allotments estimates: 1965–6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship of income to expenditure</th>
<th>Percentage of towns anticipating each relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income greater than expenditure</td>
<td>19·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income between 80 and 100 per cent of expenditure</td>
<td>7·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income between 50 and 80 per cent of expenditure</td>
<td>19·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income between 25 and 50 per cent of expenditure</td>
<td>25·6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income less than 25 per cent of expenditure</td>
<td>29·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100·0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table XIV

Local authority capital expenditure on allotments: 1965–6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of expense</th>
<th>Percentage of towns incurring expenditure on each item in 1965–6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Purchase or improvement of land for new sites</td>
<td>4·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Installation of water supplies</td>
<td>13·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Providing sheds or greenhouses</td>
<td>2·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Providing communal huts or stores</td>
<td>3·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Providing car parks</td>
<td>0·6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Providing fences, gates, roads, paths</td>
<td>13·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Providing toilets</td>
<td>1·8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

374
### Table XV

**Local authority revenue expenditure on allotments: 1965–6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of expense</th>
<th>Percentage of towns incurring expenditure on each item in 1965–6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Repair of fences, hedges or gates</td>
<td>63.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Repair of roads, paths</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Repair of car parks</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Repair of sheds, greenhouses, huts or stores</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Weed removal, grass cutting</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Ploughing</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:**
1. In the case of sites leased to allotment associations, it is customary for the association to be made responsible for several of these items.
2. In 3.8 per cent of urban authorities, the actual expenditure of the year 1965–6 exceeded the estimate (Table XIII).

### Table XVI

**Local authorities’ views on the optimum size of allotment sites**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of plots on site</th>
<th>Percentage of towns favouring such numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fewer than 25</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–50</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51–100</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101–200</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 200</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** As many as 57.5 per cent had no firm views to offer on this question.

### Table XVII

**Questions not analysed elsewhere in this Appendix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Size of each town’s ‘standard’ allotment garden plot:—</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10 rods</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 rods precisely</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11–20 rods</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–30 rods</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 30 rods</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| (b) Towns charging additional rents for a shed             | 8.0  |
| (c) Towns charging additional rents for a greenhouse      | 2.0  |
| (d) Towns with ‘model’ plots on view to the public        | 4.5  |
| (e) Towns advertising vacant plots:—                      |     |
| (i) On public notice boards                               | 26.4 |
| (ii) In the press                                        | 22.8 |
| (f) Towns planning to acquire further:—                   |     |
| (i) Statutory allotment land                              | 9.1  |
| (ii) Temporary allotment land                             | 5.4  |
| (g) Towns planning to convert existing allotment land into statutory sites | 4.7  |

375

---

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.

Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
Table XVIII
Statistical data by county: England and Wales: 1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>(a)</th>
<th>(b)</th>
<th>(c)</th>
<th>(d)</th>
<th>(e)</th>
<th>(f)</th>
<th>(g)</th>
<th>(h)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bedford</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkshire</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckingham</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>65.9</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge/Ely*</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornwall</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derby</td>
<td>55.1</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devon</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>90.1</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorset*</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampshire/I.O.W.</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>60.1</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hereford*</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hertford</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>73.2</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huntingdon*</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>N/K</td>
<td>N/K</td>
<td>N/K</td>
<td>N/K</td>
<td>N/K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancashire</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>35.2</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>89.8</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>33.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London (G.L.C.)</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>59.2</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>74.6</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nottingham</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>76.0</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>88.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salop</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stafford</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td>58.2</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>77.4</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sussex</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>75.3</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwick</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmorland*</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiltshire</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcestershire</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall figures:

| England          | 58.4 | 85.1 | 49.9 | 20.7 | 11.8 | 4.6  | 10.7 | 22.7 |

376
Table XVIII—continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>(a)</th>
<th>(b)</th>
<th>(c)</th>
<th>(d)</th>
<th>(e)</th>
<th>(f)</th>
<th>(g)</th>
<th>(h)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wales</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglesey*</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>50-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caernarvon</td>
<td>7-1</td>
<td>71-4</td>
<td>64-0</td>
<td>25-7</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>10-6</td>
<td>17-1</td>
<td>17-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carmarthen*</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>16-9</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denbigh*</td>
<td>N/K</td>
<td>N/K</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>66-7</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flint</td>
<td>40-0</td>
<td>90-0</td>
<td>10-0</td>
<td>23-8</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>17-8</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glamorgan</td>
<td>58-3</td>
<td>79-3</td>
<td>9-1</td>
<td>19-8</td>
<td>30-2</td>
<td>2-1</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>51-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merioneth</td>
<td>14-3</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>15-4</td>
<td>25-3</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>34-0</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monmouth</td>
<td>37-8</td>
<td>80-0</td>
<td>28-9</td>
<td>30-5</td>
<td>24-3</td>
<td>1-0</td>
<td>22-7</td>
<td>7-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery*</td>
<td>50-0</td>
<td>50-0</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>2-6</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pembrokeshire</td>
<td>58-3</td>
<td>61-6</td>
<td>7-7</td>
<td>11-1</td>
<td>7-7</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radnor*</td>
<td>40-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>40-0</td>
<td>33-3</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall figures:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>45-0</td>
<td>80-1</td>
<td>16-5</td>
<td>21-8</td>
<td>20-4</td>
<td>2-2</td>
<td>8-5</td>
<td>40-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall figures:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales</td>
<td>58-0</td>
<td>84-6</td>
<td>49-8</td>
<td>20-9</td>
<td>12-1</td>
<td>4-3</td>
<td>10-4</td>
<td>23-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY:**

Column (a) = Total number of statutory sites as a percentage of total number of statutory
and temporary sites.

(b) = Sites established before 1945 as a percentage of all sites.

(c) = Sites possessing a piped water supply or its equivalent, as a percentage of all sites.

(d) = Total number of vacant plots as a percentage of total plots, all sites.

(e) = Sites let en bloc to allotment associations as a percentage of all local authority
sites.

(f) = Plots which were let but not cultivated, as a percentage of all plots.

(g) = Plots located on sites with no amenities as a percentage of all plots.

(h) = Plots located on sites with five or more of the amenities specified in Chapter 7,
paragraph 262, as a percentage of all plots.

N/K = not known.

* In the case of the counties marked with an asterisk, the data derived from the completed
questionnaires were so inadequate that the figures included in this table in respect of them must
be treated with considerable caution. No completed questionnaires were received from towns in
Rutland, Brecon, or Cardigan.
APPENDIX IV

THE ALLOTMENTS SITUATION IN LARGE TOWNS: 1965

A. Introduction

At an early stage in its work, the committee was impressed by the degree to which the allotments situation differs from town to town even between those which are adjacent (paragraph 205). In this report, much of the variation has been ascribed to local circumstances or even to individual attitudes; indeed, apart from such obvious single characteristics as the prevalence of pigeon keeping on some allotments, it has not been possible to discern any regional pattern by inspection. There have, however, been indications in the evidence that regional differences exist; the list of towns without allotments (paragraph 173) contains an over-representation from the north-west, and the majority of towns which ban the cultivation of flowers on allotments (paragraph 251) are in the south of England. For these reasons, and because it seemed possible that at some future date the control over matters such as allotments administration might be released by Central Government in favour of the regions, it was thought desirable to probe this aspect more deeply.

The completed questionnaires received from urban authorities provided a number of variables relating to local allotments situations which could be analysed statistically. By the use of different techniques of computer analysis, it seemed to us that it would be possible to reduce such variables to a few basic, independent factors sufficient to account for most of the variation between the towns concerned. Further analysis could then be used to expose any regional differentiation which might be present in the data. Moreover, the same techniques might be expected to show the degree of correlation over the country as a whole of any pair of variables among those selected; this would be an important part of the exercise, since causal relationships between different aspects of allotment provision are often claimed.

The computations were carried out on the KDF 9 computer at the Cripps Computing Centre in the University of Nottingham. We are indebted to Dr. J. P. Cole and Mr. P. M. Mather, both of the Department of Geography, University of Nottingham, for their advice and help with this work.

B. The data

The input data for the computer programs were derived from the questionnaires completed by fifty-eight of the sixty largest allotments authorities outside London.* The decision to limit the exercise to these towns was taken because:—

(i) Twelve of the twenty-four smallest county boroughs had failed to submit a return;
(ii) the questionnaires received from many smaller authorities contained blank spaces; and
(iii) the boundary changes introduced by the London Government Act of 1963 rendered the 1965 data for the capital city highly speculative.

* Cambridge and Poole did not return completed questionnaires. Data for Dudley, which had co-operated in a pilot survey (paragraph 100) were omitted from the first program but included in the remainder.

378
The data selected comprised numerical values for the twenty-three variables listed in Table I. For reasons which will be explained at the appropriate point, some of these variables were deliberately omitted from one or more of the programs used.

Table I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables used in factor and vector analyses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. The programs

Four different programs were used, and the acceptable runs of each are summarised in Table II. For reasons of brevity and simplicity, the scope of the individual programs and their output will not be analysed in detail in this Appendix but a full summary has been prepared and examined. Broadly speaking, the object of each program was as follows:

1. Factor analysis

This program was used to identify the basic independent factors accounting for the differences between the towns, and the weighting of each factor for each town. By plotting pairs of factor weightings it was hoped to isolate groups of towns and to examine these groups for regional significance. In the first run it was found that the dominant factor, accounting for over 20 per cent of the variance between the towns, was loaded mainly with variables relating to size (A, B, U, W and X of Table I), and it was decided to exclude some of these from the second run (see Table II). In both runs, the first ten calculated factors accounted for over 86 per cent of the total variance.

2. Vector analysis, R-mode

The objects of this program were broadly similar to those of program 1. The factors were sharpened by a rotation procedure, but unfortunately the program did not provide individual weightings of each factor for each town.
VECTOR ANALYSIS: ROTATED FACTORS I/II Q-MODE OF DATA FOR 58 OF THE LARGEST ALLOTMENTS AUTHORITIES EXCLUDING LONDON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsidiary Factors Prominent</th>
<th>Factors I or II Prominent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Factor III</td>
<td>○ N.W. England &amp; W.R. Yorks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Factor IV</td>
<td>△ W. Midlands &amp; Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Factor V</td>
<td>+ E. &amp; S. Midlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Factor VI</td>
<td>× Coastal towns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 28
REGIONAL VARIATIONS OF THE ALLOTMENTS SITUATION IN LARGE TOWNS (EXCLUDING LONDON) AS INDICATED BY VECTOR ANALYSIS Q-MODE.

Figure 29

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
3. **Vector analysis, Q-mode**

Programs 2 and 3 had both been published by J. Imbrie* and were translated (with modifications) by P. M. Mather. The characteristics of program 3 and the interpretation of its results have been described by J. Imbrie and H. H. Van Andel.† Unlike programs 1 and 2, this program focused attention on the towns rather than on the variables, and the results followed from an inspection of the relationships between all pairs of towns, compared on the basis of all the variables.

4. **Cluster analysis**

This program was written by P. M. Mather (1968, unpublished). By using the rotated factor matrix produced by program 3 it examined the 'clustering' of factors for each town and led to the construction of a 'linkage tree' which demonstrated the order of similarity among the fifty-eight towns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Run</th>
<th>Input data matrix</th>
<th>Output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Factor analysis (Atlas Autocode)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Twenty-one variables (excluding S and T) for fifty-seven towns</td>
<td>(a) Product moment correlation matrix of variables (allotment characteristics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Eighteen variables (excluding S, T, U, W and X) for fifty-seven towns</td>
<td>(b) Calculated factors (eigen values)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Vector analysis R-mode (Egdon Fortran)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Seventeen variables (excluding A, B, G, U, W and X) in columns by all fifty-eight towns in rows</td>
<td>(a) Means and standard deviations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Product moment correlation matrix of variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Eigen values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(d) Factor loadings matrix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(e) Rotated factor matrix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Vector analysis Q-mode (Egdon Fortran)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Fifty-eight towns in columns by all twenty-three variables in rows</td>
<td>(a) Sums of squares and their square roots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Fifty-eight towns in columns by seventeen variables (excluding A, B, G, U, W and X) in rows</td>
<td>(b) Cosine theta matrix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Eigen values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(d) Cumulative proportion of sum of squares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(e) Factor matrix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(f) Rotated factor matrix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cluster analysis (Egdon Fortran)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rotated Q-mode factor matrix</td>
<td>(a) Cluster centroids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(b) Pairing sequence-similarity coefficients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Linkage order</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table II**

The computer programs

D. The analyses

1. **Factor analysis**

The second run of this program produced a correlation matrix for eighteen variables in fifty-seven towns. By studying this matrix it was possible to isolate

CLUSTER ANALYSIS: THE LINKAGE TREE DERIVED FROM SEVEN ROTATED Q-MODE FACTORS FOR 58 OF THE LARGEST ALLOTMENTS AUTHORITIES EXCLUDING LONDON

The Factor numbers (III - VII) on the linkage lines indicate the dominant Factors determining the 'anomalous' character of these towns.

Figure 30
correlations significant at the levels of 90, 95 and 99 per cent, and these are summarised in Table III. While it is apparent that some of these correlations are directly relevant to the problems with which the committee has been faced, it must be recognised that relationships demonstrated statistically are not necessarily causal in nature, and some may be suspect because the spread of values for

Table III

Significant correlations

(a) Correlations significant at the 99 per cent level

(i) The level of allotment provision in terms of acres per thousand population was higher in those towns which provided the greatest number of allotments

(ii) The proportionate loss of tenants in 1965 was greater in towns which had a generous provision of public open space. It was greater also in towns which had a greater proportion of new tenants, indicating a significant rate of turnover

(iii) The proportion of vacant plots was smaller where the ratio of permanent (statutory) plots was higher and also where more amenities were provided

(iv) The standard of amenity provision was higher in towns where the proportion of smaller plots (10 rods or less) was greater

(v) Authorities providing more plots of smaller size (10 rods or less) gave their allotments better financial support in terms of income/expenditure ratio

(b) Correlations significant at the 95 per cent level

(i) The lower the basic rent, the greater was the proportion of vacant plots and the less widely was piped water provided

(ii) A higher proportion of plots was used for the rearing of livestock in towns where more plots were permanent (statutory)

(iii) Towns with a smaller ratio of allotments income to expenditure provided better amenities and gave greater rent reductions to old-age pensioners

(iv) Allotments expenditure in terms of a 1d. rate product tended to be higher in towns where a greater proportion of larger plots was provided

(v) The rate of turnover of tenants was greater in towns providing smaller plots, and also where the allotment provision in terms of acres per thousand population was low

(vi) The practice of leasing sites to associations was more prevalent in towns where the total allotment provision was high

(c) Correlations significant at the 90 per cent level

(i) Towns which provided a higher proportion of larger plots also provided a greater total area in terms of acres per thousand population, and suffered a smaller loss of tenants in 1965

(ii) Those authorities with higher rates expenditure on allotments were more likely to have plots devoted to livestock, and had more sites with a piped water supply

(iii) Towns with the most widespread provision of piped water gave more generous rent reductions to old-age pensioners

(iv) A large loss of tenants in 1965 was characteristic of towns with low allotment provision and a high expenditure in relation to income

(v) The proportion of new tenants was higher, and the loss of tenants lower, in towns which favoured the leasing of sites to associations, suggesting that this system afforded more stability of tenancy

certain variables does not approach a 'normal' distribution. The program indicated the relative contributions, both positive and negative, of the various factors to each town's overall character in relation to all the other towns. These could be used as a basis for grouping towns according to similarity. The working graphs are not reproduced here, but in no case could the groupings be identified as regional, and it was concluded that this program provided no evidence of a coherent regional pattern in the general allotments situation.

384
2. Vector analysis, R-mode

After making allowance for the different selection of variables, the correlations indicated by this program were very similar to those shown in Table III and require no additional comment. The program did not provide factor scores and no groupings were attempted.

3. Vector analysis, Q-mode

The Q-mode procedure of vector analysis gave much greater values to the two leading factors and allowed a distinction to be drawn between normal and anomalous towns. When the 'size' variables had been excluded for the second run, it was found that the first two calculated factors accounted for almost 83 per cent of the variance between the towns, and the first seven factors for 96 per cent.

The graph of Factors I and II (Figure 28) showed that most of the towns were distributed within a narrow zone suggesting an inverse relationship between the two factors, and that this zone was divisible into broad regional groups. Thus, most towns in the north-west and the West Riding of Yorkshire had high values of Factor I, with Factor II relatively weak, while in the east midlands and southern England (excluding the coast) this position was reversed. Towns in the west midlands tended to occupy an intermediate position, while those in coastal regions were less 'clustered' in their distribution.

The values of these two factors have been plotted separately in Figures 29a and b, which clearly show the regional differentiation. On the evidence of these diagrams it seems reasonable to conclude that there is a general change in the allotments situation southwards and south-eastwards across the country. Numbers of 'anomalous' towns exist in each region, but before considering the basis of the regional differentiation and the reasons for the anomalies it will be useful to examine the results of program 4.

4. Cluster analysis

This program examined the total allotments situation in each town (as defined by program 3) and assessed the degree to which it resembled or differed from the situation elsewhere. The outcome was a list of towns in 'linkage order' from which it was possible to build the 'linkage tree' depicted in Figure 30. This diagram demonstrates the order in which each town links with others, and clearly reinforces the regional grouping of towns whose variance is largely accounted for by Factors I and II of the Q-mode analysis. Particular reference may be made to the group of towns in the east midlands and southern England, Figure 30, which link quickly with each other and are separated from a group located in the northern and west midlands regions by a collection of ten anomalous towns.

The first towns to link—indicative of the closest mutual resemblance—are Thurrock and Reading, which are soon joined by Bristol. Plymouth and Stoke also converge quickly, and Southampton joins them soon afterwards. By contrast, Liverpool and Salford, which have linked together earlier by the particular strength of Factor IV, are almost the last to join any other town. Last of all is West Bromwich, with a very low Factor I and Factor II weighting and an exceptionally strong weighting by Factor VI.

E. Summary

It is unfortunate that the vector analysis programs failed to present individual factor weightings such as were provided by the factor analysis program. It is
thus impossible to deduce from the programs themselves which of the variables listed in Table I played a prominent part in the calculation of each factor. However, although there is no connection between the factors provided by the various programs, it was found that many of the towns which grouped themselves together in the vector analysis were also grouped in the factor analysis.

Thus, by studying the characteristics of each group in the factor analysis it was possible to assess the basic qualities of the separate groups in the vector analysis. Halifax and Swansea, for example, were found to be set apart by their lavish provision of public open space, while the abnormality of Oldham and Gateshead derived from a combination of variables—limited open space, poor amenity provision and a high proportion of plots of above average size.

A similar examination of the more ‘normal’ towns showed that there is a tendency for those in the south-east to have, by comparison with the north-west:—

(a) a larger provision of allotments in relation to population;
(b) more plots above the 'standard' size;
(c) poorer financial support from the authority;
(d) poorer provision of amenities;
(e) more permanent allotments;
(f) a lower rate of turnover of tenants;
(g) more leasing to allotments associations;
(h) a greater percentage of vacant plots; and
(i) lower basic rents.

