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FARMERS AND THE WAGES THEY PAY.

The question that has to be feared in Sussex just now is that concerning the wages of all types of labour, beginning with the farm labourer. Some remarks of great interest to the agricultural community were made at Friday's meeting of the Cuckfield Board of Guardians. Mr. T. Canniford, the vice-chairman, called attention to a woman requiring relief in the Infirmary, and said her husband was only earning 16s. a week, and had to provide a house. The House Committee thought that such a man was not getting as much as a farmer ought to pay. It was not the only case of the kind that had come before the Committee, who thought that if such men looked around they could earn £1 a week or more. Mr. William Wood, of Hurstpierpoint, who could speak from practical experience on this question, said the matter did not arise from one case, as others had come before them lately. He knew what he had to pay his own men and what his neighbours were quite willing to pay. Men were being paid 22s. and 23s. a week and a house. The ratepayers should not be asked to relieve those who were engaged in an industry which could afford to pay those working in it a living wage. No doubt his remarks would not please all his farmer friends, but in his opinion the majority of them willingly paid fair wages. There was another aspect of the question. Those of them who sat on the local military tribunals heard applications for exemption on the ground that farmers could not get men. If they were only offering miserable wages, on which families could not live, this was not surprising. With the rise in the cost of articles of food produced by farmers and fetching good prices for them, it was a stigma on the agricultural industry which should not rest on it in consequence of the action of two or three farmers.