

ARTHUR YOUNG AND THE ENGLISH LANDED INTEREST 1784-1813

by

Claudio Veliz Soza

**A Thesis submitted for the Ph.D. Degree
of the University of London**



London School of Economics and Political Science.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of agrarian pressure-groups during the last two decades of the eighteenth century.

The body of the work consists of an examination of three important controversies which affected the landed interest; the struggle for a general bill of enclosure, the opposition to the Wool Bill of 1788, and the attempt to reform the existing system of tithe collection. In these three issues, Arthur Young, the agricultural journalist and pamphleteer, participated as unofficial leader and representative of a loosely organized group which, although mainly agrarian in composition and outlook, was basically different from the traditional landed interest. In fact, in these three controversies the "farming interest" of Arthur Young upheld positions towards which the traditional landed interest was either indifferent or opposed.

The first case examined is the struggle for a general enclosure bill which took place between 1789 and 1801. During these years there were six different attempts to pass such a law and they were all unsuccessful. Even the 1801 so-called General Enclosure Bill was a far cry from what Young and the farming interest had asked for. There were a number of reasons why these attempts failed, including the question of parliamentary fees, the tithes clauses, etc., but the main one was the indifference of a Parliament controlled by the landed aristocracy.

The second controversy was that over the bill which increased the penalties and restrictions on the exportation of wool from England. This bill was opposed by a well-organized pressure-group which included most of the wool-growers of the kingdom, but it passed both Houses with comfortable majorities.

The third case under study did not receive as much parliamentary attention as the first two. The attempt to commute tithes was debated throughout the last twenty years of the century with irregular intensity. This projected reform, like the other policies supported by the farming interest, was also unsuccessful.

These three failures indicate that Young was not, as it is believed, the spokesman for the landed interest, but for a smaller group of agriculturists. This group held views different from those of the traditional landed interest and constituted a commercially-minded, agrarian middle-class with an egocentric attitude towards economic problems. Their rigidity of outlook was one of the main causes of their early disappearance as an important agricultural pressure-group.

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INTRODUCTION

As the amount of available factual material on our past becomes greater, the temptation of the historian is to try and arrange all this potentially accessible knowledge into one vast, integrated whole; to write history as the summing up of human activities, hopes, failures and achievements in a given period. From this large and amorphous mass of facts, the integrating mind of the investigator would like nothing better than to discern a trend, a motive, a causality which will render past human action meaningful and purposeful.

However desirable or undesirable this may be - and at this stage one cannot but withhold judgment - there is an unsurpassable technical obstacle to its realization; recent history is so well documented that it is quite impossible to record coherently and in an organized pattern, all the minute determinants of human action. It is not enough to limit the period under study - apart from the fact that such a limitation, if carried to any lengths, results in some loss of perspective and feeling of continuity - even to describe the activities during one single day, one hundred years ago, would become a complex problem of selection if one is to include all the relevant events which took place in it and all the motivations and consequences of those actions.

To solve, or perhaps to evade, this ever-present temptation of being exhaustive in treatment, historians have had recourse to the most popular palliative of our age; specialization. There are social historians, and political ones, and constitutional and legal histories, not to mention business and economic ones. Also, the lives of single men, or small groups of men, have been used as guides to a period, either because they were a dynamic influence on their environment or as mirrors of their times. Lytton Strachey used the lives of four Victorians to paint a picture of the age. As he described it, his method was "to row out over that great ocean of material, and lower down into it, here and there, a little bucket, which will bring up to the light of day some characteristic specimen from those far depths, to be examined with a careful curiosity."

Using this as a suitable excuse, I hopefully lowered my bucket into the last decade of the eighteenth century and up came Arthur Young and his Annals of Agriculture. The outcome of my examination of these "characteristic specimens" is more or less embodied in this work.

Between the end of the American War of Independence and the Peace of Amiens, Arthur Young became the acknowledged leader and publicist for a loosely organized public opinion pressure-group which, in matters of agricultural politics and economics, indefatigably lent its support to almost every unsuccessful policy put forward during those years. The study of those remarkable failures and of their protagonists; the "farming interest" of England and Arthur Young, Esq., constitute the

principal part of this thesis.

This is not a biographical study of Young, although the activities of this bizarre publicist and pamphleteer were so important in the agrarian controversies of his time that it is almost impossible to draw a picture of the period without finding his works, opinions and personality intruding at every turn.

Young's career spanned the turn of the century and his inclinations were so varied that one is tempted to regard him as a more or less accurate mirror, if not of his time, at least of the group for which he became self-appointed representative. Because of his superficiality, he was particularly well-fitted for the role of reflector rather than creator of ideas, trends and movements. He was neither a consistent, nor a profound, thinker and therefore one can depend on the secondary nature of most of his opinions and pronouncements. A man of tremendous energy, ambition and conceit, he did not have the benefit of a firm grip on his emotions, a solid income, or an exalted position in society. Without these, his natural inclinations could not but lead on to frustration because underneath the froth of his herculean activity lay the unmistakable substance of mediocrity.

Even the posthumous satisfaction of having been ahead of his times must be denied him. Although the reforms he advocated were eventually implemented, this was done for reasons other than those he had put forward. He was a firm believer in the supremacy of agriculture as the backbone of the British economy and maintained that the "shopkeepers and manufacturers" would sooner or later collapse into nothingness from

their airy castles of paper credit. "Manufactures ... are to be considered in the same light as hospitals; these sort of establishments are an invaluable resource to the sick and decrepit; but when we receive into them the healthy and robust, we open a door to idleness and an accessory to the destruction of our country..."¹ He wrote this early in his career, but he did not change this view very much in later years. First, he looked upon industry as an occupation for the poor, the destitute and the infirm; later, when he battled unsuccessfully against the powerful manufacturer's pressure groups, he changed his contempt into an intense dislike but was never able to realize that the economic future of Britain resided not in agriculture but precisely in manufactures, industry, and the "airy castles of paper credit" he so much despised.

Young's agricultural reforms were either humanitarian or were meant as expedients to facilitate the growth and improvement of agriculture as a central and almost self-contained economic activity. He did not foresee a partnership of agriculture and industry - on the contrary - he constantly attacked those who suggested that the future might bring such a development. Even more, he denounced any suggestion that agriculture could become a minor partner in British economic life.

1. A. Young: Rural Economy or Essays on the Practical Parts of Husbandry, to which is added the Rural Socrates. London, 1770, pp. 460-461.

Arthur Young was born in London in 1741. His family belonged to the middle classes and was well connected both in the ecclesiastical and the political circles of the time. His father, the Rev. Arthur Young, Rector of Bradfield, had been educated at Eton and Pembroke College, Cambridge, and had attained some academic distinction by publishing, in 1743, a book entitled, Historical Dissertations on Idolatrous Corruptions in Religion, which was quoted² by Voltaire in one of his anti-clerical tracts.

His mother, Ann Lucretia de Coussmaker, who later became a principal influence in Young's career, brought with her a dowry of £80,000, a fortune, part of which was eventually dissipated by the youthful agriculturist in his quest to make a living from active farming. His godfathers were the Bishop of Lincoln and Arthur Onslow, who was at that time the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Because of the influence of his mother, Young was not sent to Eton to pursue an ecclesiastical career like his elder brother John, who became a Doctor of Divinity and Prebendary of Worcester. Instead, he was entered at Lavenham Grammar School in preparation for a career in commerce. He did not like this establishment and in his autobiography he referred to it as a "wretched place", not because he found himself persecuted or tormented by his tutors or fellow students, but because, being the headmaster's favourite, he left the school

2. Young's father published one other work: A Dissertation on the Gospel Demoniacs, in 1760.

without having learned very much of anything.

In 1758 he was apprenticed to Messrs. Robertson of Lynn, a firm of wine merchants. This was in order to prepare him to join his brother-in-law who was a merchant in London. But Young's heart was not in merchandise or ledgers - he acquired a reputation for being a ladies' man and his company was said to have been eagerly sought in social circles. During his years in Lynn he wrote his first published work, The Theatre of the Present War in America. In it, without having even as much as visited the North American continent, he managed to analyse the strategical situation of the contending forces with remarkable good sense. In fact, one year before Wolfe's move on Quebec, he was either prophetic or lucky to recommend this policy in his tract and thereby acquired the beginnings of a reputation as a wise political commentator. One year later, in 1759, he published his second pamphlet, Reflections on the Present State of Affairs, in which he strongly defended colonial expansionism, a policy which he later attacked with equal energy. His early success with these two pamphlets and his growing need of financial assistance made him devote more and more time to writing and in the space of a few months he produced four novels: The Fair American; Sir Charles Beaufort; Lucy Watson; and Julia Benson, or the Innocent Sufferer. None of these remains and their failure must have convinced Young that though a gifted pamphleteer he was not successful when dealing with belles lettres.

He was then nineteen years old. His father died that year and Young left Lynn for Bath where he was to take the waters. His skill at Chess and dancing made him a popular figure in the most fashionable circles of this resort. Among his acquaintances was Sir Charles Howard who offered Young a commission in his own regiment. This proposal, which Young seriously considered, was eventually turned down because of his mother's stubborn opposition. This was the second time that Young's mother had intervened to change her son's plans. First, she prevented him from attending Eton and a university for an ecclesiastical career - something for which Young never forgave her - and later she stopped him from entering a career of arms, for which he was duly grateful.

From Bath he went on to London where, against the advice of Dr. Johnson, he started a magazine called, The Universal Museum, or Gentlemen's and Ladies' Polite Magazine of History, Politicks and Literature. This venture was born and died within ten months. After six numbers had appeared, Young was glad to be rid of it by selling it to his publishers.

Eventually, in 1763, he returned to Bradfield where his family had a small estate. He had no career or prospects of any kind and, what was more pressing, he was in financial difficulties. In this situation, his mother offered to let him farm eighty acres of land in her estate. He accepted and thus started his long career in agriculture.

In 1765 he married Martha Allen who came to live with him and his mother at Bradfield, a circumstance which, not surprisingly, caused much resentment and dissension in the family. Two years later, after having failed to make his farming pay, he decided to move to better soil and rented three hundred acres in Samford Hall, Essex. While in this place, he wrote his Political Essays on the Present State of the British Empire. Less than a year after having moved into this new farm, he payed £100 to another farmer to take over the lease. This second man made a fortune from the three hundred acres.

Perhaps one of the reasons why he failed to make his farms pay their way was because he spent most of his time writing both on agriculture and on politics. His first agricultural writings appeared in a periodical called the Museum Rusticum, at various times between 1764 and 1766. These early attempts were well received by one of the most eminent agricultural writers of that time, Walter Harte. Harte corresponded with Young and advised him to publish his articles in the form of pamphlets. It is quite probable that the personal interest of Harte, added to the success which his agricultural tours had with the reading public, convinced Young that there was a vast, unexplored field for his special kind of agricultural journalism.³

3. See British Museum, Add.MSS. 35, 126 - 1.

Young followed Harte's advice and in 1767 he published The Farmer's Letters to the People of England, Containing the Sentiments of a Practical Husbandman on Various Subjects of the Utmost Importance, to which is added, Sylvae, or Occasional Tracts on Husbandry and Rural Economics. This volume was a Compendium of short articles, some of which had already been published in the Museum Rusticum. It was moderately successful in contrast with the practical farming of the author who was again busy trying to find a farm which could support him.

In 1768, Young, still without a farm, proceeded to travel extensively throughout the southern part of England, visiting estates advertised for sale. Out of these travels he wrote his first "best seller", the Six Weeks Tour Through the Southern Counties of England. This was a tremendous success and earned Young a reputation as diarist and agriculturist which he never lost. He eventually settled in a 100-acre farm in Hertfordshire, which he was careful to choose with the added advice of an experienced bailiff. This farm failed to respond to his cares and years later he wrote about it; "it was a hungry, vitriolic gravel..."

Encouraged by the success of his first volume of farming travels, he toured the northern part of the country and produced A Six Months' Tour Through the North of England, which went through two editions in less than a year and was translated into German. His last tour was A Farmer's Tour Through the East of England, which

was published in 1770 and translated into German in 1775.

In this year he also wrote a Course in Experimental Husbandry, in which he summarized his experience of practical agriculture acquired in several years of unsuccessful farming. Later in life he was extremely critical of this work and destroyed every copy he could lay his hands on.

In 1773, he began his public life by becoming chairman of the Agricultural Committee of the Society of Arts. He also started to work as a parliamentary journalist for the London Morning Post. In 1776-77, he went on a tour of Ireland and on his return he wrote an account of the trip which was then hailed as the finest example of this type of writing. From 1778-79, he managed the estate of Lord Kingsborough in County Cork. In 1779, he returned to Bradfield with plans for emigrating to America, but again his mother convinced him to change his mind and he remained in England working as a part-time farmer, journalist, pamphleteer, and writer of travelogues.

In addition to his professional difficulties, Young had to cope with a very unfortunate domestic situation. His wife was not the companion he needed. Little is known about her, but from what he wrote it is clear he did not have a very high opinion of her abilities. It has even been suggested that one of the reasons for his incessant travelling was the desire to avoid her company. Perhaps this is an exaggeration, but, as this personal letter he wrote her shows, relations between them were not very harmonious: "An ill star rose on my nativity; had I never been born it would have been just so

much the better for me, for you and our wretched children, and if anybody was to knock me on the head it would be ... favour done to you all three..."⁴ When Mrs. Young died, her husband could not think of anything more fitting than to inscribe on her tombstone as an epitaph, the inexact information that she was a direct descendant of the man who introduced the practice of marling into England.

By the end of the American War of Independence, Young's fame had travelled far and wide. Although he was still an unsuccessful farmer, his writings had earned him the opposite reputation, and famed agriculturists and public personalities corresponded with him on professional subjects. In 1783, Prince Potemkin asked him to take under his tutelage three Russian students of agriculture who were sent especially to England for this purpose. Young kept them in Bradfield for several months during which he tried hard to teach them the principles of farming. Eventually he sent them back, commenting that one of them knew so little about this subject that he would probably be sent on to Siberia for his failure.

In 1784, he started to publish the Annals of Agriculture, which he collected and edited continuously until 1809 when he lost his sight. These Annals were originally intended to contain only

4. British Museum Add. MSS. 35, 126-34.

contributions by practical farmers about agriculture. In fact they became a monthly magazine of agriculture, politics, economics, and even philosophy and religion. They reflected, through their contributions, the state of mind of the farming interest of England.

In 1785 his mother died and the next year his brother John broke his neck while hunting with George III near Windsor. Two years later, Young embarked on his first trip to France at the invitation of one of his old agriculturist friends, M. de Lazowski. He travelled again in 1788 and in 1789 when he toured the country during the most critical days of the revolution. There is a typical entry in his diary describing how he heard of the fall of the Bastille when he arrived in Strasbourg on July 20th, 1789. "I arrived there at a critical moment, which, I thought would have broken my neck; a detachment of horse, with their trumpets on one side, a party of infantry with their drums beating on the other, and a great mob hallooing, frightened my French mare; and I could scarcely keep her from trampling on Kessrs tiers etat. On arriving at the inn, (I heard) the interesting news of the revolt of Paris. The Guardes Francaises joining the people; the little dependence on the rest of the troops, the taking of the Bastille ... in a word, of the absolute overthrow of the old government." ⁵

5. Arthur Young, ed. by M. Betham-Edwards: Travels in France, London, 1889, p.206.

The most important publications of Young after 1784 were political in character. His reputation as a farming expert was established earlier in his career, especially with the volumes of tours of England and the Farmers' Letters. After the Annals were launched, Young's attention was absorbed by his job as editor and compiler and most of his writings were published in this periodical. In 1793, he published what is perhaps his most famous pamphlet, The Example of France, a Warning to Britain, a piece of anti-reformist propaganda which gained the approval of both George III and Burke. Soon after publishing this tract, Young had an opportunity of visiting with Burke at his estate in Beaconsfield. He considered him the greatest man of his age and was shaken when he saw how physically infirm he was and how petty his conversation.

This same year, Young was appointed Secretary to the newly created Board of Agriculture, a coincidence which many regarded as proof that the government was rewarding Young for his support. In fact, the very creation of the Board at this juncture was considered by some writers, like William Marshall, to be an example of ministerial patronage. Young remained with the Board until 1819, one year before he died.

In 1797 came what some of his biographers considered to be the turning point in his career. Young had developed an extraordinary, almost abnormal, affection for his youngest daughter whom he had nicknamed 'Bobbin'. When he travelled abroad, most of his letters

were written to her and he constantly enquired after her every wish and whim. When she died he sustained a severe shock from which, apparently, he never recovered. He continued to publish the Annals and wrote several pamphlets condemning the revolutionary developments in France but he began to show a morbid inclination to religious subjects which intruded into his writings and which more often than not contributed to obscure his judgment.

His biographers - and himself - explained this fanatically religious inclination of his later years as a search for spiritual consolation after the death of his daughter. In fact, it is easier to understand this stage of his life as a last effort to identify himself with a structure of belief which held the certain promise of permanency and achievement; two aspects of living which eluded him in his more earthly pursuits.

Perhaps the best explanation of Young's religious fanaticism comes from his own hand. In 1785, he wrote an article on "The Pleasures of Agriculture" in which he asked, "Why is age so often sour and morose? Why does life hang so heavily on the hands of those who have had such a time to prepare for its employment? Because pursuits have failed them. This general failure is, perhaps, the most efficient reason for two vices in the soul not uncommon in age; avarice and a contracted perversion of religion, neither of which could find place in a mind buried in a better pursuit..."

The accuracy of this prophecy is almost uncanny; Young lived to an old age spent in the loneliness of blindness and in the grip of "a contracted perversion of religion".

CHAPTER I.

THE ENGLISH FARMING INTEREST.

Most economic histories describe Arthur Young as someone who acted as a spokesman for the landed interest of England during the last decades of the eighteenth century. That is, as a sort of unofficial publicist and propagandist for that powerful group which controlled Parliament and local government even after 1832; a group consisting mainly of landowners with limited interests in the growing manufactures and mining enterprises of the time which managed to pass the notorious Corn Laws of 1815 against the wishes of the rest of the nation; an omnipotent group which was seldom defeated when it supported a bill in Parliament and seldom failed to smother attempts to curtail its power. But, Arthur Young, through the pages of the Annals of Agriculture, supported a series of policies and made a number of recommendations which have one common denomination - failure.

He agitated for a general bill of enclosure and supported six different such bills in his lifetime but none succeeded and the measure he advocated was not implemented until 1845, a quarter of a century after his death. He campaigned against the passage of the Wool Bill of 1783, and the bill went through Parliament with comfortable majorities. He joined in and became one of the leading figures of the movement which advocated a general commutation of tithes and this

reform was not carried out until 1836. He called for a vast scheme of land redistribution to alleviate the double problems of food scarcity and uncultivated wastelands - and no such agrarian reform was even considered by a Parliament of landowners. In short, practically everything Young stood for in 1784, when the first volume of the Annals was published, and fought for during his long career under "Farmer George", ended in complete and undramatic failure.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that the landed interest was not being routed during these years, nor was its power declining. It is thus more logical to assume that Young was not so closely identified with the group usually described as the traditional landed interest, but with another group, new and as yet undefined, which was important enough to fail on a national scale, but not strong enough to influence the legislature. This group had enough in common with the traditional landed interest to be, at first sight, indistinguishable from it, but it was different enough to take diametrically opposite views on practically every issue on agricultural policy which confronted them during the last decades of the century.

I have called this the "farming interest" to differentiate it from the traditional landed interest. This group had a number of characteristics which will become apparent throughout this study, but the following are an essential part of any basic definition :

1. The farming interest was primarily an agricultural group. It was a professional farmers' pressure-group in that the great majority of its members were "practising" farmers who lived on the land and who

derived all or the greater part of their income directly from farming.

Some of the members of the farming interest owned their land, others leased it but they generally held between 200 and 800 acres. They were prosperous enough to be able to have time, money and land to make experiments with new farming methods, new grasses and crops and report them in detail in the Annals of Agriculture. They themselves did not work the land but attended to the managerial side of farming. In this respect they were statistically minded and kept accounts and records of their operations and often sent them to Young for publication. As a group within the farming community they were thus relatively small, but representatives were to be found in almost every county of England and Wales.

They did not identify themselves in any way with the traditional landed interest or with the rising manufacturers of their time. In fact they shared a healthy contempt for the whole class of "manufacturers and shopkeepers" and often were at odds with the traditional landed interest in political matters.

They were aware of their own existence as a separate entity with well-defined economic and political interests and of the need to organize themselves into a pressure-group to press their interests in Parliament. The following definition of a farmer by Dr. James Robertson, a well-known Scottish contributor to the Annals is worth quoting as it gives an accurate impression of what a member of the farming interest thought a farmer should be like :

1. "A real farmer ... is every day in the year, directly or indirectly engaged in his business..."
2. "... he does not perform manual labour ... Not that this is below him, but that he has higher matters to mind ... It by no means is here insinuated that a farmer should be ignorant of what labour is: he should know how to hold a plough and drive a waggon, build a hay-stack and every other operation."
3. "He has no bailiff or delegate whatever."
4. "He has a lease, and is under no improper restrictions or services..."
5. "He pays an adequate rent. He who pays a small rent, and much more the owner who pays none, having no sufficient spur to industry and ingenuity, cannot be expected to be good farmers ..."

Although these qualifications cannot be taken too literally, they portray what Young often referred to as "gentlemen of small estate", who constituted the rank and file of the farming interest.

2. The farming interest was scientifically inclined. It tended to look at agriculture as the ideal meeting ground for scientific theory and practice. In an age of scientific and "statistical" optimism, practical farming appeared as the obvious field of human activity where scientific advance could be made to yield immediate results. The land lent itself for experiments with the added advantage that it afforded the experimenter - apart from the intellectual satisfaction - a tangible proof of success in shillings and pence. It is significant in this respect to note that at least 20 per cent of all the articles published in the Annals between 1784 and 1809 were about agricultural

experiments carried on by farmers.

Thus, the scientific curiosity of the farming interest made their inclinations and activities attractive to people like Sir Joseph Banks, the botanist, explorer and scientist, who also devoted much time to agriculture both in its farming and social aspects. Professor John Symonds who lectured on modern history at Cambridge was also a frequent contributor to the Annals and a personal friend of Young. In fact, when Young travelled to France, it was Symonds who was left the task of editing the Annals.

This scientific inclination was also partly responsible for the formation of a number of agricultural societies whose original purpose was to conduct and report the findings obtained from agricultural experiments.

3. The farming interest held reformist ideas in politics. Interested as they were in increasing as much as possible the agricultural production of the country, they were distressed to see that much of the purely technical advance which could be effected was lost and

6. Eliminating all the articles written by Young himself and those dealing with subjects such as travels abroad, foreign farming, book reviews, etc., there remain a total of 1,040 articles dealing with the following subjects:

General farm management.....	588	articles
Agricultural experiments.....	199	"
Tithes.....	19	"
Corn, bread assize, etc.....	47	"
On farm machinery.....	34	"
Wool.....	21	"
Agricultural Wages.....	10	"
Enclosures.....	28	"
Population statistics and des- criptions of the countryside.....	94	"

wasted in the face of almost insurmountable institutional obstacles. They were impatient with the traditional system of land distribution and wanted greater facilities to enclose; they objected to the taxing power of the Church through tithes and demanded a general commutation; they complained against their incapacity to make their views felt in Parliament and gradually some of them reached the conclusion that without a Parliamentary reform there was not much they could do to change the existing institutional structure.

This impatience moved them to find much to praise in the reformist wave which was sweeping through North America and later through France. In the case of the former, they were strongly opposed to the maintenance by Britain of colonies overseas and thought that the capital which went abroad should be invested in developing natural resources within the British Isles instead. During the early months of the French Revolution the contributors to the Annals were quite sympathetic. After the execution of Louis XVI their attitude changed drastically into one of fervent opposition to the revolutionary idea. This contrast cannot be explained alone in terms of the shock caused by the death of the king unless one remembers that the reformism of the farming interest did not have roots in political convictions. The farming interest could perhaps be described as a "Jeffersonian" pressure group, intensely loyal to the established authority and jealous of the prerogatives of property and of the hierarchi-bourgeois counterparts.

4. The farming interest was articulate, had mild literary pretensions and once shown the way, was notably gregarious, organizing itself locally into societies, clubs and other forms of rural collective bodies. Apart from the fact that as a pressure-group the farming interest enlisted the support of a significant number of intellectuals, writers, scientists and politicians, even the farming rank and file of the group was notably prolific in articles which reached the pages of the Annals. One of the interesting facts about the contributions to the Annals is that they were written by so many authors. Considering the nature of the farming interest it would be normal to expect that only a small number of their leaders would have had the time, inclination and ability to write articles on farming. As it is, at least 600 different authors sent articles and of these there was a hard core of 53 who wrote more than 5 articles each. The rest were farmers who sent one or two articles which ranged in subject from those explaining a new method of drilling turnips to those demanding the commutation of tithes.

Apart from writing technical articles, the members of the farming interest also had literary pretensions. In this respect it must be noted that a majority of the most influential and prolific authors of the farming interest had had university education. A few, in fact, were distinguished in the academic world, like Professor Symonds of Cambridge and the Rev. Richard Valpy, headmaster of Reading School. A large number of the articles published in the Annals are spiced throughout with classical quotations and some are partly written

in Latin or Greek or both.

The formation and growth of the farming interest as an effective pressure-group is parallel to the growth of agricultural societies in Britain. Before 1775 there were only two known agricultural societies in existence in the British Isles and both of recent foundation. Between 1775 and 1800 in the brief period of twenty-five years more than sixty agricultural societies and farming clubs were founded. Of these, thirty-nine were English, 18 Scottish, 5 Welsh and the rest Irish. These organizations subscribed to a number of farming publications including the Annals, the Transactions of the Bath and West of England Society, the Farmers' Magazine, etc.⁷ Of these, the Annals was by far the most popular and most widely used as a medium of publicity for the societies. Practically every single agricultural society founded in England during this time published its transactions in the Annals. Heated controversies raged from its pages and correspondence columns and topics such as the efficacy of fallowing or the suitability of oxen or horses for ploughing or the commutation of tithes and the enclosure of wastes brought forth an enthusiastic response from farmers all over England in the form of Letters to the Editor, and independent articles.

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7. A typical example is that of the Devonshire Agricultural Society which, upon being founded, agreed unanimously "that the Annals of Agriculture and Bath Society Papers be purchased for the use of subscribers in the vicinity of Kingsbridge..." Annals, Vol.17, p.14. See also Annals, Vol.2, p.425, for the Odiham Agriculture Society's resolution "...that it is the opinion of this meeting, that all due encouragement should be given to publications on husbandry and agriculture as tending to improve the same; and that the Annals of Agriculture, now publishing in numbers by Arthur Young, are likely to promote that end, it is therefore ordered that the secretary do take in the same for the use of members of this Society...."

In fact, the farming interests' response to Young's type of farming journalism was such, and the numbers of farmers who wrote articles was so great, that this one characteristic makes this farming pressure group radically different from all other similar groups. One of the characteristics of other agricultural pressure-groups both in the Old and the New World is their silence. They usually have to hire public relations experts to conduct their campaigns. This was certainly not the case in England during the latter eighteenth century when the farming interest was one of the most articulate and in fact, vociferous, of pressure groups.

5. Finally, a characteristic which is the one definite link between the farming interest and its urban counterpart; the protestant bourgeoisie. The farming interest was austere. Its habits and its mode of living were almost puritanical. They felt contempt for the ostentatious and the spendthrift. They even objected to owning horses for "riding for pleasure" and insisted that every beast and every human being in a farm should pay its way with productive work. Their drive for efficiency led many of their members to advocate the keeping of standardized methods of farm accounts and the establishment of formal training for young aspirants to the "farming" profession.

Throughout the fifty-six volumes of the Annals there are a number of articles devoted to praising the rural life and the profession of farming. All have one thing in common apart from their subject; they praise austerity and they maintain that an austere and happy life can be lived best in the countryside. Young himself, though a

notorious man about town during his non-farming years, became quite an authority on the evils of dissipation and went as far as to condemn the drinking of tea as contributing to the relaxation of morals. John Ellman waged a successful campaign against the licensing of ale-houses in the parish of Glynd while many of their colleagues boasted that they had never been to London or risen after dawn in many decades of farming life.

These, then, are the five basic characteristics of the farming interest; they were a professional farmer's pressure-group; they were scientifically inclined; they held reformist ideas in politics and these were partly the result of their scientific inclinations; compared with other agricultural groups they were relatively articulate and gregarious and wrote large numbers of articles, provided a loyal public to at least one long-lived agricultural publication and formed themselves into a large number of societies within a relatively short period of time. Finally, they were austere and approved of all the virtues which Calvin found to be essential both for the permanence of Protestantism and for the prosperity of commercial (or farming) enterprises.

A more detailed idea of the defining characteristics of the farming interest can be obtained from an examination of their writings, the composition of their societies, the character of their leading publications, etc. At the centre of any pressure-group there is often some publication, club, city, or even district, where the members meet, publish their writings or simply live. In the case of the farming

interest, there was the physical impossibility of having a common meeting place. They were also spread out all over England and no region could claim to be the centre of their interest or activity. Their spiritual and psychological meeting place became therefore, the Annals of Agriculture.

This magazine was edited without interruption over a period of twenty-five years from 1784 until 1809. During this time, forty-six volumes were published containing almost two thousand articles on agriculture, agricultural politics, experimental farming and allied subjects. During this same period - as it was mentioned above - more than sixty different agricultural societies were founded in Britain and many of these societies had among their members one or more of the better known authors who wrote for the Annals. In many instances, these leading agricultural journalists - if such an expression can be used in this context - were also the ones who founded the societies and kept them going during their first years. At any rate, there was a close association between the formation of agricultural societies and the growth of the farming interest.

An indication of the readership of the Annals can be obtained from an examination of the minutes of these societies. Almost without exception, the farming societies bought subscriptions to the Annals for the use of their members. The total circulation of the Annals was only about 500 copies, but if one considers that approximately thirty of these copies were sent to agricultural societies, where they were read

by the members, one realizes that the actual readership was considerably greater.

An additional fact can be mentioned in support of the proposition that the Annals were the unofficial publication of the farming interest. This is that practically every single agricultural society in England published its transactions, news and even lists of members and other advertisements in the Annals.

The fact that this publication existed for twenty-five years, that it contained almost two thousand different contributions from at least six hundred different authors, that the great majority of these authors were professional farmers and not amateurs living in the city and that the overwhelming majority of the agricultural societies founded during the period subscribed to the Annals and published their transactions in it, seems sufficient evidence to suggest that this publication was read by, and reflected the points of view of, the farming interest of England.

The membership of these societies varied greatly from place to place. Some meetings of the Sussex Agricultural Society, the Smithfield Club or the Woburn and Lewes Sheep Shearings, had attendances of more than three hundred, while regular meetings at Durham and Appledore sometimes were attended only by a dozen or so members. However, from the lists of members published in the Annals it is possible to obtain an approximate idea of their membership. In general, agricultural societies had an average nominal membership of about seventy-five subscribers. As in many cases there was some duplication,

several farmers belonging to more than one society at the same time, one can reduce this figure to sixty-five without doing much violence to the facts. In England there were thirty-nine agricultural societies which means that the total membership - and this is an extremely rough estimate - of the English agricultural societies was about two thousand five hundred. If to these are added four hundred and fifty subscribers to the Annals of Agriculture (excluding the 39 societies) then an approximate minimum of three thousand members for the English farming interest is obtained.

Again, continuing on the assumption that the farming interest read and agreed with the Annals, and therefore that its members also wrote the articles published in it, an examination of the background of a representative sample of contributors should give some idea of who were the people who made up this pressure-group.

A detailed count of the articles published in the first twenty-five volumes of the Annals - when the farming interest was more active than ever - gives a total of 1,075 articles (excluding those written by Young) which were written by 316 different authors from all over Britain.

In order to reduce this figure to one easier to handle and still representative of the sources of opinion within the farming interest, all those authors who had written less than five articles were eliminated. This left a total number of 53 authors responsible for the publication of 609 articles. This means that these authors wrote

approximately 50 per cent of all the articles published in the first twenty-five volumes of the Annals. The proportion - much lower than that usual in contemporary publications - does away with the idea that the Annals were produced by a very small and unrepresentative group of agrarian amateurs. In fact, at least 50 per cent of the articles were written by people who sent less than five articles each.

The short list of 53 includes farmers from twenty different counties and - besides a degree of concentration in Suffolk, Kent and Essex - the distribution is fairly even throughout. Furthermore, 31 were full-time farmers who lived from their land; 10 were clergymen and the rest included two medical doctors, four writers and politicians, one Cambridge don, one scientist and explorer, one foreign consul, and only 3 were entirely unknown apart from the fact that they wrote knowingly on agricultural subjects.

Apart from the fact that these people read each others' articles, agreed on a number of political questions and constituted what might be considered the hard core of the farming interest in their respective districts, they also were members, and in many cases, founders or leading personalities, of the agricultural societies which existed in their respective counties.

An additional and most significant fact about the people who corresponded for the Annals is that they often were important men in their community either as a direct result of the exercise of their profession - as in the case of John Ellman, of Sussex, or George Culley,

of Northumberland - or because they held high office in the county, like Thomas Ruggles who was Deputy-Lieutenant for Suffolk and Essex, or Capel Lofft, who was a Magistrate in Suffolk and otherwise, a leading political figure among the Whig party.

Even in matters which were not directly connected with farming but which had relation to communal activities, the names of the authors of articles in the Annals keep appearing. For instance, early in the decade of 1780, Arthur Young - who at that time had not yet started publishing the Annals - participated in a then rather loud campaign for voluntary subscriptions for the building of county ships of the line. A subscription was circulated around the County of Suffolk and it is interesting to note that of the eight people who years later were to become the most prolific Suffolk authors for the Annals, six (including Arthur Young) gave money for this project. One of these, Hutcheson Mure, gave the important sum of £300 - while Young contributed £20 - the exact amount required to qualify for appearance in the official list of benefactors which was later published as a pamphlet.⁸

Excluding Young, there were seven authors from Suffolk who published more than five articles in the first twenty-five volumes of the Annals. These were Rev. William Butts, Rev. John Carter, Capel

8. A List of Subscribers for the Purpose of Building a Ship of War for the Service of the County of Suffolk, pursuant to the resolution of a General Meeting of the County of Suffolk, held at Stowmarket, August 5th, 1782, and also, An Enquiry into the Legality and Expediency of Increasing the Royal Navy by Subscriptions for Building County Ships, being the correspondence on that subject between Arthur Young and Capel Lofft, Esqrs., with a list of the Subscribers to the Suffolk Man of War, Bury St. Edmunds, 1783.

Lofft, Thomas Ruggles, Thomas LeBlanc, Hutcheson Mure, and William Macro. Of these, three were members of the Melford Agricultural Society, the only one which existed in the county: Mr. Lewis⁹ Majendie, of Essex, another important author of the Annals, was also a member of the Melford Society. Of the seven Suffolk authors, four were farmers and the remaining three included two clergymen and one writer and politician, Capel Lofft.¹⁰ The four farmer-authors were owners of their land and relatively wealthy. Mr. Hutcheson Mure - as has been shown above - donated £300 for a cause which was not remarkably urgent or important. Messrs. Macro and LeBlanc, both prosperous graziers owned at least 700 sheep each and had farmed for approximately twenty years each before the Annals appeared. They knew each other from having been neighbours for a long time and they both became very interested in the new ideas and trend which were publicized by Arthur Young. Although from their long practical experience with farming it would have been natural to expect resistance against change from these two farmers, they became avid experimenters and most of the articles they sent for publication are precisely about new modes of farming. As evidence of their interest in the Annals it suffices to mention the fact that they contributed thirty-two articles between them

9. Annals, Vol.20, pp.404-410.

10. Dictionary of National Biography, Vol.34, pp.69-71; also John Glyde, New Suffolk Garland, 1866, pp.348 and 52-54.

during a period of only seven years.

Mr. Thomas Ruggles, inherited the estate of Spain's Hall which included parts of Suffolk and Essex and was later on Deputy-Lieutenant for Suffolk and Essex. He farmed his land with moderately modern methods, read widely and made a number of experiments, but his most important contributions were in the field of social change. His book on The History of the Poor was originally published in serial form in the Annals of Agriculture.

In Kent there were two agricultural societies, the Kent Society for the Encouragement of Agriculture and Industry and the Appledore Agricultural Society. The former was the first founded and the most famous and to it belonged four of the seven Kentish contributors to the Annals. In fact, three of them were Committee members and founders of the society also. At the same time, they were members of other farming associations in neighbouring counties. John Boys, for instance, a prominent breeder and agriculturist who wrote seventeen articles for the Annals, apart from his contribution to the Board of Agriculture for which he wrote A General View of the County of Kent in 1796, belonged to the Kent and to the Sussex Agricultural Societies and he was a member of the committees of both organizations. He was also a founding member and prominent supporter of the Smithfield Club, where he won a large number of prizes with his cattle.

11. Annals, Vol.I, p.109; Vol.II, p.169; Vol.10, p.153; and Vol.18, pp.612-622.

Boys was also Commissioner for Sewers in East Kent and was the originator and main promoter of the project to drain the Finglesham and Eastry Brooks - an idea, incidentally, which he got
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from the Annals.

Another active member of the Kent farming interest was William Hall, who farmed 306 acres for which he paid an annual rent of £350. He belonged to the Kent and to the Odiham Agricultural Societies. This last one a Hampshire group. Hall was well-known in the agricultural world and when he died his obituary was published
13
in the Farmer's Magazine of Edinburgh.

The other two Annals authors who lived in Kent and who belonged to the Kent Agricultural Society were Robert LeGrand, of Sandwich, and William Bland, of Sittingbourne. Both were farmers and both were extremely active in the affairs of their local farmer's group.

Hampshire also boasted two agricultural societies, one of which - the Odiham Agricultural Society - was one of the most active, well-known and important in England. The other was the Hampshire Experimental Farming Association which was founded much later and was presided
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over by another Annals contributor, Henry Hood.

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12. Gentlemen's Magazine, XCV, 1825, Pt.I, pp.86-87; Dict. of National Biography, Vol.6, p.131; William Berry, County Genealogies, Kent, p.446; John Donaldson, Agricultural Biography, p.76, Annals, Vol.21, p.405 and Vol.33, pp.404-424.
 13. Farmer's Magazine, Edinburgh, Vol.I, p.361.
 14. Annals, Vol.38, p.321 for Hampshire Experimental Farming Association.

The Odiham Society claimed the membership of at least eight top contributors to the Annals without counting Arthur Young, and also of the three Hampshire authors who published more than five articles each. Furthermore, it could definitely claim to have been accepted by the higher reaches of the academic world as among its members were none other than the Provost and Fellows of Queen's College, Oxford.

The three farmer-authors from Hampshire who published more than five articles apiece in the Annals were also members of the Odiham Society. One of them, Mr. James Huntingford, who was secretary of the Society for many years, was also a co-founder and member of the Committee of the Georgic Society and eventually was named for the post of secretary of the newly founded Veterinary College in London.

Alexander Baxter, a farmer and a main contributor to the Annals, was also the chairman of the Odiham Society and a principal exhibitor in local agricultural meetings.

Moving further West, in Somerset, the Annals boasted three regular contributors of which one, Mr. John Billingsley, was also the vice-president of the East and West of England Society, and another, John Proctor Anderdon, a prominent member of the same group.

15. Annals, Vol.3, pp.231, 304, 481; Vol.5, pp.282-287; Vol.4, pp.193, 321; Vol.15, p.244; vol.14, pp.163, 403.

16. Annals, Vol.17, pp.1-7; Vol.20, p.339.

17. Annals, Vol.3, pp.304-314.

18. Annals, Billingsley, Vol.17, p.399; Anderdon, Vol.3, p.50.

Somerset, in fact, there were two agricultural societies, the Bath and West and the Wiveliscombe Agricultural Society, and both were closely related to the Annals: Lord Sommerville, a close friend of Arthur Young and president of the Board of Agriculture, being one of the important members of the Wiveliscombe Society. ¹⁹

As far as the farming interest was concerned, Sussex was almost a one-man County. There were a number of lesser contributors, but John Ellman was more than enough by himself. He was responsible for the foundation of the Sussex Agricultural Society, the Smithfield Club and the Lewes Wool Fair. ²⁰ He occupied the post of Commissioner of Taxes for some time and later on, as Expenditor of Lewes and Laughton Levels, he planned, supervised and carried through the projects for the improvement of the navigation of the Ouse and the reconstruction of the Newhaven Harbour. He conducted a one-man campaign which was entirely successful, against the granting of licenses to Public Houses in his home parish of Glynd and he also maintained a local school out of his own pocket. Lastly, he instituted the tradition of giving land to his labourers when they married, a gesture which made him extremely popular in his district. He was, it must be noted, a farmer and the son of a farmer who left him the ownership of the family land in Glynd. Throughout his life he lived by farming

19. Annals, Vol.33, pp.107-108; Vol.36, pp.405-414; Vol.41, pp.418-426.

20. Farmer's Magazine, Edinburgh, Vol.I, pp.82-94; Dict. of National Biography, Vol.17, pp.302-303; Annals, Vol.33, pp.404-424.

and all his other activities were conceived and realized as functions secondary to his principal interest of farming his land in the best possible way.

At one time Arthur Young was very keen in convincing the government that the Royal Agricultural Academy should be formed after the fashion of similar institutions in the Arts and Sciences. For his first academicians he selected those who in his opinion were the best farmers in England, and one of these was John Ellman. The others were: John Billingsley of Ashwick Grove, Somerset; John Boys of Betshanger, Kent; George Culley of Fenton, Northumberland; Hutcheson Mure of Great Saxham, Suffolk; William Darn of Gillingham, Kent; and Sir Joseph Banks.

In Norfolk there were three agricultural societies, the Norwich Agricultural Society, ²¹ the West Norfolk Agricultural Society, ²² and the Norfolk Agricultural Society. ²³ The last one was the largest and most famous and to it belonged at least five well-known members of the farming interest. This was also the society to which T.W. Coke devoted much attention and time.

A complete enumeration of every one of the fifty-three most prolific authors with the details of their farming life which are of interest in this context would be an extremely tedious process. For

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21. Farmer's Magazine, (London), Vol.2, pp.231-232.
 22. Annals, Vol.39, pp.322-326.
 23. Farmer's Magazine, Vol.9, pp.14-16; and Annals, Vol.45, pp.93-101.

this reason two tables have been prepared; one listing the authors, the number of articles they wrote, the places they came from, societies to which they belonged, and any other information which could be helpful to form a better idea of the general characteristics of the farming interest; and another listing all the English agricultural societies which have been found to have existed during the latter part of the eighteenth century.

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An examination of the available data about the thirty-one English Agricultural Societies and the fifty-three most important contributors to the Annals is less rewarding than might be expected as far as clear-cut generalizations are concerned. For instance, one of the first questions to be answered is whether there is any correlation at all between the activities of the farming interest and the spread of modern agricultural practices, improved farming methods, etc. The fact is that there is no correlation at all - negative or positive. There was as much farming interest activity in Devon as there was in Norfolk. Or, again, as many agricultural societies were formed and flourished in Lancashire as in Suffolk - more in fact. One easy pitfall is to think that the farming interest was active in those places where such activity was needed. That is, that they preached and were heard and followed in counties where the fashion of the new farming had not yet reached. However, this apparently impeccable line of reasoning is not entirely

24. See Appendices X and Y.
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correct because in counties such as Nottinghamshire, Norfolk, Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire - to name a few - where improved methods of farming were coupled with a large percentage of the land being actually enclosed during this period, the farming interest had as much following and success as in Lancashire, Westmorland, Devon, Cornwall, and Shropshire, where there was plenty of scope for improvement in the methods used to farm the land.

Furthermore, it is also easy to expect that those counties where the farming interest was active should have shown signs of progress in later years; although this appears to be a reasonable expectation there is not very much truth in it. One reason for this is obvious: there is no single condition for agricultural or economic progress. When great advancement occurs, it is usually due to a coalition of important factors sparked or pushed forward by one or very few overriding circumstances which are usually desirable but also defy reasoning. This one dynamic force can be as prosaic as good soil or as dramatic as a great leader. The farming interest of England was a child of the intellectual climate of its period and of the economic demands of the country. It flourished because in an age of optimism and great confidence in man's ability to rule nature, it appeared that a methodical and intelligent application of science to agriculture held the key to the solution of humanity's chronic want of food. This oversimplified view was carried further into the field of the social sciences and was responsible for many of the farming interest's views on social change and social institutions.

However, such a belief and enthusiasm was not enough - especially in the absence of effective political control - to actually change the structure of society or even introduce such changes into the methods of production, ~~as to bring reforms via the Marxist thoroughfare.~~ In the specific case of the farming interest, it would be unfair to say that all their efforts were wasted, but it would be equally unrealistic to suggest that they led the nation into the adoption of improved farming practices.