These regional differences no doubt reflect the varying influences of physical and social environment and economic history, which underlie the purely local influences to which reference was made in the opening paragraph of this Appendix. A broad difference in the allotments situation is apparent between the closely built-up old manufacturing towns set amid the harsher physical environment of the north, and the less congested, more actively expanding towns of the south-east, with different industrial histories and structures, and generally greater prosperity. It should not escape notice that the patterns shown by the maps of Factors 1 and 2 (Figure 29) are broadly reminiscent of the rural distribution map which forms Figure 13 of this report. This suggests that local rural traditions may have been strongly reflected in the corresponding urban areas, as the concept of allotments was translated into an urban context.
APPENDIX V

QUESTIONNAIRE ISSUED TO RURAL PARishes

Table I
Scope of the analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of questionnaires issued</th>
<th>...</th>
<th>...</th>
<th>10,700</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires completed and returned</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>1,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parishes reporting no allotments at any time since 1945</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>3,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parishes reporting that their last allotment sites had been closed between 1945 and 1965</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total effective response (50-8 per cent)</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>5,437</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: According to the returns made to the Ministry's Allotments Section for the year 1964, a total of 7,660 parishes in England and Wales now have no allotments within their boundaries. If this figure is accepted, the strength of the return from those parishes which still contain allotments was 49.0 per cent.

Table II
Changes in the total number of allotment plots between 1945-65 and 1961-5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in the number of plots</th>
<th>Percentage of parishes showing each variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 25% increase 10-25% increase 0-10% increase</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-10% increase</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No change</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-10% decrease 10-25% decrease 25-50% decrease Over 50% decrease</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-10% decrease 10-25% decrease 25-50% decrease</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50% decrease</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: The parishes which reported "no change" in the numbers of allotments provided within their boundaries include those which have let vacant plots to local farmers or market gardeners while technically retaining them in allotments use.
## Table III

Changes in the total number of allotment sites between 1945–65 and 1961–5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes in the number of sites</th>
<th>Percentage of parishes with allotments showing each variation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1945–65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statutory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 25% increase</td>
<td>8·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–25% increase</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–10% increase</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No change</td>
<td>80·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–10% decrease</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–25% decrease</td>
<td>2·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–50% decrease</td>
<td>6·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50% decrease</td>
<td>1·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100·0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Table IV

Provision of allotment sites by classes: 1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of site</th>
<th>Percentage of parishes with allotments having sites of such classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statutory ONLY</td>
<td>32·1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory and temporary ONLY</td>
<td>5·7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory and private ONLY</td>
<td>10·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary ONLY</td>
<td>14·1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary and private ONLY</td>
<td>10·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private ONLY</td>
<td>24·7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory, temporary and private ONLY</td>
<td>3·1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No statutory sites</td>
<td>48·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No temporary sites</td>
<td>67·1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No private sites</td>
<td>51·9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table V
Sizes of individual allotment plots by class of site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of plots</th>
<th>Percentage of plots of each size range</th>
<th>Statutory</th>
<th>Temporary</th>
<th>Private</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 rods and below</td>
<td></td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–20 rods</td>
<td></td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–40 rods</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 40 rods</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES:
1. Although the proportion of statutory allotments returned here and elsewhere in the questionnaire agreed with the returns made to the Ministry's Allotments Section, the proportions of temporary and private plots showed a substantial variation, thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of allotments</th>
<th>Percentage of plots shown in completed questionnaires</th>
<th>Percentage of plots returned to the Ministry, 1964</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statutory</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can offer no explanation for this discrepancy.

2. The relatively small percentages of plots which exceed the maximum size of an allotment garden (40 rods) conceals the fact that their size is so great that their total area exceeds that of the smaller plots.

Table VI
Allotment provision in terms of acres/1,000 population at various dates between 1945 and 1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total allotment provision in terms of acres per thousand population</th>
<th>Percentage of parishes possessing each range of provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 4.0</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0–4.0</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0–3.0</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5–2.0</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0–1.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5–1.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 0.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES:
1. This Table includes only those parishes which have contained allotments throughout the period under review. A very small number of parishes has acquired its first allotments only since 1945, while a much greater number (see Table I) has lost all its remaining allotments since the same date.
2. In the case of many parishes, decreases in the total amount of allotment land have been masked in the Table by corresponding decreases in population.
3. Every parish which has consistently provided more than 4 acres of allotments per thousand population either incorporates commercial plots in its provision or allows individual tenants to occupy many plots.

389
### Table VII

**Comparative provision in terms of acres/1,000 population: 1945–65**

| Total allotment provision in terms of acres per thousand population | Provision in 1965 of parishes falling within each group in 1945 |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Over 4 0 | 3-0–4-0 | 2-0–3-0 | 1-5–2-0 | 1-0–1-5 | 0-5–1-0 | Less than 0-5 | Total |
| Over 4-0 ... | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| 3-0–4-0 ... | 70 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 9 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 2 | 6 | — | — | 100 | 0 |
| 2-0–3-0 ... | — | 4 | 8 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 1 | 9 | — | — | 100 | 0 |
| 1-5–2-0 ... | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 100 | 0 |
| 1-0–1-5 ... | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 100 | 0 |
| 0-5–1-0 ... | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 100 | 0 |
| Less than 0-5 | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | — | 100 | 0 |

### Table VIII

**Restrictions on the cultivation of flowers and the rearing of livestock on allotment gardens**

| | Percentage of parishes permitting different proportions of the plot to be used for each purpose |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Banned completely | Up to 25% of plot | 25–50% of plot | No restriction | Total |
| Flowers ... | 5-6 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 83 | 7 | 100 | 0 |
| Bees ... | 5 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 9 | — | — | 100 | 0 |
| Pigeons ... | 6 | 8 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 100 | 0 |
| Poultry ... | 5 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 100 | 0 |
| Goats ... | 6 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 3 | 6 | — | 100 | 0 |
| Pigs ... | 6 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 6 | — | 100 | 0 |
| Rabbits ... | 6 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 6 | — | 100 | 0 |

**Note:** As with the urban authorities, a large number of parishes reported that the question of flowers and/or livestock had never arisen. A total of 33-8 per cent ban all forms of livestock; of these 7-9 per cent rely on local bye-laws.

### Table IX

**Annual rents of allotment gardens**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual rent per rod</th>
<th>Percentage of parishes(1) now charging such rents</th>
<th>Percentage in each group which consider their present rents to be inadequate(2)</th>
<th>Percentage which consider rents in each group to be merited(3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 6d. ...</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6d.–1s. ...</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1s. precisely ...</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1s.–1s. 6d. ...</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1s. 6d. precisely ...</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1s. 6d.–2s. ...</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2s.–3s. ...</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 3s. ...</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

(1) The analysis in this Table relates only to those parishes which provide allotment gardens.

(2) A total of 22-9 per cent consider their present rents to be inadequate; 5-5 per cent allow old-age pensioners to pay a reduced rent.

(3) Only 4-2 per cent charge an additional rent for piped water.

---

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
### Table X

Local authority gross expenditure per allotment acre
(statutory and temporary sites only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gross expenditure per acre</th>
<th>1945</th>
<th>1951</th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1961</th>
<th>1965</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>90-7</td>
<td>89-8</td>
<td>89-4</td>
<td>88-8</td>
<td>88-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1d.</td>
<td>0-0</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>0-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1d.-6d. ...</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>0-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6d.-2s. 6d. ...</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2s. 6d.-10s. ...</td>
<td>0-7</td>
<td>0-6</td>
<td>0-6</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10s.-£1 ...</td>
<td>1-0</td>
<td>0-7</td>
<td>0-6</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>0-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£1-£5 ...</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>6-4</td>
<td>6-2</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>5-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£5-£10 ...</td>
<td>1-0</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>2-7</td>
<td>2-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over £10 ...</td>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>0-7</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** The 24-7 per cent of parishes which rely entirely on private allotments to satisfy the demand are included as NIL throughout.

### Table XI

Local authority net expenditure on allotments in terms of a penny rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent of call on rates</th>
<th>1945</th>
<th>1951</th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1961</th>
<th>1965</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>91-2</td>
<td>90-0</td>
<td>87-7</td>
<td>83-8</td>
<td>81-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 0-25d.</td>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>7-0</td>
<td>10-7</td>
<td>16-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-25d.-0-5d.</td>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>3-1</td>
<td>3-0</td>
<td>1-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 0-5d.</td>
<td>2-7</td>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>2-2</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>0-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Again, the parishes relying on private allotments are included as NIL. The percentage exceeding a rate expenditure of 0-5d. was considered to be too small for further breakdown.

### Table XII

Local authority administration of allotments

(a) Percentage of parishes with allotments having an allotments committee
(b) Percentage of parishes with allotments which have a body of allotment managers
(c) Percentage of parishes with allotments which employ one or more persons on allotments work exclusively
(d) Percentage of parishes with allotments which require every tenant to sign a written agreement

| Percentage | 17-3 | 3-0 | 0-9 | 30-8 |

391

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.  
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
### Table XIII

**Local authority allotments estimates: 1965–6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship of income to expenditure</th>
<th>Percentage of parishes anticipating each relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income greater than expenditure</td>
<td>60·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income between 80 and 100 per cent of expenditure</td>
<td>16·4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income between 50 and 80 per cent of expenditure</td>
<td>11·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income between 25 and 50 per cent of expenditure</td>
<td>8·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income less than 25 per cent of expenditure</td>
<td>3·9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100·0

**NOTE:** This table excludes the 24·7 per cent of parishes with allotments which contain only private sites.

### Table XIV

**Local authority capital expenditure on allotments: 1965–6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of expense</th>
<th>Percentage of parishes incurring expenditure on each item in 1965–6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Purchase or improvement of land for new sites</td>
<td>0·4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Installation of water supplies</td>
<td>6·1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Providing sheds or greenhouses</td>
<td>0·4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Providing communal huts or stores</td>
<td>0·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Providing car parks</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Providing fences, gates, roads or paths</td>
<td>6·6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Providing toilets</td>
<td>0·6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table XV

**Local authority revenue expenditure on allotments: 1965–6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of expense</th>
<th>Percentage of parishes incurring expenditure on each item in 1965–6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Repair of fences, hedges or gates</td>
<td>25·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Repair of roads or paths</td>
<td>3·4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Repairs to car parks</td>
<td>0·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Repair of sheds, greenhouses, huts or stores</td>
<td>1·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Weed removal, grass cutting</td>
<td>8·1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Ploughing</td>
<td>3·9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

392
### Table XVI

**Sizes of waiting-lists for plots**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number on waiting-list</th>
<th>Percentage of parishes having lists of each length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>88·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 1 and 5</td>
<td>8·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 6 and 10</td>
<td>1·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 11 and 20</td>
<td>1·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 20</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100·0

### Table XVII

**Questions not analysed elsewhere in this Appendix**

(a) Size of each parish's 'standard' allotment:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of allotment</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10 rods</td>
<td>11·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 rods precisely</td>
<td>44·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20 rods</td>
<td>30·6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30 rods</td>
<td>2·7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 rods-½ acre</td>
<td>7·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½-1 acre</td>
<td>2·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 1 acre</td>
<td>0·5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100·0

(b) Parishes with 'model' plots on view to the public

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5·8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(c) Parishes advertising vacant plots:—

(i) On public notice boards | 41·9 |
(ii) In the local press     | 9·8  |

(d) Parishes planning to acquire further land for allotments | 2·8 |

(e) Parishes considering that the provision of allotments in rural areas should in future be controlled by:—

(i) Parish councils or meetings | 88·4 |
(ii) Voluntary organisations    | 4·6  |
(iii) Private landowners        | 2·8  |
(iv) Rural district councils    | 1·9  |
(v) County councils             | 1·4  |
(vi) Other organisations*       | 0·9  |

100·0

* Of this total, 0·6 per cent wished to see allotments abolished.

---

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
Table XVIII

Statistical data by county (England) and for Wales as a whole

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>(a)</th>
<th>(b)</th>
<th>(c)</th>
<th>(d)</th>
<th>(e)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bedford</td>
<td>20:1</td>
<td>14:2</td>
<td>6:1</td>
<td>4:5</td>
<td>43:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berkshire</td>
<td>25:3</td>
<td>18:4</td>
<td>2:6</td>
<td>8:2</td>
<td>34:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckingham</td>
<td>26:8</td>
<td>21:4</td>
<td>2:4</td>
<td>6:8</td>
<td>47:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridger/Ely</td>
<td>4:2</td>
<td>9:3</td>
<td>16:5</td>
<td>2:8</td>
<td>22:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire</td>
<td>4:8</td>
<td>15:4</td>
<td>0:4</td>
<td>5:9</td>
<td>31:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornwall</td>
<td>18:4</td>
<td>13:8</td>
<td>0:9</td>
<td>6:1</td>
<td>37:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>11:4</td>
<td>41:6</td>
<td>0:8</td>
<td>11:9</td>
<td>13:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derby</td>
<td>14:4</td>
<td>12:3</td>
<td>1:3</td>
<td>9:3</td>
<td>32:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devon</td>
<td>19:2</td>
<td>18:7</td>
<td>0:7</td>
<td>6:3</td>
<td>67:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorset</td>
<td>16:3</td>
<td>9:6</td>
<td>2:4</td>
<td>4:6</td>
<td>44:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham</td>
<td>19:8</td>
<td>23:8</td>
<td>1:6</td>
<td>11:2</td>
<td>35:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex</td>
<td>15:7</td>
<td>19:3</td>
<td>1:8</td>
<td>8:5</td>
<td>46:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester</td>
<td>19:7</td>
<td>16:3</td>
<td>1:6</td>
<td>7:2</td>
<td>54:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hereford*</td>
<td>2:3</td>
<td>25:3</td>
<td>0:2</td>
<td>2:1</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hertford</td>
<td>17:8</td>
<td>28:7</td>
<td>1:3</td>
<td>10:2</td>
<td>35:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huntingdon</td>
<td>6:5</td>
<td>6:4</td>
<td>6:6</td>
<td>2:9</td>
<td>41:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kent</td>
<td>27:7</td>
<td>17:4</td>
<td>1:7</td>
<td>10:9</td>
<td>37:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancashire</td>
<td>10:7</td>
<td>18:9</td>
<td>0:5</td>
<td>5:7</td>
<td>36:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester</td>
<td>17:6</td>
<td>12:7</td>
<td>2:7</td>
<td>9:3</td>
<td>30:0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>4:7</td>
<td>5:2</td>
<td>9:8</td>
<td>1:4</td>
<td>43:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>5:3</td>
<td>7:0</td>
<td>12:8</td>
<td>2:2</td>
<td>4:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton</td>
<td>15:4</td>
<td>18:7</td>
<td>8:7</td>
<td>6:0</td>
<td>29:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland</td>
<td>17:3</td>
<td>16:9</td>
<td>0:9</td>
<td>10:8</td>
<td>38:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nottingham</td>
<td>15:8</td>
<td>14:0</td>
<td>2:2</td>
<td>6:5</td>
<td>30:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutland*</td>
<td>14:8</td>
<td>15:8</td>
<td>5:6</td>
<td>6:3</td>
<td>41:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salop*</td>
<td>2:7</td>
<td>21:7</td>
<td>0:1</td>
<td>8:3</td>
<td>70:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset</td>
<td>17:7</td>
<td>16:8</td>
<td>1:7</td>
<td>6:0</td>
<td>42:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stafford</td>
<td>13:6</td>
<td>14:3</td>
<td>0:8</td>
<td>9:6</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td>8:9</td>
<td>8:8</td>
<td>5:5</td>
<td>4:3</td>
<td>33:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>20:2</td>
<td>20:0</td>
<td>0:5</td>
<td>9:6</td>
<td>56:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sussex</td>
<td>20:8</td>
<td>21:3</td>
<td>0:9</td>
<td>12:7</td>
<td>47:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warwick</td>
<td>14:4</td>
<td>19:7</td>
<td>4:2</td>
<td>4:7</td>
<td>22:0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmorland*</td>
<td>11:8</td>
<td>17:0</td>
<td>0:7</td>
<td>13:7</td>
<td>36:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiltshire</td>
<td>15:2</td>
<td>2:3</td>
<td>3:2</td>
<td>5:4</td>
<td>40:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester</td>
<td>10:7</td>
<td>9:7</td>
<td>4:9</td>
<td>2:8</td>
<td>9:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire</td>
<td>14:8</td>
<td>14:9</td>
<td>2:2</td>
<td>4:9</td>
<td>27:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>15:1</td>
<td>17:8</td>
<td>2:5</td>
<td>4:1</td>
<td>21:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>22:0</td>
<td>10:2</td>
<td>0:3</td>
<td>10:0</td>
<td>26:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall: England and Wales</td>
<td>15:5</td>
<td>17:4</td>
<td>2:1</td>
<td>4:2</td>
<td>21:4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY:**
- Column (a) = Total number of vacant plots as a percentage of total plots, all sites.
- (b) = Sites possessing piped water or its equivalent, as a percentage of all sites.
- (c) = Total area of allotment land expressed as acres per thousand population living in rural areas of each county.
- (d) = Average number of plots per acre of allotment land, all classes.
- (e) = Percentage decline in total acreage of allotments between 1952 and 1964.

* The number of allotments in the rural parts of counties marked with an asterisk in this table is so small that the figures offered in respect of them should be treated with caution.
APPENDIX VI

QUESTIONNAIRE ISSUED TO ALLOTMENT HOLDERS

Basis of issue

A. Urban areas

Every urban allotments authority (including the inner London boroughs) with a population of 25,000 or above was asked to list all its allotment sites (statutory, temporary and private) in order of size, to select every fifth site, and to issue a questionnaire to every tenth allotment holder on each selected site (2 per cent sample). The urban authorities with populations of less than 25,000 were listed in alphabetical order by county; every tenth such authority was asked to list all its allotment holders (on statutory, temporary and private sites) and to issue a questionnaire to every fifth allotment holder on its list (2 per cent sample).

B. Rural areas

The rural districts in each county were listed in alphabetical order. Those parishes which had been shown to have allotments in the 1964 returns made to the Ministry were then divided into three groups by population (1961 Census):—

Group 1—Below 300 population
Group 2—300 to 900 population
Group 3—Over 900 population

Each group was then arranged alphabetically within its rural district. The parish clerk (or chairman of the parish meeting) of every fifth parish in each group was then asked to list all his allotment holders in alphabetical order and to issue a questionnaire to every fifth allotment holder on his list (4 per cent sample).

C. Members of N.A.G.S.

A list was obtained of every local allotment association affiliated to N.A.G.S. This was arranged in alphabetical order by reference first to the county and then to the town or parish in which the address of the secretary of the association was situated. The secretary of every twentieth association so listed was asked to distribute a questionnaire to each of his members to a maximum of fifty (up to a 5 per cent sample).

