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*Agricultural economics*THE SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF ECONOMIC
PROGRESS IN PRESENT-DAY AGRICULTURE

FIRST OPENING PAPER

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A YEAR and a half ago Dr. Joseph S. Davis, the retiring President of the American Statistical Association, proposed the establishment of schools of Social Engineering.¹ He directed our attention to a condition familiar no doubt to many, but lacking definition, namely that during comparatively recent years there had developed a need for economic engineers who combine a knowledge of the principles of economics with training in their application. In referring to the relationship of the present-day farm economist, who is primarily a research man, to the job he is often called upon to perform, Dr. Davis states 'we do not expect a physicist to build a bridge or a biologist to treat cancer. No more should we, if we are primarily economists, political scientists, or sociologists, set out to be social engineers or social doctors.'

A year later, at the annual meeting of the same association, Mr. M. L. Wilson, my colleague of to-day, endorsed the proposal made by Dr. Davis. Perhaps one may be permitted to interject at this point that when two distinguished economists who differ so widely on much of what is being done in their own country find a subject on which they can agree it becomes a matter of great interest.

Why did Dr. Davis refer to the need for Social Engineers, and why has this Conference devoted its opening session to a consideration of the social implications of economic progress in present-day agriculture? Why are some of us who never took a course in sociology thinking and speaking on 'social implications'? To find an answer to this question, and to provide a basis for further discussion, it may be desirable to give some consideration to what has taken place in agriculture over a period of years, and to examine the repercussions of this on agricultural science in general, and our own field in particular. Before doing so, however, it may be well to observe that the use of the term 'social' carries with it no suggestion of any

¹ Statistics and Social Engineering: *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, March 1937, vol. xxxii, no. 197.

particular doctrine. It is used in the manner suggested by Funk and Wagnall's definition in the *New Standard Dictionary* as 'pertaining to society or to the public as an aggregate body'.

The development of America and of other New World countries, during the nineteenth century and since, coincided with, and was encouraged by, the recognition and application of the principle of freedom of enterprise, private initiative, and personal reward. Under this stimulus the early pioneers explored and opened vast areas for agricultural settlement and for other productive occupations. During the early part of this period the opportunity of obtaining freedom from the restraints characteristic of many older settled areas, the chance to worship as one pleased, the pride of possessing a piece of land and of establishing a home, the advantages of education and of participation in the upbuilding of a nation were the dominating incentives that impelled countless thousands to forsake the homes of their youth and to seek opportunity in pioneer regions. Monetary reward, though always a consideration, became a much more important factor in later years. Under such circumstances, and in keeping with the spirit of the times, it is not surprising that men and women were willing to face many hardships and to forgo many of the material comforts and social advantages of older established communities.

The advent of a commercial agriculture and the development of an international trade in farm products brought other problems. Natural advantages in production on the one hand, and the availability of markets which such advantages assured on the other, brought in their wake the necessity of providing transportation and marketing facilities, of establishing grades and inspection services, and of ensuring their acceptance by those who produced the product. Faced with these conditions the governments of all the New World countries turned their attention to the provision of legislation that would encourage low-cost production, high-quality products, and efficient, expeditious transportation and marketing. It is probably a safe assertion that during this period, particularly the last half-century, the governments of these countries passed much more legislation and gave a much greater measure of assistance to farmers than was true of legislatures of the older countries.

Throughout most of this period of commercial development, the tradition of self-help and private initiative still prevailed. Legislation was designed to facilitate this and to establish rules of conduct under which the maximum of effort with the least interference might be assured. And, be it noted, most of this effort was designed to assist

individuals directly. Granted, it must be, that the group, the state, or the nation was recognized, but such benefits as might result were expected to accrue primarily and indirectly from enhanced monetary reward to the individual.

A few examples from Canadian agricultural legislative history will illustrate the development described. As early as the first decade of the last century legislation providing for the inspection of beef, pork, and flour for the mutual advantage of buyers and sellers was enacted. In 1807 the licensing of hawkers, peddlers, and petty shopmen was provided for. Wheat and other grains were made the subject of inspection in 1863, and hides and leather the following year. In 1872 penalties were provided for fraudulent marking and misrepresentation. Two years later adulteration was made a crime. In 1884 legislation designed to protect farmers against fraudulent sale of fertilizers, and a year later the first legislation to protect the consumer against low-quality canned goods was passed. Towards the close of the last century and since, milk, butter, cheese, fruits and vegetables, seeds, maple products, hay, honey, feeding-stuffs, and live stock have been added to the list of products made subject to grading and inspection regulations. In the interests of farmers and of consumers, protective legislation dealing with infectious and contagious diseases of live stock, the control of insect pests, and the destruction of weeds has been enacted. The first of such Acts dates back to 1879. Much of the early legislation was permissive or voluntary in character. Many of the more recent enactments provide for compulsory compliance.

