

A Farm in a Finnish Village from 1917 to 1973

By Aa. H. Kampp & Kalevi Rikkinen

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This paper is a continuation of "Farms in a Finnish Village 1787–1916", Geografisk Tidsskrift 1973. Together they form a case study on ownership conditions in Levanto 1787–1973.

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"The surface of every country is like a palimpsest which has been written over again and again in different centuries. How it has come to be what it is cannot be told without much patient effort".

(Archibald Geikie: *Landscape and Imagination*. 1893).

Introduction

In an earlier paper the authors have studied the changes of number and ownership of the farms in the village of Levanto in Southern Finland from the reallocation in 1787 to the completion in 1916 of the at that time still unfinished reallocation (Kampp and Rikkinen 1973, in the following called KR 73). In the said paper we also tried to link the study of the development of Levanto with other studies in this field made in Finland, Denmark and other countries.

In the present paper the study has been continued covering the period 1917–1973. Our central goal has been more exactly to examine the size and number of farms, landownership, and land use. This has been done partly by looking at the village as a whole and partly by looking at the development of a single farm assuming that the micro-level analysis would bring details which the macro-analysis based on a very large statistical material cannot give. The trends to be seen in this single village we have tried to link with the general trends on a national and internordic level.

Number and size of holdings in Levanto

The study of a small region makes a more comprehensive picture of the whole, and the better control of the sources which is possible ensures accurate details.

Up till 1916 the 8 original farms in Levanto were divided into 14 farms and 48 smallholdings (KR 73, fig. 11). Part of the smallholdings are so-called *torp* (ibid. p. 27), most of them belonging to farm B (KR 73, fig. 11). In Levanto they were made independent mostly in 1927 by the new law of 31/12 1926, § 3.

The number of plots per farm was between 1 and 10 (table 1 and KR 73 fig. 16, which is nearly identical with fig. 1 of this paper). Fig. 1 has been our starting point for the further study of this village.

From the land register and from land division maps with their explanations (AULM) it has been possible to get data (table 1), showing how many times each of the 14 farms has been divided during the period 1917–1973. It can be seen that in smaller farms fewer divisions have taken place whereas the large farms have been divided many times. In practice however this means in most cases that small pieces of land have been sold. As a result the average size of farms has declined and no really big farms are left.

It must be noted that it is possible for one farmer to own many plots of land belonging under different register numbers. This means that the two last columns in table 1 may not indicate the whole property of the farmer.

Most of the 48 smallholdings were already in 1917 quite small. Nevertheless about 1/4 of these have been further divided during the period 1917–1973. Thus on the whole the size has strongly declined.

In the following the results of a detailed study of a single farm (A_1) is presented.

A farm in Levanto

Each district and each individual farm is unique, and the difficulties in comparing regional agriculture at an international level are therefore understandable.

The authors have chosen to concentrate on a farm which has been in the possession of the ancestors of the present owner since the 17th century. In the enumeration of the farms and on the reallocation map, issued June 1787, this farm was registered as number 2¹ (KR 73, table 1).

The model of fig. 11 in KR 73 has been used for fig. 2 showing the splitting up of the farm during the period 1917–1973. The size of the circles indicates the areas of