It appears that the best thing to do in this respect is to fall back on commonsense and say that the fact that the farming interest did practise better farming, conduct experiments and give publicity to their findings, must have without doubt contributed to the progress of agricultural practice in England.

The members of the top echelons on the farming interest appear to have been fairly wealthy, none seemed to have diverted capital into mining or manufactures and all seem to have depended on agriculture for their income. Far from moving closer to the industrial circles of their time, they appear to have been extremely suspicious of the whole class of "shopkeepers and manufacturers" and to have remained agrarian both in their habits and in their first loyalties.

The role which the non-farmers played in the spreading of ideas and the publicity given to the activities of the farming interest was extremely important, but it should not be exaggerated. At first sight it might even look as if the whole farming interest - as a pressure group - was the creature of a small group of politically-minded

agricultural journalists, principally Young, Capel Lofft, William Pitt, Thomas Ruggles, etc. This is entirely a misleading idea. The non-farmer was in the minority within the farming interest, and even though he should have been more prolific with the pen than his farming colleagues, he was not. Nothing distinguishes him apart from the fact that he is constantly apologizing for not being a "practical farmer". Apart from this, even if the non-farmer had been in the majority and had been leading an obedient and amorphous group, it must be remembered that the farmers agreed with the view published in the Annals and more often than not went further and asked for immediate action at the political level with a zest and enthusiasm which must have proved quite overwhelming to their urban colleagues.

Young and his followers held strong and unsuccessful views on a number of subjects, including agricultural wages, exportation of corn, assize of bread, taxation, naval supplies and fisheries, and even such topics as foreign and domestic military policy. I have chosen general enclosure, the wool bill of 1788, and the commutation of tithes as the three subjects in which they suffered their most representative failures. Consequently this study is organized in three parts dealing with each of these topics.

The main source of material on Young and his farming interest are the Annals of Agriculture. Most of the opinions, pronouncements and activities of this group found their way into the pages of this publication which appeared without interruption from 1784 until 1809, with a last volume in 1815. As I am trying to understand not the

mentality of an age but that of a single group, I have, as far as possible, restricted myself to the use of this primary source and have drawn from other sources only to supplement this basic information.

Young died in 1820 and ten years before he had ceased publishing the Annals. The Board of Agriculture, which was in many ways associated with Young's farming interest, died a slow death and finally had its charter withdrawn in 1822. Thus, the spokesman and two of the main public instruments of the farming interest disappeared in a comparatively short time. The farming interest itself continued a separate existence, but at least at one crucial moment it joined, or was joined by, the orthodox landed interest in defence of a common policy. This was in 1815 when every single group connected with agriculture was faced with a crisis which - they thought - could only be averted by the passage of strong, protectionist legislation. They succeeded in passing the Corn Law of 1815, but this proved less effective than they had hoped and when in the 1840's the country was again faced with a dilemma between protection and free trade, the landed interest divided horizontally between "those elements which were primarily aristocratic, and those which were primarily agricultural".²⁵ The farming interest was primarily agricultural, and

25. The Repeal of the Corn Laws and the Politics of the Forties.
G. Kitson Clark, Economic History Review, 2nd. series, Vol.IV,
1951, pp.1-13.

it was a typical pressure-group, with limited views on policy, with a very narrow field of interest and almost an absolute disregard for the other aspects of the national economy. The individual member of a pressure-group, particularly an agrarian pressure-group, is egocentric by definition, he cannot begin to understand national interests but think, politically and economically, in terms of his own particular form of trade or activity. Thus, when the whole of England was living and breathing the economics of free trade, when ^{MANY} every statesman was convinced that the way to national prosperity could only be found through free trade, the farming interest dissented and tried desperately, and again, unsuccessfully, to defend the Corn Laws. But the traditional landed interest did not join them in this last stand. They were becoming less and less a pressure-group as their interests became wider and their consequent identification with national policy more all-embracing. The aristocracy of the land was becoming less dependent upon the product of agriculture while the farming interest was still tied, politically and economically, to the minutest price variations for their products. The traditional landed interest and their representatives in Parliament could afford to be convinced by reason and logic, of the advantages of free trade for the nation as a whole; "those arguments (for free trade) seemed reasonable enough to great nobles whose rent rolls were comfortably supplemented by revenue from mines, or docks, or urban property... They did not console farmers who thought that they might be ruined by one year's drop in price..." 26

The period under study is that of the infancy of a group which was extremely short-lived and which never attained the heights of political power which its American counterpart has enjoyed for some time. The reasons for this are not within the scope of this thesis, but it seems fair to assume that in a nation which was becoming increasingly industrialized, a farming interest which based its attitude towards national issues on the view that agriculture was the mainstay of the economy, was doomed to fail and eventually to disappear as a factor in the making of national economic policies.

CHAPTER II

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE GENERAL ENCLOSURE BILL 1789-1801.

The first article in the first volume of the Annals of Agriculture contained a long exposition of Young's views on foreign and domestic policy and on the problems of agriculture in the post-war period. ²⁷ In 1784, Britain was struggling to recover both economically and psychologically from the setback in America and there was widespread reluctance to engage in further colonial ventures although it was also necessary to formulate a policy with respect to the vast British possessions in Canada, the Caribbean and Asia. Young argued against any increase in capital investment in these colonies because he feared that such enterprises would be an alternative use for capital which would otherwise be spent improving British agriculture. "Let not the possession of these countries deceive us into an idea that they are worth colonizing. If they continue poor, they will be no markets. If they become rich, they will revolt; and that is perhaps the best thing they can do for our interest."
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27. Annals of Agriculture and other Useful Arts; London, 1784-1815, 46 vols. collected and published by Arthur Young. See Vol.I, pp. 1-87.

28. An Enquiry into the Situation of the Kingdom on the Conclusion of the Late Treaty, and into the Surest Means of Adding to the National Prosperity by a Proper Application of the Arts of Peace. Annals, Vol.I, 1784, p.15.

After demonstrating by a complicated statistical comparison, that capital invested in the Sugar Islands paid less and was a greater risk than when invested in British land improvement, he went on to propose a new policy for the agricultural development of Britain.

Wastes, he considered a glaring anachronism and his first proposal was "to bring into culture all wastes which are now uncultivated, not because the soil is bad, but because (they are) cursed with the rights of commonage". This he considered "the very greatest object of British policy".

His scheme to bring into cultivation the wastes of Britain was definitely impractical and a good example of the type of statistical drunkenness which afflicted so many political economists of that time. However, it contained several proposals which were typical of Young's views on the general problem of enclosures and the landless peasantry.

Eight million acres of wastes in England, five million in Scotland, and 200,000 able hands discharged by the advent of peace; these were the raw materials for Young's agrarian reform. He would give ten acres of waste to every family, a house, furniture, "the absolute necessaries", fencing for the fields, livestock, ("I would give every man a cow with a calf ... and I think it might not be amiss to let him have two ewe sheep, though in some situations a hog would be preferable...") and seed, ("three sacks of potatoes for feed are essential ... one sack of corn..."). The total cost of all this he calculated at £30.0.0.

Besides these implements, the new settlers would have a lease for three lives, and by act of parliament, would be freed from all demands for tithes, poor rates, or any other parish charges. But in reciprocity, they would be "cut off from all right, in case of misfortune, of being themselves or posterity burthensome to the parish".²⁹

To this basic plan, he added a topical item by suggesting that in offering the recently discharged army personnel access to these facilities, "many ... of the men who would now be settled would succeed and thrive greatly and be a constant spectacle to others of the reward that should attend the service of their country."

This was basically a plan of land redistribution aimed at creating a large class of small landowners and its principle re-occurs frequently throughout Young's career. He recognized the advantages of large scale farming, but he was never consciously prepared to sacrifice the material livelihood of thousands of displaced peasant families in order to make place for the new large scale capitalist farms. In fact, he did not believe that the welfare of the cottager class was incompatible with the introduction of technical improvements in the land.

29. Annals, Vol.I, p.56.

When the French Revolution drove the propertied classes of England into a panic, Young's proposal for the creation of a "militia of property" was again based on the assumption that the ownership of land creates stable, responsible citizens. During the great scarcities at the end of the century, he wrote, "It is sufficiently evident ... that the great engine wherewith the poor may be governed and provided for the most easily and the most cheaply, is property."³⁰ When the end of the war was thought to be near, he renewed his suggestion that wastes could be opened for cultivation by allotting them to discharged soldiers and their families. It is clear that his preoccupation with land redistribution and its allocation to the landless poor was a permanent feature of his thinking on agricultural policy and not, as it has been suggested, the result of disillusionment with the conduct of private enclosures and their effect on the cottager class.³¹ His first proposal for a massive redistribution of wastes was made in

30. Annals. Vol.36, p.503.

31. In 1800, he wrote the following about enclosures: "If the direct amelioration of their condition (the poor) be not a leading object in such a measure, I confess ... that I do not wish to see any general enclosure bill pass ... the labouring poor have as much right to subsistence as any man to his land; and when it is evident from experience that the culture of the kingdom is insufficient to secure it, the legislature is bound so to divide wastes as best to promote that security of subsistence which might be effected by allotments to cottages".

1784, many years before he, or anybody else, had become aware of the terrible social consequences of enclosures.³²

Young was not satisfied with a brief sketch of his plan but proceeded to demonstrate that it was financially feasible in characteristic manner. Half a million pounds annually, he suggested, would settle 16,666 men and their families in 10 acre farms of reclaimed or newly opened wastes. Consequently, every year, 166,660 acres would be brought into cultivation. Assuming that this would raise the value of this wasteland by 40 pounds per acre, he calculated that the scheme could add £333,320 to the nation's income. This amount, he argued, could be taxed at a fixed rate of 1/8 and would produce enough to cover the original investment. Furthermore, the 166,660 men and their families (at the rate of five per house) would have increased the population by "833,330 souls added to the kingdom ... all this for a less sum than it costs us to keep Gibraltar, a barren rock..."

"If he were a King", wrote Young, he would "send a message to the House of Commons, desiring to be invested with a power ... of ordering the necessary enclosures, buildings, and expenditures for the establishment of farms in tracts now waste. The Commons would rejoice to see the presence of their sovereign diffusing industry; making barren deserts (sic) smile with cultivation, and peopling

32. H.W.R. Curtler, The Enclosure and Redistribution of Our Land. 1920, p.172.

joyless wastes with the grateful hearts of men."

As it could be expected, neither "farmer George", nor the House of Commons, took the hint; the plan ended in nothing and the wastelands of England survived throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century, when some of them were used as bombing ranges by the R.A.F.

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"But improvement of our wastelands is not the only field in which wisdom may increase national resources ... there are probably five million acres uninclosed in the kingdom, which being under some sort of cultivation, do not class with the wastes I before considered." To promote the enclosure of open fields was Young's second most important policy for British agriculture. He asked for a new, "more accommodating system" of enclosing which could remove the power which "ignorance, prejudice, or caprice" could exert in opposing enclosures.

The cultivation of wastes and the enclosure of open fields were the two basic policies on which Young's programme of agricultural development was based. His scheme for distributing wastelands was

33. Annals. Vol.I, p.61.

34. A few months before being appointed secretary to the Board of Agriculture in 1793, Young bought a tract of 4,400 acres in the Yorkshire moors, between Pateley Bridge and Grassington. He was convinced that this waste-land could be improved and used as good grazing land for sheep. This, by the way, was precisely the sort of waste which he wanted to use in his land redistribution scheme. Today, a century and a half later, the area between Pateley Bridge and Grassington is as bleak and sterile as it ever was. Needless to say, Young's venture with his 4,400 acre sheep farm was not a success. See Annals. Vol.27, p.290, 1796.

never considered seriously during his lifetime, but his second proposal, for a general enclosure bill, marked the beginning of a long struggle during which, sometimes alone, sometimes with the support of the farming interest he struggled unsuccessfully against a remarkably apathetic Parliament. Between 1784 and 1801, there were six completely unsuccessful attempts at passing a general enclosure bill. Even the 1801, so-called general enclosure bill, was a far cry from the type of legislation which Young and the farming interest had in mind. After 1801, it was still necessary to apply to Parliament to enclose, and the expense of the bill was not very much less than before.³⁵ Many of the progress-conscious agriculturists whose views Young represented were dissatisfied with the legislation of 1801, - there were four attempts to repeal it between 1801 and 1813, - but its passage had taken away the momentum from the farming pressure group and it was not until twenty-five years after Young's death that a bill was finally passed which embodied the demands he made in 1784.

The principal argument offered by the farming interest in favour of general enclosure was that the open-field system presented an insuperable barrier to the introduction of new agricultural techniques. This, however, was not strictly true after 1773, when Sir Richard Sutton managed to pass a bill through Parliament which

35. Curtler, The Enclosure and Redistribution of Our Land, 1920, pp.151-152.

provided for a degree of flexibility in the traditional management of open-fields. This act was largely ignored during the controversy until in 1792, Sir Richard himself sent the text of the act to Young for publication in the Annals. In a letter which was published together with the text of the act, he explained; "Our acts of Parliament, after being passed, are not made public, and I had reason to think this in particular was very little known ... I found some gentlemen object to it as supposing it might discourage inclosures, which they consider as a better thing..."³⁶

The 1773 Act, (13 George II c.81) made it legal for three-fourths in number and value of the occupiers of an open-field, to agree on any fencing, change in cultivation techniques or crops to be made, providing that "such rules ... shall be in force no longer than six years or two rounds of the field, according to the established custom..." This clause provided also that "cottagers, or any other person having no land in such common fields but having right of common, shall not be excluded, unless at a meeting of occupiers, such cottager shall agree in writing an annual payment or annual advantage or compensation." The act also specifically stated that "balks, slades, or meers may be ploughed with the consent of the Lord of the Manor, owners of separate sheep-walks, and three-fourths in number and value of occupiers." The lords of the manor were allowed, with the previous consent of three-fourths of those

36. Annals. Vol.17, pp.516-523.

having rights of common, to lease up to one-twelfth of the common land for a rent, the product of which was to be used in drainage, fencing, or improving the common. The purpose of this act, wrote Gilbert Slater, "was to enable the common field system to be adjusted to the new agriculture of the eighteenth century..."

There is little doubt that this was the intention of the promoter of the bill, but, as Sir Richard himself pointed out to the editor of the Annals, the act was almost unknown even by the farming interest.

Both Curtler and Slater also took the view that the Act had become a dead letter soon after it was enacted. ³⁷ At any rate, it is probable that neither Young, nor his associates were too keen in bringing its existence to the public eye and this, for the same reasons stated by Sir Richard when he submitted it to the Annals. His bill was a compromise, and Young and his group were not in the mood for compromise.

On the side of Young and the farming interest, the campaign in favour of a general enclosure bill was conducted in two levels of argumentation. The first was positive; they were in favour of enclosures. To support this point, they tried to prove that the open-field system of farming was an obstacle in the introduction of new techniques and they also maintained that common fields were harbouring large numbers of idle people who endangered the morals

37. Gilbert Slater, 1907 and W.M.R. Curtler, op.cit., p.178.
The English Peasantry and the Enclosure of Common Fields.

and tranquility of the labouring community. By depriving these people of their rights of pasturage, use of fuel, etc., enclosure was expected to force them into more profitable occupations, i.e. as farms workers in the newly enclosed lands. The second part of their argumentation was negative; against the existing system of private bills of enclosure. The main reasons for this attitude were related to the expense and delay involved in transacting these private bills through Parliament.

By passing a general enclosure bill which would rationalize and simplify the legal requirements and do away with the need to apply to Parliament for every single act of enclosure, they expected to reduce considerably the expense in lawyers and parliamentary fees. Delay was involved in the long and complex parliamentary procedure and it was therefore proposed that the best way to reduce it to a minimum was to vest the power to sanction enclosures and appoint commissioners on the local authorities instead of on Westminster.

Whether these allegations were justified or not is not within the scope of this study. It is sufficient here to state that these were the main grounds on which the movement for a general bill of enclosure was launched in the late 1780s.

The first attempt to pass a general enclosure bill took place in 1789. On July 2nd, William Jolisse presented in the House of Commons a "Bill to Improve the Cultivation of the Commonable Lands Within that Part of Great Britain called England". Six months later, in February 1790, it was reported that the original Bill had been withdrawn and a new one presented by Mr. Jolisse. This second version did not have a better fate; its second reading was negatived 13-32 and after March, 1790, it was withdrawn.

Late that year Young published a copy of the Jolisse Bill in the Annals. The Bill proposed that the Sheriff of the County at the request of the Lord of the Manor should have power to select a number of persons for jury duty. A list of these persons should be sent to the Lord of the Manor who would strike a given number of names off the list. Every other person with recognized rights of common would do the same until a specified number of names remained on the list. These persons would elect, from among themselves, a jury to act as commissioners for the re-allocation of land.

This system obviously lent itself to easy manipulation by the Lord of the Manor and the county officials who were usually partial to the cause of enclosures. ³⁸ By this method enclosure

38. On February 2nd, 1796, a petition was received in the Commons from the Justices of the Peace of Lancashire in favour of the general enclosure bill before Parliament at that time. In 1800, the Grand Jury of the County of York sent to the Board of Agriculture a series of "forcible statements" in favour of general enclosure.

motions need never reach Parliament. Even in the case of people with counter-claims they were not to appeal to Westminster but to the assizes of the county where the enclosure took place.

The Bill was printed in the October 1790 issue of the Annals with some observations by Arthur Young that it had failed "because such measures never can pass our manufacturing, trading and shopkeeping legislature. ³⁹ And referring to the House of Commons' objections he wrote: "they are ... obvious and vague, and in truth, there was not one argument ... that merited one moment's attention....."

Nevertheless, it is not difficult to find powerful reasons why the House would object to such a Bill. Firstly, it was not uncommon to find contributors in the Annals recommending, together with general enclosure, a general commutation of tithes. ⁴⁰ Such proposals certainly reached the ears of the Church of England's hierarchy, and general enclosure became in their eyes closely associated with plans for the commutation of tithes. This made the established Church very suspicious of any proposal for General Enclosure. Even the Board of Agriculture was to find itself involved in difficulties later on because of this problem of tithe commutation.

39. Annals, Vol.14, p.313.

40. A contributor to the Annals, John Jenkinson, offering a plan for enclosing wastes in 1785, struck a familiar note when he wrote: "It would be a great happiness ... to annihilate tithes, both in the new and old enclosures." Annals, Vol.3, p.377.

A most important factor in preventing the smooth passage of a general enclosure bill was that of the payment of parliamentary fees. Every stage of a private enclosure bill through the complex parliamentary maze had to be carefully paved with appropriate payments whose recipients had a definite interest in maintaining the existing system. The fees varied according to the type of bill. The following list was published in the Annals and gives an idea of the variations :

Single bill fee (total for both Houses)	70.	6.	2
Double bill	154.	3.	6
3-single bill	175.	19.	10
2-double bill	246.	0.	2
5-single bill	313.	4.	10
3-double bill	372.	0.	4
4-double bill	483.	0.	4

These are the averages for the 707 private enclosure bills passed by Parliament between 1786 and 1799. Of these, only three were "single bills", 679 were "double bills", and 20 were "2-double bills".

Single bills were those in which only one person was interested; double bills were those in which a group of persons were involved and 2-double bills were those in which two groups of persons with conflicting views were interested.

The Report from the Select Committee on Wastelands contained some detailed accounts of the actual payments which went to make up

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 the total fee. Taking a double bill and a 2-double bill as examples, the total fee was made up of the following items :

<u>House of Commons</u>	<u>Double-Bill</u>	<u>2-Double Bill</u>
	£. s. d.	£. s. d.
Bill fee and small fees	28. 15. 4	58. 17. 4
Committee fees	9. 19. 2	16. 7. 4
Messenger fees	2. 16. 0	4. 6. 0
Ingrossing fees	48. 3. 0	42. 14. 6
Total in House of Commons	89. 13. 6	122. 5. 2
<u>House of Lords</u>		
Bill fees	54. 0. 0	108. 0. 0
Yeoman Usher & Doorkeeper	5. 5. 0	8. 8. 0
Order of Committee	1. 1. 0	1. 1. 0
Committee fees	4. 4. 0	6. 6. 0
Total House of Lords	64. 10. 0	123. 15. 0
TOTAL both Houses	154. 3. 6	246. 0. 2

"Besides the stated fees, the doorkeeper at the House of Commons usually receives a guinea, for his trouble in distributing the printed bills; the ingrossing clerks two guineas, for expedition, and for alterations on the 3rd reading of the bill; and other small gratuities are paid to the inferior officers of the two houses." 43

42. Report from the Select Committee on Wastelands.
Journals of the House of Commons, Vol.LV, p.382.

43. Idem, p.392.

It is beyond doubt that all the officials that received these fees had a vested interest in the rejection of any general enclosure bill that did not take their loss of income into consideration, and it is also clear that their pressure, together with the influence of a highly suspicious Church Establishment, found little difficulty in smothering the Jolisse Bill.

General enclosure was a complex proposal which not only cut across established practices in agriculture, religion and parliamentary usages, but also became a political and economic issue. Although parliamentary fees were instrumental in defeating the Jolisse Bill, they were by no means the only factor which contributed to the eventual failure of the general enclosure campaign. The lawyers, clerks and other recipients of fees were opposing the bill from outside; but there were powerful interests within the agricultural groups which did their best either to prevent it from passing, or were absolutely indifferent to its fate.

To begin with, during the last decades of the century, not all farmers and landowners were equally keen on enclosing. In fact, something akin to diminishing returns was at that time arresting the momentum of improvements. By the time Young and his farming interest began campaigning, most of the light, sandy soils which had been under open-fields, had already been enclosed. What remained unenclosed was mostly waste and common with heavy, clay soils which demanded a considerable capital outlay before real profitable exploitation could begin. At a time when the cost of borrowing was increasing, any demand for large capital investment was

unattractive and those farmers and landowners who thirty years before would have gladly supported a general enclosure bill, remained indifferent when Young called for their support. Even those farmers who had already invested capital in the land they held, were not in a position to expand. For a man who controlled enough land in a parish to be in a position to initiate enclosure legislation, the added incentive to expand was lessened in proportion to his capacity to improve what he already held. Presumably his land was already one half, or nearly half of the area, (three fifths in value were the minimum demanded to initiate a bill for enclosure in any given parish) and therefore, if he was an active improver, he already had invested a fairly large capital in this land. Therefore, his desire to expand and bring the surrounding wastes under cultivation was probably checked both by his lack of capital and by the type of soil which remained unenclosed.

Another reason which must be mentioned is that of chronological precedence. By the time Young and his associates started to campaign for general enclosure, over 1700 acts of enclosure had already been passed by Parliament. One can deduce with some justification, that the landowners who succeeded in enclosing open-fields earlier in the century, were men with considerable influence both in their parishes and in Westminster. Their motivation was economic in the great majority of cases and by the time Young started to campaign and prices started to rise as a consequence of the French war, these first enclosers started to reap the benefit of their earlier investment.

It was only human of them not to be over-enthusiastic about the prospect of every other landowner being allowed to enclose at a greatly reduced expense and with the added advantage of parliamentary support. If they were at all economically minded, they must have gathered at least the crumbs from Adam Smith's pronouncements and must have been aware of such a thing as supply and demand. In fact, for those who enclosed after 1770, but before - say, 1793, when the Board of Agriculture was established - the general bill with its promise of inexpensive enclosures for the many was a veritable threat to their investment.

Political factors abounded in an age when the whole of Europe was plunged into war. The very fact that the French Revolution was, at least in theory, a reformist movement, made any attempt to change existing institutions in England suspect of Jacobin intentions. The extent to which this was a factor is difficult to ascertain, but from Young's correspondence in the Annals it is clear that it did play a role in making general enclosure a questionable proposal at least for some over-zealous patriots.

The next important step in this struggle was the formation of the Board of Agriculture in May, 1793.

The importance of the first Board of Agriculture in promoting agricultural legislation and acting as a central organization for the landed interest has been greatly exaggerated by historians of English agriculture. The real efficacy of this institution was often

questioned by contemporaries and even superficial study shows that they were nearer to the truth than those who, years later, have hailed it as an effective and progressive institution. To be fair, the reasons for its lack of success are found not only in the Board itself, but in the indifferent attitude of Pitt's government and the hostility of the Church of England. The Board just did not have the financial power to implement many of its better projects or the influence needed to pass legislation through Parliament.

The Board was also hindered from the very beginning by the hasty and badly organized publication of a large number of extremely deficient and even inaccurate county reports. These were produced at great cost when the Board had only a limited capital at

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44. Parliament voted an annual grant of £3,000 to the Board. Other sources of income were a limited number of East India shares and bonds and some individual subscriptions of £10.10.0 each which brought in more than £1,300 in 1795, but only an average of £150 to £200 later on. After Sinclair's term in the presidency, the Board's finances were left in a critical state with a total debt of more than £2,000 which had to be serviced for several years. From the Agricultural Society Treasurer's Ledger, MSS volume in the Royal Agricultural Society Library, London.
45. The original project had been to prepare a "Statistical Survey" of England, similar to that made for Scotland by Sir John Sinclair. As the Church objected to this plan, it was decided instead to make a series of county reports containing all the information which could be of value to those interested in agriculture. The reports were prepared by "surveyors" which had been hastily recruited and which included some extremely able ones and many who were incapable of producing reliable work. The reports were first published in 1795 in a form which Sinclair called, "printed manuscript". These were quarto volumes with very wide margins for corrections and additions. These volumes were to be proof-read by experienced farmers in every county and then returned to the Board for final revision and publication. Unfortunately, the Board was judged by these first printed
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its disposal and their failure, both technical and financial, had some part in precipitating Sir John Sinclair's defeat in the 1798 elections for the presidency of the Board.

In addition to the fact that the reports were incomplete, the rumour spread that its real object was to obtain information which would lead to an increase in taxation. Also the fact that the Board was a semi-official organization made farmers suspicious of its activities and reluctant to offer their co-operation.

Its conspicuous failure to pass any legislation of real importance during its first few years of existence lessened even more its already declining prestige. What exasperated farmers more than anything else was the obvious inability of the Board of implement legislation which had been agitated by the farming interest for several years. After a number of attempts, the Board failed to obtain a general enclosure bill. When it tried to approach the problem of tithe commutation, Archbishop Moore stepped in and the Board had to retreat. Nevertheless, as early as September, 1793, a correspondent to the Annals had written: "In vain may Sir John Sinclair plan for the kingdom at large the increase of arable culture by a Board of Agriculture, unless the first result of its attempt be a clear statement to Parliament, of the necessity for a full, adequate, and permanent commutation of tithes..."⁴⁶

(footnote contd. from previous page)

manuscripts, most of which were definitely deficient. Even Young, a man not unused to publishing ill-digested facts, wrote about this that he was, "mortified to the quick at the publication of such a mass of erroneous and insufficient information."

Seven years later, when Sinclair had already been ousted from the presidency, partly for trying to press legislation of this type and partly due to his financial and publishing fiasco, a group of "practical farmers" published a pamphlet addressed to the new president, Lord Somerville, which read, "We have as yet seen nothing practical done by the Board of Agriculture but two or three puny bantlings that were the offsprings of the late president and died in their birth. The effort to which we allude is the introduction of a bill into Parliament for a general enclosure of commons surely, my Lord, it wanted no ghost to tell Sir John Sinclair that whatever measure tends materially to abridge the fees of the officers of the House of Commons, tends also to cramp the patronage of the Minister and that such a measure is not only sure to be negatived, but even to bring down vengeance upon the head of the projector...."⁴⁷

As far as the demands of the farming interest were concerned, the Board proved almost as good as non-existent. After seven years of intermittent efforts, it had only one important piece of legislation to its name; an act standardizing weights and measures throughout England and Wales. But the commutation of tithes, the general enclosure bill, the free export of wool, in short, all those issues which had captured the attention of the farming interest for

47. A Letter to Lord Somerville, with a view to showing the inutility of the plans and researches of the Board of Agriculture, London, 1800.

several years, proved beyond the power of the Board. Out of sheer lack of success the Board became little more than a rich farmer's club in London. Perhaps the clearest proof of its lack of touch and prestige with the landed interest is the fact that it declined and perished during the very years which witnessed some of the greatest and most critical issues being debated on a national scale by the manufacturing commercial groups and the agricultural interest. By 1815, the Board was but a name; in 1820 its parliamentary grant was stopped because the executive committee was unable to spend it! Finally, it was dissolved without protest in 1822, two years after Young had died. It left behind a handful of volumes of Communications,⁴⁸ a large number of county reports, some excellent, the majority extremely bad, a few essays on grasslands, some "useful projects", gold medals, premiums on good ploughing, lectures on scientific agriculture and chemistry, and the like. It did contribute to the dissemination of agricultural information, but to say that it had a decisive influence on the agricultural movements of its time is to be generous to the point of inaccuracy.

His first presidential address on September 4, 1793, Sir John Sinclair suggested that the Board should prepare a report on agricultural improvements to be submitted to the House of Commons during

48. In 1796, the Board decided to issue an annual volume of Communications on general agricultural topics. The first volume was published in 1797 and in all, seven were published, each consisting of approximately 500 pages quarto. Vol.2, 1800; Vol.3, 1802; Vol.4, 1805; Vol.5, 1806; Vol.6, 1808-10; Vol.7, 1811-13.

the next parliamentary session. Nothing was done about this until two years later when the 1795-1796 famine moved Sinclair to act. He described this decision in an autobiographical sketch prefacing his collected letters. ⁴⁹ "During the scarcity that prevailed in 1795-1796 I made a motion in the House of Commons for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the state of the waste lands of the Kingdom; and strongly recommended a general bill of enclosure, to preclude the recurrence of a similar calamity in future."

When Sinclair first proposed the formation of this Select Committee he had obtained the co-operation of both Fox and Pitt. Later both declined because, according to Sinclair's son, of the great unpopularity which the project of general enclosure had in legal circles.

The finished report which was read on December 23rd, 1795, contained almost exclusively the views of Sinclair, i.e. the Board of Agriculture, on the problem of wastelands and enclosure. One of the final recommendations of the Report was :

"That the House should grant leave to bring in a Bill to divide and enclose wastelands and commons by agreement of the parties concerned or certain proportion thereof."

49. The Correspondence of Sir John Sinclair, Bart., Vol. I, London, 1831, p.xv. Parliamentary Proceedings.

This resolution was read to the House and Sinclair moved to bring in "A Bill for Facilitating the Division and Enclosure of Commons by Agreement Among the Parties Interested Therein."

The 1796 Bill was the first attempt by the Board of Agriculture to pass such legislation and both the text of the Bill and the conduct of the struggle in Parliament showed much more preparation and planning than in the Jolisse Bill, six years before.

The Bill received first and second readings and was committed and amended three times; the last time it was sent to a Select Committee which included Sinclair, Jolisse and other members who had proposed the original Bill. In March, 1796, a motion came from the Select Committee asking for authorization to make two bills out of the one committed. This motion was negatived. The Select Committee reported on the amended Bill in April and the House re-committed it again to a whole House Committee to meet May 4th. On this day, because of lack of quorum, the House was adjourned. The Bill was not reported again.

Earlier in the year, the text of the Bill appeared in the Annals with a long introduction by Sir John Sinclair. The general provisions regulating the agreement between "the parties interested therein" were not particularly different from those found in most private bills; persons holding three fifths or more of the total value of the rights over the waste in question were given the right to enter into a legal agreement for nominating commissioners to allocate the

land. The most delicate points were those referring to the problem of tithes, the loss of parliamentary fees, and the procedure for the appointment of commissioners.

The attitude of the Church can be well illustrated by an incident which occurred immediately after the formation of the Board of Agriculture in 1793. Sinclair was then planning to prepare a "Statistical Account" of England along the same lines of the one for Scotland that he had compiled with the help of data furnished by the clergy. "One of the subjects introduced among the queries", wrote Sinclair's son in 1837, "was that of tithes, preparatory to a plan of equitable and permanent commutation. But it was suggested to Dr. Moore, then Archbishop of Canterbury, that all agitation of that question was dangerous and that the Board of Agriculture, by introducing it, indicated a want of due consideration for the interest of the establishment. His Grace accordingly waited upon the Prime Minister, and informed him that if he sanctioned this proceeding, he would lose the friendship of the Church. Upon receiving this communication, Mr. Pitt intimated to the President that the Board would be under the necessity of giving up its parochial investigation."⁵⁰ In spite of this clear indication that tithes and their commutation were forbidden territory, Sinclair ventured to include two alternative

50. Memoirs of the Life and Works of the Late Right Hon. Sir John Sinclair, Bart., by his son, the Rev. John Sinclair, MS. 1837, p.61.

suggestions in the Bill, both implying commutation, either for a land allotment, or for a yearly tithe-rent based on the price of wheat.

What must have really spoiled the chances of the Bill was a clause added in committee, presumably by Sinclair himself, allowing the rector or vicar, on a purely voluntary basis, to refer to commissioners the commutation of tithes in old enclosures for a corn-rent or land allotment. "No objections can be made to this clause", wrote Arthur Young, "as it is merely voluntary and coercive of none....."⁵¹ One of the paradoxes of this case is that the group which most effectively opposed the passage of a general enclosure bill, was to be the one which, in the long run, benefited most from the enclosure movement. Tithe-owners were against enclosures because almost invariably, they were allotted land for their tithes. Before this system had been tested, they were convinced that it worked against their interests.⁵² As it turned out, the single group which benefited directly from the re-allocation of lands was that of the tithe-owners. The holdings of both lay and ecclesiastical owners were

51. Annals, Vol.26, p.168.

52. W.H.R. Curtler, The Enclosure and Redistribution of Our Land, 1920, p.152. For a discussion of the tithe-owners' benefits from enclosure see pp.163, 235 & 236, and V. Lavrovsky, Tithe Commutation as a Factor in the Gradual Decrease of Landownership by the English Peasantry, Econ.Hist.Review, Vol.4, 1932-34, pp.273-289.

increased considerably as studies by Lavrovsky and Curtler have shown. In the eighteen awards studied by Lavrovsky for the period 1793-1815, a total of 3,867 acres were alienated for tithes; of these, 61.8 per cent passed into the hands of clerical tithe-owners and 38.2 per cent to impropiators. The absolute increase in landownership by the lay and ecclesiastical tithe-holders as a result of commutation was 57.2 per cent - before commutation they held 2,840 acres and after 6,766 acres.

In addition to tithe commutation, the bill encountered opposition in the matter of Parliamentary fees. ⁵³ As it was first proposed the approval of this bill would have meant the end of a source of income for a number of undoubtedly influential Parliamentary officers. These officers made common cause with the clerks and solicitors who also feared that their services might be dispensed with for the sake of the economies advocated in the bill. As stated above, their opposition was important enough at an earlier stage in the passage of this bill to force both Fox and Pitt to decline sitting with the Select Committee on Wastelands organized by Sir John Sinclair.

53. This matter of parliamentary fees was quite important at that time as shown in an article by Mr. E. Harries, a regular contributor to the Annals, in which he described a conversation with Mr. Fulteney, a Member of Parliament for Shrewsbury, during which he tried unsuccessfully to convince the M.P. to bring a General Enclosure Bill before the House. "He told me", wrote Mr. Harries, "that above all he was fearful that the diminution of the fees of the House would render such application abortive." Annals, Vol.15, pp.72-76.

The third obstacle in the passage was that of the procedure for appointing commissioners. Writing in March, 1796, after the Bill had been committed and amended three times, Arthur Young expressed some concern on this point. "The chief objection hitherto made", wrote Young, "is to the difficulty and inconvenience of submitting rights and titles to property to the decisions of such men, usually ignorant in law, as are commonly and necessarily appointed for commissioners of enclosure, and it has been proposed to have two sets of commissioners (the idea of the attorney-general), one to consist of persons of legal knowledge, to ascertain rights, the other for the valuation and allotment, taken from a class competent in rural knowledge." ⁵⁴ The basis for this objection seems to have been the suspicion of the lesser gentry towards the local authorities which were presumably interested in favouring the large landowners. Later on, in 1800, this same objection played an important part in defeating the amended general enclosure bill presented on that occasion. Young wrote then, "it is further asked, what would be the result of thus proving allegations (in front of one or two justices) when a great man interested in procuring an enclosure brought his proofs before a neighbouring magistrate, possibly ⁵⁵ his dependent ?....."

On May 24th, 1796, twenty days after the House had been dismissed for lack of quorum, thereby preventing the discussion of the bill, Sir

54. Annals, Vol.26, p.167.

55. Annals, Vol.35, p.137.

John Sinclair addressed the Board of Agriculture on the work executed during the year. Part of this address described the activities of the Board in support of a general enclosure bill. "The passing of a general bill of enclosure", he said, "though long and ardently wished for, has hitherto been attempted in vain, and by many was held to be impracticable ... however ... a bill has at last been prepared ... which ... is fully adequate to the object in view; and had not the last session closed rather earlier than was expected, it would probably have received the sanction of the legislature this year. I trust ... that the first session of the ensuing Parliament will have the credit of completing this ... valuable system....." ⁵⁶ This shows that Sinclair still had hopes of passing the bill in the coming autumn. As already mentioned, the bill was not brought up again for discussion after March, 1796.

One year later, in April 1797, Sir John Sinclair read in the House of Commons a report from the Select Committee on Wastelands. This was the second report on this subject since the formation of the Board of Agriculture in 1793.

The 1797 report was divided in two sections; one covering "the progress that has hitherto been made in the enclosure of land by private acts, in so far as the same can be ascertained", and a second part dealing with unenclosed land and the means proposed to enclose it. Assuming that the total acreage of England is 46,000,000

acres, of which about 7,800,000 were in waste or uncultivated, and the total acreage under common fields that could not be enclosed except by Act of Parliament was 1,200,000 acres; "it would appear that at least one-fifth of the southern part of the island remains subject to the operation of a general bill of enclosure...." At the rate of approximately 50,000 acres yearly, which had been the actual rate of enclosing up to 1796, the report suggested it would take a very long time to bring under cultivation the 10,000,000 acres of uncultivated and potentially productive land that existed in England. Therefore, it proposed that a law, "permitting persons unanimously consenting to an enclosure, to divide their common property by agreement among themselves will not probably meet with any opposition ... and your committee have come to a resolution recommending that such a Bill should be submitted to the consideration of the House."

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A more serious problem arose when there was no unanimity among the parties concerned. The report proposed two modes of dealing with such a situation:

1. By giving authority to the Courts of Law, either to appoint commissioners or to divide the commons by judicial proceedings.

58

57. Annals, Vol.28, p.509.

58. That is, by giving the power to nominate commissioners not to the parties concerned but to the Lord Chancellor, the Judge of Assize, the Grand Jury, or the Quarter Sessions of each county.

2. "To enable the parties interested to appoint commissioners for the purpose of separating the portions of those who dissent from those who assent to the enclosure, in order that the shares belonging to the assenters may be enclosed."

The report outlined two possible objections to the first alternative. Firstly, the committee decided that it "seemed unnecessary to add to the labour of those who are, it is supposed, already loaded with judicial business." ⁵⁹ Secondly, the experience of Scotland where such a plan had been in existence since the end of the seventeenth century, was not encouraging. ⁶⁰ Either the whole procedure had been too costly or it had proved impracticable. The second proposal received the endorsement of the committee on the grounds that it would only need an extension of the law regulating the divisions of joint tenancies to apply to other forms of mixed property, i.e. commons, ⁶¹ "to provide an easy and effectual method of promoting a general system of improvement."

The Conclusion of the Report included one of Arthur Young's favourite ideas; that of using discharged army personnel as the vehicle for a redistribution of unused agricultural land. Young

59. Annals, Vol.28, p.510.

60. "Act Concerning the Dividing of Commonities", July 17th, 1695.

61. "This is in fact merely extending the principles of the writ of petition, as improved on by the provisions of 8 and 9 Will. 3 Cap. 31. to other mixed property, through the medium of commissioners, in consequence of the rights being too complicated for a jury to decide upon them". Annals, Vol.28, p.512.

believed that the cultivation of wastes could be speedily and efficiently brought about by allocating the land with implements and other facilities to discharged soldiers and their families

"A disbanded fleet supplies our merchantment with sailors, and may extend the fisheries in our coasts; but a disbanded army has hitherto had little resource but emigration to our colonies, or to foreign countries, or resorting to manufactures, many of which require skill and experience in those who are employed in them. Since the introduction of machinery, however, great numbers of hands are less necessary for our manufactures than formerly and thence the proper business for our disbanded soliders would be the
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cultivation of the soil."

The final resolutions of the Committee's report included the following :

1. "That the cultivation and improvement of the waste, unenclosed and unproductive lands...is an object of such essential consequence to the nation...that every means ought to be adopted...to accomplish the same...in the course of the present session of Parliament."
2. "That it would tend to promote the enclosure of such lands, if a bill were passed for dividing, allotting,

and enclosing the waste lands...by agreement among the parties interested...."

3. "That it would tend to the enclosure of such lands if, in cases where the parties are not unanimous, a law were passed for enabling any person entitled to any waste, unenclosed and unproductive lands, etc., to divide, enclose and hold the same in severalty."

On May 3rd, 1797, the House agreed to accept the first resolution; resolution two was postponed, and after a second reading of the third resolution, it was decided to re-commit the whole report.

Two days later, Mr. Curwen and Sir John Sinclair presented two bills to the House. The first bill was worded according to the second resolution and the second bill according to the third resolution of the Select Committee. Both bills were read for the first time on May 9th, 1797. On May 24th, after having been committed twice, the second bill was deferred for three months and was not reported again.

On June 20th, 1797, Sir John Sinclair addressed the Board of Agriculture on the work on the year and in the course of his address he mentioned the enclosure bills before Parliament; "The general bill of enclosure", he said, "has been again submitted to Parliament and will probably receive the sanction of the legislature in the course of the present session. By the bill now in the Commons every

legal disability to the division, the enclosure, and the holding in severalty, mixed property in land of every description, is removed; and where the parties are unanimous the object may be effected, notwithstanding a variety of legal basis from nonage, etc. which now stand in the way of such division...this is a great step gained...which would never probably have been accomplished had it not been for...the Board of Agriculture." 63

The first bill, after having been re-committed five times, received a third reading on July 7th, 1797 and passed through the Commons. It was then taken to the Lords by Sir John Sinclair and after a motion to commit it had been negatived it was rejected. 64

On March 23rd, 1798, Sir John Sinclair was defeated by Lord Sommerville in the presidential election for the Board of Agriculture. The vote was 13 for Sommerville against 12 for Sinclair, which indicates that although it is probable that Pitt had in influence

63. Annals, Vol.29, pp.361-362.

64. This was the fourth time since 1789 that a General Enclosure Bill had been defeated in Parliament; the first setback was with the Jolisse Bill of 1789; the second was the bill of February 1796 after the Select Committee Report of 1795; and the two bills embodying the resolutions of the Select Committee Report of 1797 marked the third and fourth defeats of the "agriculturists" led by Sir John Sinclair and Arthur Young.

on the result it was by no means undisputed. The most important factor in Sinclair's ousting seems to have been his wretched handling of the finances of the Board. When Lord Somerville took over in March, 1798, the Board had debts mounting up to £2110,16.4, in charge of the 1798 and 1799 grants from Parliament. These grants were of £2,000 each. Nevertheless, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Sinclair's efforts to pass a General Enclosure Bill were not entirely overlooked by those who were interested in his replacement.

The disputed question of tithe commutation must have been partly responsible for Sinclair's defeat also because by this time he had become one of the champions of this measure in spite of the Church's open disapproval.

The next year witnessed one of the worst scarcities of the century - throughout the Annals of 1799-1800 one theme was dominant; scarcity and the poor. "The oldest farmers living remember no

65. In his biography of his father, the Rev. John Sinclair describes the incident like this: "after Sir John Sinclair had, during five years, discharged the duties of his office, laboriously and without emolument...he was suddenly displaced through the influence of Mr. Pitt. That Minister appears to have become jealous of the general popularity and influence with the landed and farming interest acquired by the President and founder, who, he perhaps conceived, was acting too independently of ministerial dictation." Memoirs...of the late Sir J. Sinclair, Bart., by the Rev. John Sinclair, London, 1837.

such season as this has been; so long a Winter, so backward a Spring, and such an unfavourable Summer. Every crop deficient and miserably got in..." So reads a letter from Sir John Call, Bart., M.P., an extract of which was published in the Annals. The season was that of 1799-1800, and the scarcity it caused was one of the worst in memory. Young proposed that public kitchens should be established in every town with over two hundred houses to supply the poor with

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meat, soup and rice. As early of October, 1799, he encouraged his readers to "promote the consumption of rice by every imaginable

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means." In 1800, the Board of Agriculture urged the government to plan for a large importation of rice from India in order to cover the deficiency of domestic grain. No action was taken until the end of the year and Indian rice did not arrive until later in 1801 when an abundant grain harvest was evident and imported rice was superfluous.

