

Technological Improvement and Social Change in South Cardiganshire

By J. GERAINT JENKINS

THE vast technological revolution in agriculture so often ascribed to late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain only reached south Cardiganshire within the last sixty years. The area is by tradition a stock-rearing area and, until the beginning of the present century, the farmers of the area never demanded the vast quantity of new tillage and barn machinery that the inventive ability of agricultural engineers had devised for easing the farmer's labour. Within the last sixty years, however, the isolation has been broken down and the vast improvement in agricultural technique, in tools, and in implements has completely changed the pattern of life in the region. The application of new scientific methods of farming and the development of rural amenities since 1945, in particular, have had a far greater impact on Welsh society than all the developments of the previous thousand years.

The agrarian history of south Cardiganshire may be said to fall into three distinct periods:

1. Until the end of the nineteenth century we have a period of medieval simplicity. A large proportion of the farmers were tenants of an anglicized aristocracy, and their farming depended entirely on a wide range of simple hand tools, a large labour force, and the co-operative effort of relatives and neighbours during the busy periods of the farming year. Until the end of the nineteenth century, the neighbourhood group was all important, and few members of the local community found it necessary to go outside their locality for the means of life.

2. From approximately 1900 to 1939 we have a period which may be described as the period of slow innovation. It saw the break-up of the large estates and the emergence of a class of owner-occupiers. It saw, too, the introduction of new horse-drawn implements—mowing machines, hay tedders, binders, and manure spreaders—many of them co-operatively owned by a number of neighbouring farmers. Nevertheless, the new implements did not supplant the old hand tools and techniques, for throughout the period the old still persisted alongside the new. The scythe for example, still continued to be used alongside the binder; the pitchfork still persisted alongside the mechanical hay loader; and corn had still to be stacked into land mows in the manner of the previous thousand years. Although the farm

labour force dwindled considerably within this period, the co-operative effort of relatives and neighbours was still required at the busiest periods of the farming year.

Within this period, too, the inhabitants of west Wales realized to the full that there was a world outside their own immediate locality, where they could sell the products of their farms, and where their sons and daughters could be educated to prepare them for a livelihood outside agriculture. Indeed, within this period a new outlook on life became apparent: agricultural work was regarded as a last resort when searching for work for young people. It was considered unnecessary to educate a child if his destiny was to be the land, and the ambition of most Cardiganshire farmers was to educate their children so as to ensure a future for them in prestige-bringing, non-manual, professional work in the towns and cities of Britain. The effect of this outlook on rural society in the inter-war period was in itself a near-tragedy, for it robbed the countryside of those people who could have become its leaders.

3. The period from 1939 to the present day may be described as a period of revolution. Old techniques, old tools, and old implements, even those regarded as the last word in modernity in 1939, have been thrown away at a great rate to be replaced constantly by more modern equipment. With modern machinery the farmers are able to complete their work with a very small labour force, and the social life associated with co-operation between neighbours at busy times of the year has disappeared. Interdependence has given place to the independence of each farm, and today the agricultural contractor with his vast range of up-to-the-minute equipment is perhaps the most important member of the rural community.

The drift of young people from the countryside to the towns has also continued at an ever-increasing rate and more and more Welsh-speaking families in the region have ceased to have any connection with the land, in many cases after generations of farming. The empty farms have almost invariably been sold to English people who are unable to participate in the traditional social life of this Welsh-speaking region. Within the last few years the movement from England into west Wales has been so great that the region is becoming more and more anglicized.

Today the west Wales farmer is a commercial entrepreneur, highly capitalized with stock and machinery, and often dependent on credit facilities. It is probably true to say that many farmers occupying small and medium-sized holdings (and 92 per cent of the farms of south Cardiganshire are below a hundred acres in size) are dependent for their net income on government subsidies. The introduction of modern amenities has, in effect,

created a new social environment, far removed from the subsistence farming of little more than half a century ago.

It is worth while to look in somewhat greater detail at these three periods in the agrarian history of west Wales.