In the tables of this Appendix, columns A, B and C show the analysis of the returns from the urban, rural and N.A.G.S. samples respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scope of the analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaires issued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Urban sample ... ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Rural sample ... ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. N.A.G.S. sample ... ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals ... ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

395

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Percentages falling within each group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Sex</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>96·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Status</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>90·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>6·4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>3·6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Age</td>
<td>Under 21</td>
<td>0·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>17·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41-65</td>
<td>62·4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over 65</td>
<td>20·1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Country of birth</td>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>97·1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rest of Europe</td>
<td>2·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Indies</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>0·4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elsewhere</td>
<td>0·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Number of children</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>35·7*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One</td>
<td>20·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>25·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>11·1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Four</td>
<td>4·7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Five</td>
<td>1·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Six or more</td>
<td>0·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Type of occupation</td>
<td>Manual: outdoor</td>
<td>18·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manual: indoor</td>
<td>26·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sedentary</td>
<td>15·6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>15·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>1·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>22·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>0·6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100·0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The figures included in this line relate not only to allotment holders without children, but also to those whose children no longer live at home.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>A Urban</th>
<th>B Rural</th>
<th>C N.A.G.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is your working day normally completed by 7 p.m.?</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>79.6</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you often work on Saturday?</td>
<td>51.9</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>50.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you often work on Sunday?</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you often work evening or night shifts?</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. If you are retired, did you previously work evening or night shifts?</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>46.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do you watch or play games regularly:—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) In winter on Saturdays?</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) In winter on Sundays?</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) In summer on Saturdays?</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) In summer on Sundays?</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Do you attend a place of worship:—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) More than once on Sundays?</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Once on Sundays?</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) On other days?</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Do you watch TV most summer evenings?</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Do you spend most of each week-end away from home (but not on your allotment)?</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. What place does gardening hold in your list of summer hobbies?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) First</td>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>79.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Second</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Third</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Fourth or lower</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. What place does gardening hold in your list of winter hobbies?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) First</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Second</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Third</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Fourth or lower</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. What place does livestock keeping hold in your list of summer hobbies?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) First</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Second</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Third</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Fourth or lower</td>
<td>98.0</td>
<td>99.1</td>
<td>96.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online. 
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
### Table IV
The allotment holder's home garden

#### (a) Size

| 1. Allotment holders who live in a block of flats | \( \% \) | \( \% \) | \( \% \) | 6-9 | 4-4 | 6-7 |
| 2. Allotment holders having the use of a home garden ... | 79-6 | 89-3 | 85-1 |
| 3. Allotment holders included in item 2 whose total home garden area is: | | | | | | |
| (a) Less than 150 square yards | \( \% \) | \( \% \) | \( \% \) | 58-6 | 43-6 | 57-6 |
| (b) Between 150 and 300 square yards | 28-0 | 32-7 | 26-9 |
| (c) Between 300 and 600 square yards | 11-0 | 15-0 | 12-7 |
| (d) Over 600 square yards | 2-4 | 8-7 | 2-8 |
| 100-0 | 100-0 | 100-0 |

#### (b) Function

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A place for drying clothes</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>27-0</td>
<td>20-8</td>
<td>30-3</td>
<td>24-0</td>
<td>26-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A place for children to play</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>10-7</td>
<td>8-5</td>
<td>10-6</td>
<td>0-8</td>
<td>8-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. A place for keeping pets or livestock</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>0-6</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>0-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A parking space</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>1-1</td>
<td>1-1</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>0-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. A place for sitting out of doors</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>7-6</td>
<td>6-6</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>4-2</td>
<td>5-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. A lawn</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>12-0</td>
<td>9-1</td>
<td>9-1</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>11-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. A flower garden</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>30-8</td>
<td>21-3</td>
<td>17-8</td>
<td>11-5</td>
<td>34-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. A vegetable garden</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>9-3</td>
<td>30-8</td>
<td>23-1</td>
<td>44-8</td>
<td>10-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. A garden for fruit bushes</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>0-7</td>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>1-0</td>
<td>0-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. A garden for large fruit trees</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>( % )</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>0-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note to Part (b)**

Each allotment holder included in the sample was asked to arrange in order of importance the uses to which he puts his home garden. Columns 1, 3 and 5 show the percentage which placed each function first in Groups A, B and C respectively. He was then asked to indicate how (if at all) this order of importance would change if he lost his allotment, and Columns 2 and 6 show the percentage which would then regard each function as being of prime importance.

Columns 7, 9 and 11 and Columns 8, 10 and 12 show the order of importance of each function separately for each of the two exercises referred to above. This was deduced by awarding ten points when a particular function was placed first, nine when it came second, and so forth. It should be noted that while this method will satisfactorily determine the order of importance, it does not illustrate the relative importance of each function to the next.
Table V
The allotment holder’s origins

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Percentage answering “Yes”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Did you live in the country as a child?</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If you now live in a town, for how many years have you done so?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Less than 5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Between 5 and 10</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Between 10 and 20</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Between 20 and 30</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Over 30 ...</td>
<td>69.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Did your father or mother work on an allotment?</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Did you work on an allotment as a child?</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Did you first take your own allotment:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Prior to 1928?</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Between 1928 and 1938?</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Between 1939 and 1945?</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Since 1945?</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. For how many years have you held an allotment?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Less than 5</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Between 5 and 10</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Between 10 and 25</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Between 25 and 40</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Between 40 and 50</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Over 50 ...</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

399

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
### Table VI
The allotment garden and economic need

(a) General

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentage of allotment holders answering &quot;Yes&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Is the total net weekly income of your household:—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Below £4?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) £4–£6?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) £6–£8?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) £8–£12?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) £12–£16?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) £16–£20?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) £20–£24?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h) £24–£28?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) £28–£32?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(j) £32–£36?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(k) £36–£40?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(l) £40–£48?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m) Over £48?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is your home:—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Owned (or being bought) by you?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Rented from your local authority?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If you own your house or flat, is its rateable value:—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Less than £50?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) £50–£100?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) £100–£150?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Over £150?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

400
Table VI—continued
(b) The monetary value of the allotment garden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentage of allotment holders answering &quot;Yes&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Is the total value of the produce which you harvest each year from a 10-rod plot:—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) NIL?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) £3 or less?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) £3–£8?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) £8–£15?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) £15–£24?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) £24–£40?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Over £40?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is your total annual outlay in respect of a 10-rod plot:—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Less than £5?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) £5–£8?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) £8–£10?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) £10–£15?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) £15–£20?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Over £20?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is the total value of the produce you give away each year:—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) NIL?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) £3 or less?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) £3–£8?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) £8–£15?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) £15–£24?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) £24–£40?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Over £40?</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table VII

Reasons for having an allotment garden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>A Urban</th>
<th>B Rural</th>
<th>C N.A.G.S.</th>
<th>A Urban</th>
<th>B Rural</th>
<th>C N.A.G.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. For physical recreation ...</td>
<td>%8</td>
<td>%8</td>
<td>%5</td>
<td>%5</td>
<td>%8</td>
<td>%6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. For the love of gardening as a hobby ...</td>
<td>32-8</td>
<td>32-3</td>
<td>20-1</td>
<td>22-9</td>
<td>33-5</td>
<td>36-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. For mental relaxation ...</td>
<td>4-2</td>
<td>6-4</td>
<td>3-9</td>
<td>5-0</td>
<td>2-9</td>
<td>3-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Because you have no garden attached to your house, or because it is too small ...</td>
<td>13-8</td>
<td>11-0</td>
<td>21-9</td>
<td>17-7</td>
<td>10-7</td>
<td>8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To help the family budget ...</td>
<td>22-7</td>
<td>16-7</td>
<td>33-6</td>
<td>27-7</td>
<td>27-4</td>
<td>18-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Because it is a change from the home environment ...</td>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>1-1</td>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>0-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Because you have sole charge of your own plot of ground ...</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>0-7</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>0-6</td>
<td>0-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. To make additional money by selling surplus produce ...</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>2-2</td>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>0-7</td>
<td>0-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Because you like to exhibit produce in shows and competitions ...</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>1-0</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>0-6</td>
<td>1-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Because you enjoy the companionship of other allotment holders, or the club facilities available ...</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>0-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Because you want fresh produce of better quality than you can buy ...</td>
<td>13-0</td>
<td>17-4</td>
<td>11-8</td>
<td>16-4</td>
<td>14-0</td>
<td>19-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Each allotment holder was asked to state (a) why he first decided to take an allotment, and (b) why he continues to work one today. In each case he was asked to arrange the same eleven reasons in order of importance. Columns 1, 3 and 5 and 2, 4 and 6 show the percentage who placed each reason first in lists (a) and (b) respectively. Columns 7, 9 and 11 and Columns 8, 10 and 12 show the order of importance of each reason in lists (a) and (b) respectively, calculated according to the points system outlined at the foot of Table IV.
### Table VIII
Sizes of allotment gardens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentage of allotment holders answering “Yes”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How many plots do you hold?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) One?</td>
<td>72-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Two?</td>
<td>22-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Three?</td>
<td>3-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) More than 3?</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is the total area of each of your plots?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Below 100 square yards</td>
<td>6-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) 100–150 square yards</td>
<td>9-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) 150–250 square yards</td>
<td>15-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) 250–299 square yards</td>
<td>5-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) 300 square yards (10 rods)</td>
<td>36-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) 301–400 square yards</td>
<td>12-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Over 400 square yards</td>
<td>14-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If you have one plot only, do you consider this to be:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) The right size?</td>
<td>86-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Too small?</td>
<td>9-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Too large?</td>
<td>3-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Every allotment holder who considered his present allotment to be too small is within the groups holding plots of 250 square yards or less. Every allotment holder who considered his plot to be too large is within the group whose plot exceeds 400 square yards in extent.

### Table IX
Livestock on allotment gardens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentage answering “Yes”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you use all or part of your plot for the keeping of:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Pigs?</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Poultry?</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Pigeons?</td>
<td>0-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Bees?</td>
<td>0-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Livestock of any description?</td>
<td>2-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If so, how large an area do you use for stock-keeping?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Less than 5 square yards</td>
<td>16-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) 5–10 square yards</td>
<td>5-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) 10–25 square yards</td>
<td>16-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) 25–50 square yards</td>
<td>22-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) 50–150 square yards</td>
<td>22-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Over 150 square yards</td>
<td>16-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table X

Produce for showing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of produce</th>
<th>Percentage raising such produce for showing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowers</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any produce</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table XI

The land use of the allotment garden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land use</th>
<th>Overall percentage of allotment used for each purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Vegetables</td>
<td>70.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Fruit trees or bushes</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Flowers</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lawn or grass</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Compost heap</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Glass (greenhouse, cold frames or cloches)</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Shed</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Livestock</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Beehives</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Other uses</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Not in use</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: The figures in this Table are obtained by taking the total area devoted to each use by the allotment holders included in the three samples, and expressing it as a percentage of the total area of their allotments.
### Table XII

**Time spent on the allotment**

*(a) Frequency of visits by season*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>A Urban</th>
<th>B Rural</th>
<th>C N.A.G.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>1 or 2</td>
<td>3–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many times (on average) do you visit your allotment per week?—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) In spring?</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>56.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) In summer?</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) In autumn?</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) In winter?</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### (b) Number of hours each week by season

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>A Urban</th>
<th>B Rural</th>
<th>C N.A.G.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How many hours (on average) do you spend on your allotment per week?—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) In spring?</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>38.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) In summer?</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>38.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) In autumn?</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) In winter?</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How many hours (on average) do you and your family spend on your allotment per week?—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) In spring?</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) In summer?</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) In autumn?</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) In winter?</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>A Urban</td>
<td></td>
<td>B Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Rest of family</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many hours do you and your family spend on your allotment in a year?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Less than 200</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>70.9</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) 200–500</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) 500–1,000</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Over 1,000</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table XII—continued
(c) Number of hours per annum

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
Table XIII
Distance and travel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentage of allotment holders answering “Yes”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Is the distance between your home and your nearest allotment:—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Less than a mile?</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) 1–2 miles?</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) 2–3 miles?</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) 3–4 miles?</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Over 4 miles?</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you normally travel there:—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) On foot?</td>
<td>60.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) By cycle?</td>
<td>20.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) By motor cycle?</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) By car or van?</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) By 'bus'?</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) By train?</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you suffer from any disability?</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

407

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentage of allotment holders answering &quot;Yes&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Is the annual rent which you pay for one 10-rod plot:—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Less than 5s.</td>
<td>2·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) 5s.–7s. ?</td>
<td>9·7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) 7s.–10s. ?</td>
<td>18·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) 10s.–15s. ?</td>
<td>30·1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) 15s.–£1 ?</td>
<td>16·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) £1–£2?</td>
<td>20·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Over £2?</td>
<td>3·1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100–0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you consider your present rent to be:—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Too much?</td>
<td>5·4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Too little?</td>
<td>11·1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) About right?</td>
<td>83·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100–0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If you do not consider your present rent to be &quot;about right&quot;, what would be your estimate of a fair rent for a 10-rod plot?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Less than 5s.</td>
<td>2·1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) 5s.–7s. ?</td>
<td>2·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) 7s.–10s. ?</td>
<td>15·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) 10s.–15s. ?</td>
<td>16·7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) 15s.–£1 ?</td>
<td>24·7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) £1–£2?</td>
<td>26·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Over £2?</td>
<td>10·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100–0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table XV

**Site amenities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>(a) Percentage of allotment holders answering “Yes”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you consider that your site has adequate amenities? ... ... ... ... ...</td>
<td>55·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If not, would you be prepared to pay an additional rent for:—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) A toolshed? ... ... ... ... ...</td>
<td>21·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) A communal hut? ... ... ... ... ...</td>
<td>13·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Toilet facilities? ... ... ... ... ...</td>
<td>18·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Better road access? ... ... ... ... ...</td>
<td>15·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Piped water? ... ... ... ... ...</td>
<td>26·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Better fencing and gates? ... ... ... ...</td>
<td>28·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) A greenhouse? ... ... ... ... ...</td>
<td>16·8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Range of payment specified by greatest number:

| (a) Toolshed                      | 3s.–5s. | 3s.–5s. | 3s.–5s. |
| (b) Communal hut                 | 1s.–2s. | 1s.–2s. | 1s.–2s. |
| (c) Toilet facilities            | 1s.–2s. | 1s.–2s. | 1s.–2s. |
| (d) Better roads                 | 1s.–2s. | 1s.–2s. | 1s.–2s. |
| (e) Piped water                  | 3s.–5s. | 3s.–5s. | 3s.–5s. |
| (f) Better fencing/gates         | 3s.–5s. | 3s.–5s. | 3s.–5s. |
| (g) Greenhouse                    | 3s.–5s. | 3s.–5s. | 3s.–5s. |

**NOTES:**

1. The figures shown as the answers to Question 2 represent the percentages of all allotment holders who completed the questionnaires. Since 55·2 per cent (A), 58·8 per cent (B) and 50·9 per cent (C) have expressed themselves to be satisfied with their amenities, the maximum percentage available to answer Question 2 is assumed to be 44·8 (A), 41·2 (B) and 49·1 (C) respectively for the three groups.

2. In view of the small number who would in fact be prepared to pay for each amenity, the analysis of Question 3 shows only the size of the additional payment specified by the greatest number from each group.

### Table XVI

**Classes of site**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentage of allotment holders answering “Yes”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Is the site on which your plot is situated:—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Statutory? ... ... ... ... ...</td>
<td>79·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Temporary? ... ... ... ... ...</td>
<td>14·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Private? ... ... ... ... ...</td>
<td>6·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If your site is private:—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Do you own your plot? ... ...</td>
<td>7·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Does every allotment holder on the site own his plot? ... ... ...</td>
<td>3·6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** The answers to these questions are completely at variance with the figures deduced and presented in the body of this report (see paragraph 344).
Table XVII
General questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>A Urban</th>
<th>B Rural</th>
<th>C N.A.G.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Are you a member of N.A.G.S.?</td>
<td>43·7</td>
<td>20·9</td>
<td>69·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you regularly read its monthly magazine Garden?</td>
<td>17·9</td>
<td>12·0</td>
<td>30·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do you feel that we need a new name for allotment gardens today?</td>
<td>15·1</td>
<td>9·7</td>
<td>16·1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES:
1. It will be recognised that every allotment holder in Group C ought to have answered "Yes" to Question 1.
2. Since the questionnaires were completed, the magazine Garden has ceased publication.

Table XVIII
Difficulties in cultivation and enjoyment of allotment gardens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulties encountered</th>
<th>A Urban</th>
<th>B Rural</th>
<th>C N.A.G.S.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Insecurity of tenure</td>
<td>16·3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. No toilet facilities</td>
<td>15·3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Vandalism or theft</td>
<td>17·9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. No communal hut or club building</td>
<td>1·6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0·6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Weeds from adjoining vacant plots</td>
<td>24·5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Lack of access road or car park</td>
<td>4·5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7·6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Poor soil or difficult drainage</td>
<td>5·1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. No individual shed</td>
<td>3·3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4·1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Inadequate water supply</td>
<td>8·6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Unable to keep livestock</td>
<td>0·7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. General neglect of the site or inadequate supervision</td>
<td>1·9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Restrictions on what you are allowed to grow</td>
<td>0·3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Each allotment holder was asked to arrange in order of importance the difficulties he found in successfully cultivating and enjoying his plot. Columns 1, 3 and 5 show the percentages which placed each stated difficulty first in Groups A, B and C respectively. Columns 2, 4 and 6 show the order of importance of each difficulty assessed in the manner described in the Note to Table IV(b).

410
APPENDIX VII

QUESTIONNAIRE ISSUED TO SECRETARIES OF ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATIONS AFFILIATED TO N.A.G.S.

Table I
Classes of allotment garden sites with associations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class or type of site</th>
<th>Percentage of completed questionnaires received from each class or type of site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Statutory ... ... ... ... ... ...</td>
<td>63·4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Temporary:—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Owned by local authority ...</td>
<td>15·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Rented by local authority ...</td>
<td>8·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Private:—</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Owned by private landlords</td>
<td>6·4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Owned by private industry ...</td>
<td>1·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Owned by the association ...</td>
<td>1·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Held on charitable trusts ...</td>
<td>0·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Owned by British Rail ...</td>
<td>0·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Owned by N.C.B. ... ... ...</td>
<td>0·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100·0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II
Age of sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of site</th>
<th>Percentage of sites (all classes) falling within each group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years ...</td>
<td>3·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–10 years ... ... ...</td>
<td>4·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–20 years ... ... ...</td>
<td>6·7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–30 years ... ... ...</td>
<td>18·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–40 years ... ... ...</td>
<td>14·4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40–50 years ... ... ...</td>
<td>26·7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–60 years ... ... ...</td>
<td>14·4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60 years ... ... ...</td>
<td>11·1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100·0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: As many as 14·4 per cent were unaware of the age of their sites.

411
Table III
Changes in the area of sites between various dates by classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage change in total area</th>
<th>1945-65</th>
<th>1961-5</th>
<th>From date of inception of site to 1965</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in area</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No change</td>
<td>61-1</td>
<td>58-8</td>
<td>75-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-50% decrease</td>
<td>35-6</td>
<td>30-4</td>
<td>8-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-70% decrease</td>
<td>3-3</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>8-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-80% decrease</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>10-8</td>
<td>8-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-90% decrease</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 90% decrease</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100-0  100-0  100-0  100-0  100-0  100-0  100-0  100-0  100-0  100-0  100-0  100-0

NOTE: As many as 31-3 per cent were unaware of the changes which had taken place in the area of their sites since 1961.
### Table IV


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No change</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–50% decrease</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–70% decrease</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70–80% decrease</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80–90% decrease</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 90% decrease</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td>NIL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** As many as 41.7 per cent did not know how many plots were vacant on their sites in 1961, while 22.7 per cent were unable to say how many plots their sites had contained at the same date.
### Table V

**Sizes of individual allotment gardens**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of sizes</th>
<th>Percentage of sites with 'standard' plots of each size</th>
<th>Percentage of plots of each size on each class of site and overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Statutory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 rods</td>
<td>1-0</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 rods</td>
<td>10-9</td>
<td>14-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 rods precisely</td>
<td>63-8</td>
<td>63-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-20 rods</td>
<td>19-2</td>
<td>16-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 20 rods</td>
<td>5-1</td>
<td>3-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table VI

**Sites leased to associations: comparison between rents collected from tenants and paid to the landowner**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rent per acre paid to the landowner</th>
<th>Percentage of associations paying such rents</th>
<th>Percentage of associations in each group collecting different rents (per acre) from the individual tenants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Less than £5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than £5</td>
<td>40-7</td>
<td>54-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£5-£10</td>
<td>51-9</td>
<td>71-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£10-£20</td>
<td>7-4</td>
<td>50-0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-0</td>
<td></td>
<td>100-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** The analysis in this Table covers twenty-seven sites. In general, the rents collected by the associations exceed those paid to the landowner by 10-15 per cent.