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The unprecedented scarcity directed the attention of all people engaged in agriculture to the finding of a solution that would prevent its recurrence. Young was deeply moved by the appalling poverty in

66. Meat prices were relatively low. Annals, Vol.34, pp.186-192.

67. Annals, Vol.33, p.623 and Vol.34, p.102.

68. "Owing to difficulties of negotiations with the East India Co., nothing was done...to give effect to the Board's recommendation until August 28th, 1800, when the necessary letters to India were dispatched... But it was not until after an abundant harvest in the year 1801 that 1,900 tons of Indian rice actually reached these shores. It was then a mere drug in the market, and cost the country a sum of £350 to discharge the Parliamentary guarantee to the importers." Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society. Vol.IX, pp.1-41.

the countryside and blamed the authorities for not facilitating the cultivation of wastelands; "while we are subject to these periodical famines by want of an increased cultivation, no effective steps are taken either to prevent their future return or to remedy the evils attendant when we actually suffer under them", and, "...to me the most grating circumstances is that such poverty should exist with commons and waste lands in every quarter; which, if portioned out amongst our poor men with great families, would raise them to a state of comfort, ease the poor rates and at the same time remove a nuisance...."⁶⁹

For the second time since the foundation of the Board of Agriculture, the prospect of famine helped the agriculturists led by Sinclair and Young in persuading Parliament to appoint a Select Committee to consider the enclosure of wastelands. In February, 1800, Sir John read the committee's first report to the Commons. This report marked a sharp departure from previous attempts at examining the problem of a general enclosure bill; it was restricted to an analysis of the "impediments to enclosures under the authority of Parliament, arising from the expenses incurred in such procedure". In other words, it abandoned the idea of a general enclosure bill that would take the legal authority and conduct of the proceedings for enclosing away from the direct jurisdiction of Parliament and

69. Annals, Vol.34, pp.190-191.

accepted in principle the continuance of the method of separate Parliamentary bills for separate enclosures.

The most interesting points in the whole report refer to the services of the solicitors and to the parliamentary fees. Sinclair and his followers had learned that any great reduction in Parliamentary fees would bring a strong and effective opposition against the bill as a whole and they apparently decided to forget about the fees for the time being and to concentrate in the passing of a consolidating bill. The report recommended that no changes should be made in this item of expense and it added, "As a suitable recompense for the time, attention and abilities of the several persons to whom they are payable, they (the select committee) find no reason to object to their usual amount; and from a comparison of it to that of the other expenses necessarily incidental to this procedure, they are not inclined to think it can in general operate as a discouragement to this mode of improvement."⁷⁰ There was also a resolution recommending that the services of the solicitor and clerk should be dispensed with. After the whole report had been re-committed for amendment, this last resolution was eliminated.

Five days after the amended resolutions had been read to the Commons, Young wrote an article in the Annals which has become rather famous because of the strong way in which he condemned the attitude

70. Annals, Vol.35, p.350.

of the public and the legislature towards the sufferings of the poor and the failure of enclosures to better the lot of the cottager. This article is sometimes taken as a point marking Young's change of ideas and disillusionment with the enclosure movement. Actually, Young was not voicing any new ideas; he had held these views on redistribution of land as early as 1784, sixteen years before, when in his first article for the Annals he outlined a scheme for distributing land among the discharged soldiers of the American War.

This article of May 18th, 1800 deserves lengthy quotation :

"...the poor have been nearly starving, in spite of great charities and the unexampled extent of poor rates, and their sufferings ought to animate every heart in the great cause of INCREASING THE CULTIVATION OF THE KINGDOM (A. Young's capital letters). The public mind has been turned universally to this object; but it was also turned to it in 1795 and 1796, and evaporated in vacuity on the return of plenty. I do not conceive that a measure having this great, humane and national object in its view can be far distant; and it well deserves the attention of the public by what means it can be made to give the greatest assistance to the village poor of the Kingdom."

"...the labouring poor have as much right to subsistence as any man can have to his land; and when it is evident

from experience that the culture of the kingdom is insufficient to secure it, the legislature is bound so to divide the wastes as best to promote by every possible means that security of subsistence which might be effected by allotments to cottages." ⁷¹

On May 15th, three days after Young wrote this article, the Committee's resolutions were agreed to by the Commons and Sir John Sinclair was asked to take them to the Lords. The Upper House finally accepted the five resolutions on July 9th, 1800.

On July 15th, the House decided that ... "a Bill for Consolidating in One Act certain provisions usually inserted in acts of Enclosure ..." should be presented to the House. The bill recommended that affidavits, authenticated by one or more magistrates should be accepted as sufficient evidence of notices and consents and the allegations in the preamble. With reference to this, Young wrote: "it is contended that entrusting this power to one or two justices may open the door to abuses" "it is further asked, what would be the result of thus proving allegations when a great man interested in profuring an enclosure brought his proofs before a neighbouring magistrate, possibly his dependent ?" "or when intricate questions of consent were brought before a weak or ignorant magistrate, however upright?" ⁷²

71. Annals, Vol.35, pp.85-90. On the Price of Corn. A Young, 1800.

72. Annals, Vol.35, p.138.

Young also pointed out that, "if the appeals which would be necessary are allowed, then the expenses might be greater than at present by going to Parliament; and if proofs beyond the mere certificates were to accompany them, it would be no more than a variation of the mode of application to Parliament, and not a diminution of the expense."

The tone of this article is rather puzzling. Instead of trying to demolish the arguments against the bill, Young calmly admits that "difficulties might arise at this stage of the business", and limits himself to asking for widespread discussion on the bill and proposing some alternative ways of dealing with the administrative side of general enclosure.

One cannot help feeling that Young was not very enthusiastic about this bill and that his attitude towards it was one of sympathetic indifference. In his opinion the bill did not even touch upon two of the main problems of the old system of private enclosure bills; the necessity of applying to Parliament and the question of tithes. It is true that the new bill would have reduced many of the expenses of enclosing but it would also open the door to new items of expense absent under the old system.

The bill was presented to the Commons on July 16th, 1800. Within one week it was committed, amended, put to a vote and passed. It was then taken to the Lords where it was read twice and committed.

On July 28th, the Committee hearing was deferred; after this
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deferment the bill was not heard of again.

The second half of 1800 saw a recurrence of the already
acute food scarcity and a steady worsening of the international
situation of Britain. 74 The rather optimistic government reports
that had announced an abundant harvest were pathetically wrong; by
the end of the year food riots multiplied and violence was rife
throughout Britain.

"Bread or Flood...Have not the Frenchman (sic) shown you
a Pattern to Fight for Liberty ?...." "Peace and Large Bread or
a King Without a Head." Such was the tone of many posters that
appeared in London and other large towns during the severe scarcity. 75

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73. This was the fifth "general enclosure bill" to be defeated since 1789. The first one was the Jolisse Bill of 1789; the second the 1796 Bill; the third and fourth were defeated in 1797.
74. The 1801 Annual Register describes well the mood of the nation during this period: "...though the difficulties and dangers that accompanied Great Britain from the commencement of the war had been very great, the situation of this country in the three first months of 1801 had become critical and alarming almost beyond any former example. Repeated efforts to circumscribe had only served to extend the power of France... At a time when the British nation, hard pressed by scarcity and threatened with famine, looked for a supply of grains to the ports were shut against her".... Annual Register, 1801, p.117.
75. The Grain Supply of England during the Napoleonic Wars.
W. Freeman Galpin, New York, 1925, pp.18-20.

The foreign situation was also far from encouraging; the country was faced with famine at home and a hostile world abroad.

In November of 1800, Arthur Young sent a circular letter through the Annals to his readers urging them to write back stating "their sentiments on the late crop, and the present state of the markets; the poor ... and particularly the difference in the situation of such poor as possess land or occupy it, both as to their comfort and the allowance they receive from the parish, compared with others who have not equal advantages; it being supposed by some that to give them property in land would conduce to ease their minds at present, and provide a permanent relief...."⁷⁶

Twelve correspondents answered the circular. Of these, five were in favour of some sort of land redistribution that would allow the rural poor to own a few acres of land; five were entirely against the whole idea and two accepted it under certain conditions. The harshness of some of the replies and the smallness of the response indicate that in asking this question, Young had entered doubtful political territory. One of his most assiduous correspondents and supporters, Thomas Ruggles, struck a note of disapproval which for those times was almost threatening. He wrote: "As to your idea of giving the poor a property in land ... I conceive it

76. Annals, Vol.36, p.354. See Appendix I.

quixotic in the extreme; in fact, it smells strongly of an agrarian law, unless I much mistake your meaning..."⁷⁶ Another correspondent, Mr. George Warde, of Bradfield House, wrote, "the idea of satisfying the minds of men by a gift of land is a political question of the greatest magnitude, and, in my opinion, fraught with danger; it would lead to an end in general participation...."⁷⁷

And yet another, Mr. George Culley of Eastfield, near Berwioj, "...I consider it (the redistribution of Land) as one of the worst things that can or could happen to cultivation...."⁷⁸ It is obvious that these agriculturists, while sharing most of Arthur Young's views on political questions, definitely left him to his humanitarian ideas and recoiled violently from any measure that might have, directly or indirectly, tended to undermine their own position as agricultural capitalists.

Food riots and the prospect of even more acute shortages moved King and Parliament to pay close attention to solving the problem of grain supply. Both Houses were re-convened early for

76. Annals, Vol.36, p.354. See Appendix I.

77. Annals, Vol.36, pp.349-353.

78. Annals, Vol.36, pp.385-387.

the session 41, Geo.3, and most of the King's speech of November 11th, 1800 was devoted to the food shortage. Following the King's speech, the Commons appointed a Committee to consider the high cost of provisions. The first report of this Committee was read two weeks later and Mr. Bragge spoke of the convenience of asking the King to make a proclamation "recommending in the strongest manner, to all such persons as have the means of procuring other articles of food, the greatest economy and frugality in the use of every species of grain....."

This was agreed upon by both Houses.

The Lords, following the King's speech, also appointed a Committee to report on the high cost of provisions. This Committee included Lord Carrington, the President of the Board of Agriculture. Their second report, issued on December 1800, listed the laws brought into effect or proposed in both Houses to increase the grain supply and economise the stock in hand, and concluded that, "although from the recency of many of the enclosures the full advantage which may be expected from them has not yet been derived, they have unquestionably contributed to the improvement of agriculture, and an increased quantity of human food Encouragement to enclosures in general (is) a measure that (the Committee) recommends in the strongest manner...in the expectation

that the enclosure of those waste lands would afford the most effectual means to prevent the recurrence of the deficiency of grains...."⁷⁹

Ten days before this report was presented to the House, Young had written an article that was to appear in the February, 1801 issue of the Annals. It began: "It is much to be lamented that no steps appear to have been taken hitherto to bring forward this great and most important measure (general enclosure). In conversation we hear little but of difficulties, yet every one admitting the principle to be just. The main difficulty seems to be the finding of a court of judicature to which Parliament should delegate its powers; to which it should transfer its ⁸⁰tenderness in touching private property." (Young's italics).

He went on to propose that the responsibility for allocating land in enclosures is not too different from the power to tax, and he suggested that there was no reason why Parliament should be so reluctant to delegate power in the case of enclosures while it surrendered "an unlimited power of taxation to every vestry in the Kingdom, filled with as low and ignorant people as are to be found in it...." "why cannot Parliament delegate a power over a parcel of beggarly wastes and commons, which are nuisances to everybody ?

79. Journal of the House of Lords, Vol.42, 1789-1800, p.680.

80. Annals, Vol.56, pp.210-214. A Young, General Enclosure.

You give a power to an ignorant and even to an interested set, to tax us to the teeth, with an almost utter failure of the intention with which it is done; and yet you will not delegate a like power into better hands in order to attain an end in which it is impossible you should fail...."

In the King's New Year speech, scarcity was again referred to and in 1801 the Lords appointed a Committee to consider the problem with the following unprecedented instructions: "That this House, having taken into consideration the report of the Committee appointed in the last session of Parliament (November 14th, 1800) to take into consideration so much of His Majesty's speech as related to the dearth of provisions, are of opinion with the Committee that one of the most effectual measures to prevent a recurrence of a deficiency of grain will be by giving further encouragement to enclosures in general, and particularly of waste and uncultivated lands...."

On May 15th, 1801, Lord Carrington presented to the House the report from the Committee. Immediately after the report was read, which included a recommendation to provide for the enclosure of wastes, etc., Lord Carrington brought in a bill entitled: "An Act providing for the enclosure and improvement of wastes and other uncultivated lands in England and Wales, without special application to Parliament in each particular case"

This bill was presented with the implicit support of a select committee that had been appointed in pursuance of policy outlined in the King's speech; it included among its supporters members of such distinction and influence in agricultural circles as Lord Egremont and the Duke of Bedford, and ecclesiastical authorities such as the Bishops of Chester and Durham. Lord Carrington who was proposing the bill was at that time the President of the Board of Agriculture and Arthur Young was its secretary. The bill embodied a measure which had been found appropriate to cope with a crisis of the greatest severity. The whole country was in such a state of tension and even fear that the strongest measures, such as the suspension of the Habeas Corpus, the Combination Laws, etc., were passed with hardly any effective opposition. Nevertheless, once again, the general enclosure bill was withdrawn after being amended, deferred and committed several times.

In June, 1801, a few days after the Carrington Bill was withdrawn, Young published the most famous exposition of his principles regarding the distribution of wastes among the poor. The contrast between the principles of land distribution described

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81. Annals, Vol.36, pp.497-658. An Inquiry into the Propriety of Applying Wastes to the Better Maintenance and Support of the Poor: with instances of the great effects which have attended their acquisition of property in keeping them from the parish even in the present scarcity. Being the substance of some notes taken by the editor in a tour in the year 1800.

in this paper and those in the so-called General Enclosure Bill of 1801 which received the Royal Assent on July 2nd of that year offer one of the best demonstrations that Young and the traditional landed interest had very few views in common on the subject of enclosure and distribution of land.

In his "Inquiry", Young was entirely committed to the idea that to distribute land to the poor was a much cheaper and efficient method of solving the problem of poverty and unemployment than relying on a hopelessly inefficient charity scheme such as the poor law. In his own words: "property is the great engine wherewith the poor may be governed and provided for the most easily and the most cheaply."⁸²

As early as May, 1801, in a short piece he wrote on the price of grain, he had told his readers: "all country poor should have land enough, in property or rented, to keep them entirely from the parish; and all town poor so to contribute, by themselves or their employers (in some cases the one in some cases the other) to a friendly society fund as to secure them all necessary relief. There will shortly be laid down before the public such decisive proofs of the benefit of the former system as ought to strike opposition dumb...."⁸³

82. Annals, Vol.36, p.503.

83. Annals, Vol.36, pp.481-486. A Young, Price and Consumption of Corn.

"All country poor should have land enough...." Can anybody suggest that in this Young was acting as the spokesman of the landed interest? No wonder that even his best friends were taken aback and complained that his ideas smelled of "agrarian law" and "general participation" - because they definitely did; they were reformist ideas, and they were not the consequence of disillusionment and despair. They were serious proposals, and what is more important, they were in many ways restatements of policies that Young had advocated sixteen years earlier, in the first article of the first volume of the Annals.⁸⁴

Young proposed three ways in which land could be distributed to the rural poor. The first one was by freely distributing wastes to poor families and, in addition, giving them some financial

84. Nevertheless, Young's reformism was not based upon political considerations but was solidly grounded in his religious humanitarianism. As the revolutionary changes became more drastic in France, his views altered considerably, as these quotations plainly show: "...I would live at Constantinople rather than at Bradfield, if the wild and preposterous propositions found on the Rights of Man were to become effective in this Kingdom. In other words, I have property; and I do not choose to live where the first beggar I met, may, the sabre in one hand and Rights of Man in the other, demand a share of that which a good government tells me is my own." The Example of France, a Warning to Britain, 1793, 2nd. ed. A Young, pp.50-51. "Genuine Christianity is inconsistent with revolt, or with discontent in the midst of plenty. The true Christian will never be a leveller; will never listen to French politics, or to French philosophy. He who worships God in Spirit and in truth, will love the government and the laws which protect him, without asking by whom they are administered." An Enquiry into the State of the Public Mind Among the Lower Classes. A Young, 1793, p.25.

support to help them build a cottage, buy a cow, etc. ⁸⁵ The second proposal was to buy land where wastes were not available ⁸⁶ and prices were relatively low. ⁸⁷ The third system was based on the renting of land, although Young was not at all enthusiastic about this alternative; his main point being that it is the ownership of land that will effect the beneficial change in the working and living habits of the poor.

To demonstrate that this project was not only possible but also an economic proposition, Young made some calculations that are very reminiscent of the 1784 plan in which he proposed to distribute waste lands among the discharged soldiers of the American War.

85.	The Norfolk Calculation:		
	Building, fencing, cow, pig, furniture, and land (3 acres)	...	£52.18.0
	The same if no furniture	...	42.18.0
	The same if no house	...	22.18.0
86.	The Bocking Calculation:		
	To buy land (1 acre)	...	30. 0.0
	One hog	...	1. 5.0
	Fencing	...	3. 0.0
	Seed	...	2. 2.0
	Sundries	...	10. 0.0
	16 weeks allowance at 4/6	...	<u>5.13.0</u>
	Addition of the Bocking Calculation	...	50. 0.0
	A house	...	10. 0.0
87.	The Renting System:		
	Rent for three acres	...	3.10.0
	One cow	...	10. 0.0
	One hog	...	1. 5.0
	Fencing	...	3. 0.0
	Weekly allowance	...	5. 0.0
			<u>£ 22.15.0</u>

Assuming that there were ten million people in England and Wales, (the 1801 Census gave a total of 9,343,578) and that half of them are supported by the parish, Young goes on; "this is five millions; and without making any deductions for manufactures or great cities, let us estimate that the benefit in some shape or other should be extended to all; five millions of people are one million of families; they might be divided into five classes of 200,000 in each and thus provided for:

200,000	at	£60	£12,000,000
"	"	50	10,000,000
"	"	40	8,000,000
"	"	30	6,000,000
"	"	20	4,000,000
<hr/>			
1,000,000			£40,000,000
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"Half of the people of England have been calculated to inhabit towns; if such an operation was to be confined to the villages only, the number of families would be 500,000 and the expense, of course, only £20,000,000."

Young's point was that the expense of establishing these people on land of their own was much smaller than the permanent expense of maintaining them on poor rates.

"If the case of a single family is taken, it will show the immense importance of the saving. Fifty-two pounds establish a family completely and free from all future parochial assistance; the interest of this is only 1s. per week; but a chargeable family costs the parish more than double even in good times; at present, five, six, eight shillings per week, and yet without the poor being

in a situation comparable to what land and a cow would place
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them in."

In 1789, when Young joined the movement in favour of a General Enclosure Bill, he was supporting what he believed was a measure that would increase considerably the productivity of British agriculture and would benefit both farmers and labourers. To him, general enclosure was not merely a device for some landowners to get rich quickly, but a comprehensive and reasonable reform of the traditional structure of land ownership - one that in the last analysis was only justifiable if it bettered the lot of those who were affected by it. This attitude was not shared by all the agriculturists that supported general enclosure - indeed, many were moved solely by motives of gain, although, as the English middle classes were at that time strongly under the influence of humanitarian ideals springing both from Wesleyan revivalism and from the rationalist ethics of the enlightenment, the minority which had the welfare of the peasantry and of the nation foremost in mind was not an insignificant one.

Pitt's accession to power, moreover, had been greeted as the beginning of a widespread period of reforms and the seemingly rapid advance in the industrial arts encouraged many to think, or hope, that this would be emulated by widespread progress in the political and social structure.

As the developments in revolutionary France plunged England into a reactionary frenzy, the humanitarian, reformist side of general enclosure was pushed into the background and although the framers of general enclosure was pushed into the background and although the framers of general enclosure bills tried to ensure the welfare of the cottagers, the struggle became solely one for the facilitation of enclosures regardless of consequences to the peasantry, as the century drew on.

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When the 1801 General Enclosure Bill received the Royal Assent Young was not among those who cheered. This 1801 bill did not even come up to his expectations of seventeen years earlier. Considered strictly in relation to the problems of poverty and scarcity, it was a reactionary bill and a most inadequate one at that.

Very few of the main features of previous proposals for general enclosure were kept; parliamentary fees were left untouched; private bills for each enclosure were still necessary and the appointment of commissioners was still left under the direct jurisdiction of Westminster. The 1801 bill standardized the main clauses

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89. The presence of Wilberforce in the Committee which prepared the 1796 Bill, for instance, ensured that the cottagers' rights would not be entirely overlooked; the commissioners were ordered, after the lands for highways had been separated, to set out enough land "as contiguous as conveniently may be to their respective dwellings or gardens" for the cottagers to gather their fuel and pasture one cow. It also provided that in cases where cottagers cannot fence their own property, the fencing shall be done from the funds destined to finance the Act. All these clauses in the original bill that attempted to make provisions for the dispossessed cottagers were eliminated in committee before the bill was finally rejected.

contained in private enclosure bills so that the whole process of drawing up new bills was somewhat expedited. It also made it easier for the allegations in the preamble of the bill, stating ownership of land, situation, desire of a majority to have the lands enclosed, etc., to be certified by making it legal to accept affidavits of these facts instead of requiring sworn witnesses to come to Westminster to testify. But most important of all, as far as Young was concerned, the 1801 bill left the dispossessed cottager completely abandoned to his own fate....and the Poor Law.

The new features of the 1801 bill were mere technicalities; they only made the existing process run more smoothly - this was not a "general bill of enclosure" nor a reform bill by any standards. Young, who was by this time an old and disappointed man, greeted the passage of the bill with his most bitter reproach - silence. He ignored it completely and went on campaigning, unsuccessfully, for the distribution of wastes to cottagers.

This was the last attempt to pass a General Enclosure Bill during Young's lifetime - and the last failure. In 1811, 1812 and 1813 there were attempts at repealing the 1801 bill but they also failed. It was twenty-five years after Young's death before a general enclosure bill was passed which fulfilled some of the demands that he made in 1784.

What is the explanation of this remarkable delay ? Parliament was largely composed of landowners who had almost unchallenged power in their hands. There was a situation of emergency that excused the most stern discipline, including the suspension of Habeas Corpus. There was constant pressure from an important sector of public opinion and famine was at Britain's doorstep. Nevertheless, a bill failed to pass that would have given more power to the landowners, and which held, in the opinion of many, the promise of greater agricultural productivity and national prosperity.

In their examination of the private enclosure bills passed during this period, the Hammonds found that although the necessity of applying for a private bill was a mild check on enclosures, there were very few instances when private bills had failed to pass either House.

"From the beginnings of the eighteenth century", they wrote; "the reins are thrown to the enclosure movement, and the policy of enclosure is emancipated from all...checks and afterthoughts." ⁹⁰ The same cannot be said of the attempts to pass a general enclosure bill; every one of the seven bills presented between 1784 and 1801 had to be fought through every stage of Parliamentary procedure and always without success.

90. J.L. and Barbara Hammond, 1911, The Village Labourer, p.28. Guil Book Edition.

During these same years the "landed interest" secured important privileges other than the undisturbed passage of private enclosure bills. For instance, the exemption of landed property from payment of tax on Collateral Successions passed April 26th, 1796⁹¹ was obtained only 21 days after presumably the same "landed interest" had failed to defeat a bill imposing a tax of two shillings on agricultural horses.⁹²

The explanation for this seems to reside in the fact that during the latter years of the century there was no closely knit group, conscious of its common interests, that could be called a single landed interest pressure-group as it existed during the latter half of the nineteenth century. There existed really two vaguely defined landed interests. One was a politically important group of large landowners and landed aristocracy, suspicious of changes in the traditional structure of landed property lest their privileges and rights slip away under the fanfare of progress. This landed interest had, to a large extent, divorced itself from active farming and looked upon the land mainly as a badge of privilege and social status. Although the process

91. Pitt introduced two tax bills; one for personal property and one for landed property. The first one passed (36 Geo.3 c.52) but the second one was withdrawn. This inequality was not remedied until Gladstone's Succession Duty Act of 1853.

92. 36 Geo. 3 c.15, April 5th, 1796.

by which the landed gentry "fell into step with the chief movement in the nation's economic life..." reached its height during the nineteenth century,⁹³ it was not unusual to find this group associating closely with some aspects of manufacturing industry and commerce. Arthur Young had very definite opinions about this section of the landed interest; "A great man's attention," he wrote, "is given to objects totally different from those which occupy a gentleman of small estate. He resides in London with great splendour and expense eight months of the year; and when in the country, the habits of his life are very far from leading him further than that small part of his property which lies in his morning ride; thus his estate is seen at second hand, through the eyes of his stewards, a set of men whose private interest is usually the reverse of that of the estate."⁹⁴

In 1788, after the success of the Wool Bill to which Young devoted so much time and energy to oppose, he wrote an article in the Annals, entitled On the Necessity of County Associations of the Landed Interest.⁹⁵ In a paragraph referring to membership in such associations he wrote: "I beg leave to

93. David Spring, "The English Landed Estate in the Age of Coal and Iron, 1830-1880", Journal of Economic History, Vol.II, No.1, 1951.

94. Annals, Vol.2, p.304.

95. Annals, Vol.10, pp.402-418.

keep entirely clear of any idea of such a plan depending on High Sheriffs, or members for Counties, or what are called leading men in a county...such are more likely to pay court to manufacturers, than to oppose and detect them..." And a few lines later: "I would have no dependence placed on those who have for more than a century so scandalously betrayed the greatest and dearest interests of the farming class." Three years earlier he complained that out of approximately five hundred peers in the whole of Britain, only two, the Duke of Northumberland and Lord Petre, had contributed to the Annals.⁹⁶

It has been suggested by the Hammonds in The Village Labourer, that a considerable number of enriched merchants and manufacturers had become landowners during the latter half of the eighteenth century and the period of the Napoleonic Wars. These "Squires of Change Alley", as Cobbett called them, presumably brought to the countryside the energy and efficiency that had given them success in other fields.⁹⁷ From this it would be wrong to infer that such persons became interested either in the support of the more progressive sector of the landed interest or in the removal of institutional obstacles to the improvement of farming. These new landowners were interested in the land

96. Annals, Vol.4, pp.299-300.

97. The Village Labourer, Guild Book Edition, 1948, pp.28-29, Vol.1.

primarily as a means of ascending the social ladder and not as a source of income. Furthermore, when it became necessary for them to choose between defending the interests of a class that very seldom accepted them as equals, or upholding the interests of that activity, be it commerce or industry, that had given them wealth, it is reasonable to expect that they chose the latter.

There was another agricultural pressure-group which had nothing to do with "Change-Alley" and less to do with the traditional landed interest. This was the farming interest which supported Arthur Young, which formed itself into agricultural societies, which read and contributed to the Annals of Agriculture, which was passionately in favour of a general enclosure bill, of a commutation of tithes - and even in some cases - of a parliamentary reform. This is a different group which must be brought into any interpretation of the economic history of this period as a separate entity. This is the only way in which the simultaneous facts of the power of the landed interest and the failures of the campaigns of Arthur Young can be reconciled.

The general enclosure bill was from the very beginning the child of the farming interest and at no time had much of a chance of passing through an indifferent Parliament.

CHAPTER III.

THE 1788 WOOL BILL.

One of Arthur Young's proudest accomplishments, duly recorded in his Autobiography,⁹⁸ was to have been burned in effigy by the wool manufacturers in East Anglia for his part in opposing the 1788 Wool Bill.⁹⁹ This occurred in the Spring of that year when he was deputed by the wool growers of Suffolk to present their views to the Parliamentary Committee at Westminster. He was accompanied by Sir Joseph Banks, the President of the Royal Society, who was acting in a similar capacity for the Lincolnshire wool growers. This was one of Young's first opportunities of looking into the world of practical politics; he met Fox, listened to debates in the House, including the trial of Warren Hastings, lobbied support, wrote pamphlets, appeared before House Committees and after several weeks of feverish activity had to return to Suffolk bitterly disappointed. The Wool Bill passed with a comfortable majority in spite of his exertions. The news of the approval of the bill

98. M. Betham-Edwards, editor, The Autobiography of Arthur Young, London, 1893, pp.

99. The Wool Bill was read on March 20th, 1788 and enacted 28.Geo.III, c.38.

was received with great joy in every wool manufacturing district.

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In Bury the multitude crowned a day of celebrations by burning an effigy of Young, the most outspoken opponent of the Bill.

The events of 1788 were the outcome of a very long struggle between wool growers and wool manufacturers, the clearest description of which is that given by Adam Smith in the Wealth of Nations: "the mercantile system ... discourages the exportation of the materials of manufacture, and of the instruments of trade, in order to give our own workmen an advantage. Our woollen manufacturers have been more successful than any other class of workmen in persuading the legislature that the prosperity of the nation depended upon the success and extension of their particular business. They have not only obtained a monopoly against the consumers by an absolute prohibition of importing woollen cloths from any foreign country, but they have likewise obtained another monopoly against the sheep farmers and growers of wool by a similar prohibition of the exportation of live sheep and wool."

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100. It is not sure whether the burning took place in Bury or Norwich as there are conflicting references in the Autobiography.
101. Adam Smith, ed. by Edwin Cannan, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations. Random House, Modern Library, 1937. Book IV, Ch.VIII, p.607, and Book IV, Ch.VIII, p.612.

When Charles II came to the throne of England, the country's economy was thoroughly disorganized after two decades of civil strife.¹⁰² Throughout the second half of the century there were complaints from all quarters about the "general decay of Trade." Economic stagnation at home ran almost parallel with prosperity and advancement abroad; the manufacturers of Holland, France and Iberian peninsula, Flanders, Germany and Sweden had expanded and were competing successfully with the British products.¹⁰³

Protectionism being the backbone of Europe's national economic policies, all rulers sought to encourage and foster their own industries by excluding foreign competition. The English woollen and worsted manufacturers were consequently faced with a waning market abroad. The years which elapsed between the Restoration and the first decade of the eighteenth century witnessed the institution of a series of measures designed to revive the woollen and worsted trade. Some of these laws remained on the Statute Book until the nineteenth century, others became dead letter soon after having been enacted. In general,

102. The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries. Herbert Heaton, 1920, p.251.

103. James, J., The History of the Worsted Manufacture in England. London, 1857, pp.161-164; and J. Smith, Memoirs of Wool, Vol.I, p.204.

it is possible to classify them under three main headings :

1. Encouragement of domestic demand.

Under this class are the various acts regulating the manner and quality of dress both for the living and for the dead. ¹⁰⁴

For example, the first of these, passed in 1666, stipulated that no person could be buried in any garment that was not made of wool throughout. ¹⁰⁵

For various reasons, this regulation did not have the desired results and was replaced in 1673 with a more severe one which required that in every parish a register should be kept to certify that the shroud was made solely of wool. ¹⁰⁶

This Act was further reinforced in 1680 and remained on the Statute Book until the last century. ¹⁰⁷

2. Discouragement of domestic and foreign competition.

The imperial expansion of Britain had as a consequence a great increase in trade with the East. The introduction of Indian and Chinese textiles was attacked as a mortal blow to the domestic

104. James, J. The History of the Worsted Manufacture in England, London, 1857, pp.164-165.

105. Statute 18-19 Charles II c.4.

106. Statute 30. Charles II c.3.

107. Statute 32. Charles II c.1.

industry by the wool merchants and manufacturers. Their pressure resulted in the passing of the 1701 Act prohibiting the import of certain kinds of Indian textiles. ¹⁰⁸ Later on, in 1721, an Act was passed which forbade the use of all printed textiles made of pure cotton. ¹⁰⁹ This Act remained on the Statute book until 1774.

Ireland had become by the end of the seventeenth century a potentially dangerous competitor of England for the foreign market and, according to the West Country wool manufacturers, a constant temptation to their weavers who emigrated because of the cheapness of wool and the lower cost of living. The danger of Irish competition was checked by Act of Parliament in 1698-1699, a move described by Young as "one of the most infamous that ever disgraced a legislature." ¹¹⁰ The clamour of the woollen manufacturers against the increasing vogue of French textiles, especially fine linen and lace, led Parliament first to prohibit the use of these fabrics in burial garments and, later, to prohibit the importation of French fabrics altogether. ¹¹¹

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108. Statute 11 and 12. William III c.10.
109. Statute 7. Geo.I c.7, amended 9 Geo.III c.4, repealed on June 14, 1774.
110. A Young, The Question of Wool Truly Stated, London, 1788, p.21.
111. This was in 1678; in 1857, James commented: "... Immediately our manufactures from wool began to amplify and prosper to an amazing extent...our staple industry had received a great impulse....." J. James, The History of the Worsted Manufacture in England, London, 1857, p.165.

3. Ensuring an abundant supply of wool at low prices.

From the earliest days of the English woollen and worsted industry, one of the main concerns of the wool manufacturing interests had been to ensure that English wool was used exclusively by English weavers and that foreign wool should be imported to supplement scarce supplies when necessary. Under Edward III, an assize of wool was instituted to prevent exportation when prices were low. Under Edward IV wool staplers were prevented from exporting wool from March to August every year so that during those months the domestic manufacturer could be sure of his supply of raw material. ¹¹² James I issued a proclamation in 1614 ¹¹³ restricting the export of wool.

Charles I's Committee on Trade received specific instructions ¹¹⁴ to study the problem of the illegal export of wool, and apply sanctions to transgressors.

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112. Statute 4. Edward IV. c.4; W. Cunningham, The Growth of English Industry and Commerce in Modern Times. The Mercantile System, Cambridge, 1925, p.504.
113. March 24th, 1616, this proclamation cancelled Elizabeth's approval of the staples at Middleburg, Bruges and Bergen-op-Zoom and designated towns in England as approved staples.
114. W. Cunningham, The Growth of English Industry and Commerce in Modern Times, pp.298-299, Appendix C.ii.
".....any person or persons knowne, suspected or pryvie to the transportacon of any woolle, woolle-fells, woollen yarne, Fullers earth, wood ashes, or any other materyall incident to the makinge of cloth or other manufactories, inhibited by any laws or proclamacon; and upon such their examynacon and conviction, they shalle by the said Commissioners, turned over to our Attorney Generall to be proceeded against for such contempt in our high Courte of Starr Chamber....."

From Stuart days onwards, the resistance of landowners became insufficient to stem the increasing power and influence yielded by the manufacturers. Every time one of these restrictive regulations was renewed or enforced, there was some protest from the side of the wool growers as this legislation undoubtedly resulted in lower prices for their product. Nevertheless, their efforts were consistently unsuccessful although in earlier times they had been able occasionally to reverse similar legislation. ¹¹⁵

At any rate, by the seventeenth century, the expedient of restricting export had become established as a cure-all for the recurrent ills of the wool textile industries. It is not surprising then, to find that one of the first measures taken under Charles II to solve the crisis in the industry was to prohibit the export of raw wool. ¹¹⁶

Of the three rather loose classes of protective legislation enumerated above, this last one is the most important with reference to the events which preceded the 1788 Wool Bill. Both the discriminatory laws against rival fabrics and the more bizarre

115. James Burnley, The History of Wool and Woolcombing, London, 1889, p.70. ".....In the thirteenth year of Richard II's reign, exportation was again prohibited; this had the effect of cheapening wool.....Exportation was, upon these circumstances, forced upon the King. Had he not acceded to the demand of the wool growers, he would have been involved in an insurrection....."

116. 13th and 14th Charles II, Chap.18. By these Statutory instruments, the exportation of wool was made a felony, and the exporter subjected to the same penalties as a common criminal.

partorial legislation suffered many ups and downs during the eighteenth century and were eventually repealed or became dead letters.

The prohibition of wool export remained in force throughout the century and by the Bill of 1788 it was made even more severe and its regulations more detailed and extensive. It was not until Huskisson's reform of 1824 that these restrictions on exports were abandoned.

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Some of the reasons for the permanence of the prohibition to export wool were directly related to the economic interests of the manufacturers. Others, claimed to be of national interest, were founded on mistaken or distorted notions as to the physical character and comparative value of English combing wool compared with the continental product.

That the wool manufacturers had no wish to compete against foreigners for the purchase of the British raw material is obvious; prohibition on export meant not only a constant supply but also relatively low prices. But in order to go to the legislature to obtain the enforcement of these restrictions, reasons of broader scope, preferably of "national interest" had to be found. The most

117. Gilbert Slater, The Growth of Modern England, 2nd Edition, 1939, pp.288-289; C.R. Fay, English Economic History, Mainly since 1700, 1940, pp.61

important of these arguments was that English combing wool was unique in Europe and absolutely necessary for the making of fine fabrics. Evidence given to the Parliamentary Committee of 1788 shows the typical attitude of the manufacturers towards this problem :

- Q. Can you assign any reason why the French are induced to give so great a price for British long, or combing, wool ?
- A.British combing wool is absolutely necessary for the support of particular French fabrics of the lighter kind, and....without the assistance of English combing wool it would be impossible to carry them on. 118

This, of course, was nonsense, as Adam Smith pointed out 119 years earlier and his namesake John Smith before him. But this did not prevent the argument being used repeatedly as a Damocles' sword over the heads of wavering members of the Commons. "The exportation of wool", wrote Nathaniel Forster, "will not only check, for a time, the manufactures in which it is used, but, by enabling foreigners, the French particularly, to rival and to under- 120 sell us, will drive them from us forever."

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118. First Report of the Committee, House of Commons' Journals, Vol.41, pp.891-894.
119. Wealth of Nations. Random House ed. 1937. Bk.IV. Chap.VIII, pp. 615-616; see also Bischoff, Vol.I, p.206, and J. Smith, Memoirs of Wool, Vol.II, pp.418-421.
120. Sir John Dalrymple, The Question Considered whether Wool should be allowed to be Exported, also Nathaniel Forster, An Answer to Sir John Dalrymple, Dublin, 1783, pp.32-33. See Also, Annals of Agriculture, Vol.VIII, p.290. "The Parliament were duped into a belief, that the French could not make merchantable cloths of their wools without a mixture of ours; but Smith in his Annals of Wool (he means Memoirs of Wool), Vol.II, p.358, has proved that impudent assertion to be totally void of truth."

Directly related to this was the complaint that a large amount of wool was being smuggled into France. There is much evidence of this, both from official Committee Reports, from fiction, and even from folk lore, and it is quite safe to suppose that "owling" did take place throughout the century. The incentive was plain, as Sir John Dalrymple suggested in his pamphlet.¹²¹ The stricter the legislation preventing exportation, the lower the price, and the greater the temptation to the smuggler who sold wool to France. Nevertheless, Young, in his zeal to defend the wool growers' cause clearly exaggerated when he asked his readers to believe that "owling" did not occur to any considerable extent.¹²² Smuggling did take place and once the legislature had accepted the thesis that English wool was vital to keep French manufacturers alive, the recrudescence of measures against smuggling was axiomatic. Hence, throughout the century, with irregular intensity, the wool manufacturers pressed the House to increase the restrictions upon illicit export or to enforce those already in existence. This found a ready echo in a sector of the public

121. Sir J. Dalrymple, The Question Considered whether Wool should be allowed to be Exported, p.8.

122. Annals, Vol.6, pp.506-528. "From the year 1730 to 1740 there issued from the press a multiplicity of pamphlets calling for restrictions on the growers of wool, in order to prevent a practice, falsely said to be common and notorious, of owling, that is, exporting into France.....Such was the impudence of the clamour, that the House supposed some foundation for it.... and entered on the consideration for a remedy. But it was a remedy for an evil that had no existence....."

and numerous pamphlets appeared offering schemes for preventing the export of wool which ranged from the impracticable to the ridiculous.

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It is easy to appreciate the difficulties which faced the landed interest when trying to convince the legislature to reverse this restrictive policy. To make matters worse, the country that was expected to profit most from a freedom to export was France which at that time was at war with England.

Although in the eyes of wool manufacturers the prohibition to export wool appeared to be directly related to the prosperity that the industry had experienced since the turn of the century, this, as Young pointed out repeatedly, was really the consequence of other factors. Foremost amongst these must be counted the

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imperial expansion of Britain and the development of trade with

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America. Also, the general expansion in quantity and intensity

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123. A pamphlet selected at random will give an idea of the general tone of this literature. Samuel Webber, An Account of a Scheme for Preventing the Exportation of Wool. Dedicated to the Hon. House of Commons, London, 1740. "I have invented...a scheme to prevent this fatal evil (of smuggling) by an universal registry....I have been endeavouring to procure an Act of Parliament....to make the scheme....effectual; but I have not been able to obtain one...."
124. A. Young, A Speech on the Wool Bill, that might have been spoken in the House of Commons, London, 1788, p.27. "...that the kingdom has greatly prospered, I joyfully admit; but that such prosperity is to be attributed to these laws, or to their principle, I utterly deny....The general prosperity of this kingdom is owing primarily....to liberty....not (to) your contemptible prohibitions - not to the pitiful jealousies of the shop, nor the monopolies of the counter. We have flourished not by, but in spite of, these...."
125. "...America was the best single external market for British woollen and worsted fabrics. In 1772, the thirteen colonies bought

of trade and industry which visited England during the eighteenth century, especially during the peaceful years of the Walpole administration, could not be affect the wool manufacturers who benefited accordingly. It is true though, that this industry did not expand dramatically in absolute terms; the total national production figures between 1700 and 1760 show only a 30 per cent increase which is a modest gain in a century of such rapid progress.¹²⁶ What did happen was that from 1800 onwards, a considerable transfer of industrial activity took place principally from Norfolk and the West of England to the West Riding of Yorkshire.¹²⁷ In the short space of 75 years, the West Riding became a strong competitor to the old worsted manufactures of Norfolk.¹²⁸ At the same time, it experienced an expansion of its woollen manufactures thereby

(Footnote contd. from previous page)

125. about a fifth of the exports of those goods." Yorkshire Cloth Traders in the United States, 1770-1840; Herbert Heaton, Thoresby Miscellany, Vol.ii, 1945, pp.225-287. In Europe, some of England's markets were re-opened; by the Treaty of Methuen in 1703, for instance, Portugal started to receive English cloth in exchange for a non-discriminatory policy towards Portuguese wines.
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126. H. Heaton, The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries, 1920, pp.258-259.
127. J.H. Clapham, "The Transference of the Worsted Industry from Norfolk to the West Riding", Economic Journal, Vol.XX, pp.195-210.
128. James, pp.258-259.

competing against the Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and Somerset
129
woollen centres.

Yorkshire had been a major centre for the manufacture of
woollens for a considerable time but its worsted industry was small
until the turn of the seventeenth century when, because of its close
connection with the American market, its superior organization and
130
other factors, it started to expand rapidly. At the time of the
American War of Independence the three major textile areas in
England were located in Norfolk, the West Country and the West
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Riding of Yorkshire. Norfolk specialized in worsteds, utilizing
the long wools produced in East Anglia, Lincolnshire and
Leicestershire; the West Country specialized in woollens, utilizing
the short clothing wool production of the Southern counties, and
to a more limited extent, Irish yarn imports; Yorkshire specialized
in worsteds and woollens and therefore was in keen competition with
132
both the Norfolk and West Country manufacturing interests.

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129. In 1772, according to James, the value of the annual production of the Yorkshire woollen manufactures was £1,869,700 and the value of its worsted manufactures £1,404,000. See James, pp.282-284.
130. H. Heaton, The Yorkshire Woollen and Worsted Industries, 1920, pp.257-259. See also, M.F. Lloyd Frichard, "The Decline of Norwich", Economic History Review, 1950-51, Vol.III, p.371.
131. Ephraim Lipson, The History of the Woollen and Worsted Industries, London, 1921, pp.220-255.
132. H. Heaton, op.cit., pp.258-9.

Average Long Wool Prices 1/

	per lb.
1775	8d
1776	8½d
1777	8d
1778	6½d
1779	5½d
1780	5½d
1781	5d
1782	5d
1783	6½d
1784	6½d
1785	6½d
1786	7d
1787	8½d
1788	8½d
1789	8½d
1790	9d

Average English Wool Prices 2/

	per lb.
	8½d
	8½d
	8d
	7d
	7d
	8d
	8d
	8½d
	8½d
	9d
	9½d
	10½d
	12d
	12d
	12½d

1/ The following data were used to obtain these average figures :

- a) Lincolnshire long wool prices per tod (28 lbs) 1775-1790 from James, Appendix, p.34.
- b) Kent long wool, prices per lb. 1780-1790. James, p.317.
- c) English long wool, prices per tod, 1775-1781. From Sir Joseph Banks' pamphlet The Propriety of Allowing a Qualified Exportation of Wool Discussed Historically, London, 1782, Appendix.
- d) Suffolk long wool prices (at Bury St. Edmunds) per tod. 1775-1788. Annals of Agriculture, Vol.IX, pp.355-356.

- 2/
- a) Prices of English wool per lb. 1775-1790, Bishoff, Appendix VI.
 - b) Prices of English wool per tod, 1775-1780, Sir Joseph Banks' pamphlet, Appendix.
 - c) Prices of English wool per tod, 1776-1787, Annals of Agriculture, Vol.IX, pp.355-356.

