INCREASING UNDERSTANDING

OF

PUBLIC PROBLEMS AND POLICIES

A Group Study of Four Topics

in the Field of Extension Education

Robert Allerton Park, Monticello, Illinois

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FOREWORD

The agricultural policy resource material presented herewith contains largely the background for the discussions that featured the second national policy conference of state extension economists.

The discussions were led and guided by members of committees that had prepared this material in advance of the conference. The presentations were made to the group as a simulated farm audience, with greatly sustained interest and very active participation in the discussions that followed each committee's formal presentation. Thirty-eight states were represented.

The conference was designed to bring to the participants two important requirements for effective extension work in this difficult field of public affairs. The first was well prepared and carefully screened subject matter - ready for digestion and critical analysis by those in attendance. The second was the technique used by extension discussion leaders in presenting the prepared material to the group. The excellence of meeting both objectives resulted in a highly successful training meeting.

The Farm Foundation, following its policy of close cooperation with the state extension services, provided a portion of the necessary expenses, assisted in stimulating the committees to develop their programs and agreed to make available to all the states the report of the conference.

F. W. Peck, Managing Director
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INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1949 the Farm Foundation invited a group of Extension Directors and agricultural economists from the four major regions of the United States to discuss: (1) the status of educational work among rural groups in the field of public policy and (2) what the Farm Foundation might do to help extension economists prepare themselves to work more effectively in this important field.

In January of 1950 a meeting was held in Chicago attended by agricultural economists from a large portion of the 48 states. We discussed the importance of educational work in the field of public policy, problems in connection with carrying on such work, and had a number of sessions devoted to the discussion of specific questions in the field of public policy. The latter sessions were designed to deal not only with content but presentation.

In the fall of 1950, four regional work conferences were held. The purpose of these conferences was to stimulate interest in and to discuss the problems relating to extension work in public policy in the various states. Extension Directors were invited as well as representative groups of county agents and others interested in the development of the field.

In discussing plans for the present conference our Committee concluded that the greatest need was for carefully prepared subject matter and an opportunity for economists engaged in extension education in public policy to discuss both subject matter and methods of presentation. Four working committees consisting of persons actually engaged in public policy extension work, prepared material and made presentations at the conference, assisted by the Federal Extension Service. The subjects selected for discussion after consultation with the 48 states were as follows:

(1) International Affairs
(2) Inflation
(3) Agricultural Production Policy
(4) Interrelationships of Agriculture and Other Segments of Our National Economy

As to procedure, the equivalent of a full day was devoted to each of these four subjects. The working committee responsible for each subject had complete charge of the program during the time allocated for their presentation.

F. F. Hill, Chairman
National Committee on Agricultural Policy

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