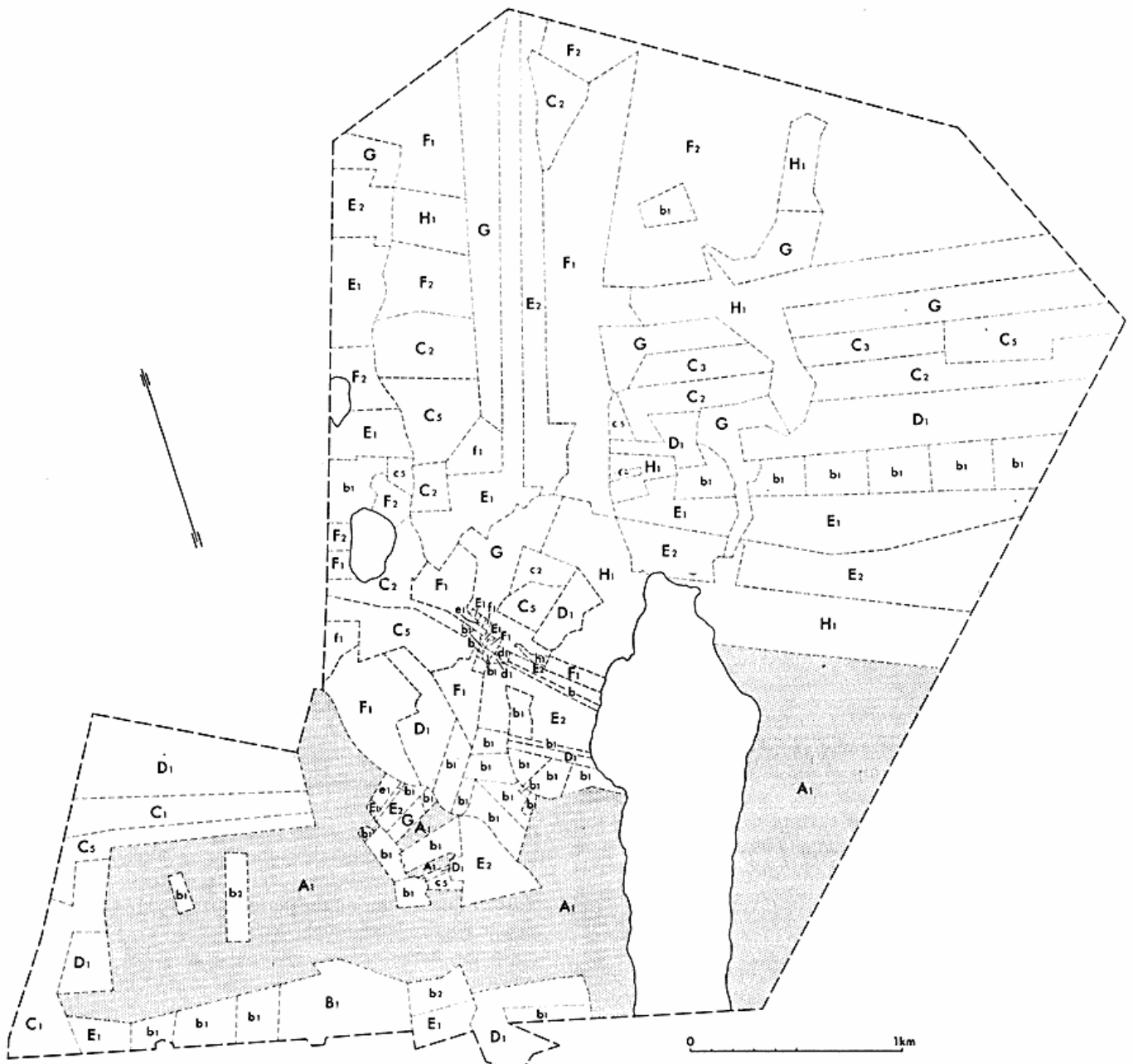


Fig. 1. Landownership in Levanto after completion of reallocation in 1916 (ANBS B30 5/76-102). Farms are marked with letters A₁-H₁ and "small farms" with letters a₁-h₁. Shaded farm (A₁) is studied more detailed in this paper.
 Fig. 1. Ejendomsforholdene i Levanto efter fuldført udskiftning i 1916. A₁-H₁: de 8 gårde, a₁-h₁: de tilhørende småbrug. A₁ er studeret nærmere i denne afhandling.

arable land of the holdings according to the land register of the year in question; the forest areas are not included.

The diagram of the farm shows clearly two periods: The first one, 1917-1962, was a quiet period as to subdivision; during the whole period it was owned by Yrjö Mela and after his death by his family. The two first di-

visions took place in accordance with the new torpare law (1918, § 34). The second subdivision in the period took place 1922 when a lot of 0.8 hectares was parcelled out as seen in fig. 2. The area of the circles are correspondingly reduced every time a small piece has been taken away, or they may increase by reclamation.

Table 1.

Some data of farms in Levanto 1917-1973 (AULM Land register).

