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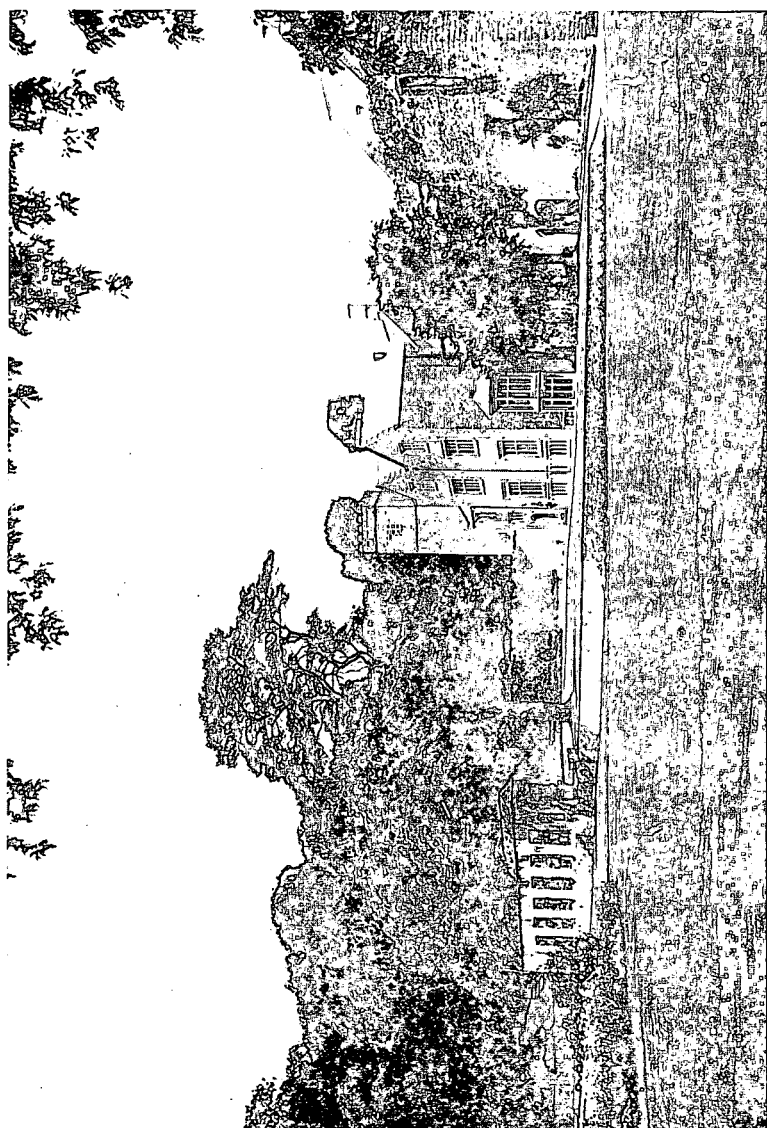
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PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS



DARTINGTON HALL

PROCEEDINGS
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FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
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HELD AT
DARTINGTON HALL
TOTNES, DEVON, ENGLAND
AUGUST 26 TO SEPTEMBER 6, 1929

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FOREWORD

THE first International Conference of Agricultural Economists was held at Dartington Hall, Totnes, Devon, England, August 26 to September 6, 1929. This conference was made possible by the interest and generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Leonard K. Elmhirst, who entertained at Dartington Hall fifty agricultural economists representing twelve different countries.

The plans and program for this conference were formulated by a committee of three consisting of C. S. Orwin of Oxford University, J. R. Currie of Dartington Hall, and C. E. Ladd of Cornell University.

The purpose of the conference was to bring together agricultural economists from many countries to discuss research results and research methods that were of common interest; to discuss national and international problems in the field of agricultural economics; and to promote a more effective and more rapid exchange of agricultural economics information.

As the program developed, it became apparent to everyone that the papers presented were so valuable and the discussions so enlightening that some effort should be made to preserve the proceedings and make them available for future use. An editorial committee consisting of J. S. King of Edinburgh and Leland Spencer of Cornell was appointed to do this. The committee assembled the papers and discussions and about two hundred copies were mimeographed and distributed.

The present volume has been prepared from the mimeographed report by F. F. Hill of Cornell University. Printer's proof was not sent to the various authors, since to do so would have greatly delayed publication. It is hoped that no serious errors have been made.

C. E. LADD

STATEMENT

By L. K. ELMHIRST

DARTINGTON HALL, TOTNES, DEVON, ENGLAND

I SHOULD like to open this conference by offering a hearty welcome to all of you who are gathered here. May, before turning to matters of immediate business, read to you messages from some of those who are unable to be with us.

Mrs. Elmhirst, more perhaps than anyone else, has been instrumental in promoting this conference, and she has asked me to express her great regret at not being able to be with us, and her best wishes for its success.

Mr. Orwin says: "I am writing with the greatest regret and disappointment to tell you that I do not feel able to leave home to attend the conference. . . . I am sure I need not tell you how sorry I am that I shall not now participate in this most interesting meeting. . . . I had hoped up to the last that I should be able to come."

I should like to suggest that the conference send the following telegram to Mr. Orwin:

"The Conference deeply regrets your inability to attend, and would like to express its sympathy with you and best wishes for Mrs. Orwin's recovery."

The Rt. Hon. C. Addison, M.P. writes "Will you please accept my sincere greetings and best wishes for the conference." He hopes he may join us at a later date.

