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### III

#### CONFERENCE ORGANISATION AND ARRANGEMENTS—A REVIEW

“Members are amazed with justice at the efficiency and magnitude of the organisation put on by our hosts. They combine it with unflinching courtesy and kindness” observed the Editor of the ‘Cow-Bell’, the daily bulletin which was being published during the period of the Conference. The Editor voiced the feelings of a large number of foreign dignitaries who assembled at Mysore from 24th August to 3rd September, 1958 for the 10th Session of the International Conference of Agricultural Economists which was being held in India and Asia for the first time since the inception of the organisation in 1929. The agricultural economists from all over the world gathered in Mysore, a garden city of India with one of the picturesque surroundings in the Indian Union. This International Organisation has so far concerned itself mainly with the study of problems of industrially advanced and developed countries and this year they decided to meet in this Asian country as social scientists for studying the various problems and also to share the findings of their experience and research with their fellow colleagues.

After the International Conference authorities chose India as the venue of the 10th Session of the International Conference of Agricultural Economists, the search for a suitable venue in India with a picturesque and rural setting started in right earnest. The President of the Conference, Mr. L. K. Elmhirst, visited India in October 1957 and went round different places in India and ultimately selected Mysore as the place for this international gathering.

#### *The Preparatory Committee*

Before that, it was decided to form an All-India Preparatory Committee for the preparation and conduct of this Conference. Accordingly, the Preparatory Committee was constituted in July 1957—a Committee representative of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of India, the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, the Reserve Bank of India and the Agricultural Economics Section of the University of Bombay, with Shri Manilal B. Nanavati as the Chairman and Dr. B. K. Madan, Prof. D. G. Karve, Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao, Dr. S. R. Sen, Prof. M. L. Dantwala and Shri V. M. Jakhade as members. Dr. M. B. Desai was elected the Member-Secretary of this Committee. This Committee held nearly 11 meetings at various places from time to time to lay down and guide the general policies regarding the preparation and conduct of this Conference. The constitution of this Committee underwent slight changes, as the work progressed, according to the exigencies of the situation, and Shri P. V. R. Rao, Chief Secretary to the Government of Mysore, joined the Committee as its member. Dr. K. S. Rao was also co-opted as its member. The Committee approached the Government of Mysore for active association and co-operation to which it responded readily and appointed the Divisional Commissioner of Mysore as the Liaison Officer of the Government of Mysore for the purpose of this Conference, in May 1958.

A difficult task faced the Preparatory Committee at Mysore. To choose a suitable hall or a building for such a gathering was a job by itself in the city of Mysore. After considerable inquiry of suitable places, the choice finally fell on

the Town Hall for the inauguration of the Conference and the subsequent cultural programmes during the Conference and Lalitha Mahal, a magnificent palatial building, as the venue of the business sessions of the Conference. The City Municipal Council of Mysore used this occasion to renovate and decorate the Rangacharlu Town Hall in the best of Indian traditions, for the inaugural ceremony as well as the subsequent cultural programmes.

In the middle of May, at the instance of the Preparatory Committee, a camp organisation at Mysore was started for grappling with the details of the arrangements with regard to accommodation, catering, transport, other facilities necessary at the venue of the Conference at Lalitha Mahal, like the arrangements for the simultaneous translation equipment, postal and telegraphic facilities, banking facilities, various offices for the Travel Agents, Air-India International, etc., arranging for local excursions, including game sanctuaries in the Mysore and Madras States, tea and coffee plantations and many other things. The Indian Society of Agricultural Economics and the section of the Directorate of Economics and Statistics in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture converted themselves into Conference Offices respectively at Bombay and Delhi. The first task after getting into Mysore was to build up contacts not only with the different departments and officers of the Government of Mysore who were to be directly associated with this Conference but also with the people of Mysore. With their co-operation, the work commenced and all efforts succeeded with their goodwill, which sustained us throughout, whenever and wherever we went, and an organisation with all Wings working in co-ordination and unison was evolved for the Conference.