Between 1775 and 1781, the price for long, or combing wool in England fell by approximately 30-40 per cent while the price for short, or clothing, wool remained fairly stable. The areas which suffered most from this price decline were those which produced considerable quantities of long wool; Lincolnshire in particular was hard hit and the first attempt to remedy this situation came from the wool growers of Lincoln. A meeting of "noblemen, gentlemen, yeomanry, land owners and land holders" of the County took place in the castle of Lincoln on October 31st, 1781, during which the following resolutions were agreed to :

"That the Committee be instructed to consider how far an immediate relief can be given to the present distress, by having permission, under the regulations of a temporary law, to export to the foreign market that surplus of our wool which is now unsold and unsaleable at the home market, and how it may be expedient to pursue the same.....

"That they consider how far it may be expedient or otherwise, to apply to Parliament for a repeal or amendment of the Act of Parliament which permits the importation of Irish woollen yarn, and how far it may be expedient....to apply to Parliament for leave to export - months after the clipping, that surplus of wool which remains on hand and cannot be sold at the home market at higher prices than - shillings per tod."¹³³

This was the first official statement of the wool growers' demands and contained two important details which were abandoned later due to the strong opposition encountered. The first refers

133. Bischoff, op.cit., pp.207-208.

to the type of wool to be exported; according to this resolution, all wool which proved "unsaleable at the home market" was to be exported. This was eventually changed to refer only to long or combing wool. The second part of this resolution is entirely different from the first; while the latter refers to the export of wool from England, the former demands the repeal of the Act of Parliament which permitted the importation of Irish woollen yarn. Later this second part was also abandoned.

As soon as these resolutions were made public, wool manufacturers throughout England organized an opposition to the intended application to Parliament. One of their first meetings took place in the Moot Hall of Leeds on December 12th, 1781. On that occasion, the manufacturers agreed unanimously to support the following counter resolutions :

"That the exportation of any sort of wool....would be injurious to the trade and manufacturers....and any steps towards obtaining a law for that purpose ought to be strenuously opposed.
That any application for a repeal of the Act of Parliament which permits the importation of Irish woollen yarn into this Kingdom ought to be opposed." 134

Similar resolutions were passed by merchants and manufacturers in Exeter, Rochdale, Essex, Halifax, Norwich, Bedford, Cambridge, and Hertford. The vast and loose organization of business connections, common interests, common beliefs, (in the case of the

134. London Courant, December 28th, 1781, p.3, col.1.

North country Quakers) and common concern that constituted the "wool manufacturing interest", started slowly to move into the defensive.

From the local meetings of the landed and manufacturing interests, the struggle moved on to the pages of the metropolitan press where a spirited battal of erudition and abuse punctuated the contest. During the early stages of the agitation, the wool growers had some support from both public personalities and from the press.¹³⁵ The first editorial comment to mention the problem appeared in the London Courant and violently opposed any¹³⁶ relaxation of the existing legislation, but with this exception the tone of the press commentaries was more or less conciliatory and in the case of the Morning Herald, the Courant's rival, openly favourable.

135. Gov. Thomas Pownall and Lord Mansfield were publicly supporting the wool growers at this stage. See Morning Herald, December 3rd, 1781, p.3, col.1.

136. "The meeting of the landholders of Lincolnshire on the 25th ult. to consider the bringing in a bill, for Parliament to permit the exportation of raw wool, has given a general alarm, as it would not only in a course of time, enable our enemies to undersell us at foreign markets, but immediately put many thousands industrious people here out of employ, and reduce them and their families at once to want and beggary. The Committee for managing the above diabolical business, propose to meet afterwards in London, for the further dispatch of it, but it is to be hoped, for the sake of this country, and its numerous manufactures, that it will be effectually stifled in its birth."
From the London Courant, October, 18th, 1781.

At this early stage of the campaign, neither Young nor
137
Sir Joseph Banks had yet appeared on the scene. The main
organizer on the side of the wool growers was one of Lincoln-
138
shire's most famous citizens, Governor Thomas Pownall. It
was he who first marshalled the landed interests' opposition
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to the ban in exportation. He had already show his disapproval
of the existing legislation when in 1774 the wool growers and
manufacturers petition to Parliament for an increase in the duties

137. Young was at this time (1781-82) busily engaged in convincing his neighbours in Suffolk to float and equip a man-of-war of seventy-four guns with their subscriptions. Over this project he entered into a heated controversy with Capel Lofft, who later became a good friend of his and a frequent contributor to the Annals. Besides engaging in patriotic projects, Young was farming actively at Bradfield and was also tutoring three Russian students of agriculture sent to him for instruction by Prince Potemkin.
138. Thomas Pownall (1722-1805) well known as "Governor Pownall", was Governor of Massachusetts from 1757 till 1759, and of South Carolina from 1759 until 1760. After his return to England in 1760, he sat in the Commons from 1767 until 1780, first for a Cornish borough and later for Minehead. His book, the Administration of the Colonies is the best known of his works amongst which are counted several tracts of the corn trade, bread assize, the wool trade, etc.
139. "Gov, Pownall was the origin of those meetings of the wool-growers in Lincolnshire, which have taken place for petitioning Parliament. The calculation which the Governor has made, is, that the free export of British long wool, which is now in very little demand at home, would raise the rentals of Lincolnshire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire, etc. as high as they were before the American War. The fall has been at least 20%.... Lord Mansfield has given it as his opinion in conversation that the free export of wool would do no injury to the British manufacturers." Morning Herald and Daily Advertiser, December 3rd, 1781, p.3, col.1.

on foreign linen imports.¹⁴⁰ In 1777 he published a pamphlet in which he examined the state of the wool trade and concluded :

"The end proposed by our system is, that the British manufacturer shall not only have the pre-emption but the monopoly also of all the wool grown in the British Isles, and that the foreign manufacturer, totally deprived of British wool, shall not be able to make a marketable fabric, as this sort of wool, absolutely necessary for such fabric, is not to be gotten elsewhere. First, it is not true that British wool is necessary to the forming of a marketable fabric; secondly, it is true, and a fact open as day, that wool equal to any marketable fabric, is to be had from almost any country in Europe." 141

Pownall went on to show that the existing prohibitions acted as a premium for the smuggler rather than as a deterrent and bringing in arguments used before him by Adam Smith, he ended by strongly advocating the freedom to export wool.

Meanwhile, the controversy in the press became more heated. The Morning Herald published an anonymous contribution signed "Agricola, House of Commons", opposing Pownall, Lord Mansfield and the wool growers.¹⁴²

140. The best description of what happened with the Irish linen manufacturer's petition is given in the title of a pamphlet written by Pownall in 1777: "Considerations on the present system of laws respecting wool, by Thos. Pownall Esq. M.P., late Governor of Massachusetts Bay, a native of Lincoln; Chairman of the Great Meeting of the Lords and Commons of Wool Counties, held in February, 1774, at the Star and Garter, Pall Mall, on occasion of the attempt of the linen manufacturers of Ireland and Scotland to obtain an additional duty upon foreign linens imported, which induced a threatening to tax our woollens from the Russian, Prussian, Saxon, and Austrian Ministers; which meeting called upon the woollen manufacturers to join them. The manufacturers did join them, and succeeded in defeating the attempt.

141. Bischoff, op.cit., Vol.I, pp.207-208.

142. Morning Herald, December 17th, 1781.

This anonymous contributor ends a long letter in which he even brought Montesquieu to his aid, ("the English constrain the merchant, but it is in favour of commerce....") by saying, "...my countrymen of Lincolnshire, of Warwickshire, and Leicestershire, and of all other wool counties, (must) be persuaded to forego their prospects of 20% gains (by exporting wool freely) as chimerical...." This was promptly answered by another anonymous contributor who maintained that; "...allowing the export would stop the smuggling trade, and give a revenue to the government instead of the smugglers."¹⁴³

Both the Morning Herald and the Courant tried to maintain an impartial position in the controversy, although the Courant, following its editorial attack of October 18th, published a letter by R. Glover, a London woollen merchant, which reflects rather well the violent attitude of some of the manufacturers' side towards this question:

"Those who advise an exportation of raw wool may expect that a petition to Parliament for such a remedy will be rejected with indignation, probably a mark of censure set on such petitioners, who, for local, temporary, perhaps imaginary relief to themselves, would sacrifice the enemy at the hottest crisis of the war, the chief of those few resources yet remaining to their country...." 144

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143. Morning Herald, December 26th, 1781, p.4. col. 2. Export of Wool. The contributor referred to the proposed duty on raw wool exports advocated by Sir John Dalrymple and Dean Tucker.
144. London Courant, 25th December, 1781. Letter from R. Glover on the wool exportation question, p.2, col.3.

A day later a letter was published simultaneously in the Courant and in the Noon Gazette and Daily Spy, which was remarkably sedate both in tone and approach and is worth quoting because it gives a good picture of what the dispute looked like from the North of England :

"To the Lincolnshire Farmers :-

I understand that you design to petition the Parliament concerning the low prices of wool, and that you want to get leave to send it abroad. This would be a sad thing for us manufacturers, as it would be the utter destruction of our trade; we should therefore be like to oppose it. It is true, we can less afford to spend money than you can; but when our ruin stares us in the face we must stir ourselves, and alas ! whichever side gets the better, thousands of pounds will be spent upon lawyers and witnesses that would be much better employed in paying your rents and keeping our poor families. You may be sure of this, that if the wool is once allowed to be exported, the French will undersell us in every market....the low price of wool...?... (the cause) is the American War.

Were I worthy to advise I would lay before you two methods, the one hot, and the other cold; either of which, in my humble opinion, might be more serviceable to you than destroying your trade. The first is this:.... to get peace with America upon the best terms than can now be obtained. (My second method is...) Be content with milk, potatoes and a little of your excellent bacon, and leave off

roast beef, plum pudding, strong beer and tea, only for three or four years. Our great folks have already played off their honours; and by that time they will not have a trump or a faced card left in their hands - the game will be up - trade will revive - wool will get up to its old price, and the present glorious and successful war will be closed by a famous and honourable a peace." 145

The decline in price was real, but it affected only the long or combing type of wool used in the manufacture of worsteds which found their main outlet in foreign markets. 146 Much of the short wools on the other hand were used in the making of cloth for domestic consumption. 147 Farmers and manufacturers were agreed that one important cause for the low price was the war with America

145. The Noon Gazette and Daily Spy, December 26th, 1781. To the Lincolnshire Farmers, by Theophilus Sutcliffe, Hepstonstall, Halifax.

146. "The cry raised by the grower, is the low price of wool, which is true only in part, the fine, short wools, and in general those used in the making of cloths, are far from low....." Courant, 5th January, 1782.

147. "I would draw the line between the wools consumed in the clothing trade, which is chiefly from home consumption, and the wools for combing, which are manufactured into stuffs, and chiefly for exportation....." Courant, 5th January, 1782. Letter on the Intended Application to Parliament by the Wool Growers." See also James, op.cit., p.314. "The demand to Spain, Portugal, Italy and the Levant took off the greater part of the worsted goods manufactured at Halifax.... Large quantities of the worsteds of the West Riding were also shipped to Holland and Germany by way of Hull." Export and home consumption of short and long wool manufactures :

	<u>Export</u>	<u>Home Consumption</u>
Short wool	£1, 243, 741	£620,959
Long wool	£1,123,200	£280,800

From James, op.cit., p.282.

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and her European allies. The dependence of the long wool fabrics upon a foreign outlet, made the price for its raw material more vulnerable to the vicissitudes of international politics. The war with America and its subsequent spread to Europe closed these markets and compelled the worsted manufacturers to slow down their production and reduce their purchases of yarn.

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The "war issue", then, was an extremely important one in this controversy and played a prominent role in the arguments used by the defenders and opponents of exportation in their newspaper articles. The letter by Mr. R. Glover which appeared in the Courant on December 25th, 1781, went so far as to blame the "country gentlemen" for the war itself and added: "they have no right to complain they have none to reprove but themselves..." This charge showed another interesting facet of the dispute; while

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148. "A war with three of the most powerful states in Europe must at any time be a trial to this country; and though ministers have boasted of its great resources, yet if trade be not supported, if the staple commodity of the country cannot find a market, we are undone."
London Courant, 27th December, 1781. On the Wool Business, an anonymous letter from a wool grower.
149. East Anglian Newspaper. A letter from "Senex", describing how much the Norwich worsted trade suffered as a result of the American War; "when our commerce was so much interrupted by naval enemies, and by those swarms of privateers with which the Channel abounded." 21st February, 1823.
150. London Courant, 25th December, 1781. An answer to R. Glover's letter on the wool question. "I am induced to say a few words, both because I think the country gentlemen unjustly censured, and because the monopoly of wool, which has been established against the landed men, by prohibiting the exportation, is one immediate cause of their present distress...."

the manufacturers insisted that the war was the sole cause for the decline in price, the landowners, being perhaps more sophisticated, ascribed it firstly to the increase in the production of wool brought about by improved farming, enclosures, etc., secondly to the effects of the export ban, and thirdly to the war, which had closed the continental and overseas outlets for worsted fabrics. One of the very few contributions on this subject which appeared in the

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Gentleman's Magazine lists in parallel columns twenty-four

"interesting queries", half of them submitted by a wool grower and the other half by a manufacturer. The first two and the last two queries are the following :

Queries by a Wool Grower

1. Whether the quantity of our wool by the modern improvements in husbandry, has not been so far augmented as to be more than sufficient to supply the demand for woollen goods at home and abroad ? And is not the export of the surplus wool become in some measure necessary ?

12. Whether it may not be expedient to permit foreigners as under the reign of Henry VIII to purchase our wool from Cnadle-
mas to the time of clipping the sheep ? Or, if this liberty should not be allowed them, whether it will not be advisable to permit the export of our wool for a limited time and under a certain price and duty, till our present stock of wool is exhausted, in order that a trial may be made, how far may be of public utility to prohibit or continue the export ?"

Queries by a Woollen Manufacturer

1. Whether the interruption of our trade with North American, Spain and other countries, is not the cause of the present low price of wool ? And is there not reason to believe, that upon the restoration of peace our foreign trade in woollen goods may be revived and the price of wool proportionally advanced ?

12. As the interruptions in the export of our woollen manufactures have been usual in ancient as well as modern times, whether it will not be advisable to wait till peace is restored and a trial made, whether the quantity of our woollen exports and the price of our wool, may not be augmented ?

Footnote:

151. Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. 52, 1782, p. 137.

While the pages of the press carried an increasing amount of space devoted to this question, meetings of landowners and of manufacturers took place throughout the country to organize their respective "pressure groups" for the expected struggle in Parliament. One meeting which is fully reported in Bischoff's History is of particular importance. ¹⁵² It was held in the Thatched House Tavern, St. James's Street, London, and it included: "... landowners, manufacturers, and persons concerned in wool and the woollen manufacture...." A motion was made from the floor, "that it is the opinion of this meeting that the exportation of British raw wool will be prejudicial to the landed commercial interests of this kingdom." Before it could be voted upon, the Lincolnshire representatives withdrew in protest, "and there remained in the room one hundred and ten gentlemen, amongst whom were many members of Parliament; whereupon the question being put, it was unanimously resolved in the affirmative."

This incident marked the first revision of the wool growers' demands. Originally, they had asked for authorization "to export to the foreign market ... wool which is now unsold and unsaleable at the home market...." ¹⁵³ They had not specified which type of wool they wanted to export, whether it was long or short. Three days

152. Bischoff, op.cit., p.212, et seq.

153. Bischoff, op.cit., p.203.

after the Thatched House Tavern meeting, they met and agreed that, "the resolution of the general meeting ... on the 2nd day of February, does not appear....to apply to the question on the expediency or in expediency of exporting long, or coarse wool, under certain restrictions, for a limited time, as that resolution speaks of general exportation only."

This point was further emphasized by Josiah Tucker and Sir John Dalrymple in pamphlets which attained great circulation and were widely quoted at the time. ¹⁵⁴ In his pamphlet, Sir John accepts the fact that a considerable amount of wool was periodically smuggled to France, and he adds: "If the experience of ages has proved that this cannot be prevented....it seems....more wise to permit it to be exported on paying a duty to the state, than to be making daily and vain complaints that it is being exported without

154. The Question Considered Whether Wool Should be allowed to be Exported when the price is low at home, on paying a Duty to the Public ? by Sir John Dalrymple, Bart, 1782.

Dean Tucker, Josiah Tucker, was another famous man who supported the wool growers' petition. He wrote a pamphlet called: Reflections on the Present Low Price of Coarse Wools, in which he suggested, as Sir John Dalrymple had, that the remedy was to permit the exportation of long wool under a small duty and in addition, that a bounty of three half pence should be granted on the exportation of the coarser cloths and stuffs to the Baltic ports as "the peasants, or common people in the North of Europe, and particularly on both sides of the shores of the Baltic, stand in great need of warm clothing during their long and severe winters...."

paying any." His contention that smuggling did take place to a considerable degree started a chain of argument which eventually ended in 1787-89 with a remarkable double volte face. His idea of taxing wool exports and thus transforming a certain loss into an asset to the nation, must have had some impact on his readers because this particular proposal came under heavy fire from the manufacturer's side. They maintained that smuggling was not so considerable and that the existing laws were quite adequate to prevent it! The anonymous author of a pamphlet opposing Sir John's scheme writes: "I have no doubt the coasts of Kent receive more French smuggled goods than any in England; and I am certain very little, if any, wool is ever exported in return, it being well known our smugglers pay ready cash for all they buy."¹⁵⁵

Four years later, when the West of England and West Riding manufacturers started to agitate in favour of more severe and extensive restrictive legislation, their main allegation was that smuggling was a flourishing activity and that thousands of packs of wool were "owled" yearly to France - conversely, from 1784 onwards, most of the pamphleteers and defenders of the landed interest, including Arthur Young and his good friend the Reverend J. Valpy,

155. An Answer Addressed to those who have read Sir John Dalrymple's Pamphlet in support of a tax, and permission to export raw wool, by a Plain Matter of Fact Man, London, 1782.

of Jersey, insisted that smuggling was not carried to any considerable extent and that the manufacturers were obviously exaggerating it as an excuse to increase their monopolistic power over the wool supply. This is just one more instance in this controversy in which economic interest and partisan spirit had the better part of the pamphleteer's desire to be truthful.

From the press, to the general meetings of wool growers and manufacturers, to the County Grand Juries and Assizes; by the beginning of the Spring of 1782 the controversy had spread far and wide through all the circles which had some association with the interests at stake. During a meeting held on the conclusion of the Lincoln Assizes it was resolved: "That the petition sent down by the Committee (The Lincolnshire Wool Committee) in London, appears to state the grievances of the country in a true light, and to ask the only relief that promises to be adequate; it is unanimously resolved that a copy of the said petition be signed forthwith, and sent to the said Committee, with a request that they will make such use of it as they shall think proper."¹⁵⁶

156. The petition in question read as follows :
"That leave may be given to bring in a bill for permitting an exportation of long and coarse wool, at such period after the usual time of clipping, with such a duty and such restrictions as Parliament shall think proper."
From, A Short View of the Proceedings of the Several Committees and Meetings held in Consequence of the intended Petition to Parliament, from the County of Lincoln, for a limited exportation of wool, London, 1782, pp.14-15.

While this was happening in East Anglia, in the North the High Sheriff and Grand Jury at the York Assizes resolved unanimously "that it appears...that to permit the exportation of wool would be highly detrimental and injurious to this country, and tend to promote the interests of our rivals and enemies, in opposition to the most valuable commerce of our fellow subjects. That it becomes the inhabitants of this County ... to oppose any application to Parliament for a purpose so alarming and injurious."¹⁵⁷

A most useful institution on the side of the manufacturers during the controversy was the recently established Worsted Committee of the Counties of York, Lancaster and Chester.¹⁵⁸ This Committee was created in 1777 for the purpose of safeguarding the interest of the worsted masters in their relations with their workers. Throughout the eighteenth century there were complaints from the manufacturers against the frauds and embezzlements committed by their workers. There was, from as early as 1610, legislation to protect employers from this sort of difficulty; what was lacking was an efficient administrative machinery which could mete out justice impersonally instead of leaving the arduous

157. A Short View etc..... pp.15-16.

158. Created by 17 Geo.III, c.11.

tasks of detecting, arresting and prosecuting offenders in the
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hands of individual employers.

In the face of Parliamentary indifference, the clothiers of the West Riding took matters in their hands and formed an informal organization financed by voluntary contributions. As this association was fairly successful the employers applied to Parliament asking for legal sanction for the Yorkshire association. Lancaster and Chester joined in and eventually, in 1777, they succeeded in obtaining legal status.

As the cost of maintaining full time inspectors throughout the manufacturing districts was high, Parliament arranged for the clothiers to use their tax drawbacks on soap used for the textile
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industry for financing the Committee's work. This money, then, was directly drawn from State funds for a specific use; to pay inspectors to enforce the anti-fraud legislation. Nevertheless, when the 1781-82 controversy was at its highest, the Worsted Committee did not hesitate to vote eighty guineas to support the
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manufacturers' campaign against the wool growers' petition. Later,

159. Heaton, op.cit., pp.418-437.

160. All soap used in England had to pay a duty. If it was imported, it paid 1^d per lb; if it was English, it paid ¹/₂ per lb. A drawback, amounting to 1/3 the total duty was granted to all soap used in the textile industries. (10 Anne, c.19).

161. Cited by Heaton, Minutes of the Worsted Committee, 1781-2.

in 1787, one hundred guineas of the Committee's funds were voted to support the campaign in favour of the wool bill. "In fact", writes H. Heaton, "during this and later agitations, the committee spent vast sums of money of the anti-smuggling crusade...."¹⁶²

Although the West of England manufacturing interests were most active in 1784-83 when the agitation for the passing of the wool bill took place, during this earlier controversy they remained rather quiet.¹⁶³ The two counties which stole the limelight during 1781-82 were Yorkshire, on the manufacturer's side, and Lincoln on the wool growers' side. The reason for this is strictly economic; the West of England counties did not use a great quantity of long wool; they were woollen manufacturing centres and their principal raw material was the short or clothing

162. Heaton, op.cit., p.432, et seq. See also James, op.cit., p.298. "Nor have the efforts of the (Worsted) committee been restricted to the repression of frauds in the trade. It has prominently assisted in numerous measures for the general benefit of the stuff manufacture, and expended large sums with that intention....."

163. John Anstie, a well-known manufacturer from the West Country, Chairman of the Wool Meeting, which was in the vanguard of the supporters of the Wool Bill in 1788, wrote in a pamphlet published in that year: "In the contest between the Lincolnshire gentlemen and the manufacturers, during the American War, I was not concerned, my business being wholly unaffected by it.....I cannot subscribe to the doctrine, that under no circumstances whatever ought wool to be permitted to go out of the Kingdom....." A Letter Addressed to Edward Phelips, Esq., M.P. London, 1782, pp.16-17.

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type of wool. Therefore, they were not unduly concerned
over the prospect of a limited exportation of long wool.
Yorkshire on the other hand, depended upon long wool yarn
imported from East Anglia to maintain her large worsted
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industry functioning and any attempts by the Lincolnshire
wool growers to divert the supply of long wool as an immediate
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threat to her manufactures.

By the end of February, 1782, the intense opposition of
the manufacturers to the wool growers' demands added to the
disastrous conduct of the war against the French and the Spanish
started to turn public opinion against a measure which, if the
manufacturers were given the benefit of the doubt, seemed only
destined to aid French industry.

164. "Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and eastern Somerset
produced principally fine quality broadcloth and
kerseymere, made from short wool and fullled in
mills driven by water power....in Devonshire and
near Wellington and Taunton, serges which also
needed fulling, were made with a warp of long wool
and a weft of short wool....." Bulletin of the
Institute of Historical Research, Vol.XIII, 1935-6,
The West of England Woollen Industry, 1750-1740, by
J. Morris, pp.106-110.

165. James, op.cit., p.306. "...the piece maker, using
every exertion, could not obtain from the home
district, or Craven, Wensleydale and the Northern
valleys of Yorkshire a sufficient supply of yarn;
and exactly the reverse of what took place in the
early part of the century ensued. Yarn was sent to
the Yorkshire stuff markets, the produce of Norfolk,
Suffolk and Essex."

166. Bischoff, op.cit., p.214.

Early in February, the Lincolnshire Wool Committee had resolved "that it does not appear....expedient to petition Parliament for redress to the growers of long or coarse wool, aggrieved by the present low prices thereof. That a liberty to export long or coarse wool, under certain restrictions, appears to be the only probable and adequate means of relief." But after restating the principles for which they had been campaigning for the last five months, they added: "that the intended application to Parliament be postponed, until it be known whether the growers of long combing or coarse wool in other counties be willing to co-operate with the County of Lincoln in the prosecution of the above plan."¹⁶⁷

This last paragraph marks the end of the first stage in the struggle between landed and manufacturing industry for the control of the supply of wool.

The press continued to carry correspondence on this subject until late in the Spring and several more pamphlets were published during 1782, but the Lincoln Committee did not find the support it needed and had to abandon the task.

167. A Short View of the Proceedings of the Several Committees and Meetings held in consequence of the intended Petition to Parliament, from the County of Lincoln, for a limited exportation of wool. London, 1782, pp.14-15.

At this stage it is worth pausing for a while to examine the main determinants of the events of 1781-1782. It is clear that there was a real decline in the price of long wool and that as far as the Lincolnshire and Suffolk wool growers were concerned, this fall was primarily the result of the glut in the long, or combing, wool market due to increased production and to the effects of the international situation. For almost a decade, until 1778, the prices of long and other wool in England ran almost parallel with only a slight difference in favour of the latter; from 1778 onwards, while the average general prices for wool increased steadily, the converse was true or long wool prices until in 1781-82 they reached their lowest level for many years; their decline from 1776 to 1781 was almost of 50 per cent. The price factor in this controversy was directly responsible for what might be called the "economic-geographical" location of the disputing parties; on the one hand, the repeal of the ban on exportation was principally supported by Lincolnshire and Suffolk which were the main long-wool growing areas, and was opposed by the Yorkshire and Norfolk manufacturing interests which represented the largest long-wool buying areas. During this first phase of the long dispute, the West of England lent very indifferent support to the other manufacturing areas.

How ever fallacious their rationalizations might seem now, both parties were arguing from fairly solid positions of self-interest; whether it was true or not that, "one pack of English long wool would enable the manufacturers of France or Flanders to work up eight or ten packs of their wool....." the fact remains that the free exportation of wool would have been a serious blow to the already tottering manufactures of Norfolk and the West Country. Yorkshire, though more efficiently organized and already looming large as a competitor to the Southern manufactures, also depended upon an abundant supply of low-priced raw material during this period of expansion and increasing mechanization of production.

The first phase of the controversy, that which took place during 1781-82, can be summed up as being a clear-cut case of rival economic interests competing for the supply of a raw material; the producer of wool wanting a higher price and the consumer demanding a low price and an assured supply.

The second phase is preceded by a substantial change in the price situation. Long wool prices reached their lower limit in 1782 and then, as a direct consequence of the peace and the re-opening of the Atlantic and Mediterranean markets for English fabrics, they began to rise steadily until by 1784 they were approximately 30 per cent higher than two years before. At the same time, the prices for all types of English wool which had been

increasing since 1779, continued their upward trend. This general price rise, while apparently proving the manufacturer's allegations that the end of the war would relieve the wool growers' plight, also brought into the open the bitter competition between Northern and Southern manufacturing centres for the relatively scarce supply of wool of all types.

This change in the price situation caused a complete reversal in the controversy; during 1781-82, the initiative had rested with the wool growers who demanded permission to export as a relief for the very low prices their wool commanded in the market; in 1784-86, the initiative rested with the wool manufacturers of the West of England who pointed to the high price of wool as an excuse for increasing legislation to stop or at least to reduce, the smuggling trade with France.

Although the growth of the West Riding worsted industry was as steady as the displacement of the West Country by the Northern manufactures, the West of England was much more conscious of the rise of Yorkshire as a competitor than were the Norwich manufacturers. Reading the voluminous output of pamphlets, reports and letters written by West Country spokesmen during these years, one cannot help feeling that although these writers reserved their strongest depreciations for the "wicked country gentlemen"....they always cast an anxious eye towards the West Riding where their

more prosperous colleagues seemed hardly to be affected by
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their ills.

It is not surprising therefore, that as a result of the price increases and the relative wool scarcity of 1783-84, the first manufacturing area to take action was the West country. A meeting took place on September 2, 1784, at the Pelican Inn, Bristol, attended by "clothiers, woolstaplers, dealers in wool, etc., of the several counties of Gloucester, Wilts, Somerset, Devon, Dorset, and Hants....." at which the following resolutions were unanimously agreed :

1. That there has been an alarming decrease in the wool for the manufactories.
2. That it appears to this meeting from very respectable evidence, that a considerable quantity of wool and live sheep has of late been exported to the kingdom of France.
3. That it is the opinion of this meeting, that the present laws for securing that most valuable article at home are either incompetent or not fully enforced.

168. The feeling of admiration mixed with a little envy which Southern manufacturers felt towards their Northern colleagues is present especially in writings touching on the development of mechanized production. See John Anstie, Observations on the Importance and Necessity of Introducing Improved Machinery into the Woollen Manufacture, more particularly as it respects the interests of the Counties of Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and Somerset. London, 1803.

4. That it be recommended to each county to convene a meeting to gain every possible intelligence previous to another general one.
5. That another general meeting be held on the first of December next at the Bear Inn, Bath. 169

The Bristol meeting is important not only because it marked the beginning of the second stage in the controversy, but because its composition and the resolutions which were adopted were characteristic of what was to follow. Firstly, it was strictly a regional gathering representing the main manufacturers of the West Country. Secondly, John Anstie was elected chairman and thus became what can be called "the leader" of the manufacturers, a position which he held throughout the controversy. Thirdly, the resolutions are remarkable in that they present the problem factually, but they offered a solution which seems strangely unrelated to it; the problem as they presented it was: "the alarming decrease in the wool for the manufactories...." not as it might have been expected, the high prices. Undoubtedly, both of these problems existed; there were high prices and there was

169. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, Sept. 25, 1784, p. 4, Col. 1. This meeting is also described by John Anstie, who was its chairman, in his General View of the Bill presented to Parliament for preventing the illicit exportation of wool. London, 1787, p. 9.

also a relative scarcity which in part accounted for them, but the Bristol meeting decided, very wisely, considering what it had in mind, to leave prices out of the picture altogether - it chose to concentrate on the physical scarcity of wool instead. This scarcity was due, according to the meeting, to the increase in smuggling, and therefore what was needed was more efficient legislation to prevent it.

This conclusion is perhaps the most important fact about the West Country manufacturers' position; of all the good reasons that might have been put forward as responsible for the rise in prices throughout England they chose one, which although factual, could hardly have caused a prolonged rise in national prices. That wool smuggling took place was beyond doubt; that it was important enough to influence prices over a period of several years was open to question.

The attitude of the West Country manufacturers can only be understood in the light of later events. In the Bristol meeting they had chosen an excellent pretext to push forward legislation which was little short of Machiavelic in that its ultimate effects were not so much calculated to reduce "owling" but to place considerable difficulties in the movement of wool within England; in other words, their intentions seem to have been to use the increase of smuggling as an excuse to pass legislation which would seriously hinder the rising wool manufactures of the West Riding of Yorkshire.

There are several reasons which point towards this conclusion, some are speculative and others are based on contemporary evidence. Among the first is that of selection; why did the West Country manufacturers choose smuggling as a cause for high prices? Even a cursory study of the supply of wool at that time shows at least two better causes; the decline of yarn imports from Ireland and the increase in demand for English wool due to the return of peace. The second one of these factors is further reinforced by the fact that cloth production was increasing steadily during the years after 1762. The increase of production in Yorkshire alone, with its subsequent increased demand for raw materials, could have easily accounted for a rise in prices.

One of the most important consequences of the restrictive legislation against the development of Irish wool manufactures passed in the late seventeenth century, was the increase of Irish yarn imports to England. From 1700 to 1729, the imports rose from 26,617 stones to 91,854 stones. In 1730 all duties on Irish woollen and worsted yarn imports were lifted....", to which, and the increased demand for worsted yarn from Manchester, and the circumstance that spinning is much cheaper in Ireland than in England being added, the increased export of yarn which took place may be imputed...." The average annual import into England

170. John, Lord Sheffield (J.B. Holroyd), Observations on the Manufactures, Trade and Present State of Ireland, London, 1785, p.155. See also, James, op.cit., pp.302-303.

of Irish worsted yarn for the five years ending in 1768 was 160,295 stones, six times more than in 1700. This upward trend culminated in 1778, when 184,000 stones were imported. From then on there was a marked decrease :

1778	184,134	stones
1779	151,109	"
1780	127,321	"
1781	122,786	"
1782	125,732	"
1783	100,015	"

Lord Sheffield's comment on this is the following :

"...latterly the quantity (of yarn exports to England) has decreased very much; principally from the increase of the woollen manufacture of Ireland, the increase of the people, and consequently increased home consumption; and some add that the corn bounties and increase of tillage has diminished the number of sheep...."¹⁷¹

The prosperity and general economic expansion which took place in Ireland during the first decade after her independence were responsible for the reduction in yarn exports. Instead of sending her raw or

171. Observations. Lord Sheffield, p.156. See also, George O'Brien, The Economic History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century, London, 1918, pp.269-274 and 392-413. Edmund Curtis, A History of Ireland, London, 1936, pp. 317-321.

semi-manufactured wool away, Ireland expanded her manufactures and either sent the finished product abroad or consumed it domestically. 172

In five years, from 1778 to 1783, Irish yarn imports fell by nearly 50 per cent - this was indeed a most important factor in the relative scarcity of raw materials which confronted English manufactures and their keen bidding for the scant supply was reflected in high wool prices. Nevertheless, the defenders of the wool bill never once brought this point forward and it was left to Lord Sheffield, writing several years later, to indicate its validity. 173

172. Old drapery imported from Ireland into England:

1781	3,740	yards
1782	4,633	"
1783	40,589	"

New drapery imported from Ireland into England :

1781	286,859	yards
1782	336,607	"
1783	358,061	"

From Sheffield's Present State of Ireland, London, 1785, p.12.

173. Even if the West Country manufacturers had wanted to bring the "Irish question" into the dispute, they probably would not have succeeded. Ireland was enjoying in 1786, a measure of self-determination which gave her considerable powers over her economic policies. The English wool manufacturers had already campaigned successfully to prevent the free export of English raw wool to Ireland; it was clearly out of their power, however great, to compel Ireland to export her wool to England. Although the expansion of the Irish manufactures had a direct influence on the scarcity of wool in England, the West Country manufacturers must have thought that Ireland had been exhausted, for the time being, as a whipping-boy, and decided to concentrate their attacks on an evil which Pitt himself had brought into fashion; smuggling. See also Annals, Vol.9, pp.487-488.

These two factors, Irish yarn imports and the consequences of the return of peace, were more directly responsible for the high prices than smuggling. There was no reason to suppose that smuggling had suddenly increased tenfold from 1782 to 1784, and thus perhaps began to affect national wool prices; the choice of this as the main cause of the dearth of wool leaves the manufacturers of the West Country open at least to suspicion. These factors are supported by the reaction of contemporaries, especially in the Northern counties. Although initially they supported the West Country move for stricter legislation, they soon discovered the true character of that legislation and opposed it strenuously.

The Bristol meeting took place on September, 1784; in December of the same year, the merchants and manufacturers of Leeds met at the Rotation Office and approved unanimously the following resolutions :

1. That it appears beyond doubt, that the exportation of wool and live sheep....is being carried on at an alarming degree.....
2. That the merchants, manufacturers and dealers in wool in these parts, ought to unite in taking the most effectual steps for the suppression of this evil....

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The fact that during the early stages of this dispute, Yorkshire manufacturers joined the West Country in their plea for stricter legislation was due to the absence of any concrete proposals. Neither the Northern, nor the Southern manufacturers had gone farther than holding general meetings and passing resolutions, and as long as the situation remained at this stage, regional interests did not enter the picture; all manufacturers were interested in putting a stop to smuggling and this was especially true at that time when any measure how ever unrealistic, which held the slightest hope of stopping the unwanted price-rise was universally welcomed. As soon as the West Country passed from words to action, this semblance of unity was destroyed.

John Anstie, the leader of the West Country group had encouraged a Mr. Butler who was at that time the Collector of Customs at Rye, to prepare the draft of a bill for the better prevention of smuggling. This draft was submitted by Butler to Anstie, who, after making some alterations, sent it to the different committees of manufacturers throughout the country for comments. The reaction to this draft bill was uncompromising among the Yorkshire manufacturers. In a meeting held at the Leeds Moot Hall on January 31, 1706, it was resolved unanimously, "that....the bill now read, if passed into a law, will be oppressive, injurious, and destructive of trade....that it does not appear to this meeting at present that there is any necessity to apply to Parliament for any further laws

for preventing the exportation of wool....." ¹⁷⁵ Similar resolutions were passed by general meetings in Halifax, Wakefield, and Bradford. In Wakefield an added resolution read "... that we will use the most effectual means in our power to prevent the said bill from being carried into a law...."

Perhaps the most graphic comment on this unexpected reaction came from John Anstie himself in an article he published in several provincial and London newspapers attempting to explain this fiasco :

".....at the instant of time when I flattered myself with the prospect of seeing the business happily terminated, we are embarrassed by the Yorkshire resolutions, it being evident that a difference in sentiment on this subject must be likely to retard the operations of government for our relief....." ¹⁷⁶

According to Anstie, the adverse reaction of the West Riding committees had been caused by a misunderstanding of his intentions. After Mr. Butler had sent him the draft of the bill, he writes,

"I was convinced that Mr. Butler had given much attention to the subject....yet, if the provisions were carried to the extent to which Mr. Butler proposed, the manufacturers would be clogged with

restrictions which they would never submit to. These sentiments I expressed in a letter to Mr. Rose, and also in one to Mr. Butler, though at the same time I gave him, in the name of our meeting, my thanks for his well-meant endeavours..... Being called to town, I embraced the first opportunity of waiting upon Mr. Rose, at this meeting he informed me, that since last seeing me he had received a letter from the meeting at Leeds, informing him that they saw no necessity at present for making any alteration in the....laws respecting the smuggling of wool. This information surprised me, but supposing it to be only a private communication I hoped it would have no bad tendency....I was however truly mortified when I saw their resolutions the next day in the public papers....."

This explanation failed to alleviate the suspicions of the Northern manufacturers who knew perfectly well that Butler's draft bill had been sent to them with the approval of Anstie. The rejection of this bill was followed by swift action designed to hinder the progress of the proposed legislation; a memorial was sent to the Lords of the Treasury, stating that, "if the said bill was passed into a law, it would be injurious and destructive to the trade

of the country.....", and an invitation to attend a general
meeting of manufacturers in London was turned down. ¹⁷⁷

Meanwhile, after this temporary setback, the West Country
manufacturers decided to go ahead with their plans and in a
meeting held on March, 1786 during which the division of opinion
among manufacturers was discussed, it was decided, "That from
the additional intelligence received since the last meeting,
respecting the illicit exportation of wool, an immediate alteration
in the laws is absolutely necessary...." ¹⁷⁸

The objections of the Yorkshire manufacturers were all based
on the very well founded fear that the numerous and detailed
restrictions that could be imposed on the movement of wool if
the bill were to pass, would hinder their own supply of the raw
material. Clauses 20 and 21, especially in this first bill, were
particularly odious. They required that :

"every farmer, grower, or owner of wool, shorn, laid
up, or lodged within fifteen miles of the coast ¹⁷⁹
shall, (within a certain time after shearing) give an

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177. Public Record Office, Treasury Minutes, February 25, 1786,
T 29/57, p.235.
178. Leeds Intelligencer, March 14, 1786, p.3, col.2.
179. The West Country manufacturers are said to have proposed
that this regulation should apply to all areas within 15
miles of the coast or any navigable river or canal. See
Sir Joseph Banks, Instructions Given to the Council Against
the Wool Bill; Annals, Vol.9, pp.488-489.

exact account, in writing, of the number of his
and their fleeces, and the number or quantity of
his and their lamb wool, the weight of locks, and
where lodged, to the next adjoining riding-officer
of the customs; and take a certificate of such entry
from the officer, under a penalty to be inflicted for
every omission...after such certificate is obtained,
he shall not remove such wool without giving a certain
number of days' notice to the officer of his intention,
specifying therein the number of fleeces, the weight
of the wool, the number of cloths it is to be packed
in, and the place it is intended to be removed to; and,
if sold, to insert the name of the buyer, the place of
his residence, and the place where it is to be delivered..
(after the wool has been sold and/or removed)...he must
bring his certificate back with an endorsement thereon,
signed by the buyer, of his having received it...if
the grower neglects to return this certificate so
endorsed... (he will be deemed) guilty of felony....." 180

In addition to these remarkably detailed regulations, there were other proposals forthcoming from the West Country binding the wool buyers to increases in their bonded sureties, etc. Some of these

180. A Letter to His Grace the Duke of Grafton upon the Bill now Depending in Parliament for Preventing the Exportation of Wool.
Ipswich, 1787.

were approved by a meeting in Exeter and later found their way to the pages of the Yorkshire newspapers:

"That the laws relative to the sureties and buyers of wool in the counties of Kent and Sussex, are insufficient, the sureties or bondsmen ought to swear themselves worth the sum of money for which they gave bond to the King....And that same regulation ought to be extended to all counties 181 in the kingdom where smuggling is practicable...."

Unfortunately, no copies of this original draft bill seem to have remained and its contents can only be reconstructed by piecing together the comments made about it by contemporaries. From these, it appears that its most conspicuous features were the general extension of the regulations for Kent and Sussex for the whole of England; the establishment of a "wool registry" in all areas within fifteen miles of the coast; the increase in sureties for all wool dealers; the increase of rewards to informers and the increase in penalties to transgressors.

The Butler draft bill was the first attempt by the West Country to restrict the movement of wool within England and the reaction it caused in Yorkshire was so violent that it endangered, as John Anstie admitted himself, the success of the whole scheme.

This first proposal was promptly withdrawn, in fact it never reached Parliament, but there is little doubt, had not the Yorkshire manufacturers acted as they did, that it would have been presented to the House.

The second draft bill was prepared under the personal supervision of John Anstie and was sent to the different committees of manufacturers accompanied by letters signed by him. In this case he could not possibly claim afterwards that the bill had been sent throughout the country without his authorisation. In fact, meetings were called in Yorkshire to examine the bill and in the announcements published in the newspapers it was stated, "....a draft of a bill intended to be carried into Parliament....having been received from Mr. J. Anstie, Chairman of the Meeting of Delegates at the Crown and Anchor, London.... a General Meeting of Merchants, Wool Dealers.... etc., is called to discuss it."

The wool merchants and manufacturers met at the Piece Hall of Bradford on May 26, 1786 to consider the new proposals, and their response was the same. It was then resolved :

"That the resolutions of the 31st January last (see p.146) be read

That those resolutions, sent with a memorial to the Lords of the Treasury ... appear to be the full sense of the meeting.....

That the reference in Mr. Anstie's letter to his having received an assent from delegates of a part of the manufacturers of Yorkshire can by no means be accepted.....

That the propositions sent by Mr. Anstie as the groundwork of a bill to prevent the exportation of wool, be rejected, as injurious to the interest of this country....

That the opinion of this meeting is that it does not appear necessary to apply to Parliament at present for any additional laws to prevent the exportation of wool, provided those now in being are properly enforced....." 183

The specific reasons why the Yorkshire merchants rejected the proposals put forward by Mr. Anstie were again based on the belief that if those regulations were to become law, the Northern manufacturers would find it very difficult to obtain their wool from the Southern counties. Yorkshire depended to a large extent upon supplies of wool which were transported over a considerable distance, mostly coastwise, and any regulations designed to obstruct this movement were seen with suspicion. The views of the northern manufacturers were summarized in a letter printed in the Leeds Intelligencer after the reception of the proposals sent by Mr. Anstie:

"On perusal of the heads of a bill proposed to be carried into Parliament this session, received from Mr. John Anstie...it seems indispensable....that the following remarks upon it should be published. First, it is proper to be noted that the clothing trade of this country requires upwards of eighty thousand packs of wool to supply it annually, and that not a sixth part of it grows within one hundred miles of the manufactory, and one half of it, within fifteen miles of

the sea, that the bill proposed would evidently make it difficult and expensive if not impracticable fully to supply the trade, and if attentively considered, will be found to have that effect.

Secondly, that a register of all the wool in the kingdom, within fifteen miles of the sea, would not only involve near half the wool growers in the kingdom in great inconvenience and loss of time....but if we may judge by the effects it has produced in Kent and Sussex, would answer very little purpose.