I am afraid I shall have to go back some years to explain to you how I first became connected with agricultural research and with the study of agricultural economics, but I shall try in a few words to tell you how this conference came about. My own study of agriculture dates from a time during the war when, a convalescent from Mesopotamia, I was able to study rural conditions in the United Provinces, with Mr. Sam Higginbottom of Allahabad, and in the Deccan, with Dr. Mann at Poona. Whilst still in the army I was able to take a short agricultural course at the Royal College of Science in Dublin in the spring of 1919. After two years' study at the New York State College of Agriculture at Cornell I returned to India and spent three years working in a rural area in West Bengal. Subsequent visits to the Philippine Islands, China and

Japan left me with a feeling that the different people in different parts of the world doing similar work in similar fields still had very little knowledge of what was being done by fellow-workers in other countries.

When Mrs. Elmhirst and I decided to set up this experiment at Dartington in 1925 in an attempt to find out whether education and research could not be allied with the commercial development of a derelict estate, our hope was that this place might become in time a useful centre for bringing different peoples together for a general exchange of views and experience.

Whilst Dr. Ladd was spending six months with us here last year he was invited to attend the Agricultural Economists' Conference at Oxford, and at his suggestion we invited a few of the members of that Conference down here for a week end to discuss what might be done to bring the workers in different countries into closer touch with one another. In discussing the possibilities of an international meeting for this year, Mr. Orwin emphasized the need for an informal gathering away from the distractions of the great cities in a place where it would be possible for delegates to come to know one another more intimately than is always possible at an official gathering. It was out of such beginnings that the idea of this conference grew.

May I speak for the staff here on the estate for a moment. We are all very happy to think that the estate is now acting host to such a representative international group, and we only hope that you will take the fullest advantage of everything there is here, and for the time being make Dartington your home. The war has left a trail of fear across the world, and has set up barriers of fear between one nation and another, and it has seemed to me that there was no better way of trying to overcome these fears and barriers than gathering you together as a family party rather than as a group of specialists.

LETTER

FROM

SIR HORACE PLUNKETT

THE HORACE PLUNKETT FOUNDATION, 10 DOUGHTY STREET,
LONDON W.C. 1, ENGLAND

August 29, 1929

DEAR ELMHIRST:

Never did I decline an invitation with more genuine regret. The reasons for my absence are purely personal; but the place, the scheme of things rural being there worked out, the joint owners of the Hall and the fellow-workers they have assembled to enjoy their incomparable hospitality, all combined to intensify my disappointment. But there are compensations. The little Foundation which has taken over my life work will be represented by at least one, Mr. Frank J. Prewett, who has knowledge I do not possess and does not have to carry the burden of three score years and fifteen.

My experience, covering half a century and in some ways unique, moves me to express in the fewest words the pith and substance of all I should be able to contribute to the thought of this gathering, which, unless I am dreaming, is destined to be historic. Dartington stands for a solution of the rural problems by facing there and now all its factors. Let me, as my contribution, ask and answer two very pertinent questions: "What is the modern problem of rural life?" "Why can it be most hopefully approached in England?"

As I see things, the outstanding feature of this amazing revolutionary epoch will ever be the application of science at an unprecedented speed to every department of the lives of nations. At the time of what we conveniently and compendiously call the Industrial Revolution, England alone, mainly in virtue of her sea boundary and sea command, possessed the conditions which for long left her free to pursue her spontaneously but half-unconsciously adopted economic polity, with its twin objective—industrial development at home and commercial expansion abroad. Thus began England's commercial supremacy, now threatened, many better thinkers than I believe, by the persistent neglect of those who live and work upon the land.

Now I was born in England of an English mother and there educated. I was brought up in Ireland, whose rural problem was to be my chief concern, but from my earliest days I was under the obsession of England's economic idea. Fortunately, I studied the rural problem chiefly in Ireland, the United States and to some extent in Scandinavia, but I always regarded it as being of English origin. Other civilized countries have seen to it that the rural population shall share in the education, in the organization and in the legislation needed to enable it to surmount the "lag" which normally arises from the slow processes of nature as compared with the ever accelerating response of mechanical development to the underestimated and ill-requited scientific researchers' toil.

For the solution of the problem I have attempted to indicate, the most relevant suggestion I could make is summed up in the advice I am at the moment unable to follow—go to Dartington. Once there, I should have tried, while soaking in ideas, to stress just two main points. First, the problem as England has moulded it is three sided. It is (1) technical or scientific, (2) economic or commercial, and (3) spiritual, moral or social. At President Roosevelt's request, some twenty years ago, for a "slogan" he could use in the advocacy of his "Country Life Policy," I suggested "Better Farming, Better Business, Better Living." He megaphoned it and it has served.

The implications of the formula cannot be elaborated here. They are pretty generally realized, but not so the interdependence of the three sides of his great endeavor to save the countryside from the sprawl of the cities. In some countries all the help the rural community needs is held to be in the sphere of governmental effort—in others, in that of private initiative. The United States, following the most marked economic trend at the moment, is emphasizing distribution—or marketing—as the end and object of agricultural cooperation. Better Farming and Better Business are thus no doubt promoted, but the larger values of cooperation are to some extent missed—just as the rural social worker is apt to over-emphasize Better Living, forgetting the fundamental need for technical efficiency and economy in country as well as in city life.

The second note I should therefore try to strike at the Dartington Conference is that of Team Work. Once the worker on one side of the rural problem automatically feels that he is aiding the

workers on the other two sides, and that they in their work are helping him, the work of all is assured of progressive advancement.

May I not ask you, if the occasion serves, to allow me to let all your guests know why I am so deeply interested in the cause to which Mrs. Elmhirst and you are devoting your full and fruitful lives, and that my absence from the great happenings of this and next week is not due to ignorance of what I miss.

Wishing the Conference the success you both so richly deserve,

I am,

Yours, more sincerely and gratefully than words can say,

HORACE PLUNKETT