PERIOD I

Up to the end of the nineteenth century, farming in south Cardiganshire was essentially mixed in nature and all the commodities required by the community were produced within the region. Each individual realized his ambitions within his own immediate locality, rarely finding it necessary to go outside that locality for the means of life. All the food required by the community could be produced locally; as well as all the products of the farm, the furniture of the home, clothing, footwear, dairy and kitchen utensils; indeed, everything considered essential to life could be produced in one or other of the local craft workshops. Every rural locality in south Cardiganshire, as elsewhere, had its community of craftsmen—smallholders who were very often paid in kind rather than in cash by local farmers. The woollen factory, for example, was allowed to keep a proportion of the fleeces that a farmer brought in for weaving into cloth or blankets for his family's use, while a blacksmith was given a small rick of corn (*llafur golym*) for the countless minor tasks, such as retining harrows and sharpening mattocks, that he undertook throughout the year. In other cases, the farmer was expected to plough the craftsman-smallholder's fields, to cart his crops, to provide corn for his poultry, in return for the craftsman's services throughout the year. In those days, therefore, the rural neighbourhood, 'characterized by an intimacy of association within a territorial space', was an economic as well as a social entity.

Nevertheless, the central theme of neighbourhood feeling, around which all other relationships revolved, was mutual assistance in farm work. On the one hand, there was co-operation and even co-ownership of implements between farmer and farmer. Each farm saw itself as the focus of a small group of perhaps seven or eight other farms with which it had frequent dealings. On the other hand, there was co-operation between farmers and a large number of non-farming cottagers and smallholders, many of whom possessed less than five acres of land.

In an era when the tools and implements of agriculture were few and simple and farming was a manual art rather than a series of mechanical processes, no farm could exist as an independent and separate unit. For example, few farms of less than eighty acres in size, and that meant a total of 80 per cent in south Cardiganshire, kept a bull. But as the income of all medium-

sized farms depended very largely on the sale of store cattle and butter, the bull was an essential farm animal. The breeds of cattle that were most popular in the late nineteenth century were the Castlemartin Blacks and Welsh Blacks and these always calved in the spring months, thus ensuring a high milk yield in the summer. Since only one farm in four possessed a bull, it meant that 80 per cent of the farms were dependent on the other 20 per cent for this essential service. The traffic of cows from one farm to the other was constant throughout the summer months, for without this co-operation between the large farm and its smaller neighbours the economic basis of Cardiganshire farming would break down. No cash payment of any kind was made for the bull's services, but the debt was paid by providing a day's labour in the hay harvest or at some other busy occasion in the farming year. In the same way, only one farm in eight kept a boar, but since bacon pigs were as important as store cattle in the economy of the region, boars too were a necessity. For the smooth running of a pastoral economy, therefore, co-operation between farmers was essential.

In an area of dispersed family farms, where the labour force on each holding was of necessity small, co-operation was practised at all times. Labour was frequently exchanged, draught animals and implements were constantly borrowed, while on certain occasions such as sheep-shearing and potato-picking the labour force on many farms attained vast proportions. The co-operative nature of Welsh agriculture was, perhaps, most clearly seen in the hayfields, for not only did neighbouring farmers help one another in harvesting this vital crop, but their wives and serving maids, together with cottagers and their families, were expected to help. For example, on a farm of seventy acres in the parish of Penbryn in mid-June 1896, 10 of the 72 adults at work in a hayfield on a particular day were neighbouring farmers, 23 were farm labourers in their employ, 12 were serving maids, also in their employ, 18 were cottagers, and 9 were the wives and daughters of cottagers. In addition to this outdoor labour staff, one should add the farmer's wife and the wives of neighbouring farmers for they were concerned with the preparation of food in the house, since only maidservants and the wives of cottagers were expected to rake the hay in the fields.

While the farmers were not paid in any way, except by exchange of labour, cottagers were always paid in kind: they were given a pat of butter (called debt butter), a bottle of milk, a little cheese, a sack of swedes, or a sack of corn for their poultry. On the other hand, a day's labour in the hayfield might pay for carting a load of coal from the local seaport village or providing a cartful of manure for the garden. As far as co-operation between farmers was concerned, a dozen or more holdings within a neighbourhood had, since

time immemorial, formed themselves into a workable unit to deal with the hay crop. Farmers together with the one or two male servants in their employ would assist one another with the mowing—a task which until the first decade of the twentieth century was always undertaken with scythes. To carry the hay, each farm within the group was expected to supply a horse and *gambo* (a long wheeled cart that made an appearance only at harvest time), together with labour in both the fields and the rickyard. It is clear, therefore, that since the hay harvest in late nineteenth-century Cardiganshire was not mechanized in any way, a large labour force was essential, but no single family farm within the region could supply that labour on its own. Owing to the moist climate too, it was essential that the hay be harvested very quickly, and again to do this a larger labour force was required.