Thirdly, the restrictions imposed, and the bonds with sureties of £500 required of all persons buying wool within fifteen miles of the sea, would be principally injurious to the Yorkshire and Lancashire manufacturers, as it would be difficult for them to procure those wools on the sea-coast at two or three hundred miles distance, without being subject to arbitrary exactions of dealers upon the place, which might be found a tax very oppressive....." 184

This second bill, it must be remembered, was prepared by John Anstie with the full assent of the manufacturers who met in London in April, 1786, to consider the first setback to their endeavours. But this time, instead of waiting for the concurrence of Yorkshire,

the West Country manufacturers pushed the matter ahead and the bill was presented to the Commons where it was read a first time and ordered to be printed.¹⁸⁵ Throughout the Spring and Summer of 1786, the government's attention was taken by the trade negotiations with France and nothing was done about the bill. This, added to the fact that it had already been officially signified to Anstie that the government was not prepared to support the manufacturers' proposals unless Yorkshire was made to agree to them, caused a long pause in the proceedings.¹⁸⁶ Nothing concrete was done about the bill until 1787 when its proposers decided to withdraw it.

During this period, the controversy moved on from the local meetings of manufacturers and wool growers, to the pages of the press. Countless pamphlets were published with the pros and cons of the suggested legislation. It was at this stage that Arthur Young entered the arena with a strong attack on the manufacturers, published in the Annals which had been founded only two years before.¹⁸⁷ From then on, this periodical became the main instrument of publicity for the wool growers. In his article, Young tried to demonstrate that "owling" was a non-existent evil; that even if it had taken

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185. Sir Joseph Banks, Instructions to Council. Annals, Vol.9, pp.489-490.
186. John Anstie, A General View of the Bill Presented to Parliament during the Last Session for Preventing the Illicit Exportation of British Wool. London, 1787, p.14.
187. Annals, Vol.6, pp.506-528. Observations on the Bill for Restraining the Growers of Wool. Arthur Young.

place to a limited extent in the past, it could not possibly have affected the woollen industry adversely because at a time when the manufacturers had complained loudest that this supposed practice was ruining their business, the industry had flourished, "if wool had really been exported....the export could not have had any bad effects, for the trade was then at its height (1730-1740) and if it had not been exported, or at least only to a trifling amount, what was then to be thought of propositions for multiplying restrictions, penalties, and felonies, and in many instances, actually creating the crimes, which were pretended to be prevented? Nothing but the manufacturing spirit of monopoly, could arrive at that combination of knavery and folly...." As a consequence of the American war, he went on, there was a real decline in the manufactures of the kingdom and the price of raw wool had dropped sharply; "a proposition was started for a regulated export with a duty: it was contended for and supported with great force of reasoning....the monopolists, however, carried the day, and that success has animated them to make a further attempt. They brought in a bill last session....the most impudent production (I speak of the manufacturers who suggested it) that ever issued from ignorance and falsehood....." He went on from here to describe the main features of the bill in some detail. Unfortunately, no copies of this bill have remained, therefore

Young's account, together with those in other contemporary writings
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are the only descriptions of this bill available.

In general, this second bill seemed to differ little from
the one proposed by Butler in 1785. All farmers and growers of
wool within an unspecified distance from the coast were still
required to fulfill a series of detailed preliminaries before their
wool could be transported or sold. If either by accident or intent,
the whole detailed process was not completed "to the satisfaction
of the officer or his deputy....then such farmer shall be liable to
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the same penalties as if the wool was actually exported....."

Similar detailed restrictions were imposed upon buyers of
wool who wanted to purchase from farms within the specified distance
from the sea. These prospective buyers were not permitted to buy
wool "without appearing at the Quarter Sessions with two sufficient
sureties entering into bond in the penalty of ---- that he will not
act contrary to this act."

This, according to Young, was the most important part of the
bill as it was first proposed; one that showed clearly the real
intentions behind the manufacturers complaints against smuggling.
He commented as follows :

188. The copies of this bill which were deposited in the House of
Commons Library were destroyed in 1834.

189. The illicit exportation of wool was a felony and the penalty
was transportation. Young's comment to this section of the
bill is the following: "Here we see amply displayed, the
kind and modest spirit of monopoly. The last clause even
a Turkish basha would be ashamed to make the part of a law
for the guidance of men governed by the cudgel...." Annals,
Vol.2, pp.511-512.

"This is a real premium upon smuggling; for in proportion as you burthen the legal trader, you encourage the contraband dealer. Why did not the manufacturers see the tendency of such conduct? The reason is plain: they do not trouble their heads so much about smuggling (which they know, notwithstanding, to be utterly insignificant) as to lay the removal of wool in general under the severest restrictions: from this conduct they know that two effects will flow: first, to lower the price in general....and secondly, to obstruct the North country trade of importing wool from the South....there is evidently a marked intention to obstruct it as much as possible: and let it be remembered, that this precious bill is a West Country measure....."

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The parts of the bill cited by Young covered practically every possible action a man might take with a load of wool. Under the tenth clause, for instance, it was ordered that "no wool shall be removed from the place of shearing to the dwelling-house of the owner, within --- miles from the sea, without a certificate in

190. Annals, Vol.6, pp.513-514. Young also mentions in passing, restrictions laid on wool being transported coastwise and by road, but he does not elaborate the point, as he says, "for lack of space."

writing to the officers, of the number of fleeces, etc..."

And further, "all policies of insurance on vessels bound to foreign parts, to be null and void, provided it afterwards appear, that they contained on board any articles prohibited by this Act."

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Having these clauses in mind, it is not surprising to learn that Pitt, though not entirely hostile in principle to the idea of such a bill, could not be convinced to support it in the Commons and, according to Sir Joseph Banks, his opposition to it was instrumental in determining its eventual withdrawal.

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Young ended this attack against the proposed bill with a passionate defence of free trade and a call to the "landlords and farmers of all the maritime counties of the kingdom", to rally their forces and defeat the bill.

191. Annals, Vol.9, pp.516-517.

192. In his General View of the Bill Presented to Parliament, John Anstie implies that his proposals of 1786 counted with the support of "the ministers". Also, most of his negotiations with the government were conducted through Mr. George Rose, who was said to be in favour of the measure, and being one of the Prime Minister's closest associates, it is not unreasonable to suppose that Pitt was not altogether prejudiced against the bill:

Nevertheless,

Sir Joseph Banks, in his Instructions to Council... writes: "it must not be forgotten that the fair and honest conduct of Mr. Pitt, who, when the bill was presented to him (the 1786 bill, which was eventually withdrawn) told the framers of it, that many of the regulations were inadmissible....and could not be prevailed on any terms to promise his concurrence, leaving his opinion to be decided by the argument he should hear in the debate....operated powerfully towards its extinction...." Annals, Vol.9, pp.490-491.

The response to Young's attack was not long forthcoming and soon the "Annals No. 36" became a common phrase in the pamphlet and press controversy.

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In the following issue of the Annals, appeared a letter signed by Capel Lofft, the man who had so strenuously opposed Young's plan of 1781 to equip and float "county man-of-wars". Capel Lofft supported Young's position with respect to the wool bill, but at the same time disagreed with his appeal to men "of fortunes to give weight to their opinions...." Lofft commented: "is this language for the eighteenth century, for England, for the Annals of Agriculture, for the liberal mind which gave birth to those Annals? Is there almost any injurious monopoly, any oppressive law, which does not derive itself from men who have some adventitious influence....to give this kind of weight to their opinions?....."

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Meanwhile the manufacturers were unable to secure the support of their Yorkshire colleagues but managed to overcome this temporary setback by their remarkable success in the South. Meetings were held in Exeter, Salisbury and Canterbury in which resolutions similar

193. Young's first attack on the bill was published in the 36th issue of the Annals, 1786.

194. This point of view, advanced by Capel Lofft, is particularly interesting because it was him who some years later, in the wake of the French Revolution, accused Young of holding dangerous ideas about an 'agrarian law' which could lead 'to a general participation....'

to those approved by the Bristol gathering were passed by unanimous votes. Another meeting was held at Bristol in March, 1786, at which it was decided to go ahead with the campaign, notwithstanding the 'defection' of the North. Finally, a general meeting of delegates from all the manufacturing areas which supported the West Country was held in London in April, at which the main arguments in favour of the bill were discussed.

Their argumentation revolved around two main points; first, that smuggling had increased considerably in the past few years, and secondly, that the new bill was not introducing anything new but was merely restating and co-ordinating existing legislation in order to make it easier to enforce.

The first point, that smuggling had increased, formed the cornerstone of their case, but even this was based on the yet unproven assumption that English wool was absolutely necessary for the weaving of certain French fabrics. Once this point was accepted, the smuggler became automatically an enemy of society - a man who for sheer monetary gain was willing to give away to "the enemies of England her most precious possession - wool..." This played strongly on the centuries-old prejudices of a merchant class which had always been "mercantilist" at heart; for them, free trade was suicide - protectionism, a sacred duty.

The second point - that the wool bill was merely an attempt to co-ordinate existing legislation - was strongly attacked by Young!

"Of all the pleas advanced, none can so insult one's understanding,
as that of asserting the measure to be in part already law....." ¹⁹⁵

Young saw in this claim, an attempt by the manufacturers to deceive the opposition into believing that the new bill was technically similar to existing legislation and tried to demonstrate that this was not so. One of the examples he chose, referred to the "sufficient washing" of the fleece before sale. "The clause in the new bill, which directs wool to be sufficiently washed is not new; for it is as old as the 23 Henry VIII, but these fabricators of penalty have most completely made it their own: the law condemned the farmer to pay 6d a fleece, half to the King; and half to him that shall sue. By this bill, if the penalty they inflict be not immediately paid, the farmer shall be committed to the house of correction, and confined to hard labour....."

Another feature of the new bill which was radically different referred to the territory over which the more stringent regulations with regards to sale and conveyance of wool would apply. Under the old legislation, all the wool shorn, stored, bought or sold within five miles of the sea in Kent and Sussex, came under these regulations. According to the 1786 bill this was extended to the whole of the island and the distance from the sea was increased to fifteen miles. This clause lent itself to much misunderstanding as Governor Pownall had occasion to show in his famous pamphlet.

Live and Let Live, which he wrote during this controversy.

Pownall observed that if the letter of the law were to be followed as expressed in the proposed bill, then it would be perfectly legal to export wool from London, Hull, Liverpool, and other ports which happened to be farther than fifteen miles from the sea. At the same time, if this clause were altered to include such areas, it would leave the door opened to an extension of the restricted area to all land within fifteen miles of the sea, or any navigable river or canal, which would bring practically the whole of England under what amounted to a Wool Register, similar to those proposed in the 1740s.

Simultaneously, with having had the bill printed in the Spring of 1786, the Commons formed a special committee on the illicit exportation of wool which rendered its first report on June 12th of that year. This report tried to establish two facts; that English wool was necessary for French manufactures, and that there was a considerable amount of wool being exported to France. The body of the report consisted of the declarations of two witnesses; Mr. Gilbert Assleck and Mr. John Anstie, the chairman of the manufacturer's wool committee. The largest section of the appendix was also produced by Mr. Anstie.

196. Thomas Pownall, Live and Let Live, a treatise on the hostile rivalships between the manufacturers and the land workers, 1767.

After having declared that smugglers were able to obtain wool in England relatively easily because of the high prices they were prepared to pay for it, Mr. Anstie was asked: "what induces the French to give such an exorbitant price for English wool?" He answered that, "he did presume.....that it arises from the superior quality of English wool, and its being absolutely necessary to the French manufacturers producing particular species of goods, and that without such wool (meaning the combing wool of England) he had reason to believe that such goods could not be produced..."¹⁹⁷ This was the bulk of the evidence respecting the use of English wool by French manufacturers. The rest of the report was exclusively devoted to showing that smuggling did take place and the evidence consisted of excerpt of conversations with presumed smugglers, letters to and from illicit exporters and a table of wool seizures for the years 1784 and 1785. According to this table, 42,262 lbs. of wool were seized in the first year, against only 13,709 lbs. in the second. The evidence presented to demonstrate that smuggling took place was extremely weak, although one would have expected that such a task should not have been too difficult. A typical excerpt is the following :

Mr. George Oakley, witness: "I was lately applied to to by a smuggler of wool: he evidently was not a judge

of the article, without enquiring its quality, he offered me one shilling per pound by the hundred-weight - I refused, presuming he meant to export it, from the high price he offered me; and hinting my idea, he told me that was no business of mine, he would pay me for it immediately...."

This report provided such meagre proofs of the manufacturers' case that the Lincolnshire Committee of Wool growers took the unprecedented and imaginative step of printing it and distributing it at their own cost as propaganda against the wool bill !

The 1786 bill came under attack not only because it was "oppressive and injurious of trade", but because it was apparently very badly constructed and written, from a legal point of view. One small anonymous pamphlet appeared which was entirely devoted to expose the technical mistakes in the printed bill. Needless to say, the author had an obvious bias against the measure, and he advanced familiar arguments to support his views, but some of the points he made against the bill were rather appropriate. For instance, according to the printed bill, a dealer in wool was compelled to enter into bond if he was to trade with areas within fifteen miles of the coast, but the agent of a dealer who was not bonded, would have traded with those same areas without difficulty !

By the end of 1786, a strong opposition to the bill had been organized not only in Yorkshire, but among the wool growers of the South. The most prominent event in this connection was a meeting held at Lewes on November, 1786, presided over by Lord Sheffield. This reunion was widely reported throughout the country, as Lord Sheffield, who enjoyed a considerable reputation as a versed man in political and economic affairs, took a decided stand against the manufacturers and made comments which must have had some influence in the eventual decision to withdraw the bill.

Lord Sheffield started by pointing out that Kent and Sussex were already subject to laws somewhat similar to those proposed in the new bill, but that they had been found by experience to be so "inconvenient and extravagant" that they had not been executed. He went on to say that the principal effect of the bill was to give advantages to the manufacturers of one part of the country over those of the other: "that the declining manufactures of the West wished to prevent the sending of wool coastwise to the thriving manufactures of Yorkshire and Lancashire.....if the bill should pass, and be enforced, he did not suppose any master of a vessel would be hardy enough to carry wool coastwise on any terms...."¹⁹⁹

199. Lewes Intelligencer, December 12, 1786.

The Lewes meeting adjourned after voting the following resolutions :

1. That it is the opinion of this meeting that the smuggling of wool is not practised in this county (Sussex) to any considerable extent....."
2. That the complicated and numerous restrictions contained in the said bill, tend to discourage the growth of wool and embarrass trade....."

Early in 1787, the climate of opinion against the bill was such that its promoters decided to withdraw it and to call for another general meeting of manufacturers, in order to draft a new proposal. This meeting sent invitations to all the manufacturers' committees in the country to send delegates to London to draft the new bill. On January 4, 1787, a committee of merchants and manufacturers at Bradford decided to send five delegates to the London meeting. This decision marked the end of the second stage in the long controversy.

From September, 1784, until the withdrawal of the 1786 wool bill in April, 1787, the manufacturers of the West Country, the South and East Anglia, had tried unsuccessfully to pass this piece of legislation, in spite of the opposition of the Yorkshire manufacturers. Their failure was due to several factors; the bill itself had obvious legal shortcomings and it would have had to be almost completely re-drafted before it could be put to a second reading in the House.

Also, the restrictive intentions behind this legislation were easily discerned and their promoters were unable to convince the public that their purpose was solely to stop smuggling. This caused the defection of Yorkshire which considerably weakened the bill's chances of success. Lastly, the strong reaction of the landed interest led by Sheffield, and Young, was partly responsible for the failure.

The news that the bill had been withdrawn was not known generally until the end of the 1786-87 session and it was greeted as a resounding success for the efforts of the landed interest. Until late in the Spring, there were apprehensions among Young's readers that the manufacturers might decide to bring the bill for its second reading: "...at the end of the session, at which time they hope to find the House fatigued and unwilling to submit to the patient investigation from which we have everything to hope and they to fear....." But this correspondent added: "Yorkshire.....is so much divided on the subject that some of the delegates of the manufacturing towns have declined attending the committee meeting in London....."

This marked the turn of the tide; Yorkshire was not altogether against the idea of such legislation; in fact, it was divided in its support; while before it had been united in opposition. During the Spring, the five Yorkshire delegates attended manufacturers'

meetings in London and decided to join the West Country in a further attempt to pass the wool bill through Parliament.

The 1786 wool bill was withdrawn before the Parliamentary Spring recess of 1787. An advertisement was published in newspapers throughout the country, announcing that at a meeting of "representatives in Parliament, for several counties and places interested in the woollen manufactures, it has been resolved, that on account ONLY of the advanced and unexpected state of public business in the present session, it is not advisable to proceed any further at this time with the bill for preventing the export of wool....." Six months later, the Yorkshire manufacturers' Committee which had attended the London deliberations of the general meeting of manufacturers, gave a slightly different version of the decision to withdraw the bill :

"Your committee understand, that through the then expected short duration of the last session of Parliament, and of the violent opposition which was threatened to the bill, it was doubted how far it would be prudent to proceed with respect to the same in the said session.....therefore, it was unanimously determined that on account only of the advanced and unexpected state of public business....." etc., and it ends: "that the same bill, should be postponed to the now next session and....be prosecuted with.....spirit and vigour....."

From comparing these two "unofficial" views of the same event it is clear that at the time when the 1786 bill was withdrawn, its promoters were not altogether sure that it would be presented again. Also, no mention was made of the "violent opposition" which was to a large degree responsible for its failure.

The first important pamphlet published by the manufacturers after Young's debut with his No. 36 of the Annals came from John Anstie. The author's foremost purpose in this publication was to refute two of the bill's most outspoken critics whom he described without naming as "a noble author and a writer of inferior rank in periodical publications....."

This pamphlet is divided into two main parts, one devoted to prove "whether the practice of smuggling wool is carried on to any considerable extent," and the other to "whether the laws now in force are sufficient to prevent that pernicious practice." He dismissed the first part by stating that although "the information which..... has been obtained from the continent exceeds my most fantastic expectations.....prudence will not permit me to give your Lordships...

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200. John Anstie, A General View of the Bill Presented to Parliament during the last Session, for preventing the illicit exportation of British wool and live sheep....addressed to the Most Noble Marquis of Lansdown, London, 1787.
201. Lord Sheffield.
202. Arthur Young.

a detail of the information....as it might prevent my procuring
that which I have reason further to expect." 203

Under the second heading of his inquiry, Anstie examined the then existing laws against smuggling. The most important of those, which was binding throughout England, required "every grower of wool residing within five miles of the sea, before he carried his wool home from the place of shearing, to give notice ten days after shearing, to the next officer of the customs, of the true number of his fleeces, and where it is housed, and not to remove the same without certifying to the said officer under his hand his intention so to do three days before." To this, Anstie appended the following comment: "As there is no further control, it is very easy to consign it (the wool) into the hands of the smuggler, and therefore in this respect the law is ineffectual." 204 He also mentioned some glaring shortcomings of the existing law which definitely needed amending even if a new bill was not to be introduced. For instance, under the old law, the most astringent regulations were set down to prevent the exportation of wool from the open coast in Kent and Sussex, nevertheless according to the letter of the same law, as Anstie pointed out: "all wool, when it comes within the limits of

203. Anstie, A General View..... p.22.

204. Anstie, A General View..... pp.25-26.

of a port, ceases to be under the control of the officers of the custom; in consequence of which, wool that is brought from the country, and deposited at Gravesend, may pass without a certificate....
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it is then easily conveyed to foreign countries....."

Finally, he proposed that the purpose of the wool bill was "to abolish injudicious restrictions" and to remedy the effects of the old regulations, "by extending the laws, at present binding only on the counties of Kent and Sussex, to all parts of the Kingdom,
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within a limited distance from the sea....."

Young did not waste time in answering Anstie's pamphlet in an article appropriately entitled "The Editor's Reply to the Manufacturers' Defence of the Wool Bill". Young had a chronological advantage over Anstie because when his reply appeared in the Annals, it was already known that the bill had been withdrawn while Anstie had written in the belief that it would be carried through without further alterations. However, Young did not make excessive political capital of this fact and appeared quite aware that the bill would be reintroduced after being amended.

Among other points, Young went out of his way to defend his contention that the bill was a "Wiltshire measure...." About this,
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Anstie had written: "What can this writer say in his justification

205. Anstie, A General View.... pp.28-29.

206. Anstie, A General View.... p.29.

207. He was referring to Arthur Young who, in volume 6, pp.513-514 of the Annals, accused the promoters of the bill of attempting to obstruct the internal and coastwise transportation of wool.

for bringing such a charge against the framers of the bill when I inform the public that I have received a letter from the chairman of the general meeting, in Yorkshire, proposing some alterations in the bill....but not a single one in those clauses which relate to the coast regulations in shipping wool ?....."

Young answered: "What the expressions in any such correspondence may be, I shall not give myself any trouble to enquire, but state very shortly to the reader, that a tract now lies open before me from which I find, that.... they have left out the whole clause which prohibited persons from buying wool on the sea coast, without first finding sureties for their obedience to the clauses of the bill in question. They have also left out the entire clause of exempting wool dealers from the debts of their servants and agents....I am very far from declaring that they have expunged the whole, or nearly the whole that militated against their own interests, but they have attacked enough to show that they were jealous of laying the coast dealer in wool under regulations which would affect themselves."

Young devoted some space to making a violent attack against the manner in which the bill had been withdrawn and after a tirade against the "frightful combination" of manufacturers' interests he ended the

208. Annals, vol.7, pp.413-414. The tract he mentioned was entitled: Heads of a Bill Presented last Session of Parliament... with the alterations made by deputies appointed to consider the same, from Leeds, Wakefield, Halifax, Bradford and Huddersfield, 1786.

article with a flourish: "Postponed ? -- Is another session in question ? -- We'll meet thee at Philippi !" ²⁰⁹

This was Young's last mention of the wool bill in the Annals before he left for his first extensive voyage in France and Spain.

In April of 1787, he received an invitation to visit France from Mons. Lazowski. This gentleman had spent two years in Bury during 1782-84, with the two sons of the Duke of Liancourt, acting as their preceptor. Their stay at Bury had been prompted by Mons. Lazowski's desire that they should learn agriculture and political economy from the master himself; Arthur Young, Esq. During those two years, Young and Lazowski became close friends, and when the Englishman received an invitation to travel across France

209. In the manufacturer's advertisements announcing the withdrawal of the bill, the only reasons advanced for this move was "the unexpected state of public business..." The word 'only' was printed in heavy capitals. Young commented: "Why was the word only printed in such formidable capitals ? - except as a sort of defiance to the opposing counties and to the whole landed interest. But this fortunate only must still be viewed in another light. The manufacturers in their publication admit that their bill was hastily produced. Also its deficiency; partiality; errors; uselessness; and severity (all these are supported by quotations from Anstie's pamphlet) - yet it is all of a sudden become such a paragon of perfection, that the bringing it into Parliament could be postponed ONLY because the public business would impede its progress - No other reason in the world, oh, no - none. To prune, to correct and refine, such a jargon of nonsense, to mollify such despotic principles; to restrain the rigour of confessed severity; to relax the efforts of admitted partiality; to make that useful which is declared useless; and to lick this unshapen cub into a beast of consistent tyranny...." Annals, Vol.7, pp.426-427.

to the Pyrennees in the company of his friend, he did not hesitate to accept. Mons. Lazowski was travelling on horseback to a spa on the Pyrennees with the Count de la Rochefaucould, to whom he had been appointed preceptor, and he wanted Young to be of the party: "...will you come with us ? Such a proposition is not a foolish one. We will pass by a part of France in going, and come back by another part, so that you will see almost two thirds of this kingdom and you will learn French....."

Young left the Annals in the able hands of his friend, John Symonds, and left Dover on May 15, 1787. When he returned on November 8, 1787, he found the landed and manufacturing interests ready to fight over the latest version of the wool bill, which was said to be ready for presentation to Parliament. This time, the alignment of forces had changed drastically; instead of being alone in their support of the bill, the West Country and East Anglia wool manufacturers were joined by their Yorkshire colleagues, who had previously opposed the measure. The bill, therefore, was presented with the whole support of the "manufacturing interest" behind it, and Sir Joseph Banks and Arthur Young hurriedly tried to rally the landed interest in opposition.

The bill presented by this manufacturers' coalition, was a compromise between the first West Country version, and the amendments proposed by Yorkshire. Young had already examined in extenso the

modifications suggested by the Yorkshire delegates in order to make it more palatable to Northern interests. His views on the proposals were published in the same 41st number of the Annals in which he hailed away the 1786 wool bill.

According to Young, the amendments proposed by the Yorkshire manufacturers referred specially to the restrictions imposed on wool dealers, to the regulations which increased sureties and required that certain wool trading operations should be effected under bond, and to the restrictions on the coastwise movement of wool.

In addition to these, the Yorkshire delegates filled in the blanks provided for the penalties to be imposed. This they did, in Young's opinion, in a ruthless manner. For instance, if a farmer failed to give an exact account of the wool he had sheared within five days after the operation had been concluded, the Yorkshire delegates proposed that he ought to be fined £100.

Young commented:

"One hundred pounds ! A man shears a score of sheep, he has ten miles to send to make the entry and if he neglects it for six days he pays a fine of £100 ? Is this England ? Is this a country of freedom ? Or are all our senses deceiving, and we are breathing the air of despotism, pestilential to human liberty ?....."

There is one important point which needs further clarification. Young did not devote much space to it in his "post mortem" article to the 1786 bill, although it was by far the most interesting aspect of the question at that time. This was the reconciliation which took place between the West Country and the West Riding manufacturers during the early weeks of 1787. Young mentioned this only in passing, but did not offer an explanation.

The reasons behind Yorkshire's opposition to the wool bill during 1784-1786 are complex, and must be studied against the economic background of those years. When John Anstie first brought up the matter of a wool bill, his main justification for it was the scarcity of wool - or rather, he and his colleagues in the West Country chose to refer solely to the physical scarcity of wool to the exclusion of any reference to high prices. They did this in the certain knowledge that to advocate low wool prices as a policy, would have brought against them the unmitigated wrath of the whole landed interest. Physical scarcity was a more concrete and recognizable evil, one which, barring the competition of the North as a buyer of wool, seemed to have been obviously caused by smuggling, in spite of the increased production of the long-wool growing areas.

In spite of this, the fact remained that it was prices that bothered the West Country in particular and the South in general and the effects which abnormally high raw material prices might

have on specific manufacturing areas, depended largely upon the economic health of that area.

The decline of Norwich and the West as manufacturing centres was a matter of fact for many contemporary observers; nor were they blind to the movement of the manufacturing activity from South to North. A correspondent of the Annals, the Rev. R. Valpy, of Reading, asked in one of his numerous contributions: "Is not the seat of woollen, as it is manifestly the case in other manufactures, gradually removing towards the North? Certainly, if there is a failure in some counties; Yorkshire is, I understand, in a state of progression, which will maintain the general proportion....."²¹²

Although Prof. J.H. Clapham has defended the thesis that the decline of Norwich did not set in until the nineteenth century,²¹³ there seems to be enough evidence to warrant a dissenting opinion.

No one during the last two decades of the eighteenth century, not even the champion of the West Country manufacturers himself, denied the fact that the Southern textile industrial centres were

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212. Rev. V. Valpy, of Reading, On Wool and the Woollen Manufacture. Annals, Vol.9, pp.522-529.
213. J.H. Clapham, The Transference of the Worsted Industry from Norfolk to the West Riding. Economic Journal, Vol.XX, 1910, pp.195-210. According to this article, the "destructive decade for the weaving and finishing trade" in Norfolk was as late as 1831-41.

losing ground to the advances of the North.

One of the ways in which this economic deterioration was evidenced to contemporaries was by the comparative wages which these textile manufacturing areas paid their respective workers. Young conducted a fairly representative survey of this subject using one of his useful circular letters which he sent to his correspondents, requesting specific information about this problem. Thirty-three correspondents answered and their replies gave him at least a partial view of what he wanted to know.

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214. In a pamphlet written in 1803, John Anstie frequently brought forward the fact of Yorkshire's superiority over the West Country in woollen manufactures. This he attributed partly to the smooth introduction of machinery in the North. See John Anstie: Observations on the Importance and Necessity of Introducing Improved Machinery into the Woollen Manufactory..... London, 1803.
215. An additional facet of this problem which did not receive much attention before 1787, but became one of the main points at issue after Young's return from France, was the level of the spinners' wages, in East Anglia. Young accused the Norwich manufacturers of intentionally lowering their labourers' wages on the pretext that wool smuggling to France was undermining the industry. "The manufacturers of that City (Norwich) went a step further and made the bill depending in Parliament a reason for alterations in the prices given for spinning, which have had the effect of almost starving the poor in the two counties of Norfolk and Suffolk..." By doing this, maintained Young, the manufacturers were plainly trying to weaken the landed interests' opposition in these counties by using an "argument pointed directly to their feelings, knowing well that the poor must have recourse to their parishes for support...." It is conceived by many respectable persons that there is a combination among the yarn makers to give the same price for their labour. Whether this lowering of wages in East Anglia was part of a concerted plan or not is hard to ascertain - what is a fact is that payment to spinners in these counties was considerably lower than in the rest of the country and this was caused at least in part by the state of the local textile industry.

He constructed a rough statistical recapitulation with all the data he had received and arrived at some interesting conclusions. All this evidence was subject to the obvious qualification that, coming from active readers of the Annals, it was at least open to suspicion of partiality, but in the case of prices and salaries, this qualification can be waved aside more easily. The following is a list of the daily earnings of wool spinners per county, based on the information sent by the thirty-three correspondents :

Earnings from Spinning, 1778-1788.

Yorkshire	9d per day	
Yorkshire	6d	(another report)
Lancashire	9d	
Lincolnshire	8d	
Oxford	6d	
Hampshire	5d	
Devon	6d	
Hereford	4d	
Somerset	4½d	
Shropshire	6d	
Cornwall	5d	
Sussex	9d	
Essex	6d	
Staffordshire	6d	
Suffolk	3½d	

Average of the 15 counties 6½d per day

216. Annals, Vol.9, pp.266-364. On the Prices of Wool; and State of Spinning at Present in England, Arthur Young.

According to this table, which, being far from representative, it can still give an idea of local conditions, the spinning wages in Suffolk were almost half the average for these counties. Suffolk, Somerset, and Hereford seemed to pay the lowest wages, while Lincolnshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire were at the other extreme. The high wages paid in Lincoln could have been the result of the considerable number of orders for Lincoln yarn which came from the north.

A pamphlet was published anonymously in Ipswich during this year in which the complaint was voiced that "the wool-combers have assumed to themselves an arbitrary power of deducting sometimes two pence, three pence, and at this time, four pence out of every shilling which has been honestly and industriously earned by every poor person employed in that branch in the County of Suffolk..... Although at this time, the spinners of wool into yarn in the County of York are, as I am informed, paid their full wages without any deductions whatsoever." 217

From all this fragmentary data, opinions of contemporaries, later developments, etc., it can be concluded that during the last two decades of the eighteenth century, the two principal wool manufacturing areas in the south were experiencing a deterioration

217. A Letter to a Member of Parliament on the Necessity of an Amendment in the Laws Relating to the Woollen Manufactory. Ipswich, Rivington. Quoted in the Annals, Vol.8, pp.549-554.

of their economic position, while those situated in Yorkshire and Lancashire were undergoing an expansion. These facts seem to underlie the apparent vagaries of the northern manufacturers' attitude with respect to the wool bill. When the Butler draft bill was first publicized in 1785, its legal shortcomings and the evident ulterior motives which were shown in its many restrictions on the movement of wool within England, set the Yorkshire manufacturers against it. An additional, and perhaps most important, reason for their aloofness, was that the rise in wool prices was not pronounced enough to affect their position. Foreign demand was brisk and they could absorb the price rise without strain. The southern manufacturers were in a weaker position. The rise in exports hardly helped to ameliorate their adverse situation with respect to northern competition. Tradition, apathy and other disadvantageous circumstances prevented Norwich and the West County centres from effecting a smooth transition into full scale mechanized production, and the comparative inefficiency of their old methods of production began to tell. By 1784, Yorkshire was well on the way to becoming the acknowledged leader in the manufacture of woollen textiles and two decades later even the fact that efficient mechanization had played an important role in making this superiority possible, was generally recognized.

218. See John Anstie's Observations on the Importance and Necessity of Introducing Improved Machinery into the Woollen Manufactory. London, 1803.

The moderate rise in wool prices which took place after the conclusion of the American War hardly touched the flourishing northern manufactures, but pushed the south almost out of competition. The complaints of the first Bristol Meeting, that there "was a scarcity of wool for the manufactories", did not find an echo in the West Riding. The northern merchant and manufacturer found the rise in prices perhaps a little inconvenient, but business was so brisk that they did not think such drastic means as the Dutler wool bill offered were necessary to stem it.

This situation changed fundamentally by 1787 - the rise in prices increased in tempo and by the Spring of that year, wool was costing 60 per cent more than in 1782. This was too much even for the prosperous West Riding, and the merchants and manufacturers who had decidedly opposed Anstie's proposals in 1785, started to have second thoughts on the matter. This worsening of the price situation, and the repeated conciliatory approaches made by the West Country representatives, added to promises to make as many amendments to the 1786 bill as were needed to satisfy northern demands finally tipped the balance. In January 4, 1787, the Bradford Committee decided to send delegates to the general meeting of manufacturers in London. The entente

219. Thomas Day, in his Letter to Arthur Young, Esq. on the Bill now Depending in Parliament, 1788, p.12, quotes Mr. Charles Clapham as saying, "....that the price of wool is at present too high to afford the manufacturers a reasonable profit upon their goods...."

against the "wicked country gentlemen" was only one step ahead.

This decision of the Bradford manufacturers is not surprising. The main contention of the West Riding had been that if the existent anti-smuggling laws were enforced, they could be as efficient as any new regulations could ever hope to be. By 1787 it was clear to them that either the government was incapable of enforcing the old regulations, or that the smugglers were able to by-pass them successfully.

The fact that smuggling took place, in whatever degree, and that the complaints of the southern manufacturers had coincided with a steady rise in prices, convinced the Bradford Committee that Anstie should at least be given the benefit of the doubt - the delegates which were sent to London were more in the capacity of observers than actual participants, but the decision to send them was the first step towards full participation by the north in supporting the wool bill.

The first important contribution by a Yorkshire spokesman to the controversy which raged in the press, came from John Hustler.²²⁰ He published a pamphlet in Bradford before the 1786 bill had been

220. John Hustler, (1715-1790). A member of the Society of Friends, very active in public affairs in his native Bradford, was responsible for the building of a new market place, a street and the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, which he himself projected and sponsored in 1777. See Dictionary of National Biography, Vol.28, pp.332-333.

withdrawn, but after the Bradford manufacturers had sent delegates to the London General Meeting. In Hustler's pamphlet, one can find most of the objections which the Yorkshire meeting had had against the earlier versions of the bill. For instance, Hustler strongly opposed the creation of a Wool Register and he explained: "At the same time that I contend for the prevention of the exportation of wool I think it my duty to object to several of the alterations proposed by the bill now before the House of Commons as futile, oppressive and impolitic; the register clauses in the bill would unavoidably subject the wool grower to such a series of trouble, vexation and hazard, as would render the occupation of his sheep walks within fifteen miles of the sea disagreeable to him, and be almost an invincible inducement to turn them into other cultivation

..... It is surprising that the compilers of the bill, could have adopted and extended to the whole of the kingdom, those vexatious restrictions and penalties, which the present laws have laid upon the counties of Kent and Sussex only; as a little consideration would have convinced them of their bad policy, from the evidence produced, of more wool having been smuggled from these two counties, than the whole kingdom besides....."

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221. John Hustler, Observations Upon the Bill Presented to Parliament for Preventing the Exportation of Wool.
Bradford, 1787, pp.15-16.

Hustler touched upon the subject of smuggling and being a good Quaker, in the name of honesty and consistency, he reprinted a long extract of a paper which he wrote in 1782, when he led the Yorkshire merchants and manufacturers in their opposition against the East Anglian wool growers' efforts to secure freedom to export. This remarkable paper was published after Sir John Dalrymple had stated his pragmatic case in favour of free export by maintaining that the quantity of wool which was being smuggled was so great, and the efforts to prevent this illicit trade had proved so futile, that it was much more realistic to allow the exportation of payment of a duty to the government. This argument forced the manufacturers to defend a most curious position; they had to try to convince the general public that smuggling was insignificant! Hence, the following quotation from Hustler's reprint :

"....these writers (Sir John Dalrymple), conscious of the bad policy of exporting raw wool, and that all the unbiassed public will declare against it, take upon themselves boldly to assert, that it is clandestinely exported, nearly in as large quantities as it would be if allowed by law, under certain restrictions and limitations, without producing any evidence to prove this extraordinary assertion..... It is not denied that the general opinion has favoured that idea but that it has been run in such considerable quantities, as to affect the markets here or abroad, is

positively denied....Large quantities have not been run, from the impossibility of the exporter packing up such a bulky article as wool, without the assistance of several persons; the improbability of a secret of such importance not being discovered from either the lucre of such assistants, who would be entitled to half the forfeiture, and the penalty of 3s. per pound...."²²²

Less than two months after this was published, Hustler played a prominent role in a meeting in Leeds which among other resolutions approved the following : "that it is the opinion of this meeting...that wool is annually exported abroad, in such quantities as not only to have caused a great scarcity of that commodity, but so as to have advanced the same to a price far beyond what the trade can bear."

The last paragraph reflects accurately the mood of the Yorkshire merchants and manufacturers; the price had risen too much - something had to be done about it.

Hustler's pamphlet was a fair and well-balanced attempt to explain the complex situation - unfortunately, the controversy had long passed the stage in which fairness was needed, or

222. Hustler, Observations, pp.8-10.

appreciated, if forthcoming. Furthermore, for all his fairness, Hustler was not a very lucid or intelligent writer. Young reviewed Hustler's pamphlet in the Annals and besides criticizing the argument as a whole ("...in general, is a weak one; founded on a petiti^o principii...."), he chose every smallest bit of inconsistency or obscure reasoning and exposed it in a devastating manner. Reading his treatment of John Hustler, one begins to understand how this fiery agriculturist managed to make so many enemies.

Referring to the woollen industry, Hustler wrote: "... by finding employment and subsistence, it gives strength and opulence....", and Young answered: "....And does not every manufacture do the same? But does any other in the kingdom yield such miserable subsistence as this? The Counties of Suffolk and Norfolk are now starving with the opulence of this boasted fabric! The author's reasoning is to prove that greater favours ought to be continued to this manufacture than to any others - and he tells us, that manufactures which find employment are beneficial to the nation. What a marvellous discovery! But relates as much to his purpose as the measure of St. Paul's dome - or the pickle of an Egyptian mummy....."²²³

223. Annals, Vol.9, pp.458-465. Review of Observations on the Wool Bill, by Arthur Young.

How ever debatable his qualities or defects as a journalist, agriculturist, or amateur politician, Young was a superb observer and a man of inexhaustible curiosity and energy. During the summer of 1787 which he spent travelling in France and Spain, he put these qualities to good use and when he returned to London, he had with him information which he hoped would dispose once and for all of the manufacturers' case for a new wool bill. The pamphlets and articles he wrote after his return were more fully documented than before and although the trend of events was not reversed, they did not fail to impress his adversaries.

His first serious article on this problem after his arrival in England was published in the Annals just before Parliament reassembled for the session 1787-88. The opening paragraph was quite explicit: "The monopolists of wool having last session only postponed their bill of pains and penalties against the growers, they have lately taken the necessary steps for renewing their attack, and give out, that immediately after the recess they shall again introduce it....." ²²⁴ After this, Young described his activities in France and explained that he visited all the major textile areas where English wool was said to be used - he

224. Annals, Vol.8, pp.467-468. On the Export of Wool, and the Bill Now Depending in Parliament, by Arthur Young.

noted the price, quality and type of the raw materials used and cloth produced and he concluded that "the result of these enquiries perfectly convinced me, that it was impossible the quantity of English wool smuggled into France could be considerable - that there was not a single fabric in that kingdom which would stop should such clandestine trade be absolutely put an end to for ever - that the manufactures in which English wool is used are not among the most flourishing".

In addition to these impressions which, coming from such a decided partisan, could be questioned, Young presented a table listing the amounts of wool imported into France by country of origin. This table, according to him, was a transcript of an official document prepared under M. de Callonne, who was at the time the French Minister of Finance.

Account of Wool Imported Into France, 1782

Spain	13,600,000	livres
Portugal	2,000,000	
Naples and Sicily	4,131,000	
Ecclesiastical State	1,485,000	
Turkey	2,795,000	
England	312,000	
Holland	1,300,000	
Hanseatic Towns	1,848,000	
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	27,471,000	livres
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Reducing these amounts to their value in English currency at the rate of 10½d. per livre, Young arrived at a total value of wool imports of £1,211,373 - of which £13,650 came from England.

The authenticity of this account could also have been doubted and Young anticipated his critics by offering the following defence; "....the most abandoned profligate would hardly venture to make any variations in an account which others are in possession of in France. The Minister, by whose orders the general inspection was made is at present in England, and may probably be in possession of a complete copy of the whole memoir".²²⁵

Whether these accounts were correct or not, they represented an interesting change in Young's position. Until 1786, he had stubbornly maintained that smuggling had completely ceased, this time, his personal inspection had shown him that although the amount which reached France was always said to be insignificant, English wool was actually being used by French manufacturers.²²⁶ Once the

225. Annals, Vol.8, pp.471-472.

226. "At Beauvais, Abbeville, Amiens, Lille, and other towns where English wool is supposed to be most used, I made many and close enquiries; they all admit, and admit very freely, that they do use English wool, but at the same time they expressly assert the quantity to be very small...."
Annals, Vol.8, p.473.

fact was established that wool was being smuggled to France, the matter of the exact quantity became largely irrelevant - Young weakened his case considerably, first by asserting that no smuggling took place, and later, by having to admit that some wool was actually finding its way into French looms.

Soon after this article appeared, one of Young's most serious and reasoned contributions to the press controversy was published outside the Annals in the form of a pamphlet entitled, The Question of Wool Truly Stated.²²⁷ In it, Young printed some information which later on was presented to the Parliamentary Committee on the Illicit Exportation of Wool. Using this and other data, he tried to restate the whole complicated problem in its simplest form. Those who asked for a drastic revision of the existing laws, proposed Young, must be prepared to show that they are "under pressure of some general or particular evil, which is of magnitude sufficient to call for the interference of the legislature.", and that the new method of dealing with their difficulties "is best calculated for doing it, with the least possible inconvenience to others....."

If the first of these two propositions were true, he went on, that would have meant that the woollen manufacturing industry

227. The Question of Wool Truly Stated, in which are examined the facts for and against the bill now depending in Parliament, by Arthur Young, London, 1788.

of the country was labouring under critical conditions. This, Young set out to prove unfounded.

According to the evidence presented to House of Commons, the export trade in woollen goods during the period 1776-1787 was as follows :

Average for 1776-1782	£ 3,162,423
" " 1783-1784	3,427,984
" " 1785-1787	3,697,653

And the figures for the production of broads and narrows in Yorkshire according to the records of the Pontefract Sessions, were the following :

	<u>broads</u>	<u>NARROWS</u>
Average for 1779-1782	3,446,833	2,625,282
" " 1783-1784	4,323,855	3,324,325
" " 1785-1787	4,876,807	3,660,074

After quoting these figures, Young added, "what degree of credit is due to assertions of failure, losses and declension in Yorkshire may easily be conceived."

Although his data is correct, it is also incomplete as it does not include detailed figures for East Anglia and the West Country which were, after all, the initiators of the wool bill and, as Young himself wrote, were suffering from "failure, losses and declension...."

Smuggling was his next topic and he wrote: "This practice is so great an evil, that there can be no impropriety in an attempt to check it, when found of a magnitude to deserve attention....." And Young's next task was to show that smuggling did not merit attention because of its insignificance.

Mr. John Anstie had presented to Parliament a series of figures allegedly copied from French customs books by an unidentified informer. Young, when examined at the Bar of the House of Commons had also produced a similar account allegedly taken from the same source; "a particular friend at Paris, a gentleman perfectly respectable...."²²⁸ Needless to say, the figures in both accounts did not coincide and Young must have delighted his readers when he decided to publish both accounts in parallel columns in the Annals.

Ports	Years	By the Anstie Report	By the "real" French Register
St. Malo	1783	531	124
	1784	456	151
	1785	515	133
	1786	515	128
Legue	1783	418	4
	1784	552	14
	1785	365	5
	1786	283	19
Granville	1787	841	10
St. Vallery	1787	639	--
Calais	1783	30	--
	Total ...	<u>5,145</u>	<u>588</u>

228. He was referring to Mons. Lasowski.

"Being an exaggeration of TEN TIMES...."

Satisfied that he had proved the manufacturers in the wrong with regards to the real state of their industry and the actual amount of wool smuggled to France, Young turned to the second part of his argument. After outlining the history of the legislation which had been passed to curb "owling", he concluded: "Through the long course of 128 years, it has been found that severity and restriction are not the means of putting a stop to smuggling; where the temptation is so great, some wool will be exported..... But the framers of the present bill, blind to this ample mass of experience - come again to the charge, and bring forward new fines, penalties and restrictions, to do that which they have uniformly failed to do for above a century."