### Table VII

**Allotment holders occupying several plots, by class of site**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of plots</th>
<th>Percentage of tenants occupying each number of plots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statutory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>87-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>10-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>1-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than four</td>
<td>0-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-0</td>
<td>100-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table VIII

Restrictions on flowers and livestock

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amenity</th>
<th>Percentage of sites operating each degree of tolerance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prohibited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowers</td>
<td>3·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush fruits</td>
<td>5·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchard</td>
<td>52·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bees</td>
<td>52·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock</td>
<td>67·6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: On 26 per cent of the sites a complete ban on the keeping of livestock was imposed by the association.

### Table IX

Provision of site amenities

(a) Amenities installed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amenity</th>
<th>Percentage of sites possessing each amenity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Piped water (or equivalent)</td>
<td>79·2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sheds (individual or grouped)</td>
<td>10·9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Communal hut</td>
<td>20·1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Toilets (W.C. or chemical)</td>
<td>22·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Storage shed</td>
<td>49·5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Car parking space</td>
<td>15·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Secure gates and fencing</td>
<td>75·8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Good paths and roads</td>
<td>71·2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Method of installation by class of site

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of site</th>
<th>Average number of the above eight amenities possessed by each class</th>
<th>Number provided and installed by the landowner</th>
<th>Number provided and installed by the association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statutory</td>
<td>3·9</td>
<td>2·8</td>
<td>1·1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>3·1</td>
<td>1·8</td>
<td>1·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>2·4</td>
<td>0·5</td>
<td>1·9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

415

House of Commons Parliamentary Papers Online.
Copyright (c) 2006 ProQuest Information and Learning Company. All rights reserved.
### Table X
**Use of communal hut**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Percentage of associations with a communal hut which use it for each of the specified purposes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. For holding meetings</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. As an unlicensed club</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. As a licensed club</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. For talks on gardening</td>
<td>61.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. For flower shows</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:**
1. On one site in three, the hut is used for two of the purposes listed in the Table; on one site in seven it is used for three different purposes.
2. Of the associations without a hut, 47.5 per cent use some other building for holding meetings.

### Table XI
**Problems encountered on the site**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Percentage of associations which suffer from each problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Poor soil</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bad drainage</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Damage caused by:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Rabbits</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Pigeons</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Dogs</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Cattle</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Vandalism</td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Theft of crops</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Inadequate supervision by the landlord</td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Inadequate attention to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Repairs</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Pest and disease control</td>
<td>71.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Vacant plots</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table XII
**Vandalism and theft on sites**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage falling within each group</th>
<th>All classes of sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sites with two amenities or fewer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory sites</td>
<td>Temporary sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sites suffering from:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Vandalism and theft ...</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Vandalism only ...</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Theft only ...</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Neither vandalism nor theft ...</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table XIII

**Questions not analysed elsewhere in this Appendix**

| (a) Percentage of cases where the individual tenants have written agreements | 54.1 |
| (b) Percentage of associations claiming to have a waiting-list for plots on their sites | 35.5 |
| (c) Sizes of waiting lists expressed as percentages of existing tenants on each site: |  |
| (i) Over 50 per cent | 3.3 |
| (ii) 25-50 per cent | 10.0 |
| (iii) 10-25 per cent | 33.4 |
| (iv) Below 10 per cent | 53.3 |
| 100.0 |
| (d) Percentage of associations forbidding sale of produce | 25.8 |
| (e) Percentage of association secretaries who consider that sale should be freely permitted | 69.0 |
| (f) Percentage of associations which supplement their funds by activities such as bingo or football sweeps | 14.4 |
| (g) Percentage of associations operating schemes for the bulk purchase of garden requisites | 86.4 |

### Table XIV

**Surrender of plots**

**(a) Numbers giving up allotments: 1961–5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number leaving as percentage of allotment holders now in occupation</th>
<th>Percentage of sites within each group for 1961–5 inclusive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10%</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–25%</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–50%</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 50%</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**(b) Reasons for surrender of plots: 1961–5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for surrendering plot</th>
<th>Order of importance of each reason (in the opinion of each association) (1961–5)</th>
<th>Numbers leaving for each reason in 1965 expressed as percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old age</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved from district</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor soil or drainage</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weed invasion</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage by straying animals</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>NIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism or theft</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lost interest</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefers to buy fruit and vegetables</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecurity of tenure</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX VIII

QUESTIONNAIRE TO FLAT-DWELLERS
(CITY OF BIRMINGHAM)

Note: The basis of issue of this questionnaire was described in paragraphs 426–8 of this report. The overall response from private and council flats respectively is shown in Table I.

Table I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaires</th>
<th>Issued</th>
<th>Completed</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private flats</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council flats</td>
<td>7,610</td>
<td>1,001</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>8,442</td>
<td>1,296</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II

Sizes of households

(a) City's mean household size (1961 Census) ... ... ... ... ... 3.2
(b) Mean household size per flat ... ... ... ... ... 2.4
(c) Percentage of private flats housing only one person ... ... ... 39.5
(d) Mean number of children aged 15 years or under:
   (i) Private flats ... ... ... ... ... 0.1
   (ii) Council flats ... ... ... ... ... 0.6
(e) Percentage of flats housing no children aged 15 years or under:
   (i) Private flats ... ... ... ... ... 90.0
   (ii) Council flats ... ... ... ... ... 63.9

Table III

Garden needs of flat-dwellers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentage answering &quot;Yes&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private flats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you live in a flat wholly or mainly to be relieved of the burden of a garden? ... ... ... ... ... 33.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Did you have an allotment before moving to your present flat? ... ... ... ... ... 0.3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Have you an allotment today? ... ... ... ... ... 0.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If your answers to questions 2 and 3 are &quot;Yes&quot;, did you increase the size of your allotment when you moved to a flat? ... ... ... ... ... NIL</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do you feel the need of a piece of ground to cultivate? ... ... ... ... ... 15.3</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES:
1. About one in twenty-five of council flat-dwellers and one in thirty-two of all flat-dwellers who completed the questionnaire has an allotment: this compares with a figure of approximately one in forty for all households in the city.
2. The overall percentage of replies which expressed the need of a piece of ground to cultivate was 25.5. These questionnaires were then submitted separately to further analysis, the results of which are shown in Tables IV–IX inclusive.

418
Table IV
Flat-dwellers who would like a garden
(a) Type of flat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentages expressing need of a garden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High-rise flats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgbaston (private)</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nechells Green (council)</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Heath (council)</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Size of households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of flat</th>
<th>Mean household size of those expressing the need of a garden</th>
<th>Mean household size of those completing the questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High-rise (private and council)</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-rise (private and council)</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: A more detailed analysis (not reproduced in this Appendix) showed that the lack of a garden is felt more keenly by households consisting of three or more persons than those which contain two or less.

Table V
Reasons for not having an allotment (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentage selecting each reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you feel the need of a piece of ground to cultivate, why have you not taken an allotment? ---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Because no allotment site exists near enough? ...</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Because no vacant plots are available near enough? ...</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Because you cannot obtain a plot with sufficiently good soil? ...</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Because you think the layout or amenities inadequate on sites that are otherwise suitable?</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Because allotment gardening, as now practised, does not attract you?</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Those completing the questionnaire were allowed to select any or all of the reasons shown in the above Table. Since the first three of these reasons suggested that the flat-holder had already made enquiries about the possibility of taking an allotment, the answers were submitted to further analysis: the results are shown in Table VI.

Table VI
Reasons for not having an allotment (b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage falling within each group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private flats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Those selecting within reasons 1, 2 and 3 of Table V only ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Those selecting within reasons 4 and 5 of Table V only ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Those selecting reasons from both groups ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table VII

Degree of interest in ‘improved’ allotments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentages answering “Yes”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you be interested in taking an allotment garden if the difficulties enumerated (Table V) could all be overcome?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Among those who had expressed the need of a garden</td>
<td>60-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) As a percentage of those who completed the questionnaire</td>
<td>9-1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: The family size of the households answering “Yes” to this question is slightly higher than the average among those answering either “Yes” or “No”.

Table VIII

The ‘journey to dig’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentages falling within each group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How far would you be prepared to travel to an ‘improved’ allotment?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Less than ¼ mile</td>
<td>21-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) ¼-1 mile ...</td>
<td>11-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) 1-2 miles...</td>
<td>21-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) 2-5 miles...</td>
<td>28-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Over 5 miles</td>
<td>17-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES:
1. This Table relates only to those flat-dwellers who had answered “Yes” to Question (a) in Table VII.
2. The figures for suburban council high-rise flats, whose occupants have good allotment provision in their neighbourhoods, reflect the general attitude of allotment holders today. Those in central council flats, on the other hand, are fully aware that there are no allotment sites close at hand, and are prepared to travel further.
3. If the answer to this question were treated as a single group, the percentages prepared to travel each of the specified distances would be as follows:—
   - Up to half a mile       ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 20-2%
   - ¼-1 mile               ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 27-7%
   - 1-2 miles              ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 24-4%
   - 2-5 miles              ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 14-6%
   - Over 5 miles           ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 13-1%
Table IX

Cultivation of ‘improved’ allotment gardens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of crop</th>
<th>Percentage of flat-holders interested in acquiring an ‘improved’ allotment who would use part of it for each crop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flowers</td>
<td>84·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>82·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small tree or bush fruits</td>
<td>39·0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Those completing the questionnaire were asked to select any or all of the crops listed in Table IX.

Table X

Interest in ‘chalet gardens’ (see Chapter 14)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentage answering “Yes”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Would you like to rent a ‘chalet garden’?</td>
<td>16·3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. If you already have an allotment garden, would you like a ‘chalet garden’ in addition to or instead of your allotment?</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If you were offered a ‘chalet garden’, how large would you wish it to be?</td>
<td>31·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) 100 square yards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) 200 square yards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How far would you be prepared to travel to reach your ‘chalet garden’?</td>
<td>20·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(a) Not more than ½ mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) 1–2 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(c) 2–5 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(d) Over 5 miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTES:
1. Of the 44·4 per cent who answered “Yes” to Question 2, one in four would only be prepared to take a ‘chalet garden’ in addition to his allotment.

2. The answers to Question 4 indicate that, in general, tenants would be prepared to travel somewhat further to a chalet garden than to an ‘improved’ allotment (Table VIII).

Table XI

Land use of ‘chalet gardens’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentage selecting each feature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you would like to rent a ‘chalet garden’, which of the following features would you choose to incorporate into its design?:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) A lawn or ornamental paved area?</td>
<td>64·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) A summerhouse or small chalet?</td>
<td>55·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Flowerbeds?</td>
<td>87·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Ornamental shrubs?</td>
<td>45·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Small fruit trees or bushes?</td>
<td>55·0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Vegetable plots?</td>
<td>62·0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Those completing the questionnaire were invited to select any or all of the features listed in the above Table.
### Table XII

#### Household sizes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of flat</th>
<th>Mean household size of those completing questionnaire (Table IV(b))</th>
<th>Mean household size of those who would like a piece of ground to cultivate (Table IV(b))</th>
<th>Mean household size of those who would like an 'improved' allotment</th>
<th>Mean household size of those who would like a 'chalet garden'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High-rise...</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-rise...</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall ...</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table XIII

#### Summary table

(a) Preferences of those interested in obtaining a garden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preferences among those who “feel the need of a piece of ground to cultivate” for:</th>
<th>Private %</th>
<th>Council %</th>
<th>Overall %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) ‘Chalet garden’ only</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) ‘Improved’ allotment garden only</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Both ‘chalet garden’ and ‘improved’ allotment garden</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Neither</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Although 31.1 per cent (22.9 plus 8.2) of those who felt the need of a piece of ground to cultivate were not interested in acquiring a ‘chalet garden’, 9.3 per cent of those who did not feel this need would be interested in a chalet garden.

(b) Overall response of Birmingham’s flat-dwellers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Percentage answering “Yes”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(i) of total answering each question (maximum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Have you an allotment? ... ...</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you feel the need of a piece of ground to cultivate??</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Would you like an 'improved' allotment garden? ... ...</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Would you like to rent a 'chalet garden'? ... ...</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

422
APPENDIX IX

MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

MODEL RULES AS TO ALLOTMENT GARDENS

The making of Rules by a Council under section 28 of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908, is optional. Such Rules require to be confirmed by the Minister of Housing and Local Government before they can be of any force.

Any Council proposing to make Rules should submit a draft copy, in duplicate, to the Ministry; copies of the Model Rules should be used for this purpose. Where it is proposed to make alterations of any importance, it may save time and correspondence if the circumstances are explained when the draft is submitted.

NOTE: An allotment garden is defined in section 22 of the Allotments Act 1922 as “an allotment not exceeding forty poles in extent which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable or fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family”.

THE ALLOTMENTS ACTS 1908 TO 1950

RULES AS TO ALLOTMENT GARDENS

made by the 1
with respect to allotment gardens for the 2

INTERPRETATION OF TERMS

1. Throughout these Rules the expression “the Council” means the 1
and includes any committee of the Council or any allotment managers appointed by the Council under the Allotments Acts 1908 to 1950.

DEFINITION OF THE PERSONS ELIGIBLE TO BE TENANTS OF THE ALLOTMENT GARDENS

2. Any man or woman, who at the time of application to the Council for an allotment garden, is resident in the 2
shall be eligible to become a tenant of an allotment garden subject to the statutory provision that one person shall not hold allotments acquired under the above-mentioned Acts exceeding 5 acres.

1 Insert “Town Council for the Borough of ”, or “Urban District Council of ”.
2 Insert “Borough”, “District” or “Parish”.

423
DIVISION OF THE LAND INTO ALLOTMENT GARDENS

3. The Council, before giving notice of their intention to let any land for allotment gardens, shall divide the land, and shall cause a plan to be prepared showing each allotment garden, and distinguishing it by a separate number.

NOTICES TO BE GIVEN FOR THE LETTING OF THE ALLOTMENT GARDENS

4. The Council shall give public notice by bills or placards, posted in some conspicuous places in the or otherwise exhibited therein, setting forth the particulars as to any allotment gardens which they propose to let.

Such notice shall specify the allotment gardens to be let, the rent to be paid for the same, the name and address of the Clerk to the Council to whom applications for the hiring of an allotment garden are to be sent, and the last day for receiving applications.

If any special condition is to apply to the allotment gardens, or any of them, the notice shall specify such condition or state where copies of the Form of Agreement for letting of such allotment gardens may be seen.

If the tenant is to pay for tenant right or compensation for improvements, this fact and the amount, if then ascertained, shall be stated in the notice.

RULES AS TO THE LETTING OF THE ALLOTMENT GARDENS, AND FOR PREVENTING ANY UNDEW PREFERENCE IN THE LETTING THEREOF

5. The Council shall not let any allotment garden unless and until notice that they propose to let the same has been duly given in pursuance of the Rule in that behalf at least two weeks before the last day for receiving an application for such allotment garden.

Every application for an allotment garden shall be in the Form appended to these Rules, or to the like effect, and shall be sent or delivered to the Clerk to the Council, who shall enter particulars of the application in a register to be provided for the purpose.

In letting an allotment garden for which there are two or more applicants eligible to become tenants and likely to keep the allotment garden in a proper state of cultivation, preference shall be given to an applicant who does not hold an allotment garden or agricultural land (other than a garden of 20 poles or less attached to his residence) either from the Council or otherwise over an applicant who does hold such land, but, subject to such preference, the allotment garden shall be let to the applicant whose name appears first on the list in the Council's register. A quitting tenant of land shall for the purposes of this Rule be treated as not holding that land.

AGREEMENTS FOR LETTING ALLOTMENT GARDENS

6. An agreement to let an allotment garden to an applicant may be signed by the Clerk to the Council on behalf of the Council and may be in the Form set out in the Schedule to these Rules.

1Insert "Borough", "District", or "Parish"

424
7. The tenant of an allotment garden shall comply with the following conditions:

(1) He shall keep the allotment garden clean and in a good state of cultivation and fertility and in good condition.

(2) He shall not cause any nuisance or annoyance to the occupier of any other allotment garden, or obstruct any path set out by the Council for the use of the occupiers of the allotment gardens.

(3) He shall not underlet, assign, or part with the possession of the allotment garden or any part of it, without the written consent of the Council.

(4) He shall not, without the written consent of the Council, cut or prune any timber or other trees, or take, sell, or carry away any mineral, gravel, sand or clay.

(5) He shall keep every hedge that forms part of the allotment garden properly cut and trimmed, keep all ditches properly cleansed, and maintain and keep in repair any other fences and any gates on the allotment garden.

(6) He shall not, without the written consent of the Council, erect any building on the allotment garden, provided that consent shall not be refused under this sub-paragraph to the erection of any building reasonably necessary for the purpose of keeping hens or rabbits.

(7) He shall not use barbed wire for a fence adjoining any path set out by the Council for the use of the occupiers of the allotment gardens.

(8) He shall, as regards the allotment garden, observe and perform all conditions and covenants contained in the lease (if any) under which the Council hold the land.

(9) He shall observe and perform any other special condition which the Council consider necessary to preserve the allotment garden from deterioration, and of which notice to applicants for the allotment garden is given in accordance with these Rules, provided that no special condition made under this paragraph shall have the effect of prohibiting or restricting the keeping of hens or rabbits.

**Payment of Rent**

8. The rent of an allotment garden shall, unless otherwise agreed in writing, be paid half-yearly on the\(^1\) in each year.

**Power to inspect Allotment Gardens**

9. Any member or officer of the Council shall be entitled at any time when directed by the Council to enter and inspect an allotment garden.

**Termination of a Tenancy of an Allotment Garden**

10. The tenancy of an allotment garden shall, unless otherwise agreed in writing, terminate on the half-yearly rent day next after the death of the tenant, and shall

\(^1\) Insert dates.
also terminate whenever the tenancy or right of occupation of the Council terminates.

It may also be terminated by the Council by re-entry after one month’s notice:—

(1) if the rent is in arrear for not less than 40 days; or

(2) if the tenant is not duly observing the Rules affecting the allotment garden, or any other term or condition of his tenancy, or if the tenant becomes bankrupt or compounds with his creditors.

The tenancy may also be terminated by the Council or tenant by twelve months’ notice in writing expiring on 1

EXEMPTION OF CERTAIN LETTINGS FROM THESE RULES

11. These Rules shall not apply to any land let to an Association, or to any allotment garden which the Council, under special circumstances, to be recorded in their minutes, may exempt from these Rules, but shall apply, except as aforesaid, to an allotment garden though held under a tenancy made before these Rules come into operation, but not so as to affect any right to compensation for an improvement executed before these Rules come into operation.

SERVICE OF NOTICES

12. Any notice may be served on a tenant either personally or by leaving it at his last known place of abode, or by registered letter addressed to him there, or by fixing the same in some conspicuous manner on the allotment garden.

1 The actual date, which must be on or before the 6th April or on or after the 29th September should be inserted.
FORM OF APPLICATION FOR ALLOTMENT GARDENS

To the Clerk to the\textsuperscript{1} I, the undersigned, hereby make application for one (or No. ) of the allotment gardens provided by the Council at:\textemdash

1. Name

2. Residence

3. Age

4. How long resident in the\textsuperscript{2}

5. Whether holding any allotment garden or agricultural land (other than a garden of 20 poles or less attached to my residence) and if so:\textemdash

   (a) From whom

   (b) Extent of land so held

   (c) Whether quitting the land, and, if so, when

In the event of my application being granted, I agree when required by the Council, to sign an agreement for letting in accordance with the Rules, and to pay the stamp duty (if any) on such agreement\textsuperscript{*} and to pay for tenant right and compensation for improvements the sum stated in the Notice of Letting (or such sum as shall be found due to the outgoing tenant for such matters).