Strangely enough, considering the time and place, there appears in the statutes of 1825 an Act providing for the fixing of bread prices, the cost of fuel, and rates of wages.

Grants in aid of agricultural societies in 1830, financial assistance to cover the expense of a hog cholera epidemic in 1834, to provide seed and relief for those suffering from crop failure in 1862, to pay a bounty of one dollar per hundred pounds of raw sugar produced from sugar beets in 1890, to encourage the incorporation of live-stock breeding associations in 1900, and to assist in the construction of cold storage in 1907 are examples of financial assistance provided by Canadian legislatures.

The establishment of the School of Agriculture at St. Anne de la Pocatière in 1859, of Ontario Agricultural College in 1874, and of the Dominion Experimental Farms in 1886 were milestones in the development of agricultural education and of scientific services. The emergence of the Dominion Department of Agriculture and of

similar Provincial bodies, the creation of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, the formation of the National Research Council, and later the addition of an Agricultural Economics Branch to the Department of Agriculture, are familiar examples of assistance provided for agriculture. Out of this legislation and these various forms of governmental assistance has emerged a far-flung agricultural service embracing graders, inspectors, promoters, agricultural representatives or county agents, scientists, and administrators.

The enumeration of these various measures and forms of assistance serves to illustrate what one country in the group designated as New World countries has done for agriculture. In the United States, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and other countries, much the same general development has taken place. The primary purpose of this review, however, is to suggest by reference to legislation the shift in emphasis from the individual to the group point of view. In the early legislation, in almost every field, the assistance provided was for the protection of the individual; it was simple and direct. As the industry gradually threw off the restrictions of a self-sufficient domestic regime and emerged as a commercial undertaking the legislation became more comprehensive, more all-embracing, and its purpose more social in character. Consider for instance the difference to-day with the Canada Grain Act, and the Livestock and Livestock Products Act, both of which not only regulate the trade but establish tariffs for the performance of services; also the Farmers' Creditors Arrangement Act, the Natural Products Marketing Act (declared unconstitutional and now inoperative), the Farm Loan Act, Provincial Debt Adjustment Acts, and legislation to provide for the inspection of farm products. Present-day legislation, though still aimed at the economic betterment of the individual producer and the protection of the individual buyer, has taken on a much broader aspect; it is not an exaggeration to state that producers as a group, consumers as a whole, and the nation as an entity bulk much more largely in the consideration of agricultural policy than was the case during our pioneer and transitional stages.

Evidence of this changing interest is reflected in the development of agricultural economics. We know that some economists trained in the general field evidenced an interest in agriculture at an early date. The writings of some of the ancients, the observations of Arthur Young, and during the nineteenth century the studies of a few European economists, particularly in Germany, were directed towards agricultural problems. Taylor tells us of a meeting of the American Economic Association in 1897 when agricultural questions were the

subject of some discussion.¹ Warren traced the germ of farm accounting in the United States back to 1874, and refers to the birth of cost accounting research in 1902.² The farm survey as an instrument and farm management as an embryo science emerged a few years later, followed by the formation of the American Farm Management Association in 1910.

Within a few years the new association had several hundred members scattered throughout the United States and Canada. This is significant, for in all the years of recorded history probably not over a score of persons with economic training had concerned themselves with the broad economic and social aspects of agriculture. But here was a new science that focused attention on the problems of the individual farm, and was designed to increase farm efficiency; and, having been born at a time and in a place where individualism and the family farm were still the dominant characteristics of agriculture, it flourished. In 1919 those interested in rural economy joined with the American Farm Management Association to form the American Farm Economics Association.