The last stages of the public controversy were approaching - the bill was under Parliamentary consideration. Young and Sir Joseph Banks had laboured hard and long to try to move an apathetic landed interest into action, but they must have suspected that their efforts had not been altogether successful.

229. Young did not let this opportunity slip by without adding some caustic comment: "We have heard of an Englishman on the North coast of France at the very time they profess their intelligence to have been collected, the latter end of 1786, and the beginning of 1787, who was much given to liquor: we are not sure, but we suspect this to have been the person employed by them....."

To many of his readers and admirers, Young's stand against the bill was not only a defence of the economic interests of the wool-growers, but a defence of their common liberties which they felt were being threatened by the passage of the bill. Thomas Day published a now-famous Letter to Arthur Young, Esq., on the Bill Now Depending in Parliament..... in which he voiced what must have been in the minds of many opponents of the bill. Sometimes the drastic curtailment of civil liberties is excusable, wrote Thomas Day, in those cases, "the public danger is so imminent that common forms must be suspended, and private property violated, to check the spreading of the conflagration.....but it is the particular boast of this age and country to produce a set of men, that, without a pretence of national danger, without a prospect of common advantage, without ambition, or desire of revenge for injuries, without a single motive but the most contemptible avarice, can coolly attempt to enslave the most useful, the most uncorrupted, the most numerous body of men in this kingdom....."

This protest had a despairing tone, and it was appropriate that this should be so, because the country gentlemen, the gentlemen of small estates, the agriculturists in general, with Arthur Young at their head, were going to suffer a striking defeat at the hands of the "Parliament of shopkeepers...."

Volume ten of the Annals brought sad reading to its subscribers; the wool bill had passed both Houses of Parliament. One hundred and eighty-six pages of that volume were devoted to a detailed description of the proceedings of the bill in Parliament. Prefacing that account, Young wrote a bitter condemnation of the landed interest, to whose passivity and "tameness" he ascribed the failure to stop the bill.

The debate in the Commons revolved mostly around the matter of smuggling. The evidence presented by both sides was continually referred to and questioned, and the motives behind the promoters and opponents of the measure, mutually assailed. It is easy,

230. "Ministry supported and carried, absolutely in the teeth of fact, argument and common sense, a measure by which all the farmers in the kingdom, who keep sheep, are stigmatized as guilty of crimes, without proof, and even without suspicion. If you demand the reason for this treatment, seek it in yourselves.

Long and repeatedly did I dwell in this work on the injurious attack that was forming against you. I explained the various bills brought forward, showed that the real intent of them was to sink the price of wool, and that all the growers of the kingdom ought to combine and petition by counties against them. Five only stirred, and of these, two withdrew their opposition, whether to their honour or not, let posterity judge! But the bill is passed; and close upon the heels of it, another to prohibit the export of hay brought in by a member for the City of London.... Seeing the tameness of the landed interest in respect to wool, they immediately come forward and regulate hay!" Annals, Vol.10, pp.1-8; Arthur Young, To the Wool Growers of Great Britain.

231. Of Young's evidence, Mr. Partridge, council for the bill, said: "Mr. Young is a person who has uniformly and positively opposed the bill in every period of its existence, and with a degree of warmth, as should make his evidence be received with caution.." Annals, Vol.10, pp.34-35.

Of Mr. Anstie's evidence, Sir Peter Burrell said: "The evidence of the promoters consists in opinions from a chairman of the committee of manufacturers, grounded on accounts delivered in by a spy, supported by general parole evidence of persons speaking generally from hearsay..." Annals, Vol.10, p.153.

reading the minutes of the debates, to be misled into believing that the question of whether wool was smuggled or not had very much to do with the final outcome. Actually, the most superficial examination of the proceedings and evidence presented before the House reveals that the promoters of the bill failed to prove their case. - That the opponents of the measure also were unsuccessful in proving their allegations, is true, but the onus of proof rested squarely on Anstie and the manufacturers and not on Young and the wool-growers. It would be correct to say, with some qualifications, that the opponents of the bill had a stronger case in this particular instance, than its supporters. Mr. Anstie had stated that 13,000 packs of wool were smuggled to France every year. To support this assertion, he had produced a list, presumably copied from the French customs register, of the amounts of English wool which had entered French ports during several years. But this list accounted only for 2,300 packs - Anstie never offered any explanation as to how he arrived at the figure of 13,000 from the 2,300 packs specified in his list.

On the other hand, the opponents of the bill, Arthur Young in particular, had admitted that the amount of wool exported clandestinely, was insignificant and to back this statement, they had produced another list, also said to be copied from the French customs register - the real one presumably - and, of course, this list was different from the one presented by Anstie. The matter rested there and could not be resolved as neither side volunteered to disclose the sources of their information.

Mr. Anstie was then examined at the Bar of the House and the question of wool prices was brought up :

Q. Is not the present high price of wool stated, and complained of as a grievance by the manufacturers ?

A. It certainly is.

Q. Is not the principal object of the present bill to lower that price ?

A. It never was an object with me, nor has it ever been avowed at our meetings, or brought forward as a reason why the bill should pass - I am not answerable for the private opinions of any manufacturer...." 232

Although smuggling figured prominently throughout the long controversy, and played a central role in the Parliamentary debate itself, a careful scrutiny of the case for the bill as a whole leads to the same conclusion which was apparent to some of the opponents of the bill. In the words of Sir Peter Durrell, speaking in the Commons against the motion: "To prevent the smuggling of wool is not the object of this bill - smuggling is made the stalking-horse, but the true object is the depreciation of the price of wool in the English market - restricting the market (will) lower the price of wool...."²³³

In spite of the fact that the bill was opposed by able speakers and that the flimsy evidence of Mr. Anstie was repeatedly challenged, the voting power was against the wool-growers and when on May 28, 1788,

232. Annals, Vol.10, pp.47-48.

233. Annals, Vol.10, p.120.

the bill was put to a vote in the House of Commons, only twenty-four members voted against while seventy-two voted in favour.

On June 7, the bill was discussed in the Lords for the first time, and Young was brought to the Bar of the House :

- Q. Do you conceive that if this bill were to pass into a law, that the price of wool would be lowered by it, and why ?
- A. I conceive all sorts of restrictions made upon the free sale of any commodity must necessarily tend to lower the price. 234

<u>Year</u>	<u>Price</u>
1784	8 ¹ / ₂ d
1785	9d
1786	9d
1787	11d
1788	12d
1789	12d
1790	12 ¹ / ₂ d
1791	11 ¹ / ₂ d
1792	16d
1793	11 ¹ / ₂ d
1794	13d
1795	15d
1796	16d
1797	15d
1798	15d
1799	21d
1800	17d
1801	19d
1803	20d
1804	22d 235

234. Annals, Vol.10, p.145.

235. Binshoff, Appendix, Table VI, Wool Prices 1784-1804.

As it turned out, the price did not fall after the bill was passed but it went on increasing as a consequence of the industrial expansion and the war.

When the House divided on June 17, the bill passed by twenty-four votes to nine: Young had failed to rally the landed classes in defence of their own interests - he wrote bitterly disappointed: "Where were at this moment the landed interest of Great Britain ? . Trampled on and insulted by a handful of tradesmen - a right, proper, and adequate treatment for men to receive, whom through ignorance, had been duped into an idea that the manufacturers were their friends; and for want of concert and union found themselves at once oppressed and insulted."²³⁶

What was the explanation of this ? The apathy of the wool-growers and their parliamentary spokesmen had been obvious; the second reading of the bill in the Commons was voted with only 159 members present; when the third reading was voted there were only 96 and the largest number which the opponents of the bill could muster at one time, 47, dwindled down to a mere 24. In contrast, a week before, a private question about a Navy captain was discussed in the presence of 400 members. Young offered the following explanation :

236. Annals, Vol.10, pp.185-186.

"Landlords, from their education, pursuits, and habits of life, have always been found to consider questions of commercial policy, as beneath the attention of men engaged in the refined, gay, or splendid scenes of life: - and have, accordingly, abandoned such questions to the attention of others, who, instigated by private interests, very different from those of the state, have been sedulous to convert such negligence to their own emolument..."²³⁷

But it was not only owing to this that landlords surrendered their rights and responsibilities so readily; Young maintained that at the root of their passivity there was a "monstrous and ridiculous fallacy...(that) the landed and manufacturing interest are the same...."

This was partly due to the type of education given to youth: "the Universities are curious to teach whatever is perfectly useless in Parliament; and all that would tend to instruct the mind in the true principles of political knowledge is avoided with...much care."

Young devoted the greater part of this article to demonstrate that those industries which had attained greater prosperity in

237. Arthur Young, On the Policy of Wool, and the Neglect of the Farming Interest in this Kingdom. Annals, Vol.10, pp.235-280.

Britain were not founded upon a monopoly such as the woollen manufacturers were now claiming for their own benefit, also, that the landed and manufacturing interests, far from being identical, were incompatible with each other. "The conclusion of the whole is; shall the landlord, the farmer, and the poor.... continue to suffer, merely that some hundreds of master manufacturers should continue in the possession of a bounty, which they have applied totally to their private use?" And he ended with an appeal: "the landed interest will find the necessity of combining..." This last phrase hinted at the direction of his next move. One month after this article was published, in No.58 of the Annals appeared Young's appeal to union; On the Necessity of County Associations of the Landed Interest which opened with a tone faintly reminiscent of a later manifesto:

"The history of the internal policy of this kingdom, in relation to trade and manufacture, would be a recital of the injustice and oppressions which have been heaped on those classes of the community commonly called the landed interest....so weak, divided, and listless have been the operations of this great body whenever attacked, that there is no paltry commercial interest, from the bold and pushing adventurers in wool, down to the makers

of felts, and the retailers of hay, but kick
this great landed interest into the kennel
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upon every occasion that offers...."

The manufacturers won the day in Westminster because of
their superior organization, their efficient system for raising
subscriptions, and publishing propaganda, their greater unity,
and the fear and respect which their strength inspired; this was
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the hard core of Young's case. The landed interest needed
only to form their own associations, profit from the lessons of
1788 and organize themselves throughout Britain. Young was careful
to state that the main object of this association was to inform its
members "of their own interests", but it is clear that what he had
in mind was the creation of what is known today as a "pressure group",
albeit, one organized openly and acting publicly in defence of its
members' interests.

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238. Young's tone in this article is such that it is worth a longer
quote: "The ablest political writers at present in Europe have,
with one voice, condemned those commercial monopolies, which take
place nowhere to such a degree as in England...but, though defeated
in the closet, (this system of monopolies) triumphs in the profound
ignorance of country-gentlemen, in every circumstance that relates
to their own interest; and in the convenience which Ministers find
in gratifying an active, well-informed, combined and powerful body,
at the expence of a disunited, ignorant, slothful, poor and dissi-
pated set..." Annals, Vol.10, pp.403-404.
239. "Mr. Anstie printed several bulky tracts in favour of the bill....
the assembly of their delegates ordered impressions of above 2000
of each for distribution. Four tracts were printed also, against
the bill; of one of these tracts the author printed 1000, half of
which he gave away himself at his own expence; of another only 250
were printed, and part also given away...." Annals, Vol.10, p.415.

He proposed that this national organization should start from local county groups which would send delegates to a central assembly meeting in London. Government would probably frown at such an organization - Young suggested - but, he added, "no Minister is ever in love with the most patriotic plan of opposition to his measures..." In any case, he went on, that was precisely what the landed interest should pursue; to make the government afraid of their strength - "the truth is, if such association succeed, Government is afraid of them and that is precisely the point desired. Why does government, full in the teeth of evidence, reason, and conviction, grant the demands of the manufacturers for the most odious monopolies, but because afraid to refuse them?"

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Out of all this tirade against government and manufacturers, two main points arose; the first was that as far as Young was concerned, the landed interest was not represented in Westminster - for all their taxable value and productive power, the farmer and his landlord did not have many supporters in Parliament :

"Shall we be told then, that there are members in that Assembly, competent to the protection of the landed interests? The assertion is a cruel insult, added to a mischievous neglect. There are members for Party, for faction; for Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox; there are members

for a superannuated Captain; to roast a Nabob; or
screen a Chief Justice; but there are NONE, or
next to none, for questions on which the interests
of the land and agriculture depend." 241

The landed interest could not hope to influence such an
assembly with reasonable arguments - their only alternative was to
intimidate by strength and organization.

The second point was on the matter of the associations'
membership. Only a few months before writing this article, Young
had appealed to "men of fortune to give weight to their opinions"
for their help in the struggle against the wool bill. After the
success of the wool bill, he completely changed his opinion as to
the worth of such allies: "I beg leave to keep entirely clear of
any idea of such a plan, depending on high Sheriffs, or members for
counties, or what are called leading men in a county. Men who lead,
or have great influence in a county (unless it arises from an over-
grown property) derive their consequence from the same arts that
disgust us so much in those who lead, and bear sway in higher spheres.
Such are more likely to pay court to manufacturers than to oppose them
and detect them...." 242

241. Annals, Vol.10, p.409.

242. Annals, Vol.10, p.408.

Few times in his career did Young stray so far towards the radical fringe of his era as during the months following the passage of the wool bill - the fact that perhaps the main determinant of his attitude was disillusionment did not lessen its sincerity; after all, the year was 1788, and in a journalist and man of affairs as fiery and impetuous as Young, radical ideas could not but find a ready listener.

The county associations were never started, but the founding five years later, of the Board of Agriculture, seemed to answer Young's plea for an information centre for farmers, although the Board never became the effective political instrument which its founders wanted it to be.

The success of the wool bill of 1788 was only one of the defeats which Young and the farming interest suffered in Westminster but it was one which lent great weight to Young's assertion about members of Parliament; "there are NONE, or next to none, for questions on which the interests of the land and agriculture depend."

CHAPTER IV

THE STRUGGLE FOR THE COMMUTATION OF TITHES,
1784 - 1801.

When Arthur Young launched his Annals of Agriculture in 1784, Britain was preparing to turn her energies and resources to the tasks of recovery. The American defeat had caused a general revulsion away from imperialistic expansionism, and Young, using the Annals as his means for influencing public opinion, tried to channel these resources into the development of British agriculture, which he considered to be first of the peace-time priorities.

In the long prefatory article published in the first volume of the Annals, he summarized his knowledge and experience of agricultural and political economy and outlined what he considered to be the essential prerequisites to any successful plan for agrarian develop-

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ment. These were :

1. Commutation of Tithes.
2. Allocation of Wastes to the discharged soldiers of the American War.
3. Reform of the Poor Laws.
4. A general Enclosure Bill.
5. Agricultural education in the universities.

243. Annals of Agriculture, Vol.1, pp.9-87. An enquiry Into the Situation of the Kingdom on the Conclusion of the Late Treaty and into the Surest Means of Adding to the National Resources by a Proper Application of the Arts of Peace, 1784.

None of these aspects of policy appeared to bring Young so close to the radical movement of his age as his long and unsuccessful campaign for a commutation of tithes. However, in espousing the cause of commutation, he adopted a strictly utilitarian outlook; his views were not dictated by his political ideas or by any vague anti-clericalism, as was the case with many of those who supported it, but strictly by his concern over the hindrance which the practice of paying tithes in kind placed on the way of agricultural progress. His position with respect to tithes is best described in his own words :

"There can be at present no question about the right of tithes. The clergy have the same right to this tax which the King has to his land tax; and the poor to their rates. But that the provision for the Church, thus raised, is absolutely inconsistent with the prosperity of agriculture, is a fact no less true; and that no truly flourishing agriculture can ever arise under it, is equally obvious. This tax has made it impossible for great capitals to be invested in agriculture...."

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The controversy over tithe commutation received considerable attention from people who would otherwise have been uninterested in matters concerning agriculture because it touched on the wider

issues of relations between Church and laity. Concurrent with the revival of an antiquarian interest, the last half of the eighteenth century witnessed an awakening among the upper classes, if not of irreligiousness, at least of a measure of intellectual scepticism. The popularity of Gibbon was due not only to his vast scholarship and the soundness of his prose, but to the fact that he had examined with a critical mind facts hitherto sheltered from objective scrutiny by religious considerations. Although when his work appeared, adverse criticism was not wanting, neither were enthusiastic supporters who saw in Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, the brilliant result of reason and objectivity put to work. In this, Gibbon was obviously not a precursor. Before this time, Selden had already enjoyed popularity and chastisement for having used historical analysis to examine what had been traditionally considered religious certainty. The fact that the rising tide of "reason" was less conspicuous in eighteenth century England than in the continent did not make it less real.

"The scepticism of English society, its freethinking, if not its free living, was plainly capable of changing its face rapidly in case of need, or even of advantage. And such advantage already presented itself in the strict regard to outward appearances maintained by the court of George III. That monarch's attentive performance of all his duties as Head of the Church of England, did at least something to regularize the external appearance of society

at the top while the Wesleyans infused Christian enthusiasm lower down, among circles unacquainted with the work of Bayle or Voltaire." ²⁴⁵

The increasing use of objective, "scientific" scrutiny both of historical and contemporary events and problems was helpful to Young - scholarship was on his side - in the Wealth of Nations, the most respected political economist of the age had already indicted the practice of paying tithes in kind :

"The tithe, as it is frequently a very unequal tax upon the rent, so it is always a great discouragement both to the improvements of the landlord and to the cultivation of the farmer. The one cannot venture to make the most important, which are generally the most expensive improvements, nor the other to raise the most valuable, which are generally too the most expensive crops, when the Church, which lays out no part of the expense, is to share so largely in the profit." ²⁴⁶

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to identify Young's views on commutation with those held by a large minority of his radical contemporaries. His was a much more parochial approach to these

245. S. Maccoy, English Radicalism, 1762-1785, London, 1955, p.469.

246. Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations, Book V, Chapter II, Part II, Art.1.

problems and although he was perfectly aware of the nature of the reforms which were being carried in France, he was too closely tied to the farm's account books to be affected by philosophical or moral considerations.

The difference between Young and the radical thought of his time with respect to agrarian reforms and commutation is best seen against the background of the French Revolution and its aftermath. What was fashionable before the death of Louis XVI became treasonable after this event. The enthusiasm for reform which had made many enlightened upper class people accept, if not support, changes such as commutation, disappeared rapidly after 1792. Even the large landowners, who were in a position to appreciate the benefits of a powerful Church, surrendered to the claims of their purses and had supported a change in the system of ecclesiastical dues, but after 1792, confronted with the effects of reform across the Channel, naturally enough, they placed first things first and abandoned their short-lived radicalism.

After 1792, the progress of radicalism in Britain suffered a setback as the pendulum of political opinion swung to the opposite extreme. Disillusionment with the French experiment made a considerable and influential sector of British opinion extremely wary of anything relating to reform, or, as the pamphleteers put it, "innovation". This caused a noticeable reluctance, especially among landowners and farmers, to insist upon a commutation of tithes.

Young's views also suffered a strong change and he became an ardent enemy of the Revolution, but after a short relapse, it was seen that his ideas on tithe-commutation had remained unaltered and he continued to support this controversial proposal for as long as he could exert influence through the pages of the Annals.

The problem of tithe commutation differed from other issues in which Young participated as self-appointed leader of the farming interest in that relatively little parliamentary activity accompanied its progress. During the controversies over general enclosure and the free exportation of wool, the contending parties and pressure groups eventually had to fight their battles on the floor of the House of Commons. This was not the case with the commutation of tithes, at least not while Young was alive. There were some debates which touched indirectly on this problem but they all ended adversely for the farming group and in any case, they did not play a major role in the dispute.

The only parliamentary attempt to reform the tithing system during these years was made half-heartedly by the Earl Bathurst in 1781. On April 6 of that year, the Earl, who was then Lord President of the Council, moved the following three resolutions in the House of Lords :

1. That it is the opinion of this House that enclosures of commons, waste lands, forests, and open fields, are highly beneficial to the kingdom.

2. That commuting of tithes, in certain cases of enclosure, for a compensation in corn or land, is a measure equally beneficial to the clergy and the landholder and ought to be encouraged by the legislature.

3. That it might be expedient to give a compensation in land, money or corn, where tithes are taken in kind, or where no composition exists.

The Bishop of Llandaff opposed the passing of these three resolutions on the bizarre grounds that, "independent of the great waste of land, and expense of enclosing, enclosures were unfavourable to agriculture, and to the cultivation of produce or corn ... The crops were subject to blights and mildews, from the shade of the neighbouring trees and hedges, which obstructed the passage of the air, while it excluded the sun, and, of course, was extremely unfavourable to the ripening of corn ... Also, the resolutions involved the danger of shaking ancient foundations which had withstood the test of ages ... If passed, they would create endless litigation...." ²⁴⁷ After a long debate, Lord

247. Tithes Indefensible. Anon. York, 1792, pp.103-104.

Bathurst decided to withdraw the three resolutions.

The problem of the advisability and manner of commutation was, of course, often referred to in the House, but it was always with reference to a private enclosure bill. There was no major campaign to put this reform in the hands of Parliament. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that this spirited controversy was waged mainly from the pulpit, from the pages of the press, and of innumerable pamphlets. This suited Young very well as he disliked parliamentary intrigue but thrived when given a chance to fight his battles with printer's ink.

The controversy over the commutation of tithes was based on the immediate economic implications of the charge; but the subject was seldom discussed without relating it to its historical origins, to its legal implications and its moral validity. It would be very hard to understand the feelings of both the anti-tithe party or the defenders of the system, without some background knowledge of the historical, theological and legal issues involved. Furthermore,

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248. A letter published in the Sunday Times of November 13, 1955, bears an interesting relation to these three resolutions presented by Lord Bathurst in 1781. Part of the letter read as follows: "... in Gloucestershire, Northleach Common's fifty-five acres ... carry fifty cattle from May into November. Each commoner pays £2.10.0 a year for each beast grazed, and this money is spent on fertilizers, chain-harrowing, etc. by the bailiff, elected by his fellow commoners at the Annual Manorial Meeting convened by Earl Bathurst, the Lord of that manor. This combines good husbandry and commoners' rights with the preservation for the public enjoyment of a fine sweep of common in a form impossible if it were broken into fields...."

by the last decades of the eighteenth century, tithes in England were a very complex and apparently irrational way of collecting ecclesiastical dues. This apparent irrationality can only be explained by referring to the evolution of this institution in England.

The accepted definition of tithe at the time Young wrote was that offered by Sir William Blackstone in his Commentaries. It is worth noticing that Blackstone's comments on tithes were adopted in toto by the Encyclopaedia Britannica. As late as the sixth edition of 1823, the whole of Blackstone's chapter on tithes was being reproduced unaltered, in spite of the fact that his views, though heavily qualified, were nearer to those of Selden and Young than to those held by the defenders of the system.

According to Blackstone, tithes were "the tenth part of the increase, yearly arising and renewing from the profits of lands, of stocks upon lands, and the personal industry of the inhabitants."²⁴⁹ Tithes, therefore, could be of three different types :

249. Sir William Blackstone, Commentaries on the Laws of England. Book II p.23, 12th edition, London, 1793.

1. **Predial:** which were those derived directly from the soil. The "theory" behind this was that products such as corn, wood, hay, etc. were completely the work of nature, that man's efforts had little or nothing to do with its quantity, quality or its renewal, that they were there to be collected year after year and directly enjoyed. Consequently, on these predial tithes, payment was usually enforced strictly and was always a full tenth of the total yearly increase.
2. **Mixed:** were those derived from products which, according to the same theory, partook equally from nature's and man's labours. They included a tenth of the yearly increase on such products as cattle, wool, honey, etc.
3. **Personal:** were those derived directly from the labour of man. The payment of personal tithes in England was based on the regulations of the Canon of 1295 passed by the Synod of London. According to this instrument, "personal tithes (must) be paid by artificers and merchants ... and carpenters, smiths, plasterers, weavers, and by all other workmen working for wages, to wit, to give a tenth of their wages...." ²⁵⁰ These regulations were altered

considerably by the Act of 1549, (2 Ed.VI.c.13) which introduced three basic changes; (a) it restrained payment of personal tithes only to such persons as had paid them for fifty years before the Act was passed; (b) labourers were freed from payment; (c) before the passing of this Act, the Bishop, or the ordinary, had been allowed to examine upon oath. After the Act, they were not allowed to do so. The passing of this third regulation especially, made the recovery of personal tithes extremely impractical and after this date they fell rapidly into obsolescence. By the last decades of the eighteenth century, they were paid only on the product of fishing and milling.

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The obsolescence of personal tithes became a factor of importance during Young's days. It was then maintained by the opponents of tithing, that the great increase in agricultural productivity caused by the use of improved technique, was due almost exclusively to the intervention of man and not to the generosity of a bounteous nature. Therefore, if personal tithes were not paid any longer, why should tithes be paid on an increase

in productivity which was due to the labour of man ?

The division between predial, mixed and personal tithes was based on the type of produce on which the tithe was paid. There was another, more flexible, classification based on the status of the receiver of the tithe. This was peculiar to the British Isles and arose from the manner in which the practice of tithing evolved in this country. According to this second classification tithes could be "great" or "small", or similarly, "rectorial" or "vicarial". This did not refer, as some authors have suggested, only to the type of product tithed, but also to the ecclesiastical status of the person to whom they were paid. For instance, great, or rectorial tithes were usually paid to a parson, while small or vicarial tithes were mostly paid to the vicar, or rather, to his lay or ecclesiastical impropriator. However, this was not a rigid rule and exceptions were found when small tithes were received by a rector or great tithes paid to a vicar. Nevertheless, there was a definite difference in status between parsons and vicars which was of great importance in the matter of tithes.

252. A Letter to the Dean of Lincoln Concerning Tythes. Anon. London, 1792, pp.11-13.

253. Lord Ernie, in his chapter on tithes, suggested that great, or rectorial tithes were only those paid on corn, beans, peas, hay and wood, and that small, or vicarial tithes, included all the rest of the predials and also the mixed and personal tithes.
See also: Percy W. Millard, The Law Relating to Tithes, London, 1938, 3rd ed. pp.1-12.

The parson, in the words of Blackstone, "is one that hath full possession of all the rights of a parochial church."²⁵⁴

This meant, in effect, that throughout his life, the parson could enjoy the freehold of the parsonage house, the glebe, tithes and other dues which were paid directly to him. He therefore had a proprietary right over the whole of his ecclesiastical dues - the vicar had no such right. Vicarial tithes were paid to a patron who, after the dissolution of the monasteries, was usually a lay impropriator. This patron, be it a person or an institution, undertook the responsibility of providing for the maintenance of the incumbent. Originally, the incumbent was named by the appropriating corporation, sometimes from their own numbers,²⁵⁵ as a deputy in charge of performing divine service and administering the sacraments to those parishes of which the corporation was patron. This minister was no more than a curate for the appropriating body,²⁵⁶ hence the custom of calling him vicarius, or vicar.

Therefore, at the end of the eighteenth century, the main distinction between vicars and parsons was one of economic dependence.

254. Blackstone, Commentaries, Book I, p.383.

255. Until 4 Hen.IV.c.12, the vicar was usually a member of a religious house and he held his vicarage only temporarily. By this act it was established that the vicar should be a secular person, that he should hold his vicarage in perpetuity, (previously he could be removed at will by the appropriator) and that he should be sufficiently endowed at the discretion of the ordinary so that he could perform divine service, inform the people, and keep hospitality.

256. Blackstone, Commentaries, Book I, p.387.

The parson had the whole right to the dues in his parish while the vicar had to depend on the munificence of his appropriator who usually kept the better part of the tithes for himself.

The endowments of a vicarage usually consisted of a portion of the glebe belonging to the parsonage and a share of the tithes including those which the appropriators found most troublesome to collect. These tithes were loosely called small, or privy tithes, as opposed to the greater, or predial tithes which were kept by the appropriators for their own use.

The origin of lay impropiators is significant in this context. Before the dissolution of the monasteries, it was possible for some ecclesiastical dues, notably tithes, to be appropriated by spiritual corporations, such as monasteries, prebends, bishoprics, nunneries, etc. These corporations had jurisdictional responsibility over a number of parishes which paid their tithes directly to them. The system of appropriations affected almost one third of all the parishes in England. At the time of the dissolution, instead of lapsing or being vested on the incumbents, they passed under the jurisdiction of the crown and were subsequently redistributed among lay impropiators and corporations.

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257. The monasteries and other religious corporations were dissolved by virtue of two statutes. The first was passed in 1536, and applied only to those establishments which had incomes below £200 per annum, (27 Hen.VIII c.26). Three years later the larger abbeys were also dissolved and their revenues vested in the crown by the 31, Hen.VIII, c.13. See Blackstone's Commentaries, Vol.1, pp.383-389, London, 1793, 12th ed.; also Easterby, Hist. of the Law of Tithes in England, 1888, p.29.

As a consequence of this the vicars became perpetual curates entitled to a salary paid by their impropriators or patrons. The vicarial endowments were almost without exception more modest than the rectorial dues received by the parson as part of them were always kept by the patron. ²⁵⁸ This difference between the financial situation of vicars and parsons became the subject of a widespread controversy in the nineteenth century and to a limited extent, helped to determine the individual parson or vicar's attitude towards commutation during Young's lifetime.

Although the intellectual climate of the last decades of the eighteenth century seemed to favour, with its moderate scepticism, any reasonable incursion against entrenched privilege, those who agitated in favour of a commutation of tithes had to find a better justification than mere economic pressure to enlist public and parliamentary opinion on their side. It was not enough to condemn the institution of tithing on the grounds that it affected the farmer's pockets. No doubt this side of the problem played a predominant role during the controversy, but in order to make their case morally as well as economically justifiable, reasons other than the financial ravages of the tithe-master had to be produced.

Fortunately for Young and his friends, the defenders of tithes obligingly adhered to remarkably dogmatic views on the nature and

258. Blackstone, Book II, pp.23-32, also E.S. Morris, Impropriation of Tithes, 1905, pp.4-5. Annals, Vol.10, p.391.

origins of this payment of tithes proved particularly easy to expose. They maintained, for instance, that tithes were divinely ordained and that they had been a permanent feature in Christendom - ever since Adam and Eve !

Another factor which made this institution vulnerable to attacks was that it affected only the landed interest. In an age when the economic importance of manufacturing and commerce was increasing visibly, the Church relied almost exclusively on dues exacted from the landed and farming interest.

Because of the desire on the part of the anti-tithe group to shatter both the moral, economic and theological foundations of this institution, there developed, during the controversy, a lively interest in the history of the origin and evolution of tithes. Young himself never questioned the right of the clergy to some form of maintenance from the community, but he believed, as many of his readers did, that tithes were not of divine origin.

The most often quoted authorities on the side of the anti-tithers were Selden and Blackstone. A century and a half before, John Selden had been compelled to deliver a recantation of his "heretical" views on the origin of tithes - he questioned the soundness of the then prevalent assumption among ecclesiastics that the Christian priesthood were direct successors of the Levites and hence, that they were bound by the tenets of the Mosaic law and

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entitled to tithes by scriptural command. He also attacked
mercilessly the fantastic belief, held by the Church, that tithes
dated back to Adam.

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The view that tithes were Jure Divino was not shared by the
Catholic Church which based its view on Aquina's interpretation of
the scriptures. Aquinas maintained that Determinatio Decimae
partis soluende est auctoritate Ecclesias, and added that the
basis for this was the text, "If we sow unto you spiritual things,
is it a great thing, if we reap your carnal things ?"

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259. The Mosaic Law commanded, "and thou shalt surely tithe all
the increase of thy seed, that the field brought forth year
by year...." Deut. XIV. 22.

260. He quoted disapprovingly from an earlier version, put
forward by the Church, of the origin of tithes. The passage
comes from a "Penitential" made for the direction of priests
in auricular confession, and written ("as my copie is.....")
about the time of Henry VI. The priests examination and
advice upon the point of tithing is described as follows :
"Hast thou truly doo thy tithings and offrings to God and
the Holichiroh ? Thou shalt undirstand that at the
beginning of the worlde, when ther was but oo man, that is
to sey, Adam, God chrgyd him that he sholde truly of al
maner thyng give God the Xth parte, and bad him that he
sholde teche his children to doo the same maner, and so
forthe al men into the world's ende. And forasmuch as ther
was that tyme no man to receive it of him in the name of
Holichirohe, and God wolde not that thei sholde have but
IX partes, therefore he commandid him that of every thyng,
the tithe parte should be brent. I fynd that afterward Adam
had two sonnes Caine and Abell, Abell tithed truly and of the
best Caine tithed falsely and of the werst: at last the fals
Tyther Cayme slugh Abell his brother, for he blameyd hym and
seyd that he tythed evel wherefore our Lord accursed Caym and
al the erth in his werk. So ye now se that fals tything was
the cause of the first man slaughter that ever was, and it
was cause that God cursed the erthe."
Selden, History of Tithes, pp.169-170.

261. Epist. I Corinthians, Cap.9, 11-14.

Selden mentioned this in his History and endeavoured to prove that during the first four hundred years of the Christian era, "no payment of them (tithes) can be proved to have been in use...."²⁶²

In fact, the first indication that the payment of tithes was being enforced in England dates from the year 786-787.

Selden mentions the case of two legates who were at that time in this country bearing letters from the Pope to King Offa of Mercia, King Aelfwold of Northumbria and the two Archbishops.²⁶³ The object of their visit was to "travel through and visit the island, and to confirm the authority of the Roman pontiff acquired there formerly through the mission of Augustine."²⁶⁴

The two legates organized ecclesiastical synods in Mercia and Northumbria to which they presented twenty injunctions which had been prepared in Rome before their departure. These were accepted and signed by the assembled dignitaries. The seventeenth injunction referred to tithes, and in part it read as follows :

"Of Giving Tithes, as it is written in the law;
thou shalt bring the tenth part of all thy crops

262. John Selden, The Historie of Tithes, 1618, Chapter XVI, p.332.

263. Selden, Historie, Chapter VIII, Part II, pp.198-203.

264. H.W. Clarke, A History of Tithes, London, 1891, p.44.

or first fruits into the House of the Lord thy
God ... No man can justly give alms of what he
possesseth unless he had first separated to the
Lord what he from the beginning directed to be
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paid to Him...."

Legally, the acceptance and endorsement by the Legatine
Councils of these injunctions, gave them force of law. The
Councils were in effect Witenagemots, and had therefore, law-
making attributes and authority. The payment of tithes was
made obligatory in the Kingdoms of Mercia and Northumbria, although
there were no specific temporal or spiritual sanctions attached to
its non-fulfilment. From this date on, this "imperative",
voluntary payment hardened gradually into a legally enforced
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liability.

Early in the development of this institution, payments were
made indiscriminately to religious persons or corporations regard-
less of whether he or it were situated within the parish or district
from where the tithe arose. This irregular system of "arbitrary
consecrations" of tithes was partially reformed in the year 960

265. Clarke, pp.44-45.

266. The first general law of tithes binding the whole of England
was enacted in the year 924 by the Anglo-Saxon King Athelstan.
See Selden, Historie, Chapter VIII, sect.6, p.213; and H.W.
Clarke, pp.70-74.

when King Edgar and his Witan enacted an ordinance establishing "that every tithe be rendered to the old minster to which the district belongs ... but if there be any thane who on his boocland has a church at which there is a burial place, let him give the third part of his own tithe to his church. If any one have a church at which there is not a burial place, then of the nine parts, let him give to his priest what he will...." ²⁶⁷

From the thirteenth century onwards, the incumbent or his patron were entitled in theory to the whole of the tithes of their district, but in fact, they did not enjoy their full possession. Only one fourth of them went to the private use of the incumbent, the remainder being distributed in equal parts amongst the bishop, the poor and the needs of church maintenance and repair. As the fees of the bishops became sufficient for their maintenance, they were deprived of this extra source of income and the division became ²⁶⁸ gradually a threefold one.

Between the fourteenth century and the Reformation, there was a gradual and effective encroachment by the incumbent and the patrons of the parish into the portions of the tithes which were devoted to

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267. H.W. Clarke, History of Tithes, pp.78-80. About the year 1200, in an epistle sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Pope Innocent III established the payment of tithes to the parson of the respective parishes and put an end to the practice of arbitrary consecrations.
268. H.W. Clarke, p.16, also Blackstone, Book I, p.384 and Tithes Indefensible, anonymous pamphlet, York, 1792, pp.16-17.

the maintenance of the Church and the local poor. By the time of the Reformation, the incumbents had succeeded in obtaining a prescriptive right to the whole tithe which they kept until the nineteenth century. This aspect of the problem was the cause for loud complaints from the part of the farming and landed interest who had to pay both poor rates and tithes. The responsibility for the maintenance of the poor, they held, belonged to the Church, and poor rates were but a duplication of the function which tithes were supposed to fulfil. ²⁶⁹ This view, while historically correct, was unrealistic as the scant volume of tithes collected in England would have been obviously insufficient to cope with the enormous problem of destitution.

In general, the controversy over tithe commutation oscillated between very practical issues brought forward by an economically minded, farming middle class, and moral and historical arguments adduced by that same class to make their first position more tenable.

269. H.W. Clarke, History of Tithes, p.152. See also, Andrew Horne, The Mirror of Justices, 1642, Selden Society Edition, London, 1895, p.14. "It was ordained that the poor should be maintained by parsons, rectors of the churches, and by the parishioners, so that none should die by default of sustenance.

Young's campaign for the commutation of tithes dates at least from 1784, when the first volume of the Annals was published. In the course of describing what he considered the most important obstacles to agricultural progress, he declared: "... tythes (sic) are so powerful an obstacle to all spirited husbandry, that it can never arise under the extreme burden of their being taken in kind ... remove an obstacle to private industry (and) you create a public resource hence the advantage of abolishing tythes; and, upon the same principle, those laws that burthen the nation with poor rates, ought to be revised."²⁷⁰

This relatively mild attack went unanswered for almost four years although the Annals frequently carried articles which echoed the editor's views on the subject. In a way, it can be said that the controversy did not start until 1788, when a Rev. Mr. Moses Grant, of Noulton, near Haverford West, decided to enter the arena by submitting to the editor of the Annals an article entitled, A Defence of Tithes. Young, who, as an editor, prided himself on his impartiality, hastened to publish the piece which opened, significantly, with the following paragraph :

"Having lately had an opportunity of reading your Annals of Agriculture, I have in several parts of them observed hints thrown out, both by yourself, and several of your correspondents, to the disadvantage

of the mode of providing a maintenance for the clergy by tithes. As I have not seen any observations in your publication in favour of that mode of provision ... I beg leave to state what occurs to me on the subject."²⁷¹

The Rev. Grant presented two main arguments against commutation. In the first place, he dismissed commutation for a fixed money payment as unjust, because with the declining value of money, what at one time could be considered an adequate stipend, might become extremely inadequate. "The impropriety of this proposal ... is further seen by the pension that is paid to the curates of parishes where the tithes are impropriated. There is no doubt but such a pension was looked upon as a subsistence for the curate at the time it was fixed. Generally five pounds a year, hardly more, was then, and still is, the salary charged on impropriators who receive the whole tithes"

Secondly, he maintained that commutation for land was equally bad because it would compel the minister to become a farmer, "he would then, for subsistence, be under the necessity of becoming a

271. Annals, Vol.10, pp.389-399.

mere farmer, whether he understand agriculture or not²⁷²

After dismissing these two ways of commuting tithes, he outlined some of the advantages of the system. The payment of tithes, he declared, "is consistent with the wisdom of Providence", because it ensures that the minister and his parishioners will share prosperity and hardships upon the same basis; "if the farmer have a poor crop the minister can have but his part of that little, so that thereby, both minister and people are as one body, united together by the closest connection ... as the natural body must always be."²⁷³

Furthermore, he did not think that tithes should be considered a discouragement to agricultural improvement because of the law which exempted newly opened lands from tithes for an initial period of seven years.²⁷⁴

This exemption was often brought up as an infallible answer to the allegations that tithing prevented the investment of commercial capitals in agrarian ventures but, in reality, the law was not as effective as its defenders claimed. The actual wording of the law

272. This is a particularly interesting statement considering V. Lavrovsky's finding that "the process of tithe commutation ... resulted in a very large growth, both relative and absolute, of ecclesiastical landownership." According to this investigator, eighteen enclosure awards chosen at random from the period 1793-1815, showed that the absolute increase in landownership by ecclesiastical and lay impropriators was of 57.2% - before commutation they owned 2,840 acres, afterwards, they owned 6,766 acres. See Tithe Commutation as a Factor in the Gradual Decrease of Landownership by the English Peasantry. Economic History Review, Vol.4, 1932-34, pp.273-289. Annals, Vol.10, p.391.

273. id. p.393.

274. 2 and 3 Ed.VI, c.13, Tithes and Offerings, 1548. Repealed in 1687, c.59.

was rather vague as was shown in the following extract from a letter published in the Gentleman's Magazine:

"... the words of the Act were too indefinite to be so construed when brought into the alembick (sic) of the law; and Lord Coke says, that, if land be not suapte natura barren, it is not within that Act ... if land is in its own nature so barren, as not to be proper for agriculture, it shall not pay tithe for seven years after it is improved: but otherwise it shall ... Very little, if any, such barren or waste land is to be found in England, as by the 2nd and 3rd of Edward VI is exempt from tithes when converted into arable land."²⁷⁵

Finally, Mr. Grant reverted to the old pseudo-theological arguments and wrote :

"I cannot avoid giving my hearty approbation to what I conceive to be of divine appointment - implanted by general consent in the heart of man, without revelation, or at least a continuance, among heathens, of what had been early established by divine appointment among their forefathers before their general degeneracy into idolatory"

275. Gentleman's Magazine, Vol.67, 1797, p.541.

Young could not let this broadside pass without comment and immediately following it, he inserted five pages of "observations", which he prefaced by stating that he would not attempt to refute the article in question, but merely to bring to the reader's attention other facts which, he believed, also merited consideration.

The backbone of his argument was that tithes had made it "impossible for agriculture ever to be pursued as a trade, - in other words, for great capitals to be invested in it." ²⁷⁶ In order to prove this, he proposed the following example :

A farm of 2,000 acres, valued at ten shillings per acre, with a rent of 1,000 pounds per annum at 26 years' purchase and paying tithe compounded at three shillings per acre, is to be stocked for production. Young did not mention what type of farm this one is, whether it will be mostly pasture, crops, or mixed. Presumably it will be mixed. He proposed two alternatives; first, a "common farmer, who will stock the 2,000 acres probably at four pounds per acre, or with £8,000 and his profit being 12%, amounts to £960 per annum. To yield that profit, his annual expenses will probably be £5,040 and the produce £6,000."

276. "What monied man would ever think of investing twenty or thirty thousand pounds in the stock of a farm as a commercial project? Yet we see it every day done in the agriculture of the West Indies, under circumstances of the greatest hazard and insecurity" Annals, Vol.10, p.400.

In the second place, a "monied man", who is prepared to invest fifteen pounds per acre, or £30,000 "in order to carry on an opopose (sic) culture that by its extent may pay for overseers, cashiers, clerks, and book-keepers, like a sugar plantation."

This second man's account would include expenses of £16,400, produce of £20,000 and a 12 per cent profit of £3,600.

"Now suppose the rector changes his mind, and takes his tithe in kind. The tenth of the produce amounts to £2,000, and as the farmer paid three shillings an acre composition, or £3,000, here is a £1,700 a year difference, at once more than $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the whole capital of £30,000, which would, as effectually, prevent such an investment, as the sudgel of a Turkish bashaw (sic)".²⁷⁷

Both these "observations" of Young and Rev. Moses Grant's "Defense of Tithes" remained unanswered in subsequent issues of the Annals.

Although popular feeling against tithes seemed to indicate that they affected all forms of cultivation and all aspects of farming, tithes were only a hindrance in very specific cases. As long as farmers remained tied to traditional methods of cultivation, tithes did not present a very big problem, apart from the inconvenience of allowing tithe gatherers to enter their lands to collect their tenths.

277. Annals, Vol.10, pp.400-401.

In fact, custom and tradition, added to the social moves which developed around this payment, made it easy for a traditional farmer to pay his tenth without really feeling it. It was only when he wanted to change his crops, or improve his methods of cultivation that the payment started to weigh on his accounts. This was especially true of those farmers who wanted to grow commercial crops such as madder, hemp, flax, hops and other cash crops with high costs of cultivation and high market prices.

In the case of improvements in farming techniques, tithes were often paid both on fertilisers and the product of the land - hence, offering a clear case to those who attacked it as an obstacle to agricultural progress.

The attitude of impropriators to this payment varied. It is not possible to say that either the ecclesiastical holders or the lay impropriators offered better terms to the farmer. Sometimes it occurred that a businesslike arrangement was reached between a lay impropriator and the farmers for a composition instead of tithes. If to this agreement was added a promise, if not a contractual agreement, of permanence, this was an extremely convenient solution for the farmer; definitely a better one than paying in kind.