Sign of the farm in 1917	Name of the farm	Size of the farm in 1917		Number of plots in 1917	Number of farm divisions 1917-1973	Size of largest farm in 1973	
		Arable land, ha	Forest ha			Arable land, ha	Forest ha
A ₁	Iso-Jaakkola	78,6	270,9	4	44	21,6	76,5
B ₁	Vähä-Jaakkola	9,3	19,1	1	3	7,0	11,2
C ₁	Kangassilta	2,3	14,9	1	1	11,9	16,9
C ₂	Juha-Tupala	28,3	69,7	6	6	7,6	9,0
C ₃	Vuorimaa	6,9	18,6	2	0	6,9	18,6
C ₄	Eskola	4,3	19,3	1	0	4,3	19,3
C ₅	Yli-Tupala	24,8	56,1	5	1	22,1	52,0
D ₁	Vähätupala	28,4	110,2	9	15	9,6	12,1
E ₁	Yli-Simola	32,5	101,8	10	6	24,2	91,7
E ₂	Ali-Simola	33,7	102,8	8	9	18,1	48,6
F ₁	Eerola	25,3	111,6	8	36	7,8	9,0
F ₂	Simola	30,8	164,9	5	21	12,2	41,7
G	Yla-Heikkilä	46,5	107,1	9	3	37,4	83,4
H ₁	Ala-Heikkilä	34,1	129,1	6	8	14,4	44,1

The signs of the farms are identical with those of fig. 1.

From 1929 the following figures are known:

fallow	oats	barley	potatoes	fodder	grass
4 ha	30 ha	2 ha	1.5 ha	roots	for hay
				1.5 ha	45 ha

There were 8 horses, 40 cows, 4 pigs, 20 sheep and 30 chickens. The main income was from sale of milk and hay for Helsinki (Suomen Maatilat 1, 1931, sp. 672).

In 1957 three lots were parcelled out. Lots marked 2⁶⁵ and 2⁶⁶ were some time owned by Karelian refugees. Later Jorma Mela, son of Yrjö Mela, took over these units.

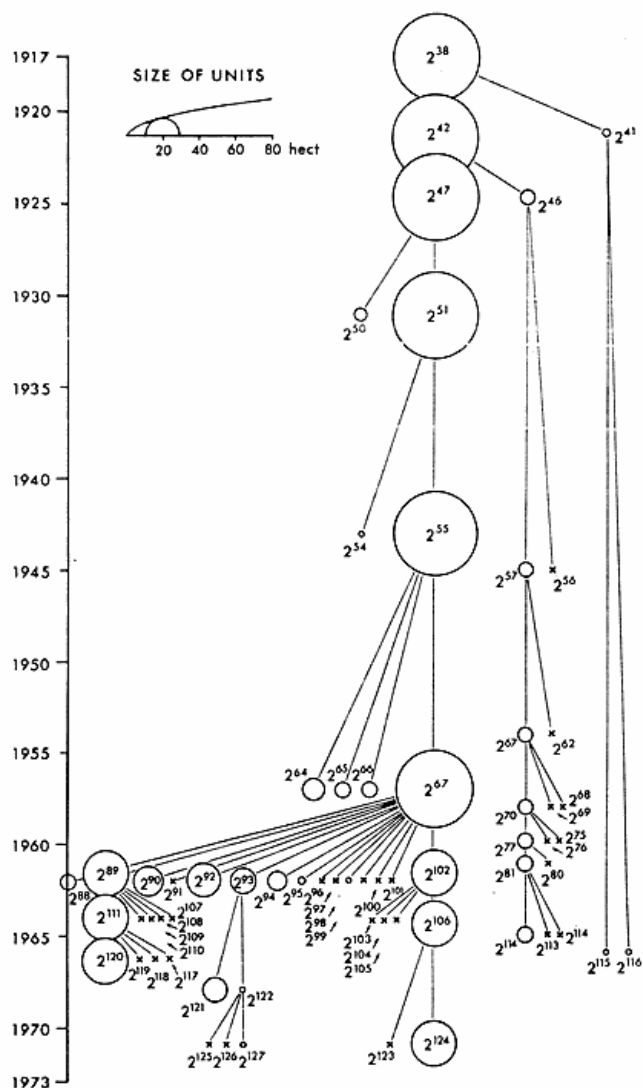
According to the Land Register the farm was divided in 1962 between several relatives; in practice this happened perhaps earlier but was not registered until 1962. Two relatively large farms were formed, Jorma Mela got the farm with the building now called Eerola, another one of nearly the same size was taken over by his brother Jouko Mela (2⁸⁹). At the same time many very small lots were formed. The total result was 15 properties of highly different size.