Throughout the first two decades of the rapid development of farm economics in America, major attention was focused upon the problems of the individual farmer. True, there were those like Ely, Taylor, Carver, and Hibbard, and later Nourse and Black, who periodically drew attention to the broader aspects, but it is not an exaggeration to state that national aspects received minor consideration. The contents of the *Journal of Farm Economics* are probably a fair index of professional interests. The first issue of the *Journal* appeared in 1919, but it was not until 1923 that much consideration was given to questions of broad social significance. In the latter year, however, an article by Eric Englund entitled 'Fallacies of a Plan to Fix Prices of Farm Products by Government Control of the Exportable Surplus' proved to be the forerunner of much that was to follow along similar lines. In 1924 the then Secretary of Agriculture for the United States, Henry C. Wallace, in an article entitled 'A National Agricultural Program—A Farm Management Problem', said '... it is not easy to see how even the solution of farm management problems on individual farms can be made to appear to be an adequate national agricultural program under prevailing conditions'. The 'prevailing conditions' referred to were considered to be the

¹ Taylor, Henry C. 'The Development of the American Farm Economic Association.' *Journal of Farm Economics*, April 1922.

² Warren, G. F. 'The Origin and Development of Farm Economics in the United States.' *Journal of Farm Economics*, Jan. 1932, vol. xiv, no. 1.

aftermath of the World War and resulting maladjustments of prices. There is no hint of developments of deeper significance or of more lasting effect.

In succeeding years the contents of the *Journal* became more varied, and reflect the broader interest of the members of the Association. Typical of these articles are the following: 'Some Economic and Social Phases of French Agriculture' by Asher Hobson, July 1924; 'The International Agricultural Crisis' by Max Sering, October 1929; 'Land Reforms in Ireland' by J. I. Falconer, October 1924; 'The Role of Public Agencies in the Internal Readjustments of the Farm' by John D. Black, April 1925; 'A Land Policy as Part of an Agricultural Program' by George S. Wehrewein, July 1925; 'Rural Depopulation' by T. N. Carver, Jan. 1927; 'The Farm Problem' by Frank O. O. Loudon, Jan. 1927; 'Agriculture Now' by John D. Black, April 1927; 'Which does Agriculture Need—Readjustment or Legislation?' by G. F. Warren, Jan. 1928.

A recital of all the articles of this nature appearing since 1924 would be revealing but repetitious. The climax was reached in the 1938 Convention Proceedings Number when almost the entire issue of 390 pages was devoted to the reports of thirty addresses and subsequent discussion on national and regional policies, international trade, insurance, credit, rural electrification, and 'disadvantaged rural classes'. Two of the articles dealt with farm management questions.

The development already outlined has been paralleled in many of the States of the United States. Typical of those that have made most progress in this connexion is New York State. Here, under the direction of Dr. Warren, whose recent passing we all so deeply regret, farm surveys were inaugurated about thirty years ago. The purpose of such surveys was to study farm businesses, with the objective—and this is important—of increasing farm efficiency. Survey forms were limited mainly to the inclusion of an inventory, a financial summary, and some general notes on management problems. Farm management, as the new field became known, was intended as a service to individual farmers based upon an analysis and comparison of the results of a group of operators. Farm accounting, already recognized, was encouraged, and farmers were persuaded to keep financial records throughout the years. Again the primary purpose was to make the individual farm more successful.

Gradually the purpose of farm management studies began to broaden out, and, with the accumulation of data from many representative areas, a farm management service for agriculture in general became available. Extension specialists in farm economics were

then added, and the consideration of agriculture as an industry became an important undertaking.

The shift in emphasis from the individual enterprise to the group or state interest is well illustrated by developments in the field of land economics. Applying the experience gained in farm management surveys a study of farming in a partially abandoned area was undertaken about 1924. Service to those remaining in this and other similar areas was an important objective of this and succeeding studies, but underlying the programme was a more important consideration—that of determining how such areas could be used to better advantage in the interests of the people of the State as a whole—and out of that work and some preliminary experimental activities of an earlier period, there emerged a State policy in which reforestation and conservation came to supplant agriculture in those sections where farming could no longer be carried on to advantage.

Research in marketing was, like farm management, first considered as a service to those co-operating, and, through the increased efficiency thus encouraged, a means of increasing the returns to farmers. Included in this field of research at a later date were certain investigations of wholesale fruit and vegetable markets. Here the objective was not so much a service to the individual, as it was a question of reorganization and the establishment of a new policy in the interests of producers, consumers, and the trade alike. A State policy with respect to public markets has since been established, based upon this and other activities.

The technique evolved for the study of farm and market problems has also been used successfully in studying the farmer's interest in taxation, rural credit, rural electrification, and public highways. Here, with a minimum of regimentation, State policies with far-reaching economic and social significance have emerged from simple beginnings.