While the hay harvest was very largely a communal affair and neighbouring farmers were expected to help one another, the corn harvest was a matter for each individual farmer. There was little co-operation between farms in a neighbourhood group on this occasion. Although the economy of west Wales is by tradition a pastoral one, surprisingly large acreages were devoted to arable crops. In the parish of Penbryn in 1890, for example, 2,500 acres out of a total of just over 8,000 were under the plough. No cereal crops were grown for sale. Wheat was used in the home, oats for feeding horses, and barley, the most important crop of all, for feeding pigs and cattle. The equipment for dealing with these crops was simple in the extreme. Corn was sown broadcast from a basket lip or linen sheet; it was weeded with a forked stick and weeding hook; and it was harvested with a scythe and cradle. In wet years, and they were frequent on the western seaboard, when rain and wind had flattened the corn crop, and in dry years like that of 1894, when the corn stalks were particularly short, the scythe and cradle could not be used and the whole crop had to be harvested with the sickle. In those unfortunate years, harvesting was an extremely slow and difficult process, but even in normal years it would take an experienced scyther at least a full day to cut an acre of corn and at least another half day to bind it into sheaves. It was customary to bind wheat immediately after cutting, a task that was always done by women, but in the case of barley and oats the crop had to remain on the ground for at least nine days before binding. The sheaves were then stooked and, after a number of days had elapsed, the stooks were collected together and built into land mows of either seventy-two or ninety-six sheaves. Finally the corn was carried to the rickyard in *gambos* and built up in rectangular or round stacks which were then thatched. Harvesting, even on a small farm, was a lengthy process for under normal circumstances it would take one man working alone at least five days to cut, bind, and carry

an acre of corn, without counting the period that the corn had to remain loose on the ground, in stooks, and in land mows.

A farm of a hundred and forty-five acres in the parish of Llangrannog in 1897, for example, grew thirty-five acres of corn—fifteen of barley, twelve of oats, five of wheat, and three of rye. If the farmer were to depend on his own labour resources, consisting of himself, his wife, two male and one maid servants, harvesting would take at least thirty-five working days. Meanwhile the day-to-day work of the farm had to continue; the ten dairy cattle had to be milked and fed, the thirty-five calves, fifteen pigs, five horses, and poultry had to be cared for and food for the family had to be prepared. No family farm of this size could possibly cope independently with all the work that was involved at this busy period in the farming year. The Cardiganshire farmer was therefore forced by circumstances to look elsewhere for extra labour in the harvest fields. He looked not towards his farming neighbours, who were themselves fully occupied, but towards the non-farming cottagers who lived in the neighbourhood and were largely dependent on the farmer for the means of life. In order to feed themselves and their families and to provide food for the pig and hens that the cottager always kept at the bottom of his garden, he was allowed to plant potatoes in a neighbouring farmer's fields. While the cottager supplied the seed potatoes, the farmer undertook the preparation of the ground, weeding and hoeing the growing crop, and supplying the manure. In payment for this the cottager was expected to work in the harvest field. For each row of carefully measured potato rows, each eighty yards long, the cottager worked for a day cutting the corn, or, alternatively, he spent a day and a half binding corn as payment for each row. As each family required between two and five rows of potatoes, this custom of work-debt solved the problem of scarcity of labour during the corn harvest. In the autumn, cottagers were expected to assist with picking the farmer's potato crop before they tackled their own, but the farmer undertook the delivery of potatoes to the cottager's home. This custom of the work-debt remained in vogue in south Cardiganshire for as long as simple equipment was used; indeed, it is only within the last fifteen years, with the advent of modern machinery, that the last vestiges of it have disappeared. In the late nineteenth century, there were at least two legal cases where cottagers had obtained the right of planting potatoes in a farmer's field, but had failed to fulfil their side of the contract by working at the corn harvest. In both cases judgment was given in favour of the farmer, mainly on the grounds that he had supplied manure for the cottager's potato crop.¹

¹ I am grateful to Mr David Jenkins of the University College of Wales for this information and for many details of harvesting customs in west Wales.

To sum up, therefore. Until the end of the nineteenth century the number employed on each farm was small, the tools and implements of agriculture were few and simple, and for these reasons no farm could exist as a single economic unit. To overcome the problem of scarcity of labour, particularly at busy periods in the farming year, a complex social organization was evolved, and in this organization all local dwellers, farmers and non-farmers, had their parts to play. Cottagers were indeed a part-time labour force and the rules relating to their rights and duties in a rural neighbourhood were very rigid indeed.