Signature

Date

\textsuperscript{*} Stamp duty will not be payable if the rent does not exceed 10s. per annum and no premium is paid.

\textsuperscript{1 Insert "Town Council for the Borough of \textquotedblright\textquotedblright, or "Urban District Council of \textquotedblright\textquotedblright.}

\textsuperscript{2 Insert "Borough", "District" or "Parish".}

427
SCHEDULE
FORM OF AGREEMENT FOR LETTING

Agreement made this 1 day of 196 between the
1 (hereinafter called the Council) of the one part, and
of (hereinafter called the tenant) of the other part,
whereby the Council agrees to let, and the tenant agrees to hire as a yearly tenant
from the day of 19 , the allotment garden(s)
numbered in the register of allotment gardens provided by the
Council and containing or thereabouts (subject to the exceptions and reservations contained in the lease under which the Council hold the land)
 at the yearly rent of payable half-yearly and at a proportionate
rent for any part of a year over which the tenancy may extend.

The tenancy is subject to the Allotment Garden Rules made from time to
time by the Council, and to the Allotments Acts 1908 to 1950.

Signed

Clerk to the Council.

Witness

Signed

Tenant.

Witness

(Any special conditions affecting the allotment garden are to be endorsed on the
agreement.)

* Where the yearly rent exceeds 25s. not more than one quarter’s rent shall be
required to be paid in advance.

1 Insert “Town Council for the Borough of “, or “Urban District Council of “.
2 Omit words in brackets if inapplicable.
APPENDIX X

THE IMPROVEMENT OF
ESTABLISHED LEISURE GARDEN SITES

A. Suggestions and guidelines for improvements

1. General

In the section of the report dealing with the landscaping and amenities of established leisure garden sites (paragraphs 693–8), reference was made to the inclusion in this Appendix of a series of guidelines for local authorities in the preparation of master plans for the improvement of such sites. Before discussing these in general terms, it is necessary to stress a number of points which have been mentioned briefly in the text of the report.

(a) The detailed treatment of each site should rest with a landscape architect.

(b) Normally, no distinction should be drawn in scope and standard of treatment between a site which will probably be devoted mainly to the cultivation of fruit and vegetables and one which seems to lend itself naturally to the chalet garden concept.

(c) In paragraph 759, we pointed to the inadvisability of selecting sites which are very small; where, nonetheless, a small site is selected, some of the features included in this Appendix might be considered unnecessary. In quality of layout and landscape, however, a small site should be a microcosm of those which are large enough to merit full treatment.

(d) Where a site abuts public open space, the availability of facilities such as toilets and car parks might obviate the need to construct similar features on the site itself. Care must be taken, however, to ensure that no gardener is required to walk an unreasonable distance to reach such facilities.

2. Design principles for the site as a whole

(a) The objective of every scheme of improvement should be to create an attractive environment appropriate to a recreational pursuit.

(b) Full use should be made of existing land form and features, such as changes of level, rock outcrops or old gravel pits, so long as they do not present a hazard to children or a litter menace. Such features, which can give individuality and create interest on a site, may be extremely difficult to re-create, once they have been lost.

(c) Consideration should be given to any drainage improvements which are needed, and the soil should be tested to ascertain whether any special additives are required.

(d) A careful study should be made of existing site vegetation in order that healthy plant material can be incorporated in the scheme. No healthy, mature trees should be felled unless there is considerable justification for doing so.

(e) The overall impression of the site should be one of an attractively landscaped area which incorporates pleasant walkways leading from the seclusion of the individual 'launds' (small grassy open spaces surrounded by plots—see section B of this Appendix) along an interesting route to the nucleus of the community centre.
(f) Some aspects of site design and plot layout may be suggested by existing earth forms or planting features, but where no such features exist these decisions will be more arbitrary. The design and character of the site as a whole will obviously be strongly related to the shape and disposition of both plots and surrounding open space. The unimaginative and traditional rectilinear layout of allotment sites should in future only be used sparingly and as a deliberate design theme—not, as so often in the past, simply because it is a convenient geometric way of dividing a site into individual plots. There is no valid reason why plots should be rectangular; equally effective layouts could be provided by employing hexagonal, octagonal or triangular units, the practical limitations on their shape being decreed only by the need to allow the gardener to grow a few row-vegetables and the desirability of avoiding awkward corners which might become unkempt.

(g) The relationship between the shape of each plot and the location of individual sheds, summerhouses or chalets should be carefully considered so that what might otherwise be a rash of individual buildings can be transformed into closely integrated and unobtrusive clusters by skilful siting and screening (see Figure 25).

(h) The improvement of an existing and well-tenanted site should be planned in such a way as to cause as little upheaval as possible to the tenants, who may in many cases have spent several years nursing their plots into good heart. It is quite possible to improve a rectilinear site out of all recognition by disturbing no more than 40–50 per cent of the tenants, and much of this disturbance need be of only a minor nature. The transfer of land from plot use to amenity use need only be of the order of 20 per cent of the whole (see Figures 24 and 25), in order to achieve a total provision of amenity space of not more than 30 per cent of the site area, and this loss may often be compensated by creating a number of smaller plots for those who find ten rods too much to manage.

(i) Where earth moving is desirable to adjust the levels on a site, great care should be taken to store the topsoil without excessive compaction. Mature or semi-mature trees which are to be incorporated into the planting scheme should be protected by sacking and fencing to avoid any accidental damage, and contractors should be instructed to maintain close and careful supervision during site works. It is also essential to select the trees which are to remain before any site work is commenced, so that they can be thoroughly protected before the contractors arrive on the site.

(j) On all but the smallest sites, consideration should be given to the possibility of creating distinctive groups of plots, each with an individual character. Such a pattern would encourage pride of neighbourhood and would allow each group to be represented on the central committee of the site association. This possibility is discussed further in Part B of this Appendix and is illustrated in Figure 25.

3. Circulation within the site

(a) Each site will require one or more roads suitable for vehicular traffic, and a series of walkways for the individual gardeners, their families and, ultimately, the general public. The roads must be sited as unobtrusively
as possible, and their routes should be selected with care in accordance with the principles which follow.

(b) The form of the road pattern will usually be determined by setting costs of construction against the benefit to tenants of bringing a road or car park within easy reach of their plots. A compromise would ideally combine reasonable constructional outlay with convenience for tenants who need to transport manure, fertiliser or other bulky loads from vehicle to plot. Since most associations will own wheelbarrows or small handcarts which could be used for the conveyance of bulky goods, a journey of up to 200 yards from plot to road would be generally acceptable.

(c) The opportunity of providing a peripheral road system, and the viability of such a system, will clearly depend upon the availability of access points from the surrounding road networks. It would clearly be more economical to construct two short access roads to penetrate from opposite sides of a square site than it would be to construct a peripheral road to serve both sides of the site from a single access point. Obviously, provision must be made for delivery and other vehicles to reach the community centre, and a hard-surfaced parking area, suitably screened, should adjoin the centre.

(d) Roads which are provided for vehicular use should be well surfaced, durable and attractive, and there should be no unsurfaced roads which deteriorate rapidly into muddy, rutted tracks giving a neglected appearance to the site. If resources are small, then it is preferable to increase the walking distance between plot and roadway or car park, so reducing the area of road surfacing required, rather than to provide a labyrinth of unsurfaced tracks which will quickly become rutted and eventually impassable. There is unlikely to be sufficient traffic congestion on any leisure garden site to necessitate a road width of more than 10 feet or 12 feet, but wider bays should be provided as passing places and as temporary parking areas for the delivery of heavy or bulky loads. It would probably be necessary to display notices asking tenants and visitors not to use these spaces as long-period parking areas.

(e) In general, all roadways should be surfaced with materials similar to those used for vehicular road surfacing in any other circumstances. A wide range of materials is available and the construction may be of flexible or rigid types, although the lighter flexible surfaces, such as gravel or shale, should only be used in exceptional circumstances or where there is little traffic on a small site. If resources are initially small, the cement stabilised soil method of base construction with a thin surface dressing would provide a satisfactory temporary surface where the soil character was suitable, and could easily be improved later by additional surface dressing. This method is very suitable for gravels and course sands, but is not easily applicable to clays.

(f) There are numerous conventional forms of flexible road structures which could be appropriately used on a leisure garden site, but no attempt will be made here to give other than general guidance since standard sources of reference are available covering aspects of cost, construction, appearance and maintenance. Such surfaces involve the binding or
coating of gravel or crushed stone with either tar or bitumen. Bitumen is dearer than tar and not so resistant to petrol drips, which would affect its use in car parking areas, but its life is generally longer. There is considerable variation in the qualities and attributes of the raw materials, but surface texture, colour, durability and safety factors are all affected by the aggregate used as well as by the coating or binder. Almost any colour is available and can be achieved by using coloured chippings, a coloured resinous binder, or a different type of bitumen, and the simplicity, and therefore cost, of the operation depends on the actual colour required. Some of the colours, such as the dense black of hot and cold asphalts and the reds and greens available in bituminous surfacings, can be rather harsh and should be carefully considered in relation to the landscaping of the site as a whole.

(g) If a concrete surface is selected, a considerable variety of permutations can be obtained between the colours of cement and of aggregates. Careful consideration should be given to the precise effect which is required when specifying concrete mixes. The final selection of materials should be the responsibility of the landscape architect, and costs of construction should be carefully considered in relation to other design elements and the visual character of the site.

(h) Kerb detail is of considerable significance visually, especially where the road is adjoined by informal grass verges and there is no paved footpath. Although the conventional style of concrete kerbing is a straightforward and tidy method of edging a road, its use can sometimes give an informal roadway a rather too formal appearance. The possibility of creating a far more natural, and seemingly ‘unfinished’, edge to the road (remembering the need for some form of mowing strip) should be considered.

(i) Considerations of expense may sometimes prevent the complete segregation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and on some sites it will be necessary to allow the walkways to cross the roads at certain well-defined points. Where this occurs, carefully designed pictorial warning notices should be provided on both routes. A temporary change to a rougher road surface would serve to warn the motorist of the crossing and could be achieved by introducing road bumps or a short section of material such as granite setts, which would also provide an easily recognisable visual warning to drivers. The pedestrian walkway could be narrowed down at the point where it crosses a roadway and, if necessary low bollards or some similar device could be employed to warn pedestrians of the possible hazard, without going to the lengths of providing gates or railings. In future there may be more visitors to leisure garden sites, including children, and it is sensible to ensure that good warning is given of any possible danger, and that adequate sight lines are allowed for at these junctions to help both pedestrian and motorist.

(j) Walkways should suggest a natural progression from the individual plot to the focal point or nucleus of the site, which in most cases will be the community centre. They should combine varying degrees of enclosure, alternating with sudden vistas, to create an interesting and meaningful spatial sequence. Where changes of level suggest the use of steps, the needs of wheelbarrow traffic must always be considered, and it may
be necessary to use a ramp instead of steps. This would probably depend on the availability of alternative routes.

(k) The walkways should normally be turfed, and of reasonable width. It is, however, inevitable that pedestrian and wheelbarrow traffic will wear through the turf unless surfaced paths are provided throughout the walkway system. Unit paving materials can generally be excluded since they would be too costly, and possibly also too formal in such a context, but a good range of colours and textures is available in shale and gravel, and would be most appropriate for such a use. Maintenance would be straightforward and would include the regular use of weed killer, a task which most associations could undertake with little difficulty.

(l) The number of car parking spaces required will undoubtedly increase steadily with rising car ownership and with changing clientele on sites. Provision should be made at the design stage to cope with demand which may arise in the future, but it is unlikely that a provision of one space per two or three plots would prove insufficient at present. An ultimate provision of one space for every one and a half plots, or even for every plot, may be required, and trends should be examined regularly to ensure that parking space remains adequate. Wherever choice exists car parks should be provided up slope of the plots they are to serve, so that heavy or awkward loads or tools can be taken downhill rather than uphill to the plot.

(m) By skilful planting, road alignment and grouping of plots it is possible to integrate roads into the site design in such a way that there is no conflict between pedestrians and vehicles, either physically or visually. It will usually be necessary to consider the screening of car parking areas and this can be done either by earth mounding or planting, or by a combination of both. A low earth bank, planted with quick-growing shrubs, can form an effective screen and can incorporate a number of slower-growing shrubs and trees which will succeed the original plant material.

1. The boundary of the site

(a) The three major factors affecting the choice of materials for the boundary fence are appearance, cost, and vulnerability to vandalism. The last of these is by far the most difficult to evaluate, and the extent to which aesthetic appeal should be sacrificed to security is debatable. A tall, seemingly unclimbable fence, or one which cannot be seen through, may simply present an irresistible challenge to the determined vandal, and neither type is calculated to appeal to the passer-by, who may be denied pleasant glimpses of the site. In the final analysis, the incidence of vandalism is probably affected more by the type of neighbourhood in which a site is situated than by any other factor, and authorities must be free to design their fences with this in mind. It is, however, important in all cases to ensure that the appearance of the fence does not detract from the quality of the urban environment.

(b) Stone and brick walls, which are admittedly very pleasing traditional materials, would be an unnecessarily expensive way of fencing a leisure garden site, and beyond the means of most local authorities. However, if any parts of a site are already surrounded by brick or stone walling this should be retained as being most useful for protection against
wind or frost and providing an excellent sun trap and horticultural aid if south facing. Concrete is a more reasonably priced solid wall material in its cheaper forms, but unfortunately these are often unattractive and so unsuitable for a leisure garden site.

(c) Wire-mesh fencing is widely used by local authorities and is also available in a P.V.C. covered form up to 12 feet or more high. It is not generally acceptable as a means of enclosing a leisure garden site but would serve a useful purpose where sites adjoin schools, playing fields or the tennis courts of a public park. There is no valid reason for using it in circumstances other than those mentioned above, as it is not a very attractive form of fencing and can look extremely unattractive when used to enclose a flat, newly laid out site (Plate 1).

(d) Lapped, close-boarded or woven wooden fences can be attractive and are commonly used as screens, but they need regular attention to ensure that the wood does not rot, particularly where it comes in contact with the ground. Mild steel or wrought-iron fencing would probably deter vandals, but is more expensive than other types. Where vandalism is unlikely to be a problem, a low knee rail or waist rail might be sufficient, provided that it could be made visually attractive in relation to the surrounding plant material.

(e) There are many ways in which plant material can be used either to form a barrier or to give a temporary or permanent ‘cosmetic’ treatment to a less attractive fencing material. Tall fences can be made vastly more attractive if climbing plants are encouraged to grow up them. By this method leisure gardeners might well find favour with nearby householders, especially if the plants selected included species such as *Vitis coignetiae*, with its magnificent autumn colour, or *Wisteria sinensis* and *Clematis montana* with their prolific flowers, rather than the old man’s beard and columbine which ‘decorate’ so many allotment sites today.

(f) The effective barrier hedging plants are well known, the commonest being the *Berberis* genus. *Berberis gagnepainii* forms a dense evergreen bush up to 4 feet high and is armed with strong spines which make it virtually impenetrable as a hedge. This is merely one of the many attractive shrubs recommended by horticulturists as suitable for hedges and barriers. It may be necessary to provide a temporary fence to protect both the site and the plants until the latter are established, but such boundaries formed of living plant material are far more attractive than most other types of fence could ever be and must surely be desirable and worthwhile to a community whose professed interest is the cultivation of plants. If there is no problem of vandalism, the purely ornamental shrubs can be used to provide attractive flowers, foliage, berries, autumn colour, or interest in winter (e.g. by the use of evergreens) or any other feature appropriate to their situation.

(g) Careful consideration should be given to the design and landscaping of each entrance to the site. In the past, on several high-standard sites, the solution to this problem has been to create an impressive entrance with formal pillars and gates (often made of wrought iron) and to approach the community centre along a straight roadway flanked with
formal planting. Unless the materials are of high quality, and the scale appropriate to such a grandiose conception, such attempts may fail dismally. In the main it would seem advisable to concentrate on creating an attractive, informal and intimate atmosphere by the use of carefully selected and well maintained plant material. There is unlimited scope for experimentation both in planting schemes and in the construction of roads, pathways and entrance gates, but the last-named must clearly accord with the type of boundary fence selected.

5. Plant material

(a) It has already been stressed that existing plant material on a site should be very carefully considered before any of it is removed, as the existing mature trees on a site may often be its most valuable asset. The primary purpose of planting on a leisure garden site is to improve the character of the communal areas of the site and to give a sense of vertical scale to a landscape which might otherwise often appear rather flat.

(b) It is reasonable to assume that in the future tenants will wish to incorporate ornamental or fruit trees, and a far greater variety of flowering plants and shrubs, than in the past. Some of the smaller trees such as birch, rowan, holly, hawthorn, weeping ash or weeping willow might provide a simple backdrop against which the contrast of the ornamental shrubs and flowering plants would be most effective. Where more space is available the 20 to 30-foot trees such as robinia, ash, sycamore, field maple or some of the conifers could be used, but the larger species with either spreading roots or dense crowns such as oak, beech, elm, poplar and the large conifers should be avoided since they cast considerable shadow and their root systems and falling leaves or needles adversely affect the soil.

(c) The planting of communal open spaces tends to make the fragmented appearance of plots less obvious by superimposing a bold planting scheme over the more intricate detail of plot boundaries. If this is associated (with the consent of the tenants) with a scheme for planting ornamental fruit trees within the plots (see Figure 25), the individual sheds, summerhouses or chalets could be so integrated into an overall planting scheme that the leisure garden site would become an asset to the urban landscape.

(d) There will generally be little need to provide major shelter belts on leisure garden sites, and, in any case, few sites will be large enough to incorporate such planting. It is possible, however, to provide numerous small breaks or filters which reduce wind penetration and speed on a very localised scale. As well as that afforded by the canopies of mature trees, protection is also needed at ground level; the inclusion of evergreen material will ensure protection all the year round.

(e) On some sites, it will undoubtedly seem desirable to screen unpleasant views. Where it is impossible to surround the offending object itself with plant material sufficient to obscure it completely, it will normally be possible to reduce its obtrusiveness by planting at strategic points within the site, thus reducing to a minimum the points from which it can be easily seen.
(f) Ground cover in most of the communal areas will be of turf which could
be rough mown and planted with bulbs where circumstances permit, and
mown regularly alongside the footpaths. The maintenance of such areas
would be straightforward and could be undertaken by the site asso-
ciation if it so wished. This would involve the purchase of mowing
equipment, as well as tools for clipping hedges, pruning and lopping
trees and other such routine tasks. Horticultural features, such as
rose-beds and other flower-beds, could be incorporated into the turfed
communal areas if considered appropriate by the association, which
would also need to undertake their maintenance, while the selection of
a planting scheme involving only a single species could give individuality
to the communal laund.

6. General amenities

(a) A piped water supply should be available within easy walking distance
and not more than 100 yards from any plot. Such a water point could
be situated centrally among a group of plots and could easily serve
twenty-five to thirty plots, although greater provision may be necessary
in many cases. The pipes and taps should be well lagged against frost and
might well have a protective surround of brickwork (Plate 2). The
heavy-duty polythene pipes and taps now available are more resistant
to frost.