And even later there has been a splitting-up activity, though mostly forest lots for summer cottages.

Jouko Mela is still owning his farm, and Jorma Mela's farm was after his death in 1964 taken over by Timo Mela. Recently a small lot was sold to the sister of Timo Mela.

Fig. 3 indicates ownership conditions of the Iso-Jaakkola (A₁, 1917) in 1973. The register numbers are the same as in fig. 2.

Some general characteristics of the development are 1) torpare stage, 2) refugees' holdings which are not as common here as in some other regions of Finland, 3) small lots for relatives, very common in Levanto as in the whole of Finland, especially in the commuting zones of



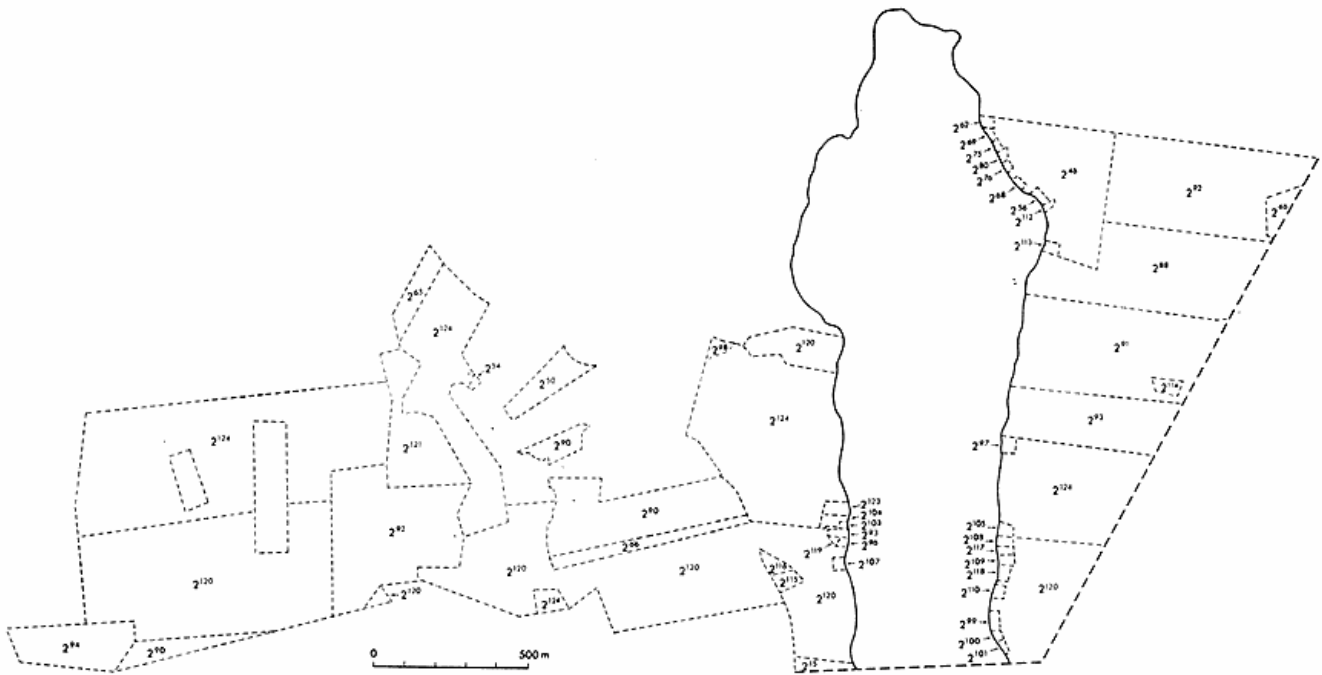


Fig. 3. Boundaries and register numbers of the original area of Iso-Jaakkola (A_1 in fig. 1) in the year 1973. The forest areas are included.

Fig. 3. Grænser og registernumre 1973 for udstykningerne fra det oprindelige areal af A_1 inklusive skovarealerne.

1969. Later on he has kindly sent to Denmark land use maps for 1970–1973 (fig. 4). The fixed crop rotation has been replaced by free cultivation. Fig. 4 demonstrates that during these years in several fields the same crops are grown for two years in succession. The choice of crops may be influenced by the fact that the owner has his permanent address in Helsinki; he is nevertheless working the farm without hired labour. The livestock was given up in 1959. This is however not an exception, as there is a marked tendency towards specialization with grain cultivation in the south and dairy farming in the north of the country (Fogelberg 1965).

The present acreage is 29.60 hectares of arable land and 51.63 hectares of forest, a comparatively large holding considering that the average size of Finnish farms is 9.3 hectares of arable land (1965) and the average size of forest areas is 35 hectares (Elo 1972).

Comparison with Finland and Norden

The agriculture of Norden has undergone a similar development as the rest of North West Europe: Until towards the middle of this century there was a steady growth of number of holdings. This tendency was then reversed. A continual reduction of the number of farms and holdings sets in with the purpose of obtaining through a concentration of the holdings an acceptable rentability within the frames of the family holding. The mechanisation has

furthered the decrease of the employment, farm hands have nearly disappeared. The farms which have pulled through most successfully are those where it has been possible to specialize.

Finland has after World War II experienced a period of

Table 2.

	Finland	Denmark	Norway	Sweden
Average size of holdings 1968				
Arable land	9.3 ha	19.6 ha	6.1 ha	17.5 ha
Forest	35	-	15	32
Arable land and gardens, 1000 ha				
1962	2698	2764	838	(1961) 3342
1972	2671	2655	795	3031
Number of holdings with more than 2 ha				
	261.750	184.518	143.433	282.187
	(1950)	(1951)	(1949)	(1951)
"	263.684	130.337	105.558	143.943
	(1969)	(1972)	(1972)	(1972)
Holdings in percentages	(1969)	(1972)	(1972)	(1972)
2-5 ha	28.5	8.2	41.8	19.6
5-10	37.2	20.7	35.0	25.5
10-15	17.9	17.5	17.1	24.6
15-20	7.9	13.5		
20-30	5.5	18.5	6.1	12.2
30-50	2.3	14.5		10.4
50-100	0.6	5.8		5.8
>100	0.1	1.3		1.9

(Nordiska Rådet 1974)