PERIOD II

The period 1900 to 1930 saw a widening of the horizons of the Welsh farmer and a new emphasis on production for the market. The acreage under arable crops declined very greatly, while first stock-rearing and then dairying became all important. The most significant single event of the period was the establishment of the Milk Marketing Board in 1933. Almost immediately the production of butter and store cattle declined, sheep and pigs disappeared, and the production of liquid milk became the basis of the economy. The milk-collecting lorry became a vital element in rural communication, for not only did it collect the churns of milk from farms daily, its driver was also expected to bring daily papers and goods from the nearest market town, while the vehicle was often used as a means of conveying people from one place to another. Throughout the period, therefore, a gradual change in the economy took place, the mixed, largely self-sufficient economy of the nineteenth century giving place to a specialized dairying economy by 1935. In 1900 the hardy native black cattle were all important, but by 1924 they had been replaced by the all-purpose shorthorn, and by 1939 Channel Island and Friesian breeds were gaining ground at a considerable rate.

This change of emphasis completely changed the pattern of work on Welsh farms. Whereas in the first decade of the century, most medium-sized, mixed farms kept two or three male labourers, who spent a great deal of time cultivating and harvesting the arable crops, by 1933 the farm servant was a rarity except on the largest farms. By that time arable crops had become relatively unimportant, so that the traditional work of the male labourer had dwindled. But as dairying grew in importance, so too did the work of women on the farms. Despite a huge increase in the size of the dairy herds, women were still expected to undertake all the milking, the cattle-feeding, the clearing-out of their sheds, together with poultry-feeding and preparing food for the family. The farmer, now in many cases without assistance from paid

labourers, was fully engaged in the fields—ploughing, cultivating, ditching, and hedging—and spent far less time in the farmyard.

Owing to this change of emphasis and the introduction of new cultivating and harvesting machinery, the paid labour force on Cardiganshire farms declined rapidly and a large number of labourers made their way to the industrial regions of south Wales, the Midlands, and London. In addition the break-up of the large estates and the fragmentation of holdings contributed further to this decline. Whereas in 1890 the average size of holding in five parishes in south Cardiganshire was 55.2 acres, by 1910 the average had dropped to 42.8. A great increase in the number of farms below twenty acres meant that holdings in south Cardiganshire became family farms in the true sense, requiring no more than the labour of a farmer and his wife to undertake all the work.

Nevertheless, the feature that characterized the period above all else was mechanization which not only contributed to depopulation but also affected rural social life in all its aspects. In the early years of the century the horse-drawn mowing-machine made its appearance and it quickly replaced the scythe on the larger farms for harvesting hay and corn. No longer were the vast gangs of farmers and cottagers required to harvest fields of corn, for all this work could be completed very quickly by the farmer himself without any assistance. Nevertheless, the purchase of mowing machines meant an appreciable capital outlay, which few farmers could afford. This problem was overcome by a co-operative effort whereby groups of half a dozen farmers pooled their resources to buy the new machines. Each farm within the group was allowed to use it in turn and in a specific order, each one providing extra labour at harvest time for the other farms within the group. By 1910 the binder had replaced the mowing machine on many farms, and its appearance dispensed with the need for extra labour to bind corn in sheaves. Since the cost of the binder was considerably higher than that of a mowing-machine, the co-ownership of those implements was often shared by a dozen or more farms. Once again labour was exchanged for building land mows and carrying the crops. As far as corn harvesting was concerned, there were few technological changes between 1914 and 1950 and throughout the period co-operation between farms continued. As far as the hay harvest was concerned, however, a large number of new implements became popular in the inter-war period, ranging from tedding machines (known as kickers) to mechanical hay loaders.