In Canada a similar but somewhat slower development in agricultural economics has occurred. Activities in the Provinces preceded by more than a decade the work in the Dominion field. Little of the work undertaken in the Provinces had until quite recent years passed the stage of farm management surveys and farm cost studies. Land utilization and farm indebtedness surveys more recently undertaken reflect, in the main, emergency conditions but are also indicative of the trend towards a broader approach.

In the Dominion Department of Agriculture, where an Agricultural Economics Branch was established in 1929, efforts were at first concentrated on the building up of basic information through the

conduct of farm management and marketing surveys. Within the past few years, however, research in taxation, credit, land settlement, public market administration, land utilization, and consumer demand indicate an effort to aid in the establishment of agricultural policies of the future. A foundation is now being laid for consideration of some of the questions of greater economic and social significance.

Among those interested in these questions in America, surprise is sometimes expressed that more consideration is not given in Europe to the development of farm economics along lines experienced on this continent. One even hears the statement occasionally that 'there are no agricultural economists in Europe'. Such a statement, of course, is not true, but why should it be made? The answer reflects a difference in development and viewpoint. The development of agriculture in the older countries passed through the stages, referred to earlier in this discussion, long before agricultural economists appeared on the scene. When the economist did finally appear, he found an established society. Instead of having to deal with the growing pains of youth, he found himself faced more frequently with the infirmities of advancing age. When in the course of his professional duties he was called upon to prescribe or operate, his patient was a sick group, a class, or the industry at large. Social maladjustments rather than individual economic problems were his concern. Land reform and the problem of how to feed a nation were matters of more importance than was the question of how to obtain maximum returns on an individual farm. What was best for the individual might not be best for society. Consideration of society, therefore, became the question of major concern.

It must not be inferred that no consideration has been given to the sort of activity which characterized the early development of agricultural economics in America and which appears also to have received most consideration by our New World competitors. Farm accounting had its beginning in Switzerland before it was given much attention in America. In Great Britain, Denmark, Norway, and Czechoslovakia much progress has been made. The application of accounting to farm management and business has in these and a few other countries also received attention. Even in this, however, one discovers that farm accounts in some of these countries are used as a barometer of agricultural conditions and the basis for national action when prices require adjusting or when the food supply of the nation is threatened. It is doubtful if any such use is made of such accounts in America.

Many of the other activities familiar to agricultural economists in

North America are comparatively unknown in Europe. On the other hand, 'agrarian policies' or *Agrarpolitik*, to use the German terminology, has long been the subject of study. Agricultural policies, the condition of agriculture as an industry and its relationship to other industries, were the subject of much consideration in these countries before any similar concern was evident in America. In many of the countries of Europe to-day, one finds in the Ministries of Agriculture and other offices of the governments well-developed departments of economics where agrarian policies are the matters of primary consideration.

In any consideration of this question it must be recognized that the activities of one country or continent are not unknown in another. It is impossible to state that 'this' or 'that' is being done 'here' and not 'there'. All that is intended in this reference is to suggest that in the Old World countries where agriculture reached maturity many years ago, questions of broader import—those of a social character affecting agriculture as an industry and its relationship to other industries or groups—received much earlier consideration than was the case in the New World countries. It must be apparent, however, that this difference is disappearing. The agriculture of many of the newer countries has reached, or is approaching, maturity. It is developing many of the aches and pains of advancing years. It is encountering new obstacles both internally and abroad. Producers themselves no longer think in terms only of their own farm operations. Agricultural scientists in every field, extension authorities, and those responsible for public policies are striving to meet the new conditions. It is to be expected, therefore, that farm economists will change their emphasis in the light of development and grasp new tools in their attack on the problem.

The discussion up to this point has emphasized the changing character of agriculture. Comparisons have been made between different countries. It has been suggested that the complexities of modern agriculture have produced a group, class, or social concept absent in our pioneer and transitional stages of growth. This has been reflected in the changing character of agricultural services in many fields, including economics, and in the legislation enacted and policies adopted by governments. It seemed desirable to outline this development in order to provide a basis for the discussion of some of the manifestations of this change that agricultural economists and those in administrative positions are called upon to deal with. In the rest of this paper a few of these questions will be introduced.

One of the questions of concern, perhaps the principal one, is that of prices. In early pioneer periods this was not an important question. To-day, unfortunately, price is the principal determinant of well-being. Maladjustments in price relationships have become a major concern of governments. Witness the measures adopted in various countries—the control of exