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WOMEN AND WORK ON THE LAND.

At a meeting of the committee of the East Grinstead Branch of the Farmers' Union, held at the Crown Hotel, East Grinstead, on Thursday in last week, the above matter was fully discussed.

The East Grinstead War Work Association had intimated that they had received a number of applications from young women who are anxious for patriotic reasons to assist farmers by taking the place of men who have been called up, and the Association wanted to ascertain from the Farmers' Union if they were agreeable to take such young women on the farms; if board and lodging would be given during the time of training, and how long such training would last, and what remuneration would be offered when trained?

Miss WOODLAND was present to represent the Association, and said it was recognised by the Board of Trade and had been requested to inquire into the question of how far women labour could be usefully employed on the land, and they wished to know from the farmers what their views were on the subject, for they were anxious to do all they could to help the farmers.

Mr. J. H. URIDGE, who was in the chair, said farmers wanted the Government to realise that if women labour had to be employed it would reduce the production of the county. Women could be usefully employed in the lighter work on the farm, and it might be generally considered that two women would be equal to one man in regard to labour. East Sussex was less suited for women labour than most other counties owing to the hilly country and the character of the soil. He thought if the energies of the organisation were used to get women labour in the counties where their work could be best employed and release men it would be a great advantage. He also mentioned the matter of gardeners and keepers, and said farmers felt that their work could be done in most cases by women. He pointed out that the most important point was the continuous labour.

Mr. LEGGAT said farmers were hard pressed for labour, and he personally had done more work himself in the past few months than in the past ten years. It was trained women who were wanted, but he was pretty certain that 50 per cent. of the women in this part of the county would be tired of the work in a fortnight.

Miss WOODLAND said the idea was that registers should be kept in the villages of women willing to do the work, and it was proposed to train women in branches of farming, including milking and dairy work. It would be explained to the applicants that they would not be filling their pockets, but would be paid a fair living wage, and would be doing their bit for their country. The housing of the women in some cases was considered a difficult question, but some farmers could no doubt take one or more into their own houses.

The subject was very fully discussed, and finally those present expressed themselves in favour of the scheme and willing to employ women labour if suitable women were found and trained. In regard to remuneration, the general feeling was that the market price would be paid, and they would be paid to the full value of their labour.

Miss Woodland was cordially thanked for her explanations, the CHAIRMAN remarking that he now had more hope in regard to female labour than he had before the meeting began.