### *Accommodation*

The Government of Mysore appointed Mr. P. S. Watsa as Accommodation and Catering Officer to help the Conference organisation. As has been mentioned, housing the delegates was our problem No. 1. The Government of Mysore placed at the disposal of the Conference organisation, their Guest Houses like the Government House, Lalitha Mahal, Ridge House, Chamundi House, etc. The State-owned hotel, Metropole and Krishnarajsagar Hotel at Brindavan Gardens were requisitioned for the purpose. The palace authorities at Mysore lent one of their mansions "Kismut" to the Conference, the University of Mysore their Vice-Chancellor's quarters, Mr. Bora Basaviah his spacious Guest House and the Church authorities their Bishop's House. In addition to that, other hotels—Green's, Ritz, Dasaprakasa, etc., were also acquired. Thus every available accommodation in Mysore was pooled for the purpose. The Conference authorities had to informally help in arranging accommodation for officers and members of the staff of various organisations like the Chicago Radio and Telephone Co., Air-India International, All-India Tea Board, All-India Coffee Board, etc., as well as a fairly good number of artistes who came from the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, for staging a programme of dance and music. Thanks to the co-operation of the various proprietors of the hotels, organisers could cope up with the magnitude of such a problem to the satisfaction of all. In addition to this, some tents were pitched in the lawns of the Government House and the other P. W. D. Guest Houses in the vicinity at Nanjangud and Srirangapatam were also reserved. But securing these places was just a beginning of work. It was equally a job to get them repaired, to see them in good condition including checking up

their various fittings. All these minutest details were properly looked after. Keeping the accommodation ready was one thing and allocation of the same to various members was another embarrassing task which faced the Preparatory Committee of the Conference, since the accommodation available in Mysore was not of the uniform nature and varied from the best that was at Lalitha Mahal and Krishnarajsagar to the moderate available at Green's and Dasaprakasa with the result that the standard of comforts and convenience varied from one place to another.

### *Catering Arrangements*

It was thought proper to have uniform catering arrangements so that delegates can informally meet and promote personal contacts among members. Therefore, catering arrangements were made at the Government House. It was so arranged that members take their breakfast at their respective residences and lunch and dinner at Government House except on occasions of special invitations. There was also a problem of continuous water supply to all these places which the municipal authorities did meet in addition to their duties of keeping the city clean and tidy. Apart from the various requirements for catering to the needs of so many, persons in charge attended to the minutest details and saw to it that the food served was wholesome and well prepared.

### *Inaugural Function*

The Prime Minister Shri Jawaharlal Nehru had graciously agreed to come to Mysore on the occasion and inaugurate the Conference. He arrived in Mysore on the morning of the 24th August by plane and joined the delegates to lunch at Government House. In the afternoon, the Prime Minister declared the Conference open by ringing the Cow-Bell, the symbol of the Conference. It was a colourful cosmopolitan gathering, and the whole inaugural ceremony passed off exceedingly well. This gave the Prime Minister an occasion to meet the members at an informal gathering which was very highly appreciated. At the inaugural ceremony besides the members of the Conference, some prominent citizens from the city were invited. The most interesting feature of this function was the inaugural address of the Prime Minister of India and the opening speech of Mr. Elmhirst, the President of the Conference. The Prime Minister dwelt at length on the problems facing India at this time and the President dwelt on the process of agricultural developments in general.

The inaugural function was followed by the Garden Party by His Highness, the Maharaja Sri Jaya Chamaraja Wadiyar Bahadur, the Governor of the State of Mysore. Nearly 1,000 guests were invited. The Party was held at the Lalitha Mahal Palace. This also provided another opportunity to the members to meet the Premier again at another informal function. It was a delightful gathering in the imposing setting of the beautiful palace when a group photo was taken in the Garden which has been printed in this Special Issue of the Journal of the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics. The Prime Minister who had specially come to Mysore from New Delhi returned to the capital the next morning.

*Lalitha Mahal*

After the ceremonial function at Town Hall, the Conference got down to business from the next day and for that the banquetting hall of the Lalitha Mahal was selected. The way to Lalitha Mahal passes through very beautiful avenues and roads and on the side of it lies the famous Chamundi Hills. Thus, the venue of the Conference had a picturesque background. The Conference Hall at Lalitha Mahal was fitted with the headphones and the simultaneous translation equipment in different languages, viz., French, German and English and interpreters' booths were also constructed. Conference Office as well as different offices were also located at Lalitha Mahal and other places. Prof. Roger Dixey who was in charge of editing the verbatim proceedings had his dictaphone equipment there and for which all facilities were provided. In the same building, we had another big hall where a regular bar was running and the All-India Tea Board and the All-India Coffee Board had their counters which served tea and coffee free to the delegates. The Mysore Government Arts and Crafts Emporium put up a stall at Lalitha Mahal which exhibited and sold various pieces of art from Mysore silk sarees to sandalwood and ivory pieces. This was one of the attractions of the Conference specially for ladies accompanying the members. To add to this, the photographers kept the Lalitha Mahal lively with the prints of various functions and tours.

