

West Sussex Gazette 9th November 1916, page 12

FRUIT GROWERS AND MILITARY SERVICE.

The local Tribunal held that the cultivation of grapes, tomatoes, and cucumbers is of national importance, and allowed exemption to fruit-growers and fruitgrowers' foremen on that ground; but the military were not content to leave the matter there, and brought several of the cases before the Appeal Tribunal on Tuesday. One case affected four foremen (in separate nurseries) in the employ of one of the largest growers in the borough. It was stated that he had 20 acres of ground and 12,000ft. of glass, and that the nurseries were entirely devoted to the production of food. The bill for wages and cartage was £2,600 a year. Owing to the shortage of labour, it was said, some of the glass houses must be closed after the present crops were gathered. They had just planted 30,000 broccoli, and other vegetables, following a potato crop; and eight tons of seed potatoes were on order for planting next season. The Tribunal held that the question whether the cultivation was of national importance was not the only one to be taken into account. Consideration had to be given to the nature of the food or luxury produced; whether it was for export; how many persons depended on the business; and how many men of military age were employed in proportion to the total number of hands; as well as to the special circumstances of each particular applicant. They allowed the appeal of the military in respect of two of the foremen, altering the exemption to 14 days, final. Leave to appeal to the Central Tribunal was refused. In connection with another appeal, the Military Representative said their instructions were imperative to press for men under 30, even if they were in certified occupations.