(b) Where family gardening involves the bringing of children onto a large
site, a children's play area would be an asset. It has been suggested that
children can constitute a nuisance on sites, but if wives are to be encour-
eged to join their husbands there, the children will have to come too.
The sensible course is to provide a play area for the younger children,
thus minimising disturbance to gardeners and enabling the children to
visit the site, where they may develop a keen interest in gardening.
It may be unnecessary to provide such facilities on a site if they already
exist nearby in a park or recreational area. It is clearly in the interests
of the leisure gardening movement to encourage children to play a part
in the maintenance of the family plot, thereby not only implanting a love
of nature but also providing more leisure gardeners for the future.

(c) The provision of a supply of electricity to the community centre is
essential, and underground cables are preferable to unsightly overhead
lines. The extension of the supply to other parts of the site would facilitate
routine maintenance tasks, such as hedge trimming; on a small site the
supply to the community centre might suffice. The inclusion of well-
designed lamp standards along the main approach road and in the central
car park may also be necessary where meetings and social occasions are
held in the community centre after dark.

7. Structures

(a) All structures should conform to a carefully formulated site plan
devised in accordance with the views of the planning department
on their appearance and siting. This will necessitate the drawing up of a
master plan showing the proposed siting of chalets, summerhouses or
sheds, giving alternative positions wherever possible; this will simplify
the implementation of the master plan and give a clearer statement to the
prospective tenants.
(b) The community centre should be individually designed by a qualified architect or landscape architect to fulfil the requirements of the community it is to serve. Such a building is essential on all established leisure garden sites, except the very small ones, since it will be a vital contributory factor to the development of community spirit on the site. It should be pleasing in appearance and designed as a permanent structure to incorporate lecture room or assembly hall, kitchen, office, cloakroom and toilets, together with space for the storage and sale of provisions, seeds and garden requisites. The scale of these appointments depends entirely on the size and character of the site, but the community centre should be the focal point of the site, both physically and socially.

(c) The immediate exterior of the centre could be paved in a decorative manner to incorporate a patio for sitting out (if orientation were suitable), and provide a pleasantly landscaped outlook from the windows of the community centre. A model plot might also be situated nearby which would serve the dual purpose of instructing gardeners with plots on the site, as well as interesting casual visitors. This model plot might be cultivated jointly by experts in certain aspects of horticulture or prize winners in local competitions, each being responsible for a small display.

(d) Toilet provision is essential on all but the smallest sites, which might have to depend on facilities existing in a nearby park or elsewhere in the immediate neighbourhood. If many gardeners on a site would otherwise need to walk further than a quarter of a mile to reach a toilet, it might be necessary to provide more than one block of toilets on the site, with separate toilets for each sex. Wherever possible, it would seem sensible to combine these with the community centre, particularly if they could be approached externally as well as from inside the building. It would not be advisable to encourage gardeners to walk through the community centre on every occasion, as muddy boots would lead to cleaning problems, but this difficulty could be overcome either by designing the toilets to lead off an outer lobby or by providing both internal and external doors. It should also be possible for gardeners to use toilet facilities when the community centre is closed.

(e) Individual sheds and summerhouses need only be of modest size; they should never exceed 150 square feet in floor area and in the majority of cases will be much smaller. They might conveniently be combined with glazed greenhouse sections with advantage to both appearance and utility.

(f) There is no real advantage in grouping sheds in rows of twelve or twenty or more as this is both inconvenient to gardeners who must walk to and from them, and visually detrimental, since large groups (especially when of brick construction) seem to dominate the site (Plate 12). Individual sheds can be far more effectively sited within the plots where the judicious planting of screens, which need only comprise one fruit or ornamental tree per plot (see Figure 25), or more if desired by the individual, can incorporate the sheds into an integrated scheme which makes them relatively unobtrusive. Additional ornamental planting of shrubs and herbs within the plot could render such individual structures virtually unnoticeable within the major landscape.
(g) A number of specifications should be prepared by the local authority to allow a choice of about four to six different styles of chalet or summerhouse (ranging between about 50 and 150 square feet in floor area). Such a system should not rigidly exclude the possibility of a tenant creating his own design and submitting it for approval, but rather should provide a strong guide to the type of development which is to take place.

(h) Timber would seem to be the most appropriate material for shed or summerhouse construction since it is relatively inexpensive and blends well with a garden landscape. There are many commercial firms offering a wide range of competitive styles. It would be relatively simple for the enthusiast to construct his own chalet in timber according to approved plans and standards mentioned in (g) above. Leisure gardens authorities would be well advised to keep themselves constantly acquainted with commercial developments in the construction of small sheds and chalets, since it is possible that suitable structures of good design could be manufactured far more economically in the future from some form of synthetic material.

(i) The siting of summerhouses must be carefully considered with regard to orientation, so that a sunny patio area can be created. Simple screening may be necessary in some cases to give greater privacy where a summerhouse is close to a walkway or neighbouring chalet, although its initial siting will obviate this necessity in most cases.

(j) At the present time, the use of colour on such structures as community centres and sheds is often unfortunate. Shades of bottle-green are often chosen for exterior paintwork in the mistaken belief that they will harmonise with the surrounding foliage. This seldom proves effective, and a better shade, which is rarely used but which blends far more effectively with most plant material, is sage or olive-green.

8. The plot

(a) Rarely, if ever, has the method of demarcation of the boundaries of each plot in this country shown the initiative and imagination so often evident on the continent (Plate 27). A well-maintained hedge confers an 'established' appearance on a plot which is difficult to achieve with any other type of fencing material. The informal divide which is created by the meeting of two adjacent shrub or herbaceous borders also has much to commend it, for although it may diminish the tenants' sense of privacy, the visual compensations are considerable. There are numerous devices for creating low divides in the form of fences or plant material; even less obtrusive is the separation of plots by a number of stepping-stones which are also useful when the adjoining borders are tended (Plates 23, 25 and 26).

(b) The replacement of paths by hedges will necessitate the inclusion of the paths within the plot. There are numerous paving materials on the market including gravels or shales as well as unit forms ranging from concrete slabs to the more expensive stepping-stones, stone slabs, bricks and setts. The design of such features will be the concern of the individual, as will also the layout of the rest of the plot.
(c) Ingenuity and variation in design and layout of sites will increase the opportunity to vary plot size up to the maximum of 20 rods, although it is anticipated that relatively few will in fact be larger than 10 rods. The layout should incorporate a wide range of plot sizes so that provision can be made for old-age pensioners or disabled persons who can no longer cope with a 10-rod plot. Women and children who may not be able to spend the time or effort to cultivate more than 5 rods, may well be interested in 'Ladies' Plots' or 'Youth Plots'.

(d) A solid foundation should be provided for each chalet (concrete is probably the most suitable material) and this should be extended to form a small patio or sitting-out area.

(e) The leisure garden landscape would become vastly more attractive if the rigidity of row cultivation was relaxed, or if some attempt were made by gardeners to make row crops slightly less obtrusive. This could be done by the partial screening of vegetables by taller shrubs or flowers, or even by the incorporation of a row of flowering plants here and there among the vegetables. The growing of runner beans on circular groups of bean poles, rather than in straight rows, and the adoption of similar techniques depend on the ability of the individual gardener to see himself objectively and to understand the significance of improving the image he presents to the general public. He will no longer be able to cover his rhubarb with a rusty old enamel bucket or protect his cucumbers with an old window frame propped on a heap of bricks. He will no longer need to collect water from his shed roof in a motley assortment of old oil drums and barrels, and he will in future be expected to assemble his compost in a tidy enclosure at the rear of his plot. He must be encouraged to beautify his plot and to grow shrubs and flowers in an informal way so that the site becomes a thing of beauty, both to the gardener who has helped to create it, and to the passer-by who stops to admire it.

Attention to these features will ensure that leisure gardens of the future are interesting and attractive areas, whether seen from within the site or from outside, and the communities of gardeners found there will have a strong sense of pride in the worthwhile contribution that they make, both individually and collectively, to the urban landscape.
B. The improvement of an existing allotment garden site: design for leisure gardening

Figures 24 and 25 illustrate the manner in which an existing statutory site (Russell Road/Moor Green Farm) in Birmingham might be redesigned to accord with the leisure garden image. The present site of 42.8 acres containing 465 traditionally rectangular plots (not all of which are shown on Figure 24) has its major entrance on the east and a minor approach from the south-west. The eastern sector of the site, from the fine entrance gates to the small communal hut, occupies a plateau of around 450 feet, beyond which the ground slopes gently west to about 375 feet in the damp floor of the river Rea bordered on its eastern bank by undeveloped open space. To the north the site abuts Cannon Hill Park, to the south extend more allotment gardens, while to the east lies high-quality private housing. Most of the site is thus on a gentle westward-facing slope bounded by informal tree planting, with mature trees in Cannon Hill Park affording protection from cold north winds.

From the main entrance a broad concrete road runs to a point just beyond the communal hut, and unmade tracks give access to the markedly rectilinear grid of plots, which for the most part are devoted to vegetables, fruit and a few flowers, though a fair number lie vacant. As Figure 24 shows, there are numerous tenants’ sheds (whose construction often leaves much to be desired) as well as a large number of greenhouses. The communal hut is a small wooden structure with brick-built toilets nearby.

In preparing a design (Figure 25) for the gradual conversion of the existing allotment garden site into a leisure garden site with public walkways linking with the adjoining park, the intention for the purposes of this report was to present a range of possible treatments for different sectors of the site, each of which would have an individual character, rather than to apply a single comprehensive theme to the entire site. It was also assumed that even when the leisure garden image had taken a firm hold there would be some tenants who wished to continue to devote most of their plots to vegetables and fruit; provision was accordingly made for this, such plots being retained in certain areas with as little disturbance to the existing layout as possible. Elsewhere, however, where interesting landscape features and existing vacant plots gave scope for imaginative design, entirely new layouts were planned.

Four styles of treatment are incorporated in Figure 25:—

(1) The extreme south-western part of the site beyond the large new car park (CP) is devoted to formal plot layouts using variations of herring-bone patterns. Informality is, however, introduced by the inclusion of pleasant turfed walkways and by appropriate planting of trees and shrubs. This system also allows a formalised, yet interesting, grouping of summer-houses with effective screening by fruit and ornamental trees, while also permitting variety in the sizes and disposition of the conventionally shaped rectangular plots. Careful attention has also been paid to the treatment of vegetable plots which adjoin chalet gardens, particularly with regard to the disposition of structures; it is especially important to avoid a random stipple of sheds, which detracts from the appearance of so many sites today (Figure 24; Plate 11a).

(2) North of (1) lies an area of traditional rectilinear layout whose plots, which include both vegetable use and chalet garden use, face on to
grassy walkways. At one point the gently curving peripheral approach road passes through a cluster of gardens where it can be absorbed into the open space and tree planting scheme without being visually obtrusive.

(3) East and north of zones (1) and (2) one moves into an area of quite different character with four separate circular, or semi-circular, clusters of gardens (predominantly chalet gardens) each oriented towards a lawn, or central island of open space linked by walkways, which offer interesting through views. The tendency for each cluster to acquire its own personality can be further encouraged by giving it a distinctive name, by allowing it to elect one representative to the site association committee, and by the inclusion of distinctive species in the general planting programme for each cluster. The northernmost cluster is conveniently grouped around an existing sunken feature (an old gravel pit), on the sides of which are mature trees. A comparison of Figures 24 and 25 reveals that the southernmost nucleus linked to a broad glade has been created with relatively little disturbance to the former pattern of plots, and some of the original vegetable plots have now been integrated with the new chalet gardens. In such a way provision can be made for neat vegetable plots to develop naturally into chalet gardens if the tenants so wish.

(4) The eastern sector of the site shows the least alteration from the original layout, while at the same time indicating how a site can be made much more attractive with only a relatively minor upheaval of plots. The use of a derelict plot here and there for extending walkways and for planting can have a dramatic effect on the local landscape. Similarly, plots along the main roadway have been suitably screened, while some have been swung round end on to the road to afford greater privacy and variety. In the area south of the road the original sixty plots (Figure 24) have been reduced to fifty-three of varied size well provided with open space, walkways, car parking space (CP), an enlarged community centre, a children's play area (PI) and water points; a model plot (M) by the community centre has also been created to demonstrate new varieties of plants and new techniques, as well as to interest the general public.

The main approach road, flanked by grass verges and flower-beds, leads directly to the focal point of the site—the community centre with its two car parks nearby. Beyond that, vehicular circulation ceases and one can walk undisturbed along the grassy pathways; there is deliberately no link for vehicles with the peripheral approach road served by a separate set of car parks on the western flank of the site. Along that part of the site which adjoins Cannon Hill Park a broad turfed walkway has been introduced, partly to give access to the park but more particularly to ensure that the new leisure garden plots are beyond the range of root penetration from the tall trees bordering the park.

In its new form the site offers extensive and attractive views seen both from within and from without. Vehicular circulation has been effectively controlled; plots which are at present vacant have been used to introduce interesting features into the layout; variations have been made in the sizes of plots to cater for the special needs of individuals; similarly, the communal area has been considerably increased so that its ratio to the area allocated to plots is about 30:70. Careful consideration has also been given to the disposition, orientation and design of the new sheds and summerhouses, many of which have lawns or patios, while the
introduction of stepping-stones, small hedges and arrangements of flowers and shrubs instead of formal plot boundaries would provide vistas of breadth and interest. Finally, an imaginative planting programme using carefully selected species of trees and shrubs has further naturalised the leisure gardening landscape.

It is appreciated that this account is based on a single case, and that throughout the country great variations occur in the size, shape, landform and layout of sites. But there is no doubt that imaginative, viable schemes could be prepared by landscape architects for most of the sites that are earmarked for establishment, and it is hoped that the future will see a keen spirit of competition not only for the best designed site within a single town but also for the highest standard of design of sites between towns.
APPENDIX XI

SPECIAL TYPES OF COMMUNAL GARDENS

In the course of conducting a survey of the gardening needs of flat-dwellers in Birmingham (paragraphs 426–36 and Appendix VIII), and following discussions with planners and others, it seems that a need may exist for the provision of small communal gardens for the use of a more restricted clientele than the allotment gardener or leisure gardener. Brief reference to these needs was made in paragraph 685, and two kinds of communal garden are now described more fully:—

(1) The open spaces which surround blocks of flats may sometimes be left as two-dimensional expanses of green which often assume a threadbare appearance in the course of time. Within such areas special provision is frequently made for children’s play, but the recreational needs of older sections of the community are only too often ignored. Yet, our evidence shows that there must be a number of tenants in every block of flats who regret their lack of garden space, particularly if they have been compulsorily re-housed after living in a house with a garden; such persons must either apply for an allotment garden or, if they find the present allotment image too distasteful, must accept their deprivation. There must, we are certain, be many instances in which the land around blocks of flats could be imaginatively landscaped to incorporate little clusters of gardens, with small plots allocated to enthusiastic tenants (Figure 26). These gardens might take full advantage of existing landforms and changes of level which while partially screening such areas, would provide interesting and attractive views for passers-by as well as for the flat-dwellers themselves. Such a practice would enable the local authority to treat the area as a small park with little cost to itself; it would ensure that the area would acquire and retain an attractive appearance when viewed from ground-level or above, and it would satisfy the needs of older or partially disabled flat-dwellers who are unable to travel far.

Figure 26 gives an impression of such a garden area subdivided on a cartwheel plan into individual plots which radiate from a small shelter placed at the hub. The emphasis on such sites would be on beauty, on attractive displays of flowers and ornamental shrubs, on small water features, rock gardens, trim hedges and tiny lawns. Individual huts would not be permitted, but tenants would be allowed to use their gardens for the purpose of sitting out. A very high standard of maintenance would clearly be required on such sites so open to the public gaze, and it would be necessary for the local authority and the gardening community to define precisely what part of the site each was to maintain.

(2) The same principle might also be applied to serve the needs of the elderly or infirm occupying blocks of flats, maisonettes or old people’s homes where groups of raised flower-beds, designed so as to be conveniently tended without excessive stooping, could be incorporated as interesting features in small residential squares or enclosed areas. Such special gardens would not only be very close to the tenants’ homes but would also make the view from their windows more attractive and personal. As Figure 27 shows, the emphasis would be on herbaceous plants of

443
both annual and perennial types and on small ornamental or flowering shrubs. It would also be a challenge to the tenant to devise a planting programme which ensured a succession of interest and colour in flowers and foliage throughout the year. Nor do we doubt that local circumstances would suggest to enterprising authorities ways in which they might effect convenient compromises between the kinds of layout suggested in Figures 26 and 27.
SUBJECT INDEX

Figures refer to paragraphs of the report except where otherwise indicated.

ABBREVIATIONS—used in text, App. II, E

ACREAGES
— of allotments, 44; 46; 48; 124 et seq.; 297; App. V, Table XVIII
— of allotments per thousand population
  — in rural areas, 285 et seq.; Fig. 15; App. V, Tables VI, VII and XVIII
  — in urban areas, 206 et seq.; Figs 11 and 12; App. III, Tables VI and VII; App. IV,
    Table III
  — ‘target’ provision, 51; 81; 82; 206

ADMINISTRATION
— of allotments
  — criticisms of, 92; 233; 241; 242; 265; 277; 278; 281; 319; 440; 442 et seq.; 646
  — in rural areas, 281 et seq.; 299 et seq.; App. V, Tables XII and XVII
  — in urban areas, 229 et seq.; Table 18; App. III, Table XII

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS
— Allotments and, 54; 276; 293; 295; 296; 485; 498; 499; 595; Chapter 22, passim

AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSIONER, 184; 186; 187; 193

AGRICULTURAL LAND (UTILISATION) ACT, 1931, 46; 52

AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES and FOOD
— Minister of, 50; 86; 179; 576; 581
— Ministry of, 49; 109 et seq.; 180; 184; 201; 216; 217; 294; 453; 582; 600; 812

ALLOTMENT, ALLOTMENTS
— Acreages of, 44; 46; 48; 124 et seq.; 297; App. V, Table XVIII
— Administration of
  — criticism of, 92; 233; 241; 242; 265; 277; 278; 281; 319; 440; 442 et seq.; 646
  — in rural areas, 281 et seq.; 299 et seq.; App. V, Tables XII and XVII
  — in urban areas, 229 et seq.; Table 18; App. III, Table XII
— and agricultural holdings, 54; 276; 293; 295; 296; 485; 498; 499; 595; Chapter 22, passim
— and charity, 9; 10; 13; 42; 322 et seq.; 850 et seq.; 875 et seq.; 927
— and county councils, 57; 301; 735
— and enclosure, 3; 6 et seq.; 12; 37; 60; 323; 325
— Commercial, 283; 289 et seq.; 308; 311; 501; 502; 871 et seq.; Plate 20
— Cultivation of
  — Restrictions on, 249 et seq.; 414; 433; Table 36
  — Types of crops, 387 et seq.; Table 33
— Definition of, 1; 2; 21; 53; 108; 281
— Demand for
  — Decline in, 85; 86; 139; 206 et seq.; 266; 285 et seq.; 298; 642; 643; Fig. 15
  — Future, 543 et seq.
  — Levels of, 20; 25; 38; 42; 44; 90 et seq.
  — Meaning of, 32; 92
  — Views of N.A.G.S on, 540 et seq.
— Distribution of, 19; 171 et seq.; Figs. 9 and 10
— for the poor, 11; 12; 323; 875 et seq.
— Land for
  — Acquisition of, 59 et seq.; 184; Table 13; App. III, Table XVII; App. V, Table XVII
  — Improvement of, 59; 63
  — Requisitioned, 126 et seq.; 132; 133; Tables 6 and 9
  — Use of, 654; App. VI, Table XI
  — Value of, 89; 654