Apart from the routine security arrangements, the volunteers of the Mysore University with their badges were posted at the Conference Hall. The Department of Economics, University of Bombay, and the Reserve Bank also sent their volunteers; some of whom were Ph.D. students of the Bombay University. All of them assisted the Conference office for all sorts of odd jobs—right from collecting money on behalf of the office to interpreting our country to foreign visitors. In Lalitha Mahal, in one of the billiard rooms, stalls were put up where the publications of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture as well as of the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics were on sale. The Bhoodan literature was also on sale in Lalitha Mahal at one of the counters along with the newspaper stalls and the enquiry counter. At the instance of Mr. Joe Ackerman arrangements were made for the Workshop Groups' meetings during the course of the Sessions which were held in the mornings as well as in the afternoons from 25th August to 3rd September 1958, both days inclusive.

*Transport and Other Services*

Many of the delegates arrived in India by chartered planes of Air-India International. From Bangalore, arrangements were made to bring them to Mysore by buses so that they can see the countryside on their way. Transport arrangements were also organised for carrying the delegates from their residences to the venue of the Conference, to the Government House, to other places as well as for carrying them to field trips and for various other purposes daily during the whole period of the Conference. Catering, conservancy and communication are the three essentials of any organisation which need to be attended to with utmost care. Naturally, therefore, an efficient communication service with telephones was also built up. For the convenience of the members, a special post and telegraph office at Lalitha Mahal was opened. The All-India International and the Trade Wings—the Travel Agents, had their offices at Lalitha Mahal. The delegates

were also provided with exchange facilities since the Conference office was accepting payment in Indian currency only. The State Bank of India and the Mysore Bank opened their branches during the period of the Conference at Government House and Lalitha Mahal respectively. The necessary medical facilities were also provided and doctors from the Krishnarajendra Hospital were on attendance as and when required.

### *Local Excursions*

The Preparatory Committee of the Conference was anxious in making the sojourn of the delegates in the country a very pleasant and enjoyable one. It was thought the delegates may be given some idea of the countryside, in and roundabout Mysore and may be shown some places of interest, as well as given some idea of the new developments taking place in the rural life of the people. With this in view, three field trips were planned. The first was a half-day tour on the Mandya side which took the delegates to the Mandya Sugar Factory, Agricultural Research Station and the village level workers' training centre including the Home Science Section of the Gram Sevika Training Centre. The purpose behind this visit was also to give them an idea of the transformation that has come about as a result of the Viswesarayya canal in the social and economic life of the region. The second half-day tour was arranged in Mysore city itself which took them to important and interesting institutions in the city of Mysore like the Palace, Jagan Mohan Palace Art Gallery, Chamarajendra Technical Institute, Central Food Technological Research Institute, Government Silk Factory and Government Sandalwood Oil Factory. The members were taken to the Chamundi Hills and the famous Mysore Nandi on the 24th morning. Two-thirds of the way up this hill is a colossal figure of Nandi, the sacred bull, carved out of a solid rock. In addition to this, a full-day excursion on the Gudalur side was planned on the 30th and 31st of August. The delegates were taken in batches. On the way, they were shown round two villages of Begur and Gundlupet where they were taken round the different cottage industries. These villages gave them some idea of typical Indian villages. They were then taken to the Bandipur and Madhumalai wild life game sanctuaries in Mysore and Madras States respectively. The country amidst which these sanctuaries are situated presents a panorama of spreading hills, valleys and plains with numerous little brooks and ponds. Arrangements were made to take them to these places on elephants and trucks. The forest officers of the respective States had made elaborate arrangements at both the places and the delegates enjoyed this trip immensely. From there, they were taken to Gudalur and from there to different tea and coffee estates through the good offices of the United Planters' Association. They were shown round two groups of plantations—Devarshola and the mango range areas (Aticuna and Carolina Estates).

### *Cultural Programmes*

The different entertainment programmes were also organised on the three days in the Town Hall. The first programme was a concert of classical music arranged on 27th August by the All-India Radio, Bangalore. This programme included sarod recital, violin solo and programmes of rhythmic instruments. The delegates were entertained to classical music. The second programme arranged on the 29th August was a pageant of Indian dances arranged by the dance troupe of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Kala Kendra, Bombay. It was intended to serve as a

contrast to the first one since the emphasis on this programme was more on visual entertainment than vocal which was the case in the former. The folk dances and music enchanted and thrilled the delegates. Apart from the different colourful folk dances which derive their inspiration and sustenance in the unique and peculiar environments of different regions, an idea of the different schools of classical dancing, *viz.*, Kathak, Manipuri and Bharata Natyam, was given to the delegates. The third entertainment programme staged on 2nd September by the Sangeet Natak Academy of Mysore gave an idea of the South Indian dances and art.