On the other hand, it was not uncommon to find incumbents who, in order to avoid disputes with their parishioners, agreed to exchange their tithes for very low compositions.

In general, it can be said that the importance of tithes as an obstacle to agricultural development did not depend on who the holder was so much as on the type of crops, investment, etc. on which they were chargeable. The bulk of the traditional farmers objected to it as they would have objected to any other payment, but they did not feel strongly enough about it to try to exercise any organised pressure on the legislature to reform the existing system, or to take the law in their hands, as it was done in Wales and Ireland in later times. The group which felt the weight of this exaction more than any other, was the farming interest; those farmers who were prepared to invest capitals in their land and who approached farming with a commercial, efficient and businesslike attitude. They were less influenced by the subtle web of social mores which bound their lesser colleagues and to them tithes were an inefficient disbursement of money from which no return could be expected. The typical farmer who objected to the payment was Young's "monied man", who invested large sums in land, and expected commercial returns from it. There were other reasons which made this payment distasteful to the farming groups, but they were less important from a national point of view.

Two years later, in a famous autobiographical essay, Young returned to the subject of tithes from another direction. The essay was written on Christmas Eve, 1790 while Young was convalescing from a very severe pneumonia which he caught "in a farming expedition".

He described the course of his life both private and public with a lucidity which is not found often in his other writings. At one stage of his narrative, he confessed that he had been seriously thinking about emigrating either to France or to America, "to one or the other, or some asylum where I shall not be flayed alive by tythes, taxes, and rates, I must look, since ruin alone awaits such properties as mine in England."²⁷⁸

Young lent great emphasis to his status as a "gentleman of little estate", and believed that one of the more serious critical symptoms of the times was the gradual disappearance from the English countryside of this class of agriculturists.²⁷⁹

He attributed this decline to two main causes; the abundance of currency, and the weight of taxation of all sorts. "The first has brought such a facility of mortgaging, that if a man has security to give, the money is before him on the table in half an hour....." He did not offer any detailed explanation of how and why an excess of currency contributed to the disappearance of the small country

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278. Annals, Vol.15, pp.174-176. He almost bought a farm in France during his voyage in 1789. Four thousand acres on the road between Paris and Lyon, near Moulins, with a chateau, twenty acres of vineyards, nine hundred sheep, seventy cows, eighty oxen, etc. But, he explained, "the revolutions and the state of the kingdom were too much in my head; my family would have been alarmed, and probably unwilling to go to France."
279. Annals, Vol.15, p.164. "...I believe I may safely assert, that I am now the only gentleman of little estate left in all this part of Suffolk; I mean, who has not the aid of a profession: for a small estate, with a perpetual advowson and enjoyment of a good living, becomes considerable...."

gentleman apart from commenting acidly that "it was an enormous temptation ..."

The second factor was outlined in greater detail; "taxes have operated yet more strongly; (against the small country gentlemen) for including poor's rates, and the vastly greater keenness of the clergy in matters of tythe, a prodigious proportion of every man's income - a much greater one than is commonly supposed - goes to the public."

The burden of taxation, complained Young, fell on these agrarian middle classes, while the two other social groups, the rich and the poor, escaped relatively untaxed. This was true, especially with reference to the assessed taxes which did affect the smaller property-owners more than it was fair. The case of the window tax is an oft quoted one, and this also applied to the tax on horses, servants, carriages, etc. The taxes of Pitt, though effective in the government's eyes, were definitely regressive from the point of view of the farming middle classes. To give greater emphasis to his argument, Young published a detailed copy of his accounts for the farm he owned in Bradfield, near Bury St. Edmunds.

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280. Annals, Vol.15, pp.194-197. Young was usually very outspoken in his comments and in this note on taxation he did well for himself: "The larger every man's income is, the more he expends on an average upon the fine arts; which pay in a great variety of articles no tax at all: a picture of £1,000 and of 1000d are rated the same at the custom house. A coach that costs £600 pays the same tax as one that costs £60. And what taxes are paid on the millions that are expended in gambling and horse racing?"

281. See appendix II.

According to this account, Young's farm of Bradfield Combust paid a total of £219.8.5 in taxes, rates, tithes and other dues of a similar nature. Typically, Young added some items which could have been safely left out in the interests of objectivity. For instance he included the sum of three pounds as a 10 per cent fall in the price of wool (his annual sale of wool being of £30) caused by "the cruel monopoly given by our laws to the manufacturers..."

The more important and justifiable items were the following :

Poor rates (Young's and three tenants)	£53. 0. 0
Tithes (Young's and two tenants)	51. 0. 0
Land Tax	39. 12. 0
Assessed taxes	27. 12. 6
Road duty and turnpike	5. 6. 0
	<hr/>
	£176. 10. 6
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The rest of the £219.18.5 was made up by the malt and beer taxes, guard rents and feudal quit rents and some more curious deductions similar to those made for the price of wool.

Although Young did not specify whether his, or his tenants' tithes were paid by a composition, the sum he mentioned, £51.0.0 - in a farm with a yearly rental of £295 - was such a great percentage that it must have sufficed to convince his readers if not of the validity of his general argument, at least of the undesirability of running the farm of Bradfield Combust as a paying commercial proposition.

Later that same year, another article appeared in the Annals, touching upon this same subject. It was entitled "On the Taxes Paid by Landed Property in England". In it, Young tried to clarify and explain some of the points he had advanced in his autobiographical essay. As expected, he did not yield an inch and tried to present a case for every single item included in his list of taxes and other dues. With reference to tithes he made one additional, interesting observation. The question had arisen whether a tithe-free estate had any advantages over one which had to pay tithes. Young explained :

"Tythe and poor rates are paid by the tenant nominally but really by the landlord, and affects the rent stipulated to be paid to him, exactly in proportion to its amount: nay, it affects it so exactly, that a farm tythe free ... lets correctly to the proportion of the tythe from which it is
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exempted...."

The point was well chosen and apart from emphasizing again Young's strict utilitarianism with regards to the reform, it made it clear that tithes affected rents in general, regardless of whether a farm was tithe-free or not. This was food for thought for those

farmers, readers of the Annals, who were indifferent to the problem because they thought themselves unaffected as they occupied tithes-free farms.

Young's strongest attack on tithes was delivered the same year, 1791, in an article describing an enclosure bill which was at that time in the committee stage in the House of Commons and which incorporated a new approach to the problem of commutation. ²⁸³

The tithes clauses of the bill specified that a yearly sum of £600, free from taxes and clear of all other deductions, except land taxes, should be paid by the proprietors of the land to be enclosed, to the rector of the parish and his successors, "...for ever." This sum of £600, to be paid, "in full compensation for all the great and small tythes, moduses, compositions and other dues and payments whatsoever, except surplice fees, mortuaries, Easter offerings, and tythes or payments for mills...."

The amount of wheat which £600 could buy at the average price for the fourteen years immediately preceding the passing of the act, would become the corn-rent of the parish and every seven years, it would be revised by commissioners according to the variations of the

283. Annals, Vol.15, pp.565-579; Langton Inclosure in Leicestershire, by Arthur Young.

average price of wheat for the immediately preceding seven years
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as published in the London Gazette.

Following the text of the tithe clauses of the bill, Young published his "observations". He approved of the idea that a corn-rent should be decided upon as an adequate compensation to the incumbent, but he strongly objected to exempting the £600 per annua from poor rates; "Upon what principles of common sense, or of justice, is the possessor of such a rental, originally granted for the support of the poor, to be exempt from their levies? Is it Christian doctrine, that the holy leader of the flock, who lives and fattens on their property, shall be the only person in the parish exempted by law from the dispensations of legal charity ...?"²⁸⁵

These special allowances to the clergy, said Young, proved how much a harassed farmer was willing to concede in order to be rid of the "horrible oppression" of tithes. As the article progressed, Young plunged into reformist writing in the best radical pamphleteering tradition - the year was 1791 - and warned the government to take heed of what was happening in the rest of Europe where revolutionary movements were triumphant.

284. In addition to the tythe clauses, Young inserted the whole cumbrous text of the manerial clause of the bill which ensured that "nothing in this act ... shall prejudice, lessen, or defeat the right, title, and interest of the said Ann Ord, as lady of the said manors of West Langton, East Langton, and Tur Langton...", and in his usual observations, he explained, "...I have inserted the manerial (sic) clause only to shew, that while the French have had sense and rigour enough to annihilate every species of feudal tyranny, the Parliament of England, in every enclosure act, recognises and confirms it." Annals, Vol.15, p.579.

285. Annals, Vol.15, p.576.

This article is so exceptional in view of Young's later development, that it is worth while quoting part of it in full:

"It behoves the government of this country to take warning in time. The progress of liberty is rapid and epidemical; it has affected revolutions in Ireland, America and France: the very terror of the movement has confirmed the freedom of the Netherlands. The oppression of tythes has been almost swept out of Europe: the period advances with celerity when the people of England will be brought to say with one voice, WE WILL NOT PAY THEM. It will then be seen whether the bayonet will be brought to the levy. Oppressed with taxes, fleeced by tythes, involved in all the ruin of a war, whether of defeats or victories (all one, for the expense is equal), the currency of the kingdom withdrawn from industry and only active in Change Alley and the Exchequer; the Turkish tyranny of the press, seizing unhappy merit (for surely the useful life of a sailor merits the term ?) and giving it to the jaws of distemper or the enemy; the price of every product of the earth sunk to the utter ruin of the farming interest, and yet the consumers poor and depressed, such were the spectacles of the American War ... Why ? Because innovation in the constitution of parliament is dangerous ! "

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Young was not a politician, nor was he intellectually a member of the radical movement of his age. The only time that he ventured into full-fledged political pamphleteering, he wrote against reform and against the ideas and principles which he had supported when he had denounced the system of tithes. His most famous political pamphlet, The Example of France, a Warning to Britain, was a violent and unfair attack on radicalism which had the lonely and dubious merit of being a good reflection of the feeling among the English propertied classes in 1793. But to accuse Young of inconsistency is to miss the point entirely. He was a man of superficial allegiances, fleeting moods and melodramatic inclinations, but he was consistent in his defence of the farming middle classes. Before 1793, he was on the side of reform because at home his group was a reformist group; after 1793 he was a staunch conservative, and even a reactionary, because the very basis of his class was being undermined by the French reforms. How ever keen in changing the existing structure of government, how ever much he disliked the "Parliament of shopkeepers" which had thwarted every attempt at improving the situation of the "gentlemen of little estate", it was far worse to support revolutionary ideas which would do away with the basis of their existence; landed property.

It would be as erroneous to classify Young together with Paine and Priestley, as to say that he agreed completely with Burke and Pitt. Young was the spokesman for an agricultural group which boasted of no intellectuals, which measured the worth of political and philosophical

ideas in shillings and pence and which was much more interested in better crops and rents than in social reforms.

Young's observations on the Langton Enclosure Bill set the stage for a controversy which raged from the pages of the Annals for several years. The first reply came from an anonymous correspondent who initialled his paper J.S.

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Considering the violence of Young's indictment of tithes this anonymous reply was very restrained and fair although at one point, it contained some biting comments on the Annals themselves; "a useful and valuable work," it said, "but you injure it with moderate men, by the violence with which you express yourself on some subjects, and the indecency with which you arraign the acts of the legislature."

This anonymous contributor based his defence of tithes on the following allegations :

287. On Tythes by J.S. Annals, Vol.16, pp.271-278.

288. On this point, Young was defended by another correspondent, Mr. John Payne, who wrote, "your correspondent talks of the indecency of arraigning acts of legislature; he it remarked, that so long as the representatives of Old Sarum, and such like honourable gentlemen, compose a majority of what is called the British House of Commons, and continue to vote away our properties so liberally as they have done, so long will men be apt to think there is something indecent in the practice; and I am afraid, if the representation of the people in Parliament is not soon put on a different foundation the ears of the sycophants of this country will be assailed with sounds much more harsh and dissonant than any that are conveyed in the word indecency." Annals, Vol.17, p.188.

1. Farmers and landowners were not justified in complaining about being deprived of one tenth of their increased produce because this tenth was "the property of the state, appropriated to the maintenance of the ministers of the Established religion of the country". Therefore, tithes were not a tax or any similar type of imposition, because taxation presupposes the legal deprivation of property, while tithes never belonged to anybody but the state.
2. The effect of tithes on rents and investments was either non-existent or negligible. On rents, tithes had no effect because tithe-free farms let at the same price as titheable land as the value of the hypothetical tithe was always added to the rent.²⁸⁹ In case of improvements, "injury there can be none, because the improver knows beforehand on what terms he improves." Tithes were a discouragement only up to 1/10th of the increased produce - not enough to prevent farmers from investing capital in their lands.
3. Proof of the foregoing was the fact that agriculture had progressed "in a wonderful degree", notwithstanding tithes.
4. There were nonetheless, certain inconveniences in the system, especially in the relation between landowners and tithe-owners. This was particularly true of relations between clergymen and their parishioners. For this reason, "a great majority of the clergy accept

289. Young used this same argument in his attack on tithes. See Vol.16, pp.104-105, Annals, and pp.23-24, above.

a composition considerably less than the utmost value of their due...." in order to prevent clashes with their parishioners which could prejudice their function as spiritual guides.

5. Certain changes could be introduced, but those proposed so far by reformists were not adequate. Land allotments should definitely be ruled out; the increase in necessary buildings and the resulting uncertainty of tenure would conduce to bad management. A fixed money payment is also out of the question as it can be invalidated by the fluctuations in the value of money. The least objectionable of the proposals is that of a corn-rent.

Young answered in the next volume of the Annals.²⁹⁰ He started by claiming that J.S.'s statement that tithes belonged to the state was "a very important admission, (and) it seems at once to justify me in representing tythes as a tax, for that property which is at the disposition of the State, and appropriated to the maintenance of certain orders of men, is unquestionably a tax."²⁹¹ J.S. had criticised Young for using the word "odious" when referring to tithes, and Young answered, "if I am asked why it is odious, I reply, that a tax which is so levied

290. The correspondence between Young and the anonymous contributor who initialled his articles, J.S., was later published as a separate pamphlet entitled, "A Letter on Tithes to Arthur Young, author of the Annals of Agriculture, with his remarks on it, and a second letter, in answer to those remarks." London, 1792.

291. In a later article following this exchange, Young added the following telling footnote to a paragraph alleging that tithes were not a tax: "... a soldier takes his pay out of my estate, as the rector takes his tythes: both in the form of a tax assigned by the State, which may disband a very different army and ease me of the other tax. Reforms (italics) of this sort have taken place, and on these principles, in various countries...." Annals, Vol.17, p.104.

as to invade the right which a man has to consider his house as his castle, or his fields as his exclusive property, is justly so characterized ... any tax levied on the produce of the land which gives the state or its delegates the power of entering at pleasure into a man's fields, with men and carts and horses, often to his damage ... merits the epithet (of odious)."²⁹²

An article supporting Young was inserted in the same volume containing the correspondence between the editor and J.S. which contained some rather interesting and significant arguments. It was signed by John Payne, Esq., of Newhill, near Doncaster and it showed a degree of political awareness which was uncommon for a contributor of the Annals.

One of Payne's first arguments was based on the fact that of all the different economic groups in society, the only one which had to pay tithes was the landed interest. "Is he an iron master, will he think it not oppressive to be forced to pay 100 bars of iron out of every 1,000 which he manufactures? Is he a lawyer, would he think it no oppression to have the tenth of every fee taken from him the moment he receives it? Yet thus it is with the farmer, and he is told it is neither odious nor oppressive"²⁹³

292. A Letter on Tithes to Arthur Young, London, 1792, p.15.

293. Annals, Vol.17, p.181.

He then went on to attack the contention that tithes had been a permanent and legally established payment since early Christendom; "whoever will take the pain to examine (the evidence) will most certainly find the whole system to originate in the grossest ignorance, bigotry, superstition and tyranny of the Church of Rome ... no man can defend their payment today consistent with the spirit that shook off the Roman yoke at the time of the Reformation..."²⁹⁴

The controversy had not progressed farther than the pages of the Annals and, apart from the rather measured contributions of J.S., it had remained at a very emotional level, especially on the side of the anti-tithe group. At this stage, the hop-growers of Southern England came to the aid of Young and his campaign.

One of the peculiarities of tithing was that it affected the farmers' income in direct proportion to his investment in land and his

294. Annals, Vol.17, pp.182-183.

success as in improver. So long as cultivation remained confined within the narrow bounds of traditional husbandry, tithes did not weigh heavily on farm accounts, but the tenth of the yearly increase in produce became increasingly important as either the capital invested or the productivity per acre started to increase.

This regressive effect of tithes was especially noticeable in the cultivation of new commercial crops, or of crops which required large capital outlays. The case of madder was in this category. Until the middle of the eighteenth century, the Low Countries enjoyed a virtual monopoly of this dye in Europe while its cultivation was prevented in Britain partly because of the tremendous tithes which would be due from such an enterprise. This fact was so well established, that Parliament intervened, and by the 31 Geo. II c. 12, it was enacted that a fixed composition of five shillings per acre should be charged in lieu of all tithes and moduses on madder. Only after this statute was passed was Britain able to supply at least part of its own demand with domestic madder.²⁹⁵ Something similar occurred with hemp and flax which were relieved from tithes by a composition of five shillings per acre by the 11 and 12 William III, c. 16. The government had, therefore, at least in two occasions and with respect to two types of product, accepted the view that tithes taken in kind were a hindrance to production and had legally commuted them for a fixed composition.

The cultivation of hops was in many ways as beset with risks, financial and physical, as that of madder. A large initial investment was required after which constant and careful supervision demanded a large overhead in wages paid to skilled labourers. Because of this, and the fact that the growing of hops was fairly restricted in area, the custom evolved of commuting tithes for a composition which was determined by mutual agreement between the hop-grower and the tithe-owner. The agreement was binding only for as long as both parties accepted it. ²⁹⁶ These bilateral agreements were usually for a sum much higher than the five shillings per acre paid for madder, hemp and flax .

Early in 1792, a Surrey tithe-owner, Mr. Henry Halsey, of Henley Park, who owned the tithes of the hop grounds in the parish of Farnham, decided to revise the composition of twenty shillings per acre which had been agreed to between him and the growers. He presented the hop-growers with two alternatives, either they agreed to increase their payments to £3.12.6 per acre, or he would take his tithes in kind. Apart from the fact that a composition of £3.12.6 was extremely high, even for hops, the growers realized that if Halsey's action was successful, similar increases would take place throughout the hop-growing area of southern England, consequently, they organized themselves in a committee in order to resist this increased exaction and

one of their first moves was to appeal for the support of the landed interest through the pages of the Annals.

The Farnham Committee published an appeal in the Annals in which they addressed themselves to the rest of the hop-planters of England, to Parliament and to the consumers at large. To the hop-planters they said: "this design to make such an enormous rise in the tythe of hops in one small corner (of England), if not effectually opposed, by obtaining a parliamentary modification ... will soon extend to all hop-growing regions ..."

To Parliament they addressed this warning: "... if you do not interpose in this occasion, you must look to a diminution of your revenue ... (as the consequences of Halsey's plans will be) almost an insupportable addition to the poors' rates due to the cessation of cultivation in at least half of the Farnham hop plantations..."

And finally, to the consumers: "if the growth of hops should decrease, from the oppression of tythes, and beer should necessarily become worse in its quality, or advance in its price, the evil must be imputed to those laws respecting tythes ... which cry aloud for renovation or repeal..."²⁹⁷

By the time the next volume of the Annals was published, the Farnham hop-growers' committee had presented a petition to Parliament

297. Annals, Vol.17, pp.379-382. Tythe on Hops, Jan.30, 1792.

asking for a legal commutation of tithes for a fixed composition in
a way similar to that followed with hemp, flax and madder. ²⁹⁸

Volume eighteen contained the proceedings of a meeting of a
"respectable body of gentlemen and yeomen of the County of Devon" in
which the following resolutions were approved unanimously :

1. That the present mode of rendering tithes in kind,
is the greatest discouragement to agriculture ...
and one of the principal causes of our burthensome
poor.
2. That it is the cause of frequent disputes and
contentions between the tithe-holder and the farmer,
which do not only disturb their peace and happiness,
but prove highly prejudicial to the religion of the
land."

These resolutions and the petition of the Farnham planters
reached Parliament for the first time on March 8th, 1792. The
petition was not acted upon until February, 1793, when it was presented
for the second time and committed. The committee read its report -
largely favourable to the petitioners - on March 11th, and on April
8th, a bill was ordered "for ascertaining the composition to be paid
for the tythe of hops in fields in the parish of Farnham ..."
(299)

298. Heads of a General Petition of the Hop Planters and Owners of
Hop Grounds to Parliament. Annals, Vol.17, pp.506-520.

299. Journals of the House of Commons, April 8, 1793.

One week later, the lay tithe-impropriator of the Parish, Mr. Halsey, presented a counter-petition which was read and brought to the attention of the committee in charge of the bill. Mr. Halsey claimed that he had paid £16,000 to the Archdeacon of Surrey for the tithes in the parish of Farnham, and that he would sustain a considerable loss if a lower composition were to be enforced instead of the one he had demanded. His evidence was added to that of the planters and the whole matter was referred for discussion in the House at a later date. The Commons were twice counted out when this case was to be discussed and after the second time, the bill was withdrawn by the petitioners.

Apparently the dispute was settled privately between the planters and the impropriator and there was no further need for parliamentary action. The incident is a minor one, but it illustrates two facets of Young's political ideology and, incidentally, of the character of his anti-tithe campaign.

Three times in 1792, Young offered space in the Annals to the hop-growers' anti-tithe committee; their first petition to Parliament and their resolutions were published in full and several times, before and during this year, the editor himself supported their claims editorially. But after August, 1792, the Annals were silent on the problem of the hop-planters' tithes. Not a single mention of the parliamentary stages of their petitions and bills appeared - as they did regularly when the enclosure bills were being transacted - further-

more, Young himself ceased to comment editorially, as he had often done, on the need for anti-tithes legislation.

The reason for this was twofold: first, Young had changed his political ideas and although he did return later to this theme of tithe reform, he never again held such radical views as he had voiced from the pages of the Annals during the first three years of the French Revolution. Secondly, Young disapproved of partial solutions to the problem of commutation in the same way that he did not like piecemeal legislation on enclosures. He would have gladly supported the Farnham Committee if they had spearheaded a national campaign to commute tithes, but he was mildly indifferent to their cause if all they wanted was financial redress in their own little parish.

Nevertheless, as far as Young was concerned, the time was too late for reforms of any type. "The fearful events in France" were, for the first time, disturbing the peace of Bradfield Combust and an enraged Arthur Young, Esq., property owner, took his pen to defend the very basis of his political, economic and moral philosophy; private property. Only a few pages away from the last publication of the anti-tithe committee, he published an article in which he attacked for the first time the reforms of the French Revolution. "The quarrel now raging in that once flourishing kingdom, is not between liberty and tyranny, or between "protective and oppressive systems of government - it is alone a question of property; it is a

trial at arms whether those who have nothing shall not seize and possess the property of those who have something..."³⁰⁰

This was the hard core of Young's quarrel with Jacobinism - it was not because the rebels had killed a King, or had swept the floor with the old aristocracy - but because they dared to attack private property that Young broke lances with them.

Young's political philosophy had one central, integrating principle; the inviolability, almost the sanctity of private ownership. His amazing feats of inconsistency and contradiction tended to arrange themselves in neat concentric circles around this basic belief. The only way of discerning some order, or interrelation, in the chaos of his political pronouncements, is by interpreting them from the narrow point of view of those men whom he represented; the bourgeoisie of the land, the thrifty, ascetic, almost puritanical improvers of the soil. The cornerstone of their earthly religion of cash and productivity was private property, and all theories and beliefs in ethereal Rights of Man, freedom, democracy, popular representation and the like vanished like mists driven by the icy wind of a reform movement which threatened their proprietary rights.

From 1792 onwards, Young was against the French Revolution, and the Annals served as a vehicle for his counter revolutionary views

300. French Events Applicable to British Agriculture, Arthur Young's Annals, Vol. 18, pp. 486-495, August, 1792. This article was later used as part of the famous pamphlet published in 1793, The Example of France, a Warning to Britain.

just as some years before, they had carried articles praising the work of the Convention.

Volume eighteen of his publication marked the transition from Young, the reformist, to Young the zealous patriot and man of religion. Hence, it is not surprising to find, only a few pages away from The Events in France Applicable to British Agriculture, a series of eight Letters on the Possessions of the Clergy and Commutation for Tythe, which began with a long anti-clerical quotation from none other than Voltaire !

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According to the anonymous contributor who submitted these Letters the three main difficulties arising from the existing tithes system were - "an endless dissatisfaction to the cultivators of the land...." - "a want of that ... benevolent intercourse which always ought to flow between the pastor and his flock..." - "a very unequal, and at times, insufficient, payment of the officiating clergy..."

Tithes in the Jewish religion were not an unreasonable system, stated this contributor. After all, "the almond and date, the fig and olive, grew almost without culture; mint, anise and cummin arose spontaneously; milk and honey overflowed; the kind hand of Providence overwhelmed these chosen people with its bounty..." How different it was in England, "where the productions of the earth are obtained with the most unremitting labour."

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301. Annals, Vol.18, pp.498-524.

302. Annals, Vol.18, p.502.

In the following Letter, he elaborated this point on the premise that personal tithes were no longer paid, and that "lawyers say, that of common right, tythes are to be paid for such things only as yield a yearly increase by the Act of God; the parson says, corn is an annual increase, therefore he is entitled to a tenth part of the gross produce; but the feelings of the farmer tell him ... that it is, and ought to be considered a personal tythe..."³⁰³

Parliament, in the case of madder, hemp and flax, had "wisely ascertained a money payment in lieu of tythe", but he added: "Is flax raised at a greater expense than wheat? Or is madder a culture that merits the preference to bread corn?"

The worst evil in the existing tithe system, according to this anonymous contributor, was the inequality of the charge, "Unhappy distribution, where the farmer pays too much, and the clergyman receives too little!"³⁰⁴

There were two reasons for this inequality; first, large areas of good agricultural land were exempted from tithes and the remaining areas were unduly burdened, especially as they had also to pay extra charges for the maintenance of the poor which were formerly provided

303. This was a recurring argument in the Annals. "What are called predial tithes, are now in fact, personal tithes, the earth in consequence of personal skill, personal expense, personal labour, producing six or sevenfold more, than it would do if left to its natural powers." Annals, Vol.19, pp.66-67.

304. Annals, Vol.18, p.508.

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for from the product of tithes.

Secondly, the extremely unequal sizes of parishes helped to make some livings very much better than others, which were barely sufficient to maintain the incumbent above subsistence level.

"Although the number of acres in England and Wales are such as to allow of upwards of 3,000 acres to each parish, yet so absurdly are they divided, that ... many parishes do not consist of one thousand acres; and what is still worse, considerably more than one-third of the great tythes are either in lay hands, as impropriators, or are appropriated to ecclesiastical uses; and in many parishes much land is tythe-free, so that probably two-fifths of the clergy have only the small tythes and surplus fees for their support."³⁰⁶

The solution to this problem lay in a general geographical redistribution of parishes and a commutation of tithes for a pound-rate payment. All moduses and tithes should be terminated and all lands, regardless of ownership, newly assessed for a money payment for the maintenance of the clergy. To ensure fairness, this payment should be made flexible, so that it varied with the rise and fall of farm prices.

305. "It would be a great injury to the clergy ... that ecclesiastics should have got into their possession nearly one half the lands of the kingdom, and exempted them from payment of tythe."
Vol.18, p.505.

306. Parliament had twice before worried itself about this problem of the size of parishes. Under Henry the Eighth and Charles the Second, acts were passed empowering the parties concerned, together with the ordinary, to annex small parishes and consolidate the livings. Annals, Vol.18, p.511.

Owners of tithe-free land would be compensated by buying that exemption from them on the basis of thirty-years' purchase, "which is conjectured may require the sum of £11,825,600."

These Letters were published without any comment from the editor - a most unusual procedure - and later issues of the Annals did not carry any further observations or correspondence about them. Judging from this, it would seem that they had absolutely no effect on the readers, but it is probably more true to say that the editor himself had lost all interest, at least for the time being, in the problem of tithe reform. A few months later, in his famous pamphlet, The Example of France, a Warning to Britain, he explained his new attitude to the problems of reform; in general, and commutation in particular :

"The landed interest is immediately and most essentially concerned; for the poison of equality in principle and in French practice tends directly to their ruin: the fate of landlords in France is too well known to want repetition ... the farmers have not much more to boast of, for they have paid dearly for their exemption from tythes ... I shall not be suspected of thinking tythes a light grievance; but they are a grievance that would be ill remedied by the loss

306. Parliament had twice before worried itself about this problem of the size of parishes. Under Henry the Eighth and Charles the Second, acts were passed empowering the parties concerned, together with the ordinary, to annex small parishes and consolidate the livings. Annals, Vol.18, p.511.

of the crop that pays them: the enormity of the taxes I pay is known to every man that reads the tracts I publish: heavy as they are, let them remain rather than be changed for a contribution forciere..."³⁰⁷

How did Young explain this violent about-face in his convictions ?

"... I am sensible that I may be reproached with changing my politics, my 'principles', as it has been expressed. My principles I have certainly not changed, because if there is one principle more predominant than another in my politics, it is the principle of change (italics). I have been too long a farmer to be governed by anything but events..."³⁰⁸

Meanwhile, another aspect of the problem of tithes was moving into the forefront. A pamphlet addressed to the Dean of Lincoln was published anonymously in 1792, and Young reprinted it in the Annals.³⁰⁹

307. The Example of France, a Warning to Britain. London, 1793, p.79. Another quotation from the Annals illustrates clearly the peculiar dilemma in which the farming interest found itself after 1792. A contributor in a letter to the editor opened his communication like this: "Dear Sir, it is possible that I may express myself in strong language, in speaking of the baneful effects of tithes; but I must beg that you erase from this letter every expression which, in your opinion, may tend to give any encouragement to infidels and anarchists - French liberty is worse than tithes ten times over ! Although that is no reason why tithes should not be commuted in England." Vol.33, p.84.

308. ibid., p.5.

309. Annals, Vol.19, pp.61-68. A Letter to the Dean of Lincoln, concerning tythes, by a Member of the Church of England, 1792.

The anonymous author complained against the practice, said to be becoming more prevalent among tithes-owners, of setting aside old Chancery and Exchequer decrees for the payment of moduses or compositions in lieu of tithes. The pamphlet referred only to the diocese of Lincoln, but in fact, this practice was becoming quite common throughout England as financially pressed incumbents tried to improve their livings by revising upwards inadequate moduses and compositions which had first been determined in the seventeenth century or even earlier.³¹⁰

In Common Law, parsons and vicars, with the consent of either their patron or their ordinary, were allowed to make agreements for the payment of moduses and compositions instead of taking their tithes in kind. This privilege was curtailed - for the benefit of the incumbents - during Elizabeth's reign. By the 13. Elizabeth I c.10, the agreements were limited to three lives or twenty-one years in duration and the assents of both patron and ordinary were made compulsory. This was a safeguard against agreements for inadequate payments becoming permanent and it consequently applied only to ecclesiastical tithes-owners.

310. See P.W. Millard, The Law Relating to Tithes, 1938, pp.7-8. The difference between a modus decimandi and a composition real was that a modus was an agreement made before the time of legal memory (before the reign of Richard I), while a composition was one made within legal memory. Also, a modus could be proved by immemorial usage only, while to prove a composition real, factual evidence was needed.

Some incumbents altered the terms of their agreements regularly at the termination of the period of three lives or twenty-one years, but the great majority did not, as they were satisfied with their incomes and wanted to avoid financial disputes with their parishioners. But during the last decades of the eighteenth century, the rapid increases in prices made many compositions and moduses entirely inadequate. Tithe-owners then resorted to this Elizabethan statute and cancelled the old agreements in favour of new ones with increased payments. In several test cases before the courts these revisions were challenged, but the letter of the law was in favour of the tithe-owners.

The situation became so alarming to the landed interest that a bill was moved in the House of Commons in 1772 to secure the possessions of laymen against the dormant claims of the Church. In other words, to limit or repeal the Church's nullum tempus. The bill was presented by Mr. H. Seymour, M.P., and was defeated in its first reading by 141 to 117 after Lord North had spoken against it.

In 1773, a case was heard in the High Court ³¹¹ in which an agreement by indenture dated 1676, for a modus decimandi, was set aside by the Rev. Mr. Lloyd, the incumbent. The agreement had been executed by the patron, the vicar and the bishop and was to continue

311. Exchequer, Michaelmas Term, 16 Geo. III. Lloyd versus Mortimer.

"for ever", but Rev. Lloyd did not think himself bound by it and the court upheld him.

This useful maxim, nullum tempus occurrit Ecclesiae, was also put to another good use by the impoverished, or merely knowledgeable, incumbents as the following case illustrates :

"The Rev. Mr. Brearey, rector of Middleton upon the Wolds, in Yorkshire, filed a bill in the Exchequer in the year 1762, against Mr. Manby, one of his parishioners, for great and small tythes of his lands, although Manby proved, by witnesses, that no tythe, modus, or composition, had, within the memory of man been paid for those lands, it was determined that the non-payment of tythew ... from time immedmorial was no exemption from the payment of them, unless it was set out and established by the defendant that such exemption arose from the lands having been parcel of one of the greater abbays. - And it was decreed that Manby must account to the rector for the tythes of those lands for which he claimed the exemption"³¹²

This particular aspect of the tithes controversy was eventually settled in favour of the landed interest by the 2 and 3 William IV, c.100 which provided for the shortening of the period during which

312. Annals, Vol.21, pp.439-440. Observations on the Origins and Effects of Tithes, 1793.

exemption from payment of tithes, modus or composition must be proved to a minimum of thirty years and a maximum of sixty. ³¹³

As the international situation worsened and the editor of the Annals became more intransigent in his anti-jacobinism, a note of caution crept into the contributions to his periodical. In those which still dared to break the silence on the subject of reforms by commenting on the suitability of a commutation of tithes, the tone became almost apologetic. One of these correspondents, after writing advocating the abolition of tithes had the topical good sense to date his letter :

"London, April 24, 1793, the fourth year of French anarchy and misery, and the 105th of true British liberty." ³¹⁴

After 1793, the attention of the editor and of most of his correspondents was engaged, judging from their writings, by three main topics; the war with France, the newly-founded Board of Agriculture, and practical and technical aspects of farming. Although only one year before Young had gone out of his way to show

313. The Ecclesiastical Law of the Church of England. Sir Robert Phillimore, 2nd ed. London, 1895, p.1160.

314. Annals, Vol.20, p.384.

that how ever anti-Jacobin his feelings were, he was still in favour of a reform of Parliament, as the fear of armed French invasion became more real, all talk of reform became suspect and the Annals reflected this mood by presenting strictly patriotic reading-matter to its subscribers.

Nevertheless, even in the midst of these perilous times an occasional phrase crept in among the self-congratulatory articles, which showed that not all of the farming interest was as forgetful of reform as the editor of the Annals was believed to be. When numerous contributors were hailing the foundation of the Board of Agriculture and the appointment of Sinclair and Young as president and secretary, a farmer with cool judgment reminded Young that all was not well with their plans for improvement :

"In vain may Sir John plan for the kingdom at large,
the increase of arable culture by a Board of Agriculture,
unless the first result of its attempt be a clear
statement to Parliament of the necessity for a full,
adequate, and permanent commutation of tithes ... In
vain, for distinct counties, are societies of agriculture
forming, by a personal subscription, unless the farmers
are secured by the legislature, from being immediately
plundered for their success, by a tithe...."³¹⁵

For more than four years after this was published, the Annals were silent on the question of tithes. All that the farming interest read about this problem from 1793 until 1798 was a solitary "Hint on Potatoes" from a correspondent who suggested that if the Board were really keen on generalizing the growing of this crop, they should ask tithe-owners to remit the tithes for the best crop and the largest acreage in every parish.

The war with France offered Young a wonderful field for his skill as a pamphleteer. His talent for exaggeration, for diatribe and sarcasm was put to good use in the service of king and country, and his reputation as a staunch defender of the established order was made secure. Nevertheless, one cannot help detecting signs, how ever faint, of hesitation in this new attitude. Or rather, one could believe, and find evidence to support this belief, that Young remained a mild radical at heart throughout these years. After all, these were the years of scarcity when he proposed again and again that the only solution to the recurrent dearth of food was to redistribute land to the cottagers and other landless peasant groups. 316
And two decades after his first attack on tithes, speaking at a meeting of the Board of Agriculture, he again defended the principle of commutation :

"The Board has been repeatedly and grossly attacked as an enemy of the Church, because it has attempted with all its energy, to secure the cultivation of the waste lands of the kingdom; in contending for a commutation of tithes, it did no more than had been done two thousand times before, in separate acts of enclosure..."³¹⁷

This speech was read in 1809 and although it was largely an apology for the Board's activities, it did show that Young had not changed so completely his views on agricultural reforms.

Outside the pages of the Annals, the issue of tithe commutation also stirred some interest. The Gentleman's Magazine published an interesting letter opposing commutation which embodied some ideas heard of earlier in the Annals, especially that of using tithe-remissions as an incentive for improving cultivation. "To the farmers who produced the best ten acres of wheat, barley or oats, I would relinquish respectively the tithes of those acres for that year...", wrote a contributor to this magazine: "The award would be by proper judges, and on Michaelmas Day, I would request the whole of them (if my house could contain them !) to take their goose, plum pudding, and home-brewed otober at the rectory, and then receive the award, if not the reward, for their industry" But,

317. On the Advantages which have resulted from the Establishment of a Board of Agriculture, Arthur Young, 1809.

he went on, "as to the abolition of tithes, which seems now to be so ardently wished for by many, it would then scarce ever be desired ... For my part, Sir, I am thoroughly convinced of the Hure Divine right of tithes"³¹⁸

Finally, after a silence of several years, Young returned to the subject of tithes in full force. In December, 1798, he issued a circular letter requesting information and opinions about a plan, said to have been in contemplation at that time, "for selling the tithes of the kingdom and investing the money in the public funds for the benefit of the clergy to whom they belong; part of it to accumulate to compound interest for the future advance of their living."³¹⁹

Twenty correspondents answered the circular and their letters were published in the Annals. Of the twenty, three objected to the sale of tithes, fourteen approved of the proposed plan, and three objected only on technical grounds, though agreeing in principle. Fifteen believed that the sale would have a beneficial effect on the relations between the clergy and the parishioners - three thought the opposite. The only point on which they were all agreed was on the inclusion of lay impropiators in the proposed plan for commutation.

Some of the answers of the correspondents are worth quoting as they reflected the state of mind of a porition of the farming interest

318. Gentleman's Magazine, Vol.65, 1795, pp.4-5.

319. Annals, Vol.32, p.275.

at this late date in the controversy. The first question asked whether the reader had any objections to the plan as such. Mr. E.L. Loveden, of Buscot Park, answered: "The extinction of tithes I consider a measure of absolute necessity. Considerable powers must be given to landlords for raising the money to purchase, and the proprietor of the land (should be the only one) enabled to buy(At) Thirty Years' purchase, tithes would sell for in all places that I know except Wales, there it has been customary to value them at four or five years' purchase less than farms sell for." Mr. John Parkington, a frequent contributor to the Annals was also in favour of the plan but he added: "I doubt that there is enough money to buy such a large property. Most capitals having been spent in improvements such as enclosures, etc."

There were also dissenting opinions. The Rev. J. Howlett who had attained some fame writing on problems of population, believed that the sale of tithes "would greatly diminish the power and influence of the clergy", and Mr. George Warde indignantly declared that he was not "one of that description of dissenters studying the overthrow of the Church...", and Mr. Paul Troby, of Plympton, was also categorical in his opposition: "The difficulty of disposing of such a mass of property, so differently circumstanced, has appeared to me insurmountable; the effect it would have is also problematical. I feel no difficulty in declaring it was my opinion that it had better be left alone."

An interesting aspect of this questionnaire was that which touched upon the delicate problem of valuations. Young had asked: "By what regulations can it be effected, that the inattention or liberality of a present occupier, who takes one half, or any other proportionate value of his tythes instead of a composition nearer their real value, shall not by such a conduct entail a permanent degradation of his living?" and "By what regulations can it be prevented that those livings which have been the possession of liberal clergymen whose first object has been to live on good terms with their neighbours, be not the only ones unadvanced: whilst others who have sought nothing but profit shall be rewarded by a perpetuity of the extreme value?" Immediately following these two questions he proposed: "How far would it be consistent with the interests of agriculture that valuations should take place, in order to remedy these evils?"

This suggestion had a mixed reception from his readers.

Mr. Robert Proctor Anderdon, who frequently contributed to the Annals, had strong opinions on this subject: "Valuations", he wrote, "may retard the progress of Christianity and of loyal and constitutional principles ..." Other contributors referred to them as "destructive to the interests of agriculture" and advocated the utmost secrecy in this matter.

The explanation for this reluctance to allow land to be valued by outside commissioners was probably based on a simple desire for privacy, but there is some justification in believing that other, more

practical reasons were behind it, as Mr. John Jacobs, of Sextries, suggested in his letter: "Objections to valuations in general have been that they would check improvements; that they would give too great an information to landlords; and would likewise give the government an opportunity of burdening the landed interest ... by taxing according to the real value of the land."

Nothing concrete came from this questionnaire, and the plan which the editor had mentioned when he first sent the queries, was not put forward until three years later. In 1801, a bill was presented to the Commons, "to enable the clergy to let leases of their tithes, for a limited time, under certain restrictions." The Bill was read a first time, committed, and then after a number of postponements, it was abandoned.³²⁰

This was the last attempt remotely connected with the Annals of reforming the existing system of tithe collection. The bill was mentioned by a correspondent, but it did not receive editorial support.

The struggle for the commutation of tithes died away before Young's retirement and the cessation of publication of the Annals. The fact that it failed at that time was due not only to the strong opposition of a determined ecclesiastical establishment, but to the hysterical climate of political opinion which saw in every suggestion

320. Presented for the first time on March 10, 1801, by Sir Henry Paulet St. John Mildmay. Read on March 23rd, and printed. Committed on May 5th, order for committee discharged and bill abandoned on May 12th. Journals of the House of Commons. 1801.

for reform, the hidden work of Jacobinism. Commutation was doubly suspect in that it represented a definite breakage with tradition and it also challenged the temporal powers of the Church.

It was not until England was well under the influence of the liberal tenets that a ministerial plan for commutation succeeded in becoming law. This is perhaps one of the few aspects of Young's thought in which he was prophetic, or at least, ahead of his time. The tithe commutation act of 1836 included practically every single provision he had suggested before 1801 and the reasons given by Lord John Russell for bringing in the bill could have been spoken by Young forty years earlier. Lord Russell said in Parliament that the commutation bill would place the clergy "in that situation which they ought to occupy, providing them with a regular and independent income, connected with the land and the landowners of their parish, and free from the present objections to the collection of tithes." Referring to the farmers, he said that they would now be at liberty "to cultivate their land as they pleased, and apply their skill and capital to its improvement without any apprehension of an augmentation of tithe."

This was all that the farming interest and Young had asked for forty years earlier.

CONCLUSION

The historical past is indivisible, therefore the only real way in which an historian can arrive at an understanding of human action through history - if such a thing is possible - or be able to describe past events accurately, is by knowing all, comprehending all, relating all and, of course, understanding all. This is clearly impossible, but as it was suggested in the introduction to this study, expediency has made it necessary for investigators to evolve different systems of "historical tracers" which are extremely useful in helping to understand a period, or discern trends within a period, without having to claim omniscience. This is more or less what I have attempted to do in this thesis. I have gone roughly from the particular to the general, not systematically, but rather, by a process of trial and error. The particular, of course, is Arthur Young; the general is the "farming interest" which Young represented.

The conclusions from this study are of two types; first, there are those which are derived directly from the material under study and which - it is hoped - prove the existence of this "farming interest", and secondly, those which are more speculative and which attempt to interpret the role of these agrarian capitalists in terms of the historical period in which they appeared.

An examination of the Annals of Agriculture, however superficial, shows that Young was not alone in holding the ideas he did hold. He was, in effect, the publicist and spokesman for a group of men interested in agricultural affairs. The size of this group cannot be determined with any precision but if one is to judge from the circulation of the Annals and the membership of the county agricultural societies, it must have numbered at least a few thousand. The main indication of what their economic status was comes from their farms. A number of descriptions of farms owned by readers and contributors to the Annals appeared at irregular intervals in this publication. From them it is possible to ascertain that the average size was somewhere between 150 and 800 acres. With few exceptions, they were mixed farms, their rentals ranged from £80 to £500 per year with the majority between £200 and £300.

The political disturbances of the period under study make it difficult to trace clearly the development of the farming interest as a politically-conscious group but it is generally true to say that with some notable exceptions, Young himself amongst them, they were indifferent to active partisan political controversy. However, until 1792, partly because of their bourgeois social status, partly because of conviction, their sympathies were with the revolution. After this date, reflecting the nation's mood, they adopted a counter-revolutionary position in defence of their property rights which they felt were being threatened by developments in France.