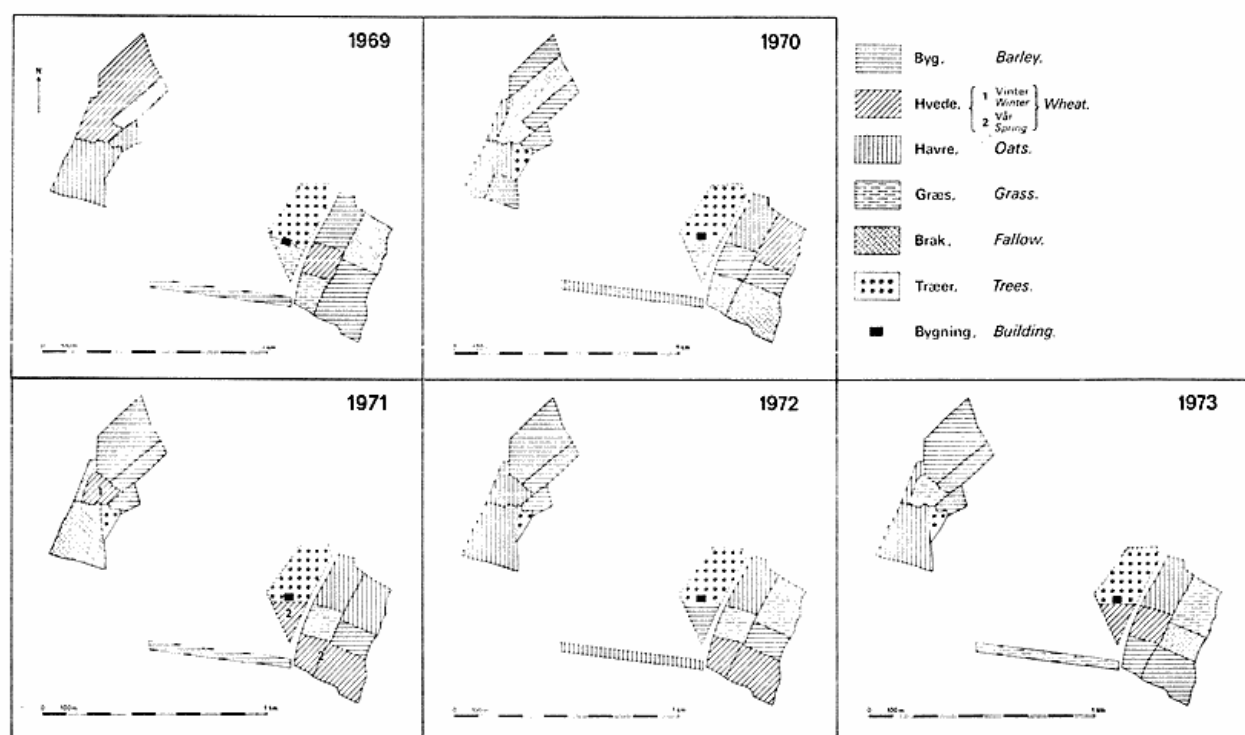


Fig. 4. Land use maps of the farm. (Signatures according to B. Hauskov et al. 1973).
Fig. 4. Gårdens dyrkningsmonster 1969–1973 inkl.

reclamation as intensive as ever seen in the history of Europe. The purpose was to obtain land for the 420 000 families from Karelia which Finland had lost.

But already before the war Finland had a demographic pressure on the agricultural districts because of the high net reproduction rate and the late start of the industrial revolution (Alexandersson 1972).

Thus the number of holdings were greatly increasing in Finland at a time when the development in other countries had already begun to move in the opposite direction; the average size was still decreasing till 1960 though the total area was increasing until 1970 (Elo 1972).

The Storskifte had to a large extent been finished in 1916, and the later administration of divisions is called Nyskifte. The average number of lots per holding decreased from 6.7 in 1918 to 2.7 in 1971 and the distance from the buildings decreased at the same time essentially.

The structure of size groups in Finnish agriculture has to a large extent been influenced by legislation. When Finland had become an independent country, Torparelag 135/18 gave the torpare the right of being a freeholder; lex Kallio 129/22 gave possibilities of setting up smallholdings intending to secure land for the landless agricultural workers; the colonisation law 332/36 increased the number of independent landowners and supported them inter alia by permitting supplementary allotments; this law was especially important for North Finland.

Snabbkolonisationslagen 346/40 supplied State land and expropriated land for the refugees, the law 396/45 gave in the same way land to the ex-soldiers and refugees (45 000 new smallholdings). A premium was given for reclamation according to this law and to 353/58 which especially aimed at a colonisation towards the north. From the year 1967 a premium for reclamation is no longer awarded.

Since 1916 100 000 hectares have been reclaimed and 1918–1968 133 000 new smallholdings were established.

The law 216/69 aimed to increase the farm size, and also 548/71 deals with supplementary allotments (Elo 1972).

Especially in southern Finland the tendency is towards fewer and bigger holdings (Jaatinen 1968).

But the development is still slow (Elo 1972), and Finland is a country of smallholders.

Denmark. In KR 73 the Danish smallholder act of 1899 was mentioned and that the aim quickly became an independent farm large enough to keep a family, also that from the year 1909 loans for buying additional allotments were granted by the State.

In 1919 new laws were passed with the same intention, namely to create a large number of smallholdings. This time, however, the land was owned by the State and could be rented by the smallholders. The land available



Fig. 5. Surface drainage is still common in Finland because of the sub-soil conditions. The picture is from Levanto 1969. (Aa. H.K.).

Fig. 5. Overfladedræning er stadig almindelig i Finland, hvor klippegrunden ligger højt. Billedet er fra Levanto 1969 (Aa. H.K. fot.).

for this purpose was glebe and other areas owned by the State.

From 1900 to 1950 30 000 State smallholdings were established. The State-subsidised holdings meant a social reorganisation and fitted well into the economic development where the intensively operated farm was advantageous.

From 1940 the area of arable land decreased.