### *Social Functions*

This Conference had also its social functions. As reported earlier, on the day of the inauguration, the Prime Minister and the delegates along with a large number of State officials and prominent citizens were invited to an At Home by His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore who is also the Governor of Mysore. Further, a special dinner was arranged in the beautiful surroundings of the Brindavan Gardens at Krishnarajsagar on 26th August by the Government of Mysore. The City Municipal Council of Mysore also entertained the delegates to tea and a programme of dance and music on 1st September. A farewell dinner was arranged again at Brindavan Gardens on behalf of the Preparatory Committee of the Conference. All these social functions provided ample opportunities to delegates to meet and build up contacts. As a number of ladies accompanied the members, a special Reception Committee was appointed for them with Smt. Sheela Irani as Chairman. This Committee kept them company and showed them round the city and the State of Mysore.

A special pamphlet—"Information for Members"—was issued on this occasion which contained all the relevant information regarding the State of Mysore, the Conference programme, the different organisational arrangements including places of residence, telephone numbers, etc., as well as details about the different excursions. On this occasion, leading newspapers of India—"The Times of India," the "Statesman," the "Hindu" and "Deccan Herald"—issued special supplements detailing the nature and activities of this International Organisation as well as the activities of the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, and the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, Bombay.

### *Publications and Souvenir Presents*

During the period of the Conference, many things were presented to the delegates from time to time. As they registered themselves, they were given folders which were specially designed and prepared for the occasion. The Tourist Information Bureau of the Government of India, presented tourist sets to delegates. A special booklet—"Indian Agriculture in Brief" and an "Atlas" prepared by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Souvenir Volume—"Studies in Indian Agricultural Economics"—prepared at the instance of the Preparatory Committee and published by the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics for the occasion were also presented to each of the delegates. The Reserve Bank of India gave their following three publications: (i) Summary of the Rural Credit Survey Report, (ii) General Report of the All-India Rural Credit Survey, 1951-52, (iii) Review of the Co-operative Movement

in India, 1954-56. Farmers' Forum also gave a special issue narrating the activities of their organisation. Many of these publications had an attractive uniformly designed jacket to commemorate and mark the holding of this Conference in India. Through the courtesy of the Planning Commission of the Government of India, a book on "Community Development in India" by Shri V. T. Krishnamachari as well as a copy of the memorandum on "Appraisal and Prospects of the Second Five-Year Plan" were distributed to the delegates. The All-India Tea Board and the All-India Coffee Board presented tea and coffee tins respectively. The presentation of a silver-plated image of the famous Nandi bull on the Chamundi Hills of Mysore created a veritable surprise and came as a fitting climax to all these happy events. It was intended to be a memento and a token of good-will.

#### *All-India Tour*

Immediately after the close of the Conference, the delegates were taken around on a cross-country tour in two air-conditioned trains starting from Mysore on 4th September and terminating at New Delhi on 12th September, 1958. Nearly 178 foreign delegates participated in the tour. The tour covered St. Thomas Church, Shri Kapaleeswar temple (Mylapore) and Mahabalipuram at Madras ; Ajanta and Ellora Caves ; Fatehpur Sikri, Agra Fort, Etamat-ud-dula and Taj Mahal at Agra as well as the Bhakra Nangal. At all these centres, reception committees were formed and the delegates were shown round many different places of interest. As a fitting climax to the All-India tour, a symposium was organised at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi with a view to have an idea of the spontaneous reaction of the delegates after visiting a number of places in the country.

#### *Cow-Bell*

As has been mentioned earlier, a daily bulletin—"Cow-Bell" was being issued during the period of the Conference. It was being edited by Mr. J. O. Jones of U.K. and contained many lively and useful references on the various aspects of the Conference as also on some of the personalities attending the Conference.

#### *Conclusion*

This is a review of the organisational arrangements that were made at the time of the International Conference. Looking back, one has a feeling of pride and satisfaction that the different Wings of the Conference organisation functioned in perfect co-ordination and unison. All are happy that various delegates had a word of appreciation about the organisational set-up and the different services which were provided to them. The incoming President of the International Conference, Mr. Sherman E. Johnson, Department of Agriculture, U.S.A. writes to our President, "You and others of the Preparatory Committee have set a standard in preparation and conduct of the International Conference that will be very difficult to maintain." The different departments and the local officials of the Government of Mysore who were connected with the different Wings of the organisation and who bore the major brunt of the burden also share the credit for the success of the Conference. All have contributed their mite towards the organisation of various activities. But all these harmonious blending of different activities could not have been achieved without the willing and unstinted co-operation of the delegates themselves, who overlooked some minor inconveniences which some of them might have experienced, and helped the organisers to maintain the services running at a very efficient level.