445
ALLOTMENT, ALLOTMENTS—continued

— Numbers of
  1873–1895, 33; 34; 124; Table 1
  1895–1914, 124; Fig. 4
  1914–1918, 39; 40; 125; 126; Fig. 4; Tables 3 and 5
  1918–1928, 127; 128; Fig. 4
  1929–1939, 44; 129 et seq.; Fig. 4
  1939–1945, 48; 132; 133; Fig. 4; Table 9
  1945–1950, 50; 134; Fig. 4
  1950 to date, 83; 135 et seq.; 641; Fig. 4; Table 10; App. III, Tables II and III;
    App. V, Tables II and III

— Origins of
  — in rural areas, 3 et seq.; 34
  — in urban areas, 22 et seq.; 40

— Private
  — Definition of, 61; 321
  — Extent of, 218; 220; 320; 340; Chapter 9, passim; App. III, Table IV; App. V,
    Table IV; App. VI, Table XVI

— Provision of
  — Compulsory, 29; 37; 51; 55; 56; 276; 543; 657; 737
  — Early arguments for, 18
  — Early opposition to, 15 et seq.
  — Present-day, 206 et seq.; 285 et seq.; Figs. 11, 12 and 15; App. III, Tables VI and VII;
    App. V, Tables VI, VII and XVIII
  — Target, 51; 81; 82; 206
  — Wartime, 39; 40; Table 3

— Rents of, 20; 23; 25; 41; 67; 269 et seq.; 316; 317; 400; 402; Fig. 17; App. III, Tables IX
  and XVII; App. V, Table IX; App. VI, Table XIV
  — Adequacy of, 272; 273; 401; 594; 657; App. VI, Table XIV

— Sizes of
  — in rural areas, 307; 308; 384; 385; Table 32; App. V, Tables V, XVII and XVIII
  — in the past, 16; 20; 35; 36; 38; 41; Table 2
  — in urban areas, 274 et seq.; 284; 385; 514; Table 32; App. III, Tables V and XVII

— Title of
  — Need for change in, 672; 673; App. VI, Table XVII

— Towns without, 173; 210

— Urban and rural
  — Differences between 41; 107; 158 et seq.; 202; 731 et seq.; Fig. 7
  — Waiting-lists for, 170; 513; 594; App. V, Table XVI; App. VII, Table XIII

See also ALLOTMENT GARDENS

ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATIONS, Chapter 12, passim; App. VII
  — Amenities on sites with, 520; 521; Table 41; App. VII, Tables IX and X
  — and home gardeners, 505; 507; 888
  — as agents of local authority, 240; 518; 520
  — Failings of, 511; 524; 525
  — Finances of, 519; 520; App. VII, Table XIII
  — Leases to, 236 et seq.; 516; 517; App. III, Table XVIII
  — on the continent, 631 et seq.
  — Popularity of sites with, 513
  — Promotion of, 64
  — Security of sites with, 512; App. VII, Table III
  — Sites owned by, 337; 855; 856
  — Social activities of, 509; 510

ALLOTMENT GARDENING
  — Corporate nature of, 416 et seq.; 653
  — Future of, 648; 649 et seq.

See also ALLOTMENT HOLDER

ALLOTMENT GARDENS
  — Amenities on, 261 et seq.; 714; Table 29; App. III, Table XVIII
  — and health, 369; 371 et seq.; App. VI, Table VII

446
ALLOCMENT GARDENS—continued

— and home gardens, 355 et seq.; 394; 655
— and recreation, 41; 370; 561 et seq.; 632 et seq.; Table 42; App. VI, Table VII
— Appearance of, 455 et seq.; 656
— Definitions of, 43; 53; 54; 254; 476
— Distance of travel to, 375 et seq.; 433; Figs 18 and 19; App. VI, Table XIII; App. VIII, Tables VIII and X
— Flowers and shrubs on, 250 et seq.; 305; 433; 446; 515; 678; Table 19; App. III, Table VIII; App. V, Table VIII; App. VI, Table XVIII; App. VII, Table VIII
— 'Image' of, 431; 432; 541; 656; 670; 671; Tables 38, 39
— in New Towns, 211; 212; 225; 227
— Leases of, to associations, 236 et seq.; 303; 516; 517; App. III, Table XVIII; App. VII, Table VI
— Livestock on, 47; 48; 51; 54; 71; 253 et seq.; 306; 398; 399; 414; 474 et seq.; 483 et seq.; 500; 515; Tables 20, 34 and 36; App. VI, Tables IX, XI & XVIII; App. VII, Table VIII
— 'Model' sites
— Authorities providing, 255; Table 21; App. III, Table XVII; App. V, Table XVII
— Visited by the committee, 265; 273; 464 et seq.
— Multiple holdings of, 295; 386; 514; App. VI, Table VIII; App. VII, Table VII
— Neglect of, by authorities, 413; 523; Table 36; App. VI, Table XVIII; App. VII, Table XI
— on the continent, 612; 613
— Penalties for damaging, 71
— Regional variations
— in rural areas, 282 et seq.; Figs. 13, 14, 15
— in urban areas, 205; Fig. 12; App. IV, Figs. 28, 29, 30
— Rents of, 67; 269 et seq.; 272; 273; 316; 317; 400 et seq.; 594; 657; Fig. 17; App. III, Tables IX and XVIII; App. V, Table IX; App. VI, Table XIV
— Security of tenure of, 405; 406; 546 et seq.; 556 et seq.; Table 36; App. VI, Table XVIII
— Sizes of, 276; 595; App. III, Table XVII; App. V, Table XVII; App. VI, Table XVII
— Tenancies of
— 'Model' rules for, 69; 182; 183; 244; App. IX
— Rules for, 69 et seq.; 243; 245; 304
— Written agreements for, 246 et seq.; 304 et seq.; App. VII, Table XIII
— Vacant plots, 50; 162 et seq.; 255; 256; 295; 296; 309; 311; 457; 513; Fig. 8; App. III, Tables XVII and XVIII; App. V, Tables XVII and XVIII; App. VII, Table IV
— Vandalism and theft on, 408; 409; 448; 522; 692; 711; Table 36; App. VI, Table XVIII;
— App. VII, Tables XI and XII
— Waiting-lists for, 170; 513; 594; App. V, Table XVI; App. VII, Table XIII
— Women as tenants of, 348; 381
— Zoning of, on town maps, 550
See also Allotments,
ALLOCMENT HOLDER, etc.

ALLOCMENT HOLDER, Chapter 10, passim
— Attitudes of mind, 105; 268; 273; 415 et seq.; 647
— Personal characteristics of, 348 et seq.
— Age, 351; Fig. 17; App. VI, Table II
— Income, 360; Fig. 17; App. VI, Table VI
— Mode of Life, 354; App. VI, Tables II, III
— Occupations, 352; 353; Fig. 17; App. VI, Table II
— Origins, 349; 350; App. VI, Tables II, V
— Reasons for taking allotment, 369 et seq.
— Use of home garden by, 355 et seq.; 394; App. VI, Table IV
— Time spent on allotment by, 380 et seq.; Table 31; App. VI, Table XII

ALLOCMENTS ACTS, Chapter 2, passim, Chapter 6, passim
— Criticism of, 79; 139; 277; 593; 644; 661 et seq.
— Definition of, 52
— Proposal for repeal of, 669
— 1887 Act, 29; 30
— 1922 Act, 43; 52; 181; 188; 239; 663
— 1925 Act, 44; 52; 188; 189 et seq.; 198; 558; 663; 722 et seq.
— 1930 Act, 51; 52; 80; 254; 273; 293; 305; 486; 594; 663; 664; 677; 679

447
ALLOTMENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE, 50; 51; 89; 135; 155; 198; 269; 392; 682; 740; 834

ALLOTMENTS AUTHORITIES
— Definition of, 55
— Failings of, 278; 279; 281; 646
— Lack of information from, 106
— Rural, Chapter 8, passim
— Urban, Chapter 7, passim
See also ADMINISTRATION
— Finance, etc.

ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE
— Appointment of, 65; 230; 300; App. III, Table XII
— Duties of, 65
— Exemption from obligation to appoint, 188
— Future of, 234; 235
— Status of, 230 et seq.; 265; 549

ALLOTMENTS SECTION, M.H.L.G.
— Duties of, Chapter 6, passim

AMENITIES
— Popularity of sites with, 263, Table 27
— Provision of,
  — in rural areas, 314; Table 29
  — in urban areas, 261 et seq.; App. III, Table XVIII
  — on sites with associations, 520; 521; Table 41; App. VII, Tables IX and X
  — Views of allotment holders on, 403; Table 35; App. VI, Table XV

AMSTERDAM
— Administration of allotments in, 634; Table 47
— Provision of allotments in, 612; 616; Table 45
— Provision of chalets in, 628; Table 46
— Rents of gardens in, 634; Table 47
— Size of plots in, 625
— Size of sites in, 624

BIRMINGHAM, 23; 25; 40; 49; 100; 103; 205; 225; 259; 271; 426 et seq.; 461; 469; 509; 519; 615; 637; 696; 919; Apps. VIII and X
— Russell Road site, 376; 637; 696; Figs. 18 and 19; App. X
— Uplands site, 469; 509; 519; Plate 10

BRISTOL, 208; 221; 241; 242; 259; 408; 459; 473; Table 17

BRITISH WATERWAYS, 334

CARDIFF, 103; 233; 241; 461; 470; 637; 713; Plates 11a, 11b, 12, 28,

CAR PARKS
— on allotment garden sites, 407; 450; Tables 24, 29, 36; App. III, Tables XIV, XV; App. V, Tables XIV, XV; App. VII, Table IX
— on leisure garden sites, Fig. 25; App. X

‘CHALET GARDENS’, Chapter 14, passim
— Administration of, 634; Table 47
— Associations on
  — Duties of, 631; 632
  — Letting of sites to, 631
  — Powers of, 631
— Definition of, 612

448
CHALET GARDENS—continued

—Demand for
— on the continent, 617
— in England and Wales, 434; 636; 637; 919; Table 39; App. VIII, Tables X, XI and XIII
— Development of, on continent, 612 et seq.
— Planning and layout of, 618 et seq.; Fig. 23; Plates 22–27
— Plots on, 625 et seq.
— Provision of
— on the continent, 616 et seq.; Table 45
— in England and Wales, 684; 692; 695; 696; 779; 780; 781; 795; Fig. 25; App. X
— Rents of
— on the continent, 634; Table 47
— in England and Wales, 824 et seq.; Table 48
— Security of tenure of, 621; 622
— Structures on
— Amenities in, 629
— Overnight stay in, 629; 630
— Purchase of, 628; Table 46
— Views of N.A.G.S. on, 605

CHALETs or SUMMERHOUSES
— on continental ‘chalet gardens’
— Amenities in, 629
— Overnight stay in, 629; 630
— Provision of, 628 et seq.; Plates 23, 25, 26
— Purchase of, 628; Table 46
— on leisure gardens, 697; 813; 814; App. X; Plates 28, 29

CHARITY
— and allotment provision, 9; 10; 13; 42; 322 et seq.; 850 et seq.; 875 et seq.; 927

CHARITY COMMISSION, 323 et seq.; 341; 597; 851; 852; 876; 877

‘COMMERCIAL’ ALLOTMENTS
— and agricultural holdings, 293; 873
— Appearance of, 501; 502; Plate 20
— Definition of, 289 et seq.; 311
— Location of, 283; 284; Fig. 14
— Origins of, 283
— Proposals for the future of, 871 et seq.
— Sizes of, 292; 308

‘COMMUNAL GARDENS’, 685; 763; Figs. 26 and 27; App. XI

COMMUNAL HUT
— Absence of, on allotment sites, 413; 509; Table 36; App. VI, Table XVIII
— Appearance of, 451; 469; Plates 10, 24

COMMUNITY SPIRIT
— Lack of, on allotment sites, 416 et seq.; 504; 509; 525; App. VI, Table VII

COMPENSATION
— Laws governing payment of, 76 et seq.
— Proposals for, in the future, 835 et seq.; 873
— Views of N.A.G.S. on, 599

‘CONTINENTAL’ ALLOTMENTS, Chapter 14, passim

COPENHAGEN
— Administration of allotments in, 634; Table 47
— Chalets in, 628; Table 46
— Provision of allotments in, 616; Table 45
— Rents of Allotments in, 634; Table 47
— Size of ‘chalet gardens’ in, 625
COUNTIES
— Statistical data for, App. III, Table XVIII; App. V, Table XVIII

COUNTY COUNCILS, 57; 301; 735

CULTIVATION
— Restrictions on flowers and shrubs, 249 et seq.; 414; 433; Table 36
— Types of, 387 et seq.; Table 33; App. VI, Table XI

'CY PRÈS'
— Doctrine of, 324; 851; 852

DAMAGE
— Penalties for causing,
  — to allotment, 71
  — to leisure garden, 712

DEFINITION
— of allotment, 1; 2; 21; 53; 108; 281
— of Allotment Garden, 43; 53; 54; 254; 276
— of Leisure Garden, 676 et seq.

DEMAND
— for allotments,
  — Early, 20; 25; 38; 42; 44
  — Fluctuations in, 85; 86; 90 et seq.; 139; 206 et seq.; 266; 285 et seq.; 298; 642; 643; Fig. 15
  — Future, 543 et seq.
  — Meaning of, 32; 92; 648
  — Views of N.A.G.S. on, 540 et seq.
  — for leisure gardens, 741; 743; 750

DENMARK
— Allotment position in, 612
— Origins of chalet gardens in, 613
— Site designs in, 624; Plate 27

See also COPENHAGEN

'DIG FOR BRITAIN' CAMPAIGN
— Background and purpose of, 575
— Efforts to obtain sponsorship for, 576; 581; 600.

'DIG FOR VICTORY' CAMPAIGN, 48; 132; 133; 368; 392; 545; Table 9

DISTANCE OF TRAVEL
— to allotment sites
  — in the past, 6; 32; 39
  — on the continent, 620
  — today, 375 et seq.; Figs. 18 and 19; App. VI, Table XIII
— to 'improved' sites, 433; App. VIII, Tables VIII and X
— to leisure gardens, 692

DISTRIBUTION
— of allotments
  — in the past, 19
  — today, 171 et seq.; Figs. 9 and 10

DRAINAGE
— of leisure garden sites, 692
— Problems caused by inadequate, 411; 442; 522; Table 36; App. VII, Table XI

ECONOMIC MOTIVE
— for allotment gardening, 361; 396; App. VI, Table VII

450
ECONOMIC NEED
— for allotments, 358 et seq.; 367
See also ALLOTMENTS and charity,
ALLOTMENTS and the poor, etc.

EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
— Department of, 564; 565; 600

ENCLOSURE AWARDS
— Allotments for general purposes under, 3
— Field gardens provided by, 8; 37; 60; 325
— Fuel allotments provided by, 6; 12
— 'Poor's' allotments provided by, 7; 8; 323

ENCLOSURE, PARLIAMENTARY
— Effects of, 4; 5; 6
— System of, 2; 3

EVIDENCE
— Difficulties of obtaining, 104 et seq.
— Methods of acquiring, 96 et seq.

FARMERS
— Vacant allotments let to, 296

FENCING AND GATES
— Appearance of, on allotment sites, 447 et seq.; Plate 4
— on leisure garden sites, App. X

FINANCE
— of allotment administration
  — accounting procedures, 68; 259; 311
  — borrowing powers, 60; 185 et seq.; 260; 313; Table 14
  — capital expenditure, 259; 261 et seq.; 314; Tables 23, 24, 25, 26 and 29
  — costs of administration, 259; Table 23
  — in rural areas, 310 et seq.; App. V, Tables X, XI, XIII, XIV and XV
  — in urban areas, 257 et seq.; App. III, Tables X, XI, XIII, XIV and XV
  — maintenance of sites, 259; 264 et seq.; Table 23
  — outgoings, 259; Table 23
  — proceeds of sale of land, 63
  — purchase of equipment, 67
  — rate expenditure, 67; 257; 258; 310; 315; Tables 22, 23
  — surpluses, disposal of, 68; 312
— of leisure gardens, Chapter 20, passim

See also RENTS,
RATES, etc.

FLAT-DWELLERS
— Allotment gardens and, App. VIII, Tables V, VI
— Communal gardens and, 685; 763; Figs. 26, 27; App. XI
— Interest in 'chalet gardens' among, 436; 636; App. VIII, Tables X, XI and XIII
— Interest in 'improved' allotments among, App. VIII, Tables VII, IX and XIII
— Needs of, for garden space, 426 et seq.; 685; App. VIII
— Sizes of households among, App. VIII, Tables II, IV and XII

FLOWERS AND SHRUBS
— Absence of, on allotment sites, 251; 252; 305; 388; 389; 391 et seq.; 455; Table 33
— Restrictions on cultivation of
  — Background to, 250 et seq.; 305; 433; 515; Table 19; App. III, Table VIII; App. V, Table VIII; App. VI, Table XVIII; App. VII, Table VIII
  — Problems caused by, 446; Plates 1, 3, 5, 9, 11a, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21
  — Proposals for removal of, 678

'GARDEN' MAGAZINE, 603; 632; 637; App. VI, Table XVII

451
GARDENING
— Importance of, as a recreation, 652

GERMANY
— Origins of 'chalet gardens' in, 613
See also HAMBURG

GOVERNMENT GRANTS
— for allotments,
  — Alternative purposes of, 566; 567
  — paid through N.C.D.F.P., 586 et seq.; Table 44
  — Recent applications for, 564 et seq.
  — Views on arguments for, 568; 844
— for leisure gardens
  — Proposals for, 845; 846; 903; 904

GREENHOUSES
— on allotment gardens
  — Appearance of, 462; 466; 468; Plates 7, 8 and 9
  — Prevalence of, Table 33
  — Rents of, 273; Table 35

GRIMSBY, 229; 233; 265; 273; 466; 468; 810; Table 28; Plate 9

GUILDFORD, 240

*GUINEA GARDENS*, 23; 25; 271; 615; 919; Fig. 2

HAMBURG
— Allotment Association of, 632
— Allotments in
  — Administration of, 634; Table 47
  — Chalets on, 628; Table 46; Plate 26
  — Distance of travel to, 620
  — Numbers of, 616; Table 45
  — Rents of, 634; Table 47
  — Sizes of, 625
  — Types of, 612
— Allotment sites in
  — Replacement of temporary, 622
  — Sizes of, 624

HEALTH
— and allotment gardening, 369; 371 et seq.; 395; App. VI, Table VII
See also RETIREMENT

HOLLAND
— Allotment provision in, 612 et seq.
See also AMSTERDAM

ROTTERDAM

HOME GARDENS
— and allotment gardens, 355 et seq.; 394; 655

HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
— Minister of
  — Attitude of, 600; 645; 682; 740
  — Default powers of, 58; 181; 735
  — Duties of, 62; 66; 69; 179 et seq.; 585; 600
  — Proposals for future responsibilities of, 688; 689; 709; 710; 751; 768; 772; 798;
    846; Chapter 24, passim

*IMAGE*
— of allotment gardens, 89; 251; 318; 431; 446; 455; 462; 463; 483; 502; 541; 656; 670;
  Tables 38, 39; Plates 1, 3, 17, 21
— proposals for improving, of allotments, 432, 656, 670; 671; Chapter 17, passim, Table 39

452
IRELAND
— Allotments in, 639

LAND
— for allotments
  — Acquisition of, 59 et seq.; 184; Table 13; App. III, Table XVII; App. V, Table XVII
  — Improvement of, 59; 63
  — Requisitioned, 126 et seq.; 132; 133; Tables 6 and 9
  — Use of, 654; App. VI, Table XI
  — Value of, 89; 654
— for leisure gardens, 802 et seq.
— used for allotments
  — alienation of, 62; 63; 189 et seq.; 722 et seq.; Table 15
  — Subsequent uses of, 221; Tables 16, 17

LANDSCAPING
— of leisure gardens, 695; 769; 770; 810; 825; Figs. 24, 25; App. X

LAND SETTLEMENT ASSOCIATION LTD., 46; 47; 97; 487 et seq.; 865

LAND SETTLEMENT (FACILITIES) ACT, 1919, 42; 52; 189 et seq.; 678

LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
— Minister of, 179; 585

LEASES
— of land for leisure gardens, 729; 765; 853; 856
— of sites to associations, 237 et seq.; 303; 516; 517; App. III, Table XVIII; App. VII, Table VI

LEGISLATION
— Abolition of, considered, 667; 668; 927
— Existing, Chapter 2, passim
— Proposals for new, 666; 669

LEISURE GARDENS
— Acquisition of land for, 763; 801; 802
— Administration of, 773 et seq.
— and ‘chalet gardens’, 684; 779; 781
— and planning, 687; 688
— Associations on
  — Admission of home gardeners to, 888
  — Duties of, 700; 702; 704; 705; 709; 787; 883 et seq.
  — Leasing of sites to, 703; 827; 828
  — Need for, 699; 701; 705
— Authorities, 731 et seq.; 765
— Communal areas on, 695; App. X
— Community spirit on, 886; 887
— Closure of, 791 et seq.
— Definition of, 676 et seq.
— Disposal of, 801; 802
— ‘Established’, 729; 756 et seq.
— Finance of, Chapter 20, passim
  — Borrowing powers, 815 et seq.
  — Government grants, 844; 845
  — Proceeds of sale, 804 et seq.
  — Rating, 834
  — Repairs and maintenance, 820 et seq.
— from private allotments, Chapter 21, passim
— Multiple holdings of, 867 et seq.
— National association for, 892 et seq.
— Subscriptions to, 897 et seq.

