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PROCEEDINGS OF THE
SEVENTH
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS





STRESA

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SEVENTH
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS

HELD AT
VILLA DELLE AZALEE
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PREFACE

THE Editor has given me the opportunity once again to preface this volume of the *Proceedings* with a word of thanks to all who helped to make a success of the Seventh International Conference of Agricultural Economists which was held at Stresa, Italy, from August 21-7, 1949.

The Conference thanks the Italian Government for its support and H.E. Signor Segni, Minister of Agriculture, who personally conveyed the greetings of his Government. The Conference was also indebted to Signor Ernesto Pavlovich, Prefetto di Novarro, who in addition to placing many of the services of the Province at our disposal also attended our opening and closing sessions; and to the Mayor of Stresa for the great personal interest he took in our welfare and for making us his guests at a reception given by the city.

In organizing a conference such as ours a very great burden is bound to fall on those of our members who reside in the country where we are meeting. Not only do they have to attend to the innumerable details of securing a meeting-place, of finding a suitable hall, of installing interpreting equipment, and so forth, and of solving the complicated domestic problems of housing and feeding some hundreds of people from all parts of the world, but they have also the task of upholding the standard set in preceding conferences. In always refusing to meet in a big city or to court expensive official receptions, and in choosing rural or university surroundings, the Conference has tried to aim at a combination of simplicity with an easy yet efficient informality. The Conference has set a precedent in this respect which is not easy to interpret and which creates a special problem for those who, as in this case, were our hosts for the first time. For this task of interpretation, and for setting up the Italian organization for the Conference at Stresa, we owe our deepest thanks to Senator G. Medici, whose opening address on the first main subject of our programme started off our discussion on the right note of complete frankness and yet of friendly informality.

In November 1948, an Italian Organizing Committee was formed with Professor Brizi as Chairman. The Committee consisted of Dr. Facca, Turin; Dr. Orlando, Rome; Professor Pagani, Milan; Professor Tofani, Florence; Dr. Vanzetti, Verona; and Dr. Visocchi, Florence. It was responsible for the general plan, for the laying out

of the available funds to make it possible for agricultural economists—who are not rich—to enjoy the hospitality of Stresa and to take part in the Italian tours at a reasonable cost.

For the infinite detail of arrangements which must be left to be carried out in the three or four days before and during the week of the Conference, the infinite pains taken to equip the Villa delle Azalee, for the fitting of several hundred human pieces into a jig-saw puzzle of hotel accommodation, for arranging for the excursions and the marshalling of members to these events, together with innumerable other duties involved in trying to meet all the individual needs of two hundred people from twenty-four national groups, the Conference owes a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Facca, Dr. Orlando, and Dr. Virone. In their service to the Conference they were tireless and continuously resourceful.

The Conference made very heavy demands on its staff of assistants, whose services were lent to us from Rome, Novarro, Paris, Oxford, Dartington, and elsewhere. The secretarial staff answered inquiries and typed notices, belated papers, and the recorded speeches of a full week's discussion; the interpreters, who literally sweated in their boxes to provide us with simultaneous translations, and the engineers who tended continuously the electrical equipment for translating and recording. These services, exacting and knowing no prescribed hours, were given with great willingness and good humour.

During the week the members of the Conference took part in three excursions: a steamer trip on Lake Maggiore, which included tea on the Isola Bella and an escorted tour of the Palazzo Borromeo as the guests of Prince Borromeo, who greeted the party; a trip to the Albergo Panorama and the Mottarone, which had unfortunately to be curtailed because of mist; and a visit to the famous horse-breeding farm of Tescio-Incisa, as the guest of its owners, Signors Tescio and Incisa. It is a great pleasure to recall these interesting and enjoyable excursions by putting on record our appreciation to Prince Borromeo, Signors Tescio and Incisa, and to the staffs of the steam-boat and mountain-railway companies.

A feature of our Conferences which has become quite indispensable to those who like to get a first-hand contact with farming life and technique in unfamiliar lands is the tour which precedes and follows the week of meetings. The first of these in point of time left London by bus on the morning of Tuesday, August 16, and proceeded by Dover and Dunkirk to Belgium, France, and Switzerland, to arrive at Stresa on Sunday, the 21st. Following the Conference the return

journey was made, after various visits in Italy via Venice and Genoa, by the Riviera, and so to Paris and London. In parts adventurous, tiring because of the number of visits which had to be crowded into so short a time, the tour will remain a treasured memory for the eighty persons who took part. The second tour enjoyed well-arranged and not-too-hurried visits to peasant farms, packing-stations, factories, and nursery gardens, but managed to fit in some sight-seeing among the ancient architectural and artistic treasures of Lucca, Florence, Sienna, and Rome. The long list of thanks due for the arrangements and hospitality on both tours is a formidable one, and would take up too much space here. But mention must be made of those who bore the responsibility within each of the countries through which the tour passed—G. Baptist and A. Verkinderen in Belgium; R. Moreau in France; A. Hurni in Switzerland; C. Vanzetti, E. Virone, and G. Orlando in Italy. The whole of this formidable undertaking was organized by the Secretary, Mr. John R. Currie. Those who took part in the trip had a full realization of the heavy demands he made on himself for this one item of the Conference arrangements alone in the midst of his many other Conference duties, and will long remember his 'All aboard'.

Behind the work of our Italian hosts in making the local arrangements lies, of course, the burden of general organization and financial provision which falls also to the Secretary and his staff at Dartington. The recording and editing of the *Proceedings* have again been the work of J. P. Maxton and the staff of the Institute of Agrarian Affairs.

The papers and discussion which are presented in this volume are the result of a week's serious deliberation. There were no formal resolutions to record. There was no attempt to arrive at 'agreement' or 'agreed solutions'. There was instead a determined effort to give ear to one another's points of view and to understand—not to disguise and obscure—differences of conditions, differences of meaning, and differences of opinion and of aspirations. In this the Conference was eminently successful in so far as it could eliminate in so short a space of time the barriers to knowledge and understanding accumulated over centuries, and in the war years by the isolation of some nations. To the reader we can pass on the words of the recorded speeches, feeling certain that they will further an international understanding of agrarian affairs, and, but not so easily, the atmosphere of goodwill and frank comradeship in which the earnest discussions took place, and the stimulation of mind and emotion and of friendship which members carried away with them.

At a meeting of the Council, held during the Conference at Stresa, it was decided to hold the Eighth International Conference of Agricultural Economists in 1952 in the U.S.A., at a place to be recommended by the American members of Council.

L. K. ELMHIRST

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