

PREFACE

THIS survey of the allotments and small holdings of Oxfordshire, made in the latter part of 1913 and the earlier part of 1914, was to have formed a part of the Report on the agriculture of the county recently issued on behalf of the Institute.¹ But of late years public interest in this branch of the industry has been stimulated by the consideration of problems connected with the improvement of conditions of life among rural workers, the retention of the labourer on the land, and the increase of food production, so that a closer study of the history and present circumstances of the small agricultural holdings of the county seemed to be called for than their position in its rural economy would appear, at first sight, to justify. Thus, this special inquiry was undertaken with the object of determining, as far as possible, the conditions which have led to the creation of allotments and small holdings in Oxfordshire, and to consider how far these conditions are likely to prevail in the future. At the same time, the causes of failure and the circumstances necessary for the most successful development have been investigated.

The survey is the work of Mr. A. W. Ashby, research assistant in the Institute, and was carried out by him with the aid of a research scholarship of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries. The work was greatly facilitated by the ready co-operation of a large number of interested persons,

¹ *Agriculture in Oxfordshire*, by John Orr, with a chapter on soils by C. G. T. Morison. Oxford University Press, 1916.