453
LEISURE GARDENS—continued
— 'Non-established', 729; 760 et seq.
— Preparation of, 693 et seq.; 769 et seq.; App. X
— Provision of
  — Compulsory, 737 et seq.
  — Exemption from, 751; 752; 767
  — Voluntary, 733; 750
— Provision of amenities on, 697; 698; 706; 708; 810 et seq.; App. X
— Registration of, 768
— Rents of
  — Additional, 825; Tables 48, 49
  — Basic, 822 et seq.; 869; Tables 48, 49
  — Method of payment, 789; 790
  — Reductions in, 829 et seq.; Table 49
— Security of tenure and, 716 et seq.; 771; 772
— Siting of, 690 et seq.
— Sizes of, 695
— Sponsorship of, 927
— Stock keeping on, 679; 681
— Tenancies of, 778 et seq.
— Tenants of,
  — Compensation to, 835 et seq.
  — Retired, 711; 885
  — Rules for, 706 et seq.; 782 et seq.; 835 et seq.
— Title of, 672 et seq.
— Town and county associations for, 889 et seq.
  — Subscriptions to, 897 et seq.

LEISURE GARDENS ACT
— Proposals for, 675

LEISURE GARDENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
— Appointment of, 753
— Constitution of, 754
— Duties of, 754 et seq.; 791 et seq.

LEISURE GARDEN SITES
— Closure of, 791 et seq.
— Expansion of, 799
— Preparation of, 693 et seq.; 769 et seq.; App. X
— Siting of, 690 et seq.
— Types of, 684 et seq.; Figs. 23, 25

LEISURE GARDENS MANAGER
— Appointment of, 775
— Duties of, 775; 780; 787; 883

LICENCES TO CULTIVATE, 75; 247

LINCOLNSHIRE, 30; 32; 282; 283; 284; 285; 292; 294

LIVESTOCK
— and allotment gardens, 47; 51; 253 et seq.; 306; 398; 399; 414; 474 et seq.; 483 et seq.;
  500; 515; Tables 20, 34 and 36; Fig. 21; Plates 15, 16 and 17; App. III, Table VIII;
  App. V, Table VIII; App. VI, Tables IX, XI and XVIII; App. VII, Table VIII
  — Bees, 477; Table 34; App. III, Table VIII; App. V, Table VIII; App. VI, Table IX
  — Hens (Poultry), 48; 54; 71; 306; 483 et seq.; Table 34; Plate 17; App. III, Table
    VIII; App. V, Table VIII; App. VI, Table IX
  — Pigeons, 478 et seq.; Table 34; Fig. 21; Plates 15 and 16; App. III, Table VIII;
    App. V, Table VIII; App. VI, Table IX
  — Figs, 48; 54; 306; 483 et seq.; Table 34; App. III, Table VIII; App. V, Table VIII;
    App. VI, Table IX
  — Rabbits, 48; 54; 71; 306; 483 et seq.; Table 34; App. III, Table VIII; App. V, Table
    VIII

454
LIVESTOCK—continued
— and leisure gardens, 679; 861; 862
See also LIVESTOCK SITES
‘Stock’ Allotments, etc.

LIVESTOCK SITES
— Powers to establish, proposals for, 863; 864
— Rules for creation of, 865

Malmö
— Allotments in
  — Administration of, 634; Table 47
  — Chalets on, 628; Table 46
  — Numbers of, 616; Table 45
  — Rents of, 634; Table 47
  — Sizes of, 625
  — Types of, 612

MANAGEMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
— Committee on, 188; 234; 601

MANAGER
— Appointment of, for allotments, 64; 459

‘model’ allotments
— Authorities providing, 255; Table 21; App. III, Table XVII; App. V, Table XVII
— visited by the committee, 265; 273; 464 et seq.; Plates 8, 9, 12, 30

MULTIPLE HOLDINGS, 295; 386; 514; App. VI, Table VIII; App. VII, Table VII

National Allotments & Gardens Society Ltd., Chapter 13, passim; 45; 48; 50;
97; 103; 232; 234; 247; 252; 269; 277; 346; 367; 393; 405; 453; 505; 506; 507; 509; 510; 513;
517; 519; 619; 621; 637; 641; 644; 662; 672; 677; 687; 718; 726; 738; 743; 750; 782; 811;
892 et seq.; 922
— Annual conference of, 103; 606 et seq.
— as member of International League, 605
— compared with Hamburg Association, 632
— Evidence given by, 540 et seq.
— Finances of, 532 et seq.; 902 et seq.
— Grants to, 586 et seq.; 903; 904
— Importance of, 530
— Membership of, 528; 529; App. VI, Table XVII
— Need for reorganisation of, 608 et seq.; 893 et seq.
— Origins of, 526; 527
— Publicity for, 602

National Association of Parish Councils, 296; 306; 312; 453

National Coal Board
— Allotments provided by, 330 et seq.

National Council for Domestic Food Production, 86; 584 et seq.
(now for Recreational Gardening and Livestock Keeping)
— Grants received by, 586; 587; Table 44
— Proposals for abolition of, 893

Neglect
— of allotment sites
  — Problems caused by, 413; 523; Table 36; App. VI, Table XVIII; App. VII, Table XI

New towns
— Provision of allotments in, 211; 212; 225; 227
— Provision of leisure gardens in, 731
NOTTINGHAM, 24; 141; 151; 208; 550

NUMBERS
— of allotments
  — 1873 to 1895, 33; 34; 124; Table 1
  — 1895 to 1914, 124; Fig. 4
  — 1914 to 1918, 39; 40; 125; 126; Tables 3 and 5; Fig. 4
  — 1918 to 1928, 127; 128; Fig. 4
  — 1928 to 1939, 44; 129 et seq.; Fig. 4
  — 1939 to 1945, 48; 132; 133; Table 9; Fig. 4
  — 1945 to 1950, 50; 134; Fig. 4
  — 1950 to date, 83; 135 et seq.; 641; Table 10; Fig. 4; App. III, Tables II, III; App. V,
    Tables II, III

OLD-AGE PENSIONERS
— Reductions in rent for
  — allotments, 273; App. III, Table IX; App. V, Table IX
  — leisure gardens, 829

ORIGINS
— of allotments
  — in rural areas, 3 et seq.; 34
  — in urban areas, 22 et seq.; 40

PARLIAMENT
— Annual report to, 66; 197; 915

PERENNIAL CROPS
— Restrictions on cultivation of, 78; 249; 840

PESTS AND DISEASE
— on allotment gardens, 459; 523
— on leisure gardens, 708; 714

PLANNING
— and allotments, 44; 50; 87; 88; 198 et seq.; 225 et seq.; 266; 267; 299; 546 et seq.; 596;
  658; 682; 740
— and leisure gardens, 684 et seq.; 721; 761; 789
— on the continent, 616 et seq.; Table 45

POOR LAWS
— Allotments provided under
  — History of, 11; 12; 323
  — Proposals for the future of, 875 et seq.

PRIVATE
— allotments
  — and leisure gardens, 730; 763; Chapter 21, passim
  — Definitions of, 61; 321
  — Numbers of, 218; 220; 320; 340; Chapter 9, passim; App. III, Table IV; App. V,
    Table IV; App. VI, Table XVI
  — owned by the allotment holders, 337; 855
  — provided by landowners, 26; 27; 297

PROBLEMS
— facing allotment holders, 404 et seq.; Table 36; App. VI, Table XVIII; App. VII, Table XI

See also SECURITY OF TENURE,
VANDALISM
WEEDS, etc.

PRODUCE
— from allotment gardens
  — in local shows, 369; 388; 390; App. VI, Tables VII and X

456
PRODUCE—continued
— from allotment gardens—continued
  — Sale of, 365; 366; 515; 595; 680; App. VI, Table VII; App. VII, Table XIII
  — Value of, to allotment holder, 49; 363; 366; App. VI, Table VI
  — Value of, to the nation, 570 et seq.; 577 et seq.; Table 43

PROVISION
— of allotments
  — Compulsory, 29; 37; 51; 55; 56; 276; 543; 657; 737
  — Current arguments for and against, Chapter 16, passim
  — Early arguments for, 18
  — Early opposition to, 15 et seq.
  — in rural areas, 285 et seq.; Fig. 15; App. V, Tables VI, VII and XVIII
  — in urban areas, 206 et seq.; Figs. 11, 12; App. III, Tables VI and VII
  — Target for, 51; 81; 82; 206
  — War-time, 39; 40; 48; 49; 126; 132; Tables 3, 5 and 9

QUESTIONNAIRES
— Difficulties in analysing, 104
— Issue of, 98 et seq.
  — to allotment holders
    — Analysis of, 348 et seq.; App. VI
    — Basis of issue of, App. VI
    — Response to, 344 et seq.
  — to association secretaries
    — Analysis of, 507 et seq.; App. VII
    — Response to, 505
  — to Birmingham flat-dwellers
    — Analysis of, 426 et seq.; App. VIII
  — to rural authorities
    — Analysis of, 281 et seq.; App. V
    — Response to, 280
  — to urban authorities
    — Analysis of, 205 et seq.; App. III
    — Computer analysis of, App. IV
    — Correlations derived from, App. IV, Table III
    — Regional variations shown by, Figs. 28, 29, 30
    — Response to, 203; 204

RAILWAY ALLOTMENTS
— Administration of, 329
— Amenities on, 329
— Decline in numbers of, 328
— Origins of, 39; 327

RECOMMENDATIONS, 660; 669; 675; 681; 689; 692; 698; 705; 708; 710; 752; 768; 777;
  780; 781; 788; 790; 798; 803; 807; 819; 834; 843; 846; 853; 858; 860; 866; 870; 874; 878;
  904; 906; 917

RECREATION
— of allotment gardening, 41; 370; 560 et seq.; 652 et seq.; App. VI, Table VII
— Government assistance to, 560 et seq.; 844 et seq.
— Use of land for, 561 et seq.; 654; 655; Table 42

REGIONAL VARIATIONS
— in rural areas, 282 et seq.; Figs. 13, 14, 15
— in urban areas, 205, Figs. 12, 28, 29, 30; App. IV

RENTS
— of allotments
  — Adequacy of, 272; 273; 401; 594; 657; App. VI, Table XIV
  — in rural areas, 316; 317; 402; App. V, Table IX; App. VI, Table XIV
  — in the past, 20; 23; 25; 41
  — in urban areas, 67; 269 et seq.; 400; Fig. 17; App. III, Tables IX and XVII; App.
    VI, Table XIV
RENTS—continued
—of allotments—continued
— on the continent, 634; Table 47
— of leisure gardens, 822 et seq.; Tables 48 and 49

REQUISITIONED LAND
— Allotments on, 39; 48; 50; 75; 126 et seq.; Table 6

RETIEMENT
— Benefits of allotments in, 353; 372; 373; 652; 654

ROADS
— on allotment sites, 407; 449; Table 36; App. VI, Table XVIII
— on leisure garden sites, App. X

ROD
— Meaning of, 108; Fig 20

ROTTERDAM
— Administration of allotments in, 634; Table 47
— Provision of allotments in, 612; 616; Table 45
— Provision of chalets in, 628; Table 46
— Provision of children's gardens, in, 634
— Rents of gardens in, 634; Table 47

RURAL AND URBAN ALLOTMENTS
— Differences between, 41; 107; 158 et seq.; 202; 731 et seq.; Fig. 7

SCOTLAND
— Allotments in, 638

SECURITY OF TENURE
— of allotment gardens
— considered, 718 et seq.
— Lack of, 92; 157; 198 et seq.; 340; 405; 406; 512; Table 36; App. VI, Table XVIII
— Statutory provisions for, 62; 189 et seq.; Table 15
— Views of N.A.G.S. on, 546 et seq.; 556 et seq.
— of leisure gardens, 692; 715; 716 et seq.
— on the continent, 621; 622

SITES
— Ages of, App. III, Table XVIII; App. VII, Table II
— Character of, Chapter II, passim; Plates 1–17
— Desirable features of, 438
— Location of, 439 et seq.; 445
— 'Made-up', 444; 692
— 'Model', 464 et seq.; Plates 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13
See also LEISURE GARDENS,
LIVESTOCK,
PLANNING, etc.

SIZE
— of allotment gardens, 274 et seq.; 307; 308; 384; 385; 514; 595; Table 32; App. III, Table XVII; App. V, Table XVII; App. VI, Table VIII
— of allotment sites, 274; 275; App. VII, Tables III and V
— of early allotments, 16; 20; 35; 36; 38; 41; Table 2

SMALL HOLDINGS, 28; 31; 33

SMALL HOLDINGS AND ALLOTMENTS ACT, 1908, 37; 52; 182; 184 et seq.; 197; 323; 324; 663; 664; 673; 678; 743

SOIL
— Quality of,
— on allotments, 411; 443; 522; Table 36; App. VI, Table XVIII; App. VII, Table XI
— on leisure gardens, 692

458
SOUTHAMPTON, 25; 205; 208; 338

STATISTICS (OFFICIAL)
- Analysis of, Chapter 5, passim
- Irregularities in, 110 et seq.; Table 4

'STATUTORY' ALLOTMENTS
- and security of tenure, 44; 62; 189 et seq.; 224; 404; 405; 406; 548; 553 et seq.; 722 et seq.; Table 36
  — Definition of, 61; 108; 141; 324
  — Disposal and alienation of, 44; 62; 189 et seq.; 682; Table 15
  — Numbers and acreages of, 142 et seq.; 215 et seq.; 223; 298; Tables 11 and 12; Fig. 5;
    App. III, Tables IV and XVIII; App. V, Table IV; App. VI, Table XVI

'STOCK' ALLOTMENTS, 47; 487 et seq.; Table 40; Fig. 22; Plates 18 and 19

STORESHEDS
- Appearance and management of, 451

STUDENTS' INVESTIGATIONS
- Theses prepared by, 101; 232; 242; 273; 422; 425; 455; 484; App. IID

SUBSIDIES
- for fertilisers, 598
- for water provision, 598

SURRENDER OF PLOTS
- Reasons for, 425; Table 37; App. VII, Table XIV

SWEDEN
- Allotment provision in, 616, 625, 628
See also Malmö

'TEMPORARY' ALLOTMENTS
- Definition of, 61
- Numbers and acreages of, 152 et seq.; Fig. 6; App. III, Table IV; App. V, Table IV; App. VI, Table XVI

TENANCIES
- of allotments
  — Agreements for, 246 et seq.; 304 et seq.; App. VII, Table XIII
  — Compensation on termination of, 76 et seq.
  — 'Model' rules for, 69; 182; 183; 244; App. IX
  — Rules for, 69; 70; 71; 243; 245; 304
  — Notices to quit, 72 et seq.
- of leisure gardens
  — Agreements for, 708
  — Compensation on termination of, 835 et seq.
  — 'Model' rules for, 709; 710
  — Rules for, 708; 709; 785
  — Notices to quit, 782 et seq.

'THREE-QUARTERS OF A MILE' RULE, 192; 377; 378

TOILETS
- on allotment sites, 407; 451; Table 36; App. VI, Table XVIII
- on leisure garden sites, App. X

TOOLSHEDS
- on allotment sites, 412; 460 et seq.; Table 36; Plates 1, 6, 12, 13; App. VI, Table XVIII
- on leisure gardens, 697; 814; App. X

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT, 1968, 552; 687 et seq.

TOWN MAPS
- Zoning of allotments on, 550
- Zoning of leisure gardens on, 752

459
TRADING
— on allotment sites, 507 et seq.

TRESPASS
— on allotments, 48; 594

URBAN AND RURAL ALLOTMENTS
— Differences between, 41; 107; 158 et seq.; 202; 731 et seq.; Fig. 7

USE AND MISUSE
— of allotment gardens, 388 et seq.; 456; Table 33

VACANT
— allotments
  — Numbers of, 50; 162 et seq.; 309; 457; 513; Fig. 8; App. III, Table XVIII; App. V, Table XVIII; App. VII, Table IV
  — Problems caused by, 410; 457; 458; Table 36; Plate 5
  — Ways of reducing numbers of, 255; 256; 295; 296; 311; App. III, Table XVII; App. V, Table XVII
— leisure gardens
  — Treatment of, 692; 757; 789; 868; 884

VANDALISM AND THEFT
— Penalties for, 71; 712
— Problems caused by
  — on allotment gardens, 408; 409; 448; 522; 692; 711; Table 36; App. VI, Table XVIII;
    App. VII, Tables XI and XII
  — on leisure gardens, 711; 712
  — on the continent, 624

VEGETABLES
— Cultivation of, on allotments, 387 et seq.; 455; 456; Table 33; App. VI, Table XI
— Reasons for extensive cultivation of, 252; 391 et seq.
— Restrictions on, for leisure gardens, 678; 706 et seq.; 779 et seq.

VISITS
— made by the committee, 102; App. II, A

WAITING-LISTS
— for allotment gardens, 170; 513; 594; App. V, Table XVI; App. VII, Table XIII
— on the continent, 617

WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE U.D.C., 341; 875

WATER
— Provision of
  — to allotment gardens, 407; 452 et seq.; 598; Table 36; App. III, Table XVIII;
    App. V, Table XVIII; App. VI, Table XVIII
  — to leisure gardens, 812; App. X

WEEDS
— Problems caused by, 410; 457; 458; 523; Table 36; Plate 5; App. VI, Table XVIII

WOLVERTON U.D., 212

WOMEN
— Appeal of allotments to, 348; 381; 451; 466