It is clear, nevertheless, that early mechanization during the first twenty-five years of the twentieth century led to interdependence between farmers, particularly through the co-ownership of implements and the exchange of

labour at busy periods such as threshing time. By 1904 an agricultural contractor with steam and threshing tackle was making regular journeys from farm to farm in the autumn and again in January, spending little more than one day at each farm in turn. Whereas in the nineteenth century threshing was done with flails, the process continuing on odd days throughout the winter months, farms required extra labour after the advent of steam-threshing tackle—some to feed the machine, others to carry the grain to the barn; some to remove the chaff from the machine, others to build straw ricks, while hordes of small boys fed the engine with coal and water. It became customary therefore for farmers to help one another in threshing and for cottagers to pay for the right of planting potatoes in the farmer's field by giving a day's work at the threshing. But for cottagers, mechanization generally meant that they were less essential to the smooth running of the economy than in the past, for the traditional work that they performed—cutting and binding corn—was now undertaken by machines, except on the smaller farms. But the cottagers' custom of planting potatoes in the field continued until 1939 and even later in some localities, although the rigid rules of the work-debt were not as strictly adhered to. A cottager was still expected to plant and pick a farm's potatoes, and to work at the hay harvest for, although field machinery had been introduced to deal with the hay, manual labour was still required in the rickyard.

In most aspects of farm work, therefore, the advent of machinery meant the end of the rigid social organization that co-operation between farmer and cottager brought into being. Nevertheless, until 1939 smallholdings still depended very largely on hand tools, although many could borrow the machines of neighbouring large farms for some of their tasks, the debt being paid by providing a day's work at the hay or potato harvests or on threshing day.

PERIOD III

Since 1939 the agricultural economy of south Cardiganshire has been completely transformed, and the technological, economic, and social changes brought into being since 1945 in particular have completely altered the outlook of the Welsh farmer. One of the most significant social changes which came as a result of technological improvements was a weakening of the neighbourhood group with its intimacy of association and co-operative organization. Today each farm in the region is an economic unit, almost completely independent of its neighbours. Although few farms employ paid labour on a full-time basis, a wide range of modern equipment makes it possible for the farmer to complete his work with little outside help. It has been said that in areas where farmers regard the neighbourhood as the main

social organization of their lives, clear signs of technological and economic backwardness are displayed in those districts. In the hills of mid-Cardiganshire, for example, where neighbourhood feeling reigns supreme, there is among the farming population an unwillingness to change attitudes, values, and institutions, which are out-dated in terms of modern economic and social conditions. But in the south of the county technological progress has led to a weakening of neighbourhood feeling and economic and social conditions have changed spectacularly.

As has been said, the introduction of new implements in the inter-war period failed to disrupt the established order; indeed early mechanization led to greater co-operation between neighbouring farmers. Before 1939, machinery was introduced in an attempt to cut down labour costs, for there was a great decrease in the number of employees on Welsh farms. Since 1945, however, south Cardiganshire farmers have experienced great difficulty in obtaining labour. Very few young people are prepared to work on the land after leaving school, whereas in pre-war days a proportion of school leavers did become farm labourers. Between 1935 and 1938 52 per cent of youths leaving school in the Penmorfa district took up agricultural work, but in the years 1955-8 less than 5 per cent of school leavers became farm workers. The setting-up of a research establishment at Aberporth has not only provided work for those who in earlier years could have become farm workers, but it has also robbed the farmers of the services of cottagers, who were in effect a part-time labour force. Cottagers have ceased to provide voluntary labour in threshing and in the potato and hay fields. Before 1950, for example, the potato crop on every farm was planted and harvested by hand, but since that date farmers have experienced increasing difficulty in obtaining extra labour. Cottagers have ceased to plant potatoes in a neighbour's field and the total acreage devoted to the crop has decreased considerably. A number of the larger farms in the region have purchased mechanical planters which are hired out to neighbouring farmers for a specific fee rather than by exchange of labour. In all aspects of farm work voluntary co-operation has ceased and the co-ownership of implements is no longer practised.

South Cardiganshire is a region of small-sized dairy farms and the average income of the individual farmer is little more than £700 per annum. To overcome the shortage of labour, it would be impossible for him to purchase all the equipment required for modern farming; indeed, it would be quite uneconomic for the Welsh farmer to purchase the highly specialized, expensive cultivating and harvesting machinery which may be required for only a few days in every year. The majority of Cardiganshire farmers view hire-purchase facilities with considerable suspicion, so that one of the most signi-