The farming interest was important enough as a pressure-group to attempt to influence Parliament directly, as was shown when they deputed Young and Sir Joseph Banks to present their views to the Parliamentary Committees on the illicit exportation of wool. The fact that the controversies described in this thesis received ministerial attention and were eventually resolved on the floor of the House of Commons, makes it clear that the groups which participated in them were at least active enough to make their voices heard at a national level.

That Young was representing the ideas of this group and not just his own is also evident. He could not have carried on publishing the Annals for more than two decades had he not enjoyed the support of a considerable number of contributors and subscribers. These people formed the core of the farming interest, but each actual reader and each subscription to the Annals represented at least a group of active agriculturists in a county and in some cases, an agricultural society. Young was not the initiator of all the policies he supported. Although the detailed recommendations he made for the earlier drafts of the general enclosure bill were largely his own, in the case of the wool bill, the commutation of tithes, and practically all the other controversies in which he participated he joined well-established pressure-groups.

Once the fact is established that Young, through the Annals, was publicizing the views of a group and not merely his own opinions, the next step is to show whether these views were in any significant way

different from those held by the traditional landed interest. Evidence for this is clearly afforded by the final result of their endeavours. The three instances examined in this thesis ended in complete failure after a long, complicated, and at times, well-organized, struggle. This would not be very significant were it not for the fact that during this period the traditional landed interest was supposed to control both Houses of Parliament. There were a number of reasons which accounted for the lack of success of each of these campaigns, but none of these would have been sufficient to justify their absolute failure had parliament been favourably disposed towards their initiators. The fact is that the policies advocated by Young and the farming interest were different from those supported by the traditional landed interest.

These failures form a barometric record of the early activities of a new social and economic group. At this stage the farming interest was just beginning to attain the self-consciousness necessary to transform a simple conglomeration of men with similar interests, into an organized political and economic pressure-group.

The main determinant of this group's differentiation from the traditional landed interest was economic. While the large landowners were already acquiring interests in the rising mining and manufacturing industries, the farming interest was adopting an egocentric attitude towards national economic problems. The traditional landed interest

was not, as the farming interest was, wholly dependent upon the product of active farming, hence, it could afford to be broad-minded in its approach to national economic issues. The farming interest depended completely on farming and the beginning and the end of their politics and economics were found in their account books. They could not afford the luxury of being understanding of other groups' interests.

This lack of flexibility was the main factor behind their early disappearance as a separate group. After the death of Young and the dissolution of the Board of Agriculture, they remained for some years as a public opinion group, but they had already lost the coherence and single-mindedness which were their mark during the last decades of the eighteenth century.

The series of failures which the farming interest sustained during the years of the war against France were partially redeemed by the successful passage of the 1815 Corn Laws. But this legislation was not as efficient as its supporters had hoped for and a prolonged agricultural crisis spread over the English countryside. The final setback came when these same Corn Laws were repealed by a Parliament of landowners conscious of national interests. In the 1840s, the farming interest, or what was left of it at that time, represented the extreme conservative views which had been abandoned by the landed aristocracy. England held no hope for those who still believed that national prosperity could be based only on agriculture.

The conditions which in Canada, the U.S.A. and Australia led to the formation of strong farming pressure-groups, were absent from England, or, perhaps, they were only present for a few decades at the beginning of the industrial revolution. As industrialization progressed, the farming interest of England was forced out of existence and its members found it necessary to accept a more eclectic approach to national economic problems.

Young was staunchly opposed to the investment of British capital overseas because he saw, correctly, that colonial investment was an alternative to investment in British agriculture; nevertheless, it would be interesting to find out how many prominent members of the farming interest followed the overseas expansion of the nineteenth century after having been eliminated as an effective agrarian pressure-group at home. In fact, it is significant to note that several contributors to the Annals, both from England and abroad, painted in vivid terms the advantages of emigrating, and Arthur Young's own son succumbed to the temptation and established himself in the Crimea where he was still farming a few years before the Crimean War.

The farming interest was the vanguard, in the late eighteenth century, of modern, middle-class agrarian capitalism, and the fact that it died in its infancy as an organized group was a reflection of the course which the industrial revolution took in Britain. In a country where there was no frontier and where economic life was becoming rapidly and vitally dependent upon the growth of industry, a rigidly-minded agrarian pressure-group could not have a very good chance of survival.

APPENDIX I

Authors who Published more than five articles each in the first twenty-five Volumes of the Annals of Agriculture, classified according to their Counties.

SUFFOLK

1. Rev. Mr. William Butts, of Glemsford, near Sudbury. Published between 1785 and 1795. He was a member of the Melford Agricultural Society and donated £10 for the collection for a Suffolk ship of war.
2. Rev. Mr. John Carter, of Flempton. Published 6 articles between 1784 and 1789. He was a member of the Melford Agricultural Society and donated £5.5s for the Suffolk ship of war.
3. Mr. Thomas LeBlanc, of Cavenham. Professional farmer, wool-grower, owned about 600-700 sheep, supported Young's project for a Wool Fair in Thetford, published 12 articles between 1784 and 1791. He was a neighbour and old friend of Mr. William Macro. Donated £10.10s for the Suffolk Ship of war. Refs: Annals, Vol.2, p.169; Vol.18, pp.612-622.
4. Mr. William Macro, of Barrow. Professional farmer, wool-grower, owned about 700 sheep, published 20 articles between 1784 and 1789. At least twenty years of active farming. Donated £2.2s for the Suffolk Ship of war. Refs: Annals, Vol.1, p.109; Vol.10, p.153.
5. Mr. Hutcheson Mure, of Great Saxham. Professional farmer, published 11 articles between 1784 and 1793. Was mentioned by Young as a prospective member of an Agricultural Royal Society. Donated the sum of £300 for the Suffolk Ship of war. Refs: A List of Subscribers for the Purpose of Building a Ship of War for the Service of the Public ... at the County of Suffolk, 1782, p.3.
6. Mr. Thomas Ruggles, of Clare (1713-1813). Farmer, landowner, he inherited Spain's Hall from his father and his lands being partly in Suffolk and in Essex, he was active in the affairs of both counties. He occupied the post of Deputy-Lieutenant for both counties and was also chairman and founder of the Melford Agricultural Society. He was against tithes and in favour of a

speedy commutation. He published 36 articles in the Annals between 1786 and 1795. He also wrote The History of the Poor, their rights, duties and the laws respecting them, in 1793-94. This book was first published in serial form in the Annals.
Refs: Dictionary of National Biography, Vol.49, p.393.

7. Mr. Capel Lofft, of Troston Hall (1751-1824). Writer, politician, agriculturist, he published 36 articles between 1785 and 1796. His father was secretary to Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough and his mother was sister of Edward Capell, the editor of Shakespeare. He went to Eton and Peterhouse, Cambridge. Afterwards joined Lincoln's Inn and was called to the Bar in 1775. He inherited both his family's fortune and the estates of Edward Capell in Troston and Stanton, near Bury. He was a strong Whig and supporter of Fox and took a prominent part in the agitation against the slave trade and in the opposition against the War in America. He was also an advocate of Parliamentary reform and an original member of the Society for Constitutional Reformation. Among his personal friends were Wilberforce, Godwin, Cartwright, Hazlitt, Fox, and especially, Arthur Young. Lofft was a staunch supporter of Napoleon who in fact said once, "qu'il compterait toujours M. Capell Lofft parmi ses amis les plus affectionnes...." In fact, in 1815, he attracted attention by moving the Court of King's Bench to issue a writ of Habeas Corpus to bring up the body of Napoleon, then detained on board the Northumberland in Plymouth Harbour. He was the author of at least 18 published books ranging from learned works in Latin to poetry and political controversy. Another of his characteristics was his deep humanitarianism. In 1800 he was struck off the lists of magistrates because of his impassioned defence and "improper interference" in trying to save the life of a poor girl who had been condemned to death for a paltry theft. He even had a heated argument with his friend Young and in defence of stray dogs, which Young proposed should be destroyed as a precaution against the spread of rabies. Refs: Dict. of National Biography, Vol.34, pp.69-71; New Suffolk Garland by John Glyde, pp.52-54 and 348; Annals, Vol.17, pp.535-564.

KENT

8. Mr. William Belcher, of Ulcombe, near Maidstone. Professional farmer, published 19 articles between 1784 and 1787. Refs: Annals, Vol.2, p.62.
9. Mr. William Bland, of Sittingbourn. Professional farmer, land-owner, published 6 articles between 1787 and 1790. He was a member of the Kent Agricultural Society. Refs: Annals, Vol.21, p.405.

10. Mr. John Boys (1749-1824) of Betshanger, near Sandwich. Farmer, landowner, member of the Kent Agricultural Society, the Smithfield Club, and the Sussex Agricultural Society. He published 17 articles between 1785 and 1795. Young named him as a prospective member of his proposed Royal Agricultural Academy. He farmed extremely successfully and built a reputation as breeder of Southdown sheep. He also occupied the post of Commissioner of Sewers for East Kent and in that capacity was responsible for the drainage of the Finglesham and Eastry Brooks. He wrote A General View of the County of Kent, for the Board of Agriculture in 1796, and An Essay on Faring and Burning in 1805. Refs: Dict. of National Biography, Vol.6, p.131; Gentlemen's Magazine, XVC, Part 1, p.86; William Berry's County Genealogies, Kent, p.446; Annals, Vol.21, p.405, Vol.33, pp.404-424; John Donaldson's Agricultural Biography, p.76.
11. Mr. J.H. Campbell, of Charlton. Farmer, breeder of Herefordshire cattle, he published 10 articles between 1789 and 1792. He donated £3.3s for the statue built in honour of the Duke of Bedford. Refs: Annals, 13, p.217, Vol.17, p.446.
12. Mr. William Dann, of Gillingham. Farmer, landowner, he published 17 articles between 1788 and 1795. He was mentioned by Young as prospective member for his proposed Royal Agricultural Academy.
13. Mr. William Hall, of Elmatone Court. Farmer, member of the Kent Agricultural Society and of the Odiham Agricultural Society. He published 8 articles between 1785 and 1788. He farmed 306 acres for which he paid £350 in rent. He had an obituary notice in the Edinburgh Farmer's Magazine, Vol.I, p.361. Refs: Annals, Vol.3, p.321, Vol.6, p.159, Vol.21, p.407.
14. Mr. Robert Legrand, of Ash, near Sandwich. Farmer, member of the Kent and of the Odiham Agricultural Societies, friend of John Boys. Published 11 articles between 1785 and 1791. Refs: Annals, Vol.2, p.78, Vol.21, p.407.
15. Mr. Thomas Adby, of Albyns. Farmer, published 7 articles between 1788 and 1795. Refs: Dict. of National Biography, Vol.1, pp.30-31.
16. Rev. Mr. John Howlett, of Dunnow. (1731-1804). Political economist, statistician, he studied at St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford and graduated B.A. in 1755. He was presented with the living of Dunnow in 1771. He published 13 articles between 1787 and 1795. He also wrote at least ten books and pamphlets on social, demographic and allied subjects. He was one of the very few

contributors to the Annals who was against the commutation of tithes. Refs: Dict. of National Biography, Vol.28, p.127, Gentleman's Magazine, 1804, Part 1, p.282.

17. Mr. Lewis Majendie, of Hedingham Castle. Farmer, landowner, member of the Melford Agricultural Society; published 6 articles between 1789 and 1795.
18. Rev. Mr. Charles Onley, of Stisted Hall, near Braintree. Rector of Stisted, published 31 articles on agricultural subjects. He was an avid experimenter and farmed his own land. Ref: Annals, Vol.2, p.35.

HAMPSHIRE

19. Mr. Alexander Baxter, professional farmer, chairman of the Odiham Agricultural Society, published 10 articles between 1785 and 1790. Ref: Annals, Vol.3, pp.304-314.
20. Mr. Thomas Bernard, farmer, mainly interested in dairying, member of the Odiham Agricultural Society, published 9 articles between 1784 and 1795. Ref: Annals, Vol.3, p.306.
21. Mr. James Huntinford, of Odiham. Farmer, secretary of the Odiham Agricultural Society, member of the Committee of the Georgic Society, secretary of the Veterinary College, London, published 5 articles between 1785 and 1791. Refs: Annals, Vol. 17, pp.1-7; Vol.20, p.339.

SOMERSET

22. Mr. Robert Proctor Anderdon, of Henlade. Farmer, landowner, member of the Bath and West of England Society. Against tithes and in favour of speedy commutation. He won several prizes at the Bath and West Society shows. Published 11 articles between 1784 and 1795. Ref: Annals, Vol.3, p.50.
23. Mr. James Bernard, of Crowcombe Court. Farmer, published 7 articles between 1785 and 1795.
24. Mr. John Billingsley, of Ashwick Grove. Farmer, prospective member of Young's proposed Royal Agricultural Academy, vice-president of the Bath and West of England Society, published 5 articles between 1784 and 1794. Ref: Annals, Vol.17, p.339.

YORKSHIRE

25. Mr. Edward Holmes, farmer, interested in meteorology, published 9 articles between 1785 and 1789.
26. Mr. William Priestley, Ripon. Farmer, prospective member of Young's Royal Agricultural Academy, published 7 articles between 1786 and 1792.
27. Mr. William Strickland, Welburn. Unknown, published 5 articles on farming subjects between 1786 and 1891.

MIDDLESEX

28. Mr. John Fraser. Unknown, published 5 articles on farming subjects between 1788 and 1790.
29. Dr. Abraham Wilkinson, M.D. Medical doctor, farmer, strongly in favour of enclosure and against tithes. Published 7 articles between 1790 and 1795.

BERKSHIRE

30. Rev. Mr. Richard Valpy, of Reading (1754-1836). Published 12 articles between 1785 and 1795. He went to Pembroke College, Oxford, where he graduated B.A. in 1776. He took orders in 1777 and was appointed second headmaster of Bury St. Edmunds School. In 1788 he was elected Fellow of the Society of Antiquarians. In 1781, he was appointed Headmaster of Reading School, then in a depressed condition. Under his leadership, the school reached its highest standard. He wrote a number of school books, including several Greek and Latin grammars. He also made a number of adaptations of plays from the classic languages into English. His adaptation of Shakespeare's King John was performed at Covent Garden in 1803. Apart from these works he also wrote two volumes of poetry. Refs: Diet. of National Biography, Vol.58, pp.85-86; Literary Gazette, 1854, p.254; The Times, April 5, 1836; Gentleman's Magazine, 1836, Part 1, p.553.
31. Mr. George Warde, farmer, published 7 articles between 1789 and 1795. One of the few contributors to the Annals to be against a commutation of tithes. Member of the Odiham Agricultural Society.

NORFOLK

32. Mr. John Allen, of Wepstead. Farmer, landowner, wool-grower, supported Young's project for a wool fair in Thetford; published 5 articles between 1790 and 1794.
33. Rev. Mr. Joseph Forby, Unknown. Published 6 articles between 1788 and 1795.

LANCASHIRE

34. Mr. John Jenkinson, of Yealand, near Lancaster. Farmer, landowner, relatively wealthy, published 14 articles between 1785 and 1793. Ref: Annals, Vol.3, p.91.
35. Mr. Charles Mordaunt, of Halsall. Farmer, landowner of 6,000 acres arable and 5,000 highland and moor between Ormskirk and the sea. Also tithe impropiator for the parish of Halsall. Published 12 articles between 1786 and 1795.

DEVON

36. Mr. Paul Treby Treby, farmer, chairman of the Devonshire Agricultural Society, chairman of the South Devon Agricultural Society, published 5 articles between 1791 and 1795. Refs: Annals, Vol.22, p.69.
37. Mr. Christopher Gullett, farmer, landowner, relatively wealthy, member of the Odiham Agricultural Society, published 7 articles between 1784 and 1791.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

38. Sir Richard Sutton, ex-member of Parliament, president of the Newark Agricultural Society, published 10 articles between 1788 and 1795. Ref: Annals, Vol.40, p.476.

STAFFORDSHIRE

39. Mr. William Pitt, of Pendeford (1749-1823). Farmer and writer on agriculture, he was one of the ablest correspondents for the Board of Agriculture. Published 39 articles between 1784 and

1795. His other printed works include A General View of the Agriculture of the County of Stafford, 1794, a similar report on Northamptonshire, 1809; Worcestershire, 1813; Leicestershire, 1809; Agricultural Political Arithmetick, 1803, and The Bullion Debate, a serio-comic-satiric poem, 1811. Refs: Donaldson's Agricultural Biography, p.74; Dict. of National Biography, Vol.45, p.386; Rupert Simms, Bibliotheca Staffordiensis, Lichfield, p.361.

SUSSEX

40. Mr. John Ellman, of Glynd. Farmer, landowner, member and co-founder of the Sussex Agricultural Society, the Smithfield Club and the Lewes Wool Fair. Published 6 articles between 1789 and 1795. He was a prospective member of Young's proposed Royal Agricultural Academy. He also acted as cattle judge in several Smithfield Club shows and himself won a large number of prizes with his pedigree specimens. Ref. Annals, Vol.53, p.404-424; Farmer's Magazine (Edinburgh Vol.9, pp.82-94); Dict. of National Biography, Vol.17, pp.302-303.

NORTHUMBERLAND

41. Mr. George Culley, of Fenton (1735-1813). Farmer, landowner, prospective member of Young's Royal Agricultural Academy. Published 12 articles between 1790 and 1795. Member of the Durham Agricultural Society of which his brother Matthew was a co-founder. He was the earliest and perhaps the most successful pupil of Robert Bakewell and the reputation he achieved in the field of breeding soon spread all over Britain. Crowds visited his farms to see his experiments which were at that time making agricultural history. His name was given to a celebrated breed of cattle. Refs: Dict. of National Biography, Vol.13, p.282; Donaldson's Agricultural Biography, p.67; Gentlemen's Magazine, 1813, Part 1, p.661; Farmer's Magazine, (Edinburgh), Vol.LV, pp.283-286.

SHROPSHIRE

42. Rev. Mr. Edward Harries, of Cruckton, near Shrewsbury. Rector of Cruckton, experimental farmer, author of 23 articles published between 1785 and 1795. Owner of 300 acres of which 176 arable and the rest under grass. Also owner of 100 sheep. In spite of being in orders, he pronounced himself strongly against tithes.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

43. Mr. Isaac King, of Wycombe. Farmer, tenant, leases 135 acres of which 120 are arable. For this he pays £105 per annum. Published 8 articles between 1785 and 1795. Refs: Annals, Vol.36, pp.156-161.

BEDFORDSHIRE

44. Governor Thomas Pownall. Retired ex-governor of Massachusetts. Published 6 articles between 1787 and 1788. Member of the Bedford Agricultural Society.

CAMBRIDGE

45. Prof. John Symonds (1729-1807). Published 13 articles between 1784 and 1791. Close friend of Young. He was professor of Modern History at Cambridge. Before he had been a Fellow of Peterhouse. He was appointed to the professorship on the death of Thomas Gray, the poet. His printed works include, Remarks on an Essay on the History of Colonization, 1778; The expediency of Revising the Present Edition of the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, 1789. Refs: Dict. of National Biography, Vol.55, p.271; Gentlemen's Magazine, 1778, p. 421; and 1807, Part 1, p.281. Also British Museum ADD. MSS. 19150, fol.381-93; fol.51, and 19174, fol.695.

GLOUCESTER

46. Rev. Mr. G. Swayne, of Pucklechurch. Published 7 articles between 1785 and 1791. Ref: Donaldson's Agricultural Biography, p.69.

SURREY

47. Mr. Christopher Baldwin, Farmer, landowner, published 5 articles between 1790 and 1792.

LONDON

48. Mr. Anthony Songa, consul of Milan, published 15 articles, mostly on Italian agriculture between 1784 and 1796.

49. Sir Joseph Banks, scientist, explorer, prospective member of Young's Royal Agricultural Academy, published 10 articles between 1788 and 1792. He contributed £52.10s to the statue for the Duke of Bedford. Ref: Dict. of National Biography, Vol.3, pp.129-131.
50. Mr. John Middleton, published 6 articles on farming between 1788 and 1792.

SCOTLAND

51. Sir John Sinclair, president of the Board of Agriculture, agriculturist writer, published 13 articles between 1790 and 1795. He was chairman of the Society for the Improvement of British Wool and contributed £10.10s to the statue for the Duke of Bedford. Refs: Dict. of National Biography, Vol.52, p.301 and Donaldson's Agricultural Biography, p.69.
52. Dr. James Anderson, M.D. Medical doctor, published 6 articles in 1793. He was interested in introducing mulberries into England for the purpose of starting a silk industry. Refs: Annals, Vol.23, pp.225-254; Donaldson's Agricultural Biography, p.59; Dict. of National Biography, Vol.1, p.381.
53. Dr. James Robertson, D.D., published 6 articles during 1794.

APPENDIX II

List of the Agricultural Societies which Existed in England

1
during the Period 1776-1809.

ENGLAND

1. Appledore Agricultural Society, Kent. Ref: Annals, Vol.43, pp.654-656.
2. Bath and West of England Society, Somerset. John Billingsley, vice-president, John Proctor Anderdon, member. Refs: Annals, Vol.17, pp.399-403, Vol.32, pp.244-252.
3. Bedfordshire Agricultural Society. Ref: Annals, Vol.37, pp.553-556.
4. Berkshire Agricultural Society, Newbury, John Allen, member. Ref: Annals, Vol.41, pp.427-438, Vol.43, pp.165-167.
5. Cleveland Agricultural Society, Stokeley, North Riding. Ref: Annals, Vol.43, pp.163-165.
6. Devonshire Agricultural Society, Paul Treby Treby, chairman. Ref: Annals, Vol.17, pp.14-16.
7. North Devon Agricultural Society, Barnstaple. Ref: Annals, Vol.27, pp.331-336.
8. South Devon Agricultural Society, Paul Treby Treby chairman, Kingsbridge. Ref: Annals, Vol.22, pp.69-72.
9. Drayton Agricultural Society, Oxfordshire. Ref: Annals, Vol.43, pp.529-33.
10. Driffield Agricultural Society, East Riding. Ref: Annals, Vol.33, pp.538-539.
11. Durham Experimental Agricultural Society, George Culley, member. Ref: Annals, Vol.19, p.548, Vol.27, p.204, Vol.31, p.99, Vol.41, p.13; Farmer's Magazine, (Edinburgh), Vol.4, pp.283-286.
12. Essex Agricultural Society, Chelmsford. Ref: Annals, Vol.38, p.18, Vol.41, pp.173-179.
13. Georgic Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, Sommers Town, Middlesex. James Huntingford, member of the Committee. Ref: Annals, Vol.20, pp.339-349.

1. The names mentioned are those of society members who were also authors of more than five articles in the first twenty-five volumes of the Annals.

14. Hackness Agricultural Society, Brompton and Wykeham. Ref: Annals, Vol.43, p.262.
15. Hampshire Experimental Farming Association. Ref: Annals, Vol.38, p.321.
16. Herefordshire Agricultural Society. Ref: Annals, Vol.35, pp.91-102, Vol.38, pp.296-306.
17. Kendal Agricultural Society, Westmorland. Ref: Annals, Vol.34, pp.541-544.
18. Kent Society for the Encouragement of Agriculture and Industry. John Boys, William Hall, William Bland, Committee members; Robert Legrand, member. Ref: Annals, Vol.19, pp.541-548, Vol.21, pp.383-409, Vol.45, pp.101-104.
19. Lancaster Agricultural Society. Ref: Annals, Vol. 33, pp.629-635.
20. Manchester Agricultural Society. Ref: Annals, Vol.24, pp.496-514, Vol.31, pp.555-556, Vol.33, pp.635-636.
21. Melford Agricultural Society, Suffolk. Rev. Mr. William Butts, Rev. Mr. John Carter, Mr. Lewis Majendie, Mr. Thomas Ruggles, members. Ref: Annals, Vol.20, pp.404-410.
22. Middleton Farming Society, Westmorland. Ref: Farmer's Magazine, Vol.9, pp.463.
23. Newark Agricultural Society, Nottinghamshire. Sir Richard Sutton, chairman. Ref: Annals, Vol.40, p.476.
24. Norfolk Agricultural Society, Sir John Sinclair, John Ellman, Sir Joseph Banks, Rev. Joseph Forby, members. Ref: Annals, Vol. 45, pp.93-101; Farmer's Magazine, Vol.9, pp.14-16.
25. Northumberland Agricultural Society. Annals, Vol.31, pp.1-21.
26. Norwich Agricultural Society. Ref: Farmer's Magazine (London), Vol.2, pp.231-232.
27. West Norfolk Agricultural Society. Ref: Annals, Vol.39, pp.322-326.
28. Odiham Agricultural Society, Hampshire. Alexander Baxter, Thomas Bernard, James Huntingford, George Warde, Robert Legrand, William Hall, Christopher Gullett, members. Ref: Annals, Vol.3, pp.231-304, 318-481. Vol.4, pp. 193, 321. Vol.5, pp.282-287, Vol.14, p.163, 403. Vol.15, p.244.

29. Penzance Agricultural Society, Cornwall. Ref: Annals, Vol.27, pp.200-204.
30. Smithfield Club; John Ellman, Sir Joseph Banks, George Culley, John Billingsley, John W. Allen, John Boys, members. Ref: Annals, Vol.32, pp.208-210; Vol.33, pp.323; Vol.38, pp.45-81, 142-148.
31. Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, London. Ref: Farmer's Magazine, (London), Vol.2, p.193.
32. Sussex Agricultural Society, John Boys, John Ellman, members. Ref: Annals, Vol.29, pp.587-604; Vol.33, pp.404-424.
33. Sussex Western Agricultural Society, Petworth. Ref: Annals, Vol.35, pp.639-642; Vol.37, pp.550-553.
34. Wellingborough Agricultural Society, Northamptonshire. Ref: Annals, Vol.35, pp.435-437.
35. Agricultural Society for the Hundred of West Derby, County of Lancashire, Prescott. Ref: Annals, Vol.39, pp.132-149.
36. Wilveliscombe Agricultural Society, Somersetshire. Lord Sommerville, member. Ref: Annals, Vol.35, pp.107-108; Vol.36, pp.405-414; Vol.41, pp.418-426.
37. Workington Agricultural Society, Cumberland. Ref: Farmer's Magazine, (Edinburgh), Vol.10, pp.73-91; Vol.11, pp.73-99; Annals, Vol.45, pp.264-268.
38. Wortley Farmer's Club, Penistone, West Riding. Ref: Annals, Vol. 43, pp.421-423.
39. York Agricultural Society. Ref: Farmer's Magazine (London), Vol.2, pp.141-142.

APPENDIX III

In Volume 36, pp.113-114 of the Annals, Young published a circular letter requesting information about "the difference in the situation of such poor as possess land, or occupy it, both as to their comfort and the allowances they receive from the parish, compared with others who have not equal advantages; it being supposed by some that to give them property in land would conduce to ease their minds at present, and provide a permanent relief..."

Twelve correspondents answered this request. Of these, five were entirely opposed to the idea of distributing land to the poor in any form, five were in favour of redistribution, and two were of a divided mind.

The points which Young asked his correspondents to answer were :

1. Whether they were in favour of any plan to distribute land to the poor.
2. Reasons for objection or approval.

The detailed answers were the following :

From the Rev. Dr. Hilton, of Northwold, Norfolk.

Dr. Hilton was against the idea of distributing land to the poor.

His main reasons were, first, that it would pose unanswerable legal

problems; "Pray inform me of the legal manner in which it is proposed to vest those lands so that they may afford a permanent relief ..."; and secondly, that even if it were possible and advisable to distribute land to the poor, there wasn't anybody who could undertake the administrative responsibilities involved. The cottagers, Dr. Hilton thought, were "unfit to be intrusted with the fee simple of an acre of land ...". The Churchwardens and overseers of the poor he also dismissed as being "a fluctuating body of men unworthy of such a patronage." Finally, the vestry at large he also declared ineligible because "all the contention and discord of popular election will ensue from this democracy ..."

From Mr. John Forbes, Davenport, near Congleton, Dec. 20, 1800. ³²³

In favour of distributing land to cottagers.

"...the poor in country places are better with a small portion of land, so much as will sufficiently maintain one cow, more makes them neither labourers nor farmers..."

322. Young added a passage to this observation: "No formal proposition is made (to distribute land). The enquiry is for discovering the means. But if land from commons be assigned to poor families, the property might be vested in them inalienably, so long as they remained otherwise unchargeable to the parish. Fifty pounds would build a cottage, buy a cow and a hog, enclose the ground, and set a man a-going. That is equal to 1 shilling a week allowance. But a family thus to be contented, costs the parish at all times probably from 5 shillings to 7 shillings a week."

323. Annals, Vol. 56, pp. 331-333. Crops in Cheshire - Poor Relieved with land, by John Forbes.

I have always observed that too small farmers are much worse off than labourers ... a great national hurt ... such quantities of the best lands converted into useless parks and chases. These new-made parks are much complained of and inveighed against by the lower classes."

From Mr. George Warde, Bradfield House, Dec. 20, 1800. ³²⁴

Against distribution of land to cottagers.

"My observation upon the few poor whom I have known to possess land or common rights is, that they are not benefited by it ... the idea of satisfying the minds of men by a gift of land, is a political question of the greatest magnitude; and, in my opinion, fraught with danger: it would lead to an end in a general participation, and if it fell short of this extremity, I may say at least it would seriously decrease the labour-capital of the kingdom, for it is utopian to suppose any man to labour but from necessity."

From Mr. Thomas Ruggles, Clare, Suffolk, December 15, 1800. ³²⁵

Against any plan for land distribution.

324. Annals, Vol. 36, pp. 349-353. On Crops, Prices, Cottage Land, etc.
George Warde.

325. Annals, Vol. 36, pp. 354-355.

"As to your idea of giving the poor a property in land ... I conceive it Quixotic in the extreme; in fact, it smells strong of an agrarian law, unless I much mistake your meaning."

From Mr. E. Harries, Arlscott, December 20, 1800. ³²⁶

In favour of distributing land to cottagers.

"The idea of a cottagers having sufficient land to keep a cow, has long been a favourite with me ... I have heard it objected, that a cow rendered a labourer too comfortable and independent of his employer, and that he will not be so regular at his work; this, to me, is a strong argument in its favour, and if he can now and then, (which, I believe, will rarely happen) when he is not disposed or able to go through his daily labour, so much the better, when he can labour easily at his own business..."

From Mr. John Parkinson, Asgarby, Lincolnshire, December 22, 1800. ³²⁷

In favour of distributing land to cottagers.

"Providence has so ordained it, that if a man be possessed of the least industry, the having land in

326. Annals, Vol.36, pp.355-359.

327. Annals, Vol.36, pp.360-363.

his own occupation excites him to employ his vacant time in cultivating and contributing to raise food... I know of no method which would ease the minds of cottagers so much as allotting to each a moderate quantity of land to keep a cow and grow potatoes."

From an anonymous correspondent, Worcestershire, December 22, 1800. ³²⁸

Conditional attitude to distribution of land to cottagers.

"We have here and there an instance of a man having a small estate of three or four acres of enclosure ... on which some men contrive to make a living for themselves: but it is here thought it gives them an idle habit, and they do not make good labourers..... We have others, more common, that have from a quarter to half an acre of gardening adjoining to their dwellings ... and this state, I am inclined to think, is the best for a farm labourer..."

From Mr. J. Boys, Betshanger, Kent, December 23, 1800. ³²⁹

Conditional attitude to distribution of land to cottagers.

He agrees with Young's idea about landed property keeping

a farm labourer away from parish support, but is doubtful about the method of distribution.

"The possessors of land hardly ever, in this part of Kent, come to the parish at all for relief, and occupiers very seldom... When a labourer ... is put into the possession of three or four acres of land, his labour is, in great measure, lost to the community."

From Mr. Joseph Scott, Chatteris, December 20, 1800. ³³⁰

In favour of distributing land to cottagers.

"...if industrious labourers were supplied with a rod of land each, even if they paid a fair rent for it, it would be of more real lasting advantage to them than anything that has been done them this century."

From Mr. George Culley, Eastfield near Berwick, January 3, 1801. ³³¹

Against distribution of land to cottagers.

"I am convinced that it does a great deal of harm: because their depending upon such a piece of ground takes them off everything else; by thinking it will support them, they are too apt to neglect every other mode of industry Indeed, in so very strong a light

330. Annals, Vol.36, pp.376-380.

331. Annals, Vol.36, pp.365-387.

do I behold this matter, that I consider it as one of the worst things that can or could happen to cultivation, because it is the way of rendering a very industrious set of people not industrious."

From Mr. Paul Panton, Plasgwyn, Anglesey, January 10, 1801. ³³²

In favour of distributing land to cottagers.

"Are these wastes, hitherto neglected by capitalists (italics) incapable of culture? If capable of produce, of which there cannot be any doubt, policy, inhumanity, and common sense forbid that they should be any longer withheld from that culture which may be effected ... by the labour of the country poor. Teach them to feed themselves, this they will soon learn if they have land assigned to them, and are permitted to reap the fruits of the labour bestowed on that land."

APPENDIX IV

Although there were a number of social, political, and even psychological distinctions between the "farming interest" which Young represented and the better known landed interest, it remains true that their basic differentiation was economic. The Annals contain a wealth of information and descriptions of farms which could be used to provide a standard for the acreage, methods of cultivation, capital invested, etc., which could be said to be typical of the "gentlemen of little estate". Unfortunately, much of this material is irrelevant as it refers not to farms owned or worked by contributors to the Annals, but to other landowners. Young's Northern Tour, for instance, contains a detailed account of the farms he visited, but these cannot be taken as representative of the farming interest's mode of management. Only a few of the descriptions of farms in the Annals belonged to the farming interest and these are not very many. The most important is perhaps that of Young's farm in Bradfield, and there are thirteen other descriptions which can be taken as representative.

1. Arthur Young's accounts of his farm in Bradfield, near Bury St. Edmunds. Annals, Vol.15, pp.186-194.

"I have so often, in this memoir, mentioned the weight of our taxes, and there are so many persons who consider such things slightly, and without applying calculation to them, that I am apprehensive lest any reader should imagine, that I deal more in general declamation on the subject than proceed on the authority of well founded facts. To obviate this idea, and give the best proof I can possibly quote of the justice of my complaints, I will produce that instance with which I am unquestionably well acquainted, namely, my own property. I have near a nominal £300 a year here; the following detail of taxes will shew, that it is but nominal." ³³³

Tythe (my own)	31.	0.	0	
A tenant	10.	0.	0	
" "	10.	0.	0	
				51. 0. 0
Poor Rates	33.	0.	0	
	10.	0.	0	
	7.	0.	0	
	3.	0.	0	
				53. 0. 0
Land Tax	39.	12.	0	39. 12. 0
Road duty and turnpike	5.	6.	0	5. 6. 0

333. In this account he included the tithes, rates and window taxes of his tenants "for they are in fact as much paid by me, as the sums assessed on my own farm...."

Assessed taxes

18. 17. 6
7. 7. 0
1. 0. 0
8. 0

27. 12. 6

Manor of Bradfield Combust,
Guard rent

4. 5 4. 5

Lands in Bradfield
Combust, same
Feudal quit rent

2. 2. 8 2. 2. 8
2. 2. 7 2. 2. 7

Consumption of malt in
the family, six quarts at
14/6 per quart tax

4. 7. 0

Pay annually to my own
labourer £33 in lieu of
beer which, in the same
ratio is for the tax

11. 19. 3

Thirty-six acres of barley
annually produce four quarts;
144 grs; pay in malt tax
"2.18.0 an acre; and if 3 qts.
of this crop (deducting) 4 bu.
for feed and 4 for hogs and
poultry etc.) are brewed into
7³/₄ barrels of ale at 5s.10d.
a barrel in duty, it is £2.5.2.
1/2 per acre together £5.3.2¹/₂
per acre: while the total value
of the produce of the Eastern
Counties of the kingdom does not
exceed at 20/ the sum of £4.0.0
A produce taxed like this, at
125% of its value must be
lessened in the consumption and
price greatly: I shall suppose
to avoid all exaggeration that
this deduction in price to be
only 4s. a quarter on the 3 qrts.
per acre sold, this forms a tax of

21. 12. 0

37. 18. 3

£30 of wool a year; calculate a depression of 10% per year in price as a consequence of the cruel monopoly given by our laws to the manufacturers.

3. 0. 0

Total

£219. 18. 5

As the gross rental from the farm was £295. 3. 0 from which the land tax, quit rent, castle guards and repairs had to be deducted, it appeared that, according to Young's accounts, the farm had a net rental of £229.12.7 and paid in tithes and other exactions, a total of £219.18.5.

Gross rental

£ 295. 3. 0

£295. 3. 0

land tax

39. 12. 0

quit rent

2. 2. 7

castle guards

7. 1

repairs

23. 8. 9

65. 10. 5

65. 10. 5

£229. 12. 7

"Hence it appears that out of a portion of land which yields the proprietor £229.12.7, the public burthens take £219.18.5 !"

2. On the Proper Husbandry for a Gentleman, by Rev. Ch. Onley, Stithead, Essex. Annals, Vol.2, p.294. August, 1784.

This contributor begins by stating that "grazing is the farming of gentlemen". He goes on to describe his own farm; one fourth of the land is devoted to the supply of winter and spring artificial grasses. He also gives his course of crops for a period of twenty-one years; this account includes the value of his crop. This adds to £77.0.0 and he therefore deduces that he has received an average yearly return of £3.7.6. per acre.

3. On the Profit of Farming, by Robert Andrews, Esq., of Auberries, near Sudbury. Annals, Vol.4, p.252.

He has farmed for a total of thirty years, from 1753 to 1784. In the period 1753-1761, his profits amounted to an average of £88 to £98 per year, his farm was described then, as "inconsiderable".

From 1762 to 1778, the farm consisted of 350 acres and his profits increased to £208 per annum, or twelve shillings per acre.

From 1779 to 1781, the farm size increased to 580 acres and the profit to £342 yearly, or again, twelve shillings per acre.

From 1782 to 1783, the size of the farm was reduced to 220 acres and the profit increased to £336 per annum, or £1.10.0 per acre.

4. An Account of the Annual Average Expence on a Farm Containing a Thousand Acres, by Mr. William Macro, Barrow, March 1786, Vol.5, Annals, p.422.

This is a hypothetical case.

One thousand acres valued at	£ 415. 0. 0
tithes	83. 0. 0
labour	500. 0. 0
poor rates	74. 14. 0
window tax	9. 0. 0

"I foretell that there will be no more such great fortunes got in the farming business for a century to come as there has been for a century past, unless some curmudgeon should pinch it out of his own and his servants' bellies....."

5. An Account of the Annual Average Expence for the Last Three Years to January 1st, 1786, in the Following Estate. By William Hall, Elmstone, Annals, Vol.6, p.159.

A farm of 257 acres, valued at £220. It has a parsonage of 10 acres and tithes on 300 acres valued at £84. Marshland of 39 acres valued at £46.

Total 306 acres valued at £350, of these, 153 acres are arable.

Rent	£ 350. 0. 0
tithes	10. 2. 0
poor rates	42. 8. 0
window tax	7. 13. 0
servants tax	2. 10. 0
horse tax	1. 0. 0
waggon tax	6. 0

He keeps nine horses and the housekeeping staff includes five men and three women servants. The total capital invested in the farm is £1,500, or approximately £5. per acre of arable land

6. Account of a Farm, by Thomas Carr, Esq., Bedingham, near Lewes, Sussex. Annals, Vol.12, p.30.

A farm of 770 acres, plus two small rented farms, making a total of 780 acres. He has occupied it for eight years. He keeps eight horses and twenty-two oxen.

7. Account of a Farm, by T.C. (anon) from Sunderland, September, 1791, Annals, Vol.17, p.568.

A farm of 200 acres.

8. Account of a Farm. Anon. Annals, Vol.17, pp.39-44.

Twenty years' experience farming 300 acres; $\frac{1}{2}$ arable and $\frac{1}{2}$ grass and hay land. "I find it difficult in selling my wool, for want of a manufactory near the middle of this county"

9. Agricultural Observations, by Edward Harries, Esq., Cruckton, September, 1793. Annals, Vol.21, p.368.

"I have again resumed the practice of farming by occupying about 140 acres"

10. Account of a Farm, by H. Harper, of Bank Hall, Lancashire, December, 1793. Annals, Vol.21, p.568.

"The first part of my farm was Bottle Marsh, which I enclosed and marked; and which I may say, cost me twelve hundred pounds before I got a shilling of income..... The rent of my farm, both the old and the new, is two hundred and sixty pounds a year, clear of all taxes and repairs whatsoever"

11. Experiments in Agriculture, by Sir Francis Bassett, Bart, M.P. Tehidy Hall, Cornwall, December, 1793. Annals, Vol.22, p.145.

He has two farms; one is of 300 acres of inclosed land and 400 acres of park, (in this park he keeps approximately three hundred head of deer) and a small farm of 50 acres divided into ten enclosures "...in which I mean to try experiments in agriculture ... The stock I now have in both farms, consists of eight draught horses, fifteen draught oxen, eleven bulls, one milch (sic) cow, six young oxen, two steers, twenty pigs, and about four hundred sheep of different ages..."

12. On the Profit of a Farm, by Arthur Young, Annals, Vol.9, p.235, notes on the farm of a regular contributor to the Annals, Mr. Thomas Ruggles, of Clare. The farm consists of 146½ acres, exclusive of hedges, ditches, ponds, etc. Two acres are wood and 20½ grass. The total first stock of the farm, or capital employed was £646.18.7d.

13. Advice to a Country Gentleman of Small Estate. Anon. Annals, Vol.35, p.418.

He suggests the best size of farm to be 600 acres. He himself owns 180 acres inherited from his family and pays £60 taxes on net receipts.

14. Farming Account, by Isaac King, Wycombe, Bucks. Annals, Vol.36, p.156.

"I took what was called the dearest farm belonging to the estate of Loakes, containing 120 acres of arable, 12 acres of very poor pasture, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres of meadow, at the rent of £105 per annum. At the end of five years, as I could calculate, I was minus £500...."

15. Expences of a Farm in Norfolk. Anon. Annals, Vol.37, p.447.

Eight hundred acres, of which 660 were arable and 140 sheepwalk. Rent was £540 per annum and it was tithe-free. Initial capital was £4,800.

Interest on capital	£ 240.	0.	0
rent	530.	0.	0
rates	130.	0.	0
depreciation	100.	0.	0
seed	180.	0.	0
28 horses at 15 pounds	420.	0.	0
labour	500.	0.	0
	<hr/>		
	£2,100.	0.	0
suppose the profit 5%	240.	0.	0
	<hr/>		
	£2,340.	0.	0
	<hr/>		

APPENDIX V.

Acreage Enclosed by 1796.

County	Total acreage	Extent of wastes according to Young	Acreage enclosed by 1796
Bedford	302,942		54,763
Berkshire	463,830	40,000	159,666
Bucks	479,411	6,000	63,356
Cambridge	315,168		12,352
Cheshire	649,424	60,000	10,563
Cornwall	868,167	252,828	
Cumberland	973,146	492,000	63,233
Derbyshire	643,752	239,492	64,585
Devon	1,671,377	320,000	
Dorset	622,843	86,000	19,622
Durham	649,427	130,000	64,615
Ely, Isle of	239,950		
Essex	977,760		1,533
Gloucester	804,932		27,663
Hampshire	961,671	187,383	
Herefordshire	538,924		3,300
Hertford	404,523		12,033
Huntingdon	233,985		45,321
Kent	975,960		
Lancs.	1,201,888	508,500	27,994
Leicester	532,385	20,000	186,102
Lincoln	1,704,368	200,000	414,897
Holland	267,849		
Kesteven	463,490		
Lindrey	973,030		
London	74,850		
Middlesex	148,691	7,901	7,875
Norfolk	1,314,240	144,846	100,222
Northampton	585,148		206,808
Northumberland	1,291,978	450,000	111,248
Nottingham	540,015		142,764
Oxford	479,173		99,980
Peterborough	53,464		

County	Total acreage	Extent of wastes according to Young	Acreage enclosed by 1796
Rutland	97,273		27,245
Shropshire	861,800		21,285
Somerset	1,032,325		48,200
Stafford	738,513		38,673
Suffolk	948,270	100,000	8,543
East	557,354		
West	390,916		
Surrey	461,833	96,000	615
Sussex	932,503	90,000	1,450
Warwick	628,994	120,470	89,289
Westmorland	504,917	405,120	14,027
Wight, Isle of	94,146		
Wilts	860,611	500,000	95,052
Worcester	447,679		57,670
Yorkshire	3,890,990	849,272	402,711
East R.	750,115		
North R.	1,361,622		
West R.	1,779,353		

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35.128	Vol. 3	1798-1802
35.129	Vol. 4	1803-1807
35.130	Vol. 5	1808-1810
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