

T. Brown, The effect of enclosure upon population, 1794

(T. Brown, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Derby*, 1794, p. 35 in A. Aspinall and E. Anthony Smith, eds., *English Historical Documents, XI, 1783-1832*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1959, pp. 476.)

Those who have urged the impolicy of inclosures, from the idea that they depopulate, must have taken tip the matter on very superficial grounds. Ask any man if the planting, preserving, and rearing of hedges is not attended with much expense; and if, even after they are reared, whether the cutting and scouring, and keeping them up, does not require much attention and increase of labour? The dressing and keeping an inclosed field in a proper state of cultivation and improvement, is certainly equal to what is done in the common fields. In a word, I think no man will contend for a moment, that to cultivate and improve land after it is inclosed, requires less labour than it did in the common field state; nor that men will do more labour in a day than was formerly done. If my position be right, it will follow, that the number of hands employed cannot be diminished. I know there are places where common arable fields have been inclosed, laid down in pasture, and neglected; less ploughing done, and perhaps fewer labourers employed, after the enclosure; but this very rarely happens, for wherever enclosures are turned to the most advantage, I will contend they require an increase of capital, attention, and labour; and consequently that the number of labouring hands are not diminished. So far as any experience goes, enclosure in the first instance requires an increase of capital to be employed in agriculture; this capital renders the product of the land more abundant, and this abundance requires more hands to be employed. By the facility with which abundant produce is managed on inclosed lands, the additional capital employed makes its returns, so that there are more hands required, and more produce carried to market.