ficant developments of the post-war period has been the emergence of the specialized agricultural contractor, who, with his ever-widening range of modern equipment, has become one of the most important members of the rural community. Before 1939 the only farm task that the contractor undertook, and he was usually a farmer himself, was the threshing. Today the advent of the combine harvester has dispensed with the threshing machine although most farmers keep a small proportion of corn for spring sowing which has to be threshed in January. Nevertheless, threshing day is not the co-operative affair that it was a few years ago and the contractor, with his staff, is able to complete the work very quickly. In all aspects of farm work, from ditching to harvesting and from ploughing to baling hay, the agricultural contractor is a key figure, and not only has his emergence meant a great decrease in the labour force, it has also meant that the farmer is spending less and less time in the fields. Within recent years farmers have taken over such tasks as milking and caring for the dairy herd, tasks which in the past were always performed by women. Today women spend little time outside the dwelling, but since south Cardiganshire has become an important holiday centre, catering for tourists has become an industry of great importance. Almost every farm has taken advantage of this post-war boom and signboards advertising *Bed and Breakfast* and caravan sites have mushroomed throughout the area. Tourism provides the farmer's wife with an income that is far more assured than that derived from selling butter and eggs, particularly in an area where the economy of the small farm is delicately poised. Nevertheless, the Welsh farmer's dependence on the tourist trade has had adverse effects on the traditional social and religious life of the region. Alien influences have led to a weakening of neighbourhood feeling and to the disappearance of the communal nature of the social life associated with the Welsh rural scene.

The period since the end of the war has also witnessed the extension of government grants and subsidies to cover practically all farm operations. In addition to subsidies and grants for production, there are improvement schemes designed to improve dwellings and land and to bring modern amenities to the small farmer. In the broader field, the government has been improving rural schools, encouraging the development of the electricity grid, grant-aiding large public water supply schemes, and improving roads. The introduction of modern amenities and the growing use of motor cars has in effect created a new competitive social environment. The Milk Marketing Board is faced with ever-growing quantities of milk, surplus to the requirements of the market. The average price of milk has decreased to such an extent that some farmers have reverted to the age-old tasks of rearing beef

cattle. The economy of the small and medium-sized farms is in the balance. On the one hand the farmer is faced with increasing rents and higher costs of machinery, labour, feeding stuffs, and veterinary services. On the other hand he finds that his returns are diminishing, particularly from the sale of liquid milk which is the keystone of the economy. An alarmingly large proportion of the moderate 'prosperity' of the small Welsh farm is due to government subsidies, for even the most favoured dairy farms derive up to 30 per cent of their net incomes from grants and subsidies, while on small stock-rearing farms subsidies exceed net income by a considerable amount. The government has decided to assist some small farms under the "Small Farmer Scheme", but in view of the evidence, many have expressed the opinion that small units are undesirable and economically wasteful, and that nothing should delay the process of amalgamation into larger units.

Notes and Comments

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The annual conference of the British Agricultural History Society was held at Keele Hall, the University of Keele, from 7 to 9 April. After the opening reception and dinner, at which the Society's guests were the Earl of Harrowby, Professor W. M. Simon, and Mr F. B. Stitt, Professor W. M. Williams spoke on the theme 'A Sociologist's Use of Historical Evidence'. The following morning Mr R. W. Sturgess read a paper on 'The Agricultural Revolution on the heavy lands of the Midlands'. In the afternoon members visited Sandon Hall, where the Earl of Harrowby acted as guide, and in the evening Dr T. C. Smout explored the problems of 'Scottish Farming before the Improvers'. The final paper of the conference was given by Dr Rosamund Faith on 'Peasant Families and Inheritance Customs'.

At the annual general meeting held on Thursday, 8 April, Professor H. P. R. Finberg was elected President of the Society. Mr C. A. Jewell and Mr T. W. Fletcher were re-elected Treasurer and Secretary respectively. Three members of the executive committee, Professor H. P. R. Finberg, Mr G. Ordish, and Miss L. Pearson retired, and Mr

G. Houston, Mr W. Harwood Long, and Dr W. J. Rowe were elected to the vacancies.

Dr W. H. Chaloner presented the report of the executive committee and thanked Mr R. V. Lennard for his active service in the office of President during the past three years. The Treasurer reported that the membership list had been scrutinized for delinquent subscribers and revised. The financial position of the Society was satisfactory.

THE CONSTITUTION

The executive committee, as authorized by the annual general meeting, has studied the constitution of the Society with a view to reform. Three proposals for the amendment of the constitution have been received relating to clauses 4, 8, and 10, and written notice of these amendments will be circulated to members with the notice of the next annual general meeting that is to be held in Spring 1966.

FUTURE CONFERENCES

The December conference of the Society will be held jointly with the Association of Agriculture at the London School of Economics on Saturday, 4 December. The 1966 Spring conference and annual general meeting will be held in Dublin beginning either on Mon-

(continued on p. 115)