Towards the middle of the 20th century the parcelling out movement was followed by the opposite trend favouring larger holdings which had better possibilities of adapting to modern methods of farming through increased mechanisation and to the changing post war market conditions. Parcelling out gradually came to a halt, amalgamations were finally legalised in 1962, and now the number of farms is being reduced with accelerating speed. Since 1960 the number of holdings has been diminished by 1/3; 2/3 of the farms have an area covering 10–50 hectares. It has become common for a landowner to buy or rent the land of a neighbour who then only uses the buildings for residence. This has led to a disturbing tendency towards scattered farm land, perhaps one holding being owned and another holding being leased by the same farmer (Kampp 1959, 1971 and 1972).

Sweden. The development in Sweden after World War II has been in sharp contrast to that of the first decades of the 20th century. In order to encourage mechanisation and to create farms of an economic size, there has been a policy since 1947 whereby the small farms are to be reduced in number by being amalgamated in order to get larger farms which could be economically cultivated without paid help at the same time being large enough to secure a family its livelihood.

This change of structure, which had already begun before 1947 owing to the continuing depopulation of the

agricultural districts has been actively hastened. In the 1940s only smallholdings were abandoned; since then many small farms of 5–20 hectares have been absorbed and their share of the arable land has been decreasing.

There is no constraint on the owners, but as soon as a small farm is put up for sale, it is decided whether it may continue as a self-sufficient unit or not (Bergsten 1968). Of all farms above 2 ha in the country about 50 % had disappeared between 1950 and 1972. The total rotation area has been diminished by some 10 % 1961–1972 (Nordiska Rådet 1974).

Norway is a country of very small farm holdings; only one farm in four has a cultivated area of more than 10 hectares (Nordiska Rådet 1974).

In the 20th century the development till 1917 was characterized by a large increase in the number of holdings (Ahlmann 1943, Sømme 1954). Also Norway has thus had its colonisation period. 1921–1940 16 000 State subsidised holdings were established, especially in northern Norway. But after 1940 few holdings have been set up, the development has been reversed, reclaimed areas being added to already existing holdings.

Right up to the 1950s the number of holdings was stagnating even if the figures let one guess that an alteration was coming, a change which manifested itself as an accelerating movement during the 1960s, when the number of holdings decreased and their average area increased, especially among the smallest size groups (Elo 1972).

The development in Norden has thus been uniform, even if it has started at different times in the various countries.

RESUME

»Farms in a Finnish Village 1787–1916« (Geogr. Tidsskr. 1973) behandlede udviklingen i en finsk landsby ca. 70 km NØ for Helsinki. Nærværende afhandling fortsætter denne undersøgelse op til 1973. En af landsbyens gårde behandles mere detaljeret.

I Sydfinland var tovangsbruget almindeligt i 1700-tallet; bønderne havde som i Danmark fælles arbejdstid for pløjning, såning og høst af ensartede afgrøder.

Arronderingen af de udskiftede ejendomme var ikke særlig ideel sammenlignet med danske forhold, idet hver gård fik 8–16 lodder + ret til udnyttelse af en del fælleslodder, der i 1844 så vidt muligt blev udskiftet til gårde, der grænsede op til dem; antallet af lodder blev kun forøget på 4 af gårdene.

Efterhånden blev det tilladt at udstykke gårdene, og i 1916 var der ialt 14 gårde og 48 småbrug. 1914–16 var der gennem rationalisering sket en nedskæring i antallet af lodder pr. ejendom.

Tabel 1 viser, hvor mange gange hver af de 14 gårde har solgt lodder fra i perioden 1917–1973; de fleste småbrug var allerede i 1917 ret små, men 1/4 af dem blev senere yderligere delt.

Udstykningerne fra gården A₁ fremgår af fig. 2, hvor cirk-

lernes størrelse er proportional med agerarealerne. Gården er i tidens løb blevet stærkt delt, omend ikke så stærkt, som det ved første øjekast fremgår af fig. 3, idet en bonde stadig kan eje flere adskilte lodder.

Udstykningen af denne gård er et karakteristisk finsk eksempel, idet der dels er udstykket til torpare, der hørte under en bestemt gård, til flygtninge fra Karelen, til slægtninge og endelig til fremtidige sommerhusejere.

Finland er senere end de andre nordiske lande begyndt at bevæge sig mod den fase i landbrugsudviklingen, hvor antallet af landejendomme mindskes.

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