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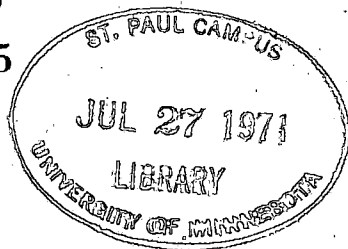
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By HENRY C. TAYLOR

U.S.A.

A STATEMENT AT THE FINAL MEETING OF
THE CONFERENCE

BELOVED Founder-President, Honoured Functioning President and Members of the Association—

The function of the agricultural economist is to throw light on the pathway of the farmer and the agrarian statesman. The purpose of this Association is to broaden the vision and stimulate thinking in carrying out this task.

First, a glance backward and then a look ahead. Just a century ago the first comprehensive treatment of National Agricultural Economics appeared in Germany.¹ In 1929 Leonard Elmhirst and George Warren started what is now the International Association of Agricultural Economists which has grown in scope until at this, the twelfth meeting, seventy countries are represented. This Association has rendered a great service. It has promoted international friendships and stimulated international thinking and put methods of research and teaching of agricultural economics on an ever higher plane. And while this service will ever continue to be important with the oncoming generations of agricultural economists and will continue to serve as a stimulus to the improvement of national agricultural economics, the time has come for the development of an international agricultural economics. In this development the International Association of Agricultural Economists can play an important role.

With the expansion of commercial agriculture in the 116 countries of the world as a basis of higher levels of living, international trade in increasing numbers of agricultural products is assured and more and more of the farmers of the world will find themselves confronted with international competition, as well as competition within their own countries. This means that if the agricultural economists are to throw light on the pathway of these farmers and the agrarian statesmen who represent them in their governments, the agricultural economists must broaden their scope and increase the candle-power of their light

¹ Die 'Nationalökonomik des Ackerbaues und der verwandten Urproduktionen. Ein Hand- und Lesebuch für Staats- und Landwirthe', von Wilhelm Roscher, Stuttgart, 1859.

so that the farmer may have a world-vision of the phases of agriculture which concern him.

To perform this service, much more and much better information will be needed than is now available. A world census of agricultural production, annual statistics of production and forecasts of the yields of the crops and livestock which are now in process of growth, along with adequate statistics of the exports and imports of every country, will be required. The members of this Association, each in his own country, have an important task to perform in creating and stimulating national agencies for collecting this factual material. And this Association, in its triennial meetings, can do much to help its members perform this task.

To bring together and disseminate to all countries the information gathered in each country a central agency is required. Fortunately, such an agency exists. An international agency has existed for sixty years which has had for its purpose this assembling and disseminating of agricultural information to the member nations. The International Institute of Agriculture, created in 1904 by international agreement, carried on for forty years, giving especial attention to providing the member governments with production and marketing information. While this information was inadequate, it was useful. In 1925 that Institute undertook a World Census of Agriculture which was an important beginning, even though the results were inadequate. In 1942 the Institute published a large volume on *World Trade and Agricultural Products*. Those in charge were looking ahead to the day when fact gathering on a world-wide basis of production and demand forecasts would be adequate for the starting of an agricultural outlook service which would include estimates of intentions to plant and intentions to breed, which, with the other information available, would provide the basis for readjusting agricultural production to fit the prospective market conditions.

At the end of World War II the I.I.A. was superseded by the F.A.O. which was brought into existence during the war and was provided with vastly increased financial resources. The F.A.O. can be looked to as the central international agency for assembling and disseminating to the governments of the world all available information regarding agricultural production and distribution. The agricultural extension agencies of the various countries would then have information for providing farmers with a basis for adjusting their production to probable market demands throughout the world.

Dr. Billingsley of the F.A.O., who has been in attendance at this meeting and who is responsible for collecting statistics of exports and imports from all member countries, told me the other day he was unable to obtain reliable export and import statistics from a very high percentage of the countries. He said also that the F.A.O.'s effort to make a world census of agriculture had lacked success in many countries. It is obvious that without the interest and intelligent co-operation on the part of member nations the F.A.O. cannot perform the task of assembling and disseminating the information essential to a clear picture of what is going on in the world of agriculture. In order that the F.A.O. may do this work effectively, it is necessary that each and every country develop its local fact-finding agencies and forward the material to the central agency. Here is where this Association can put its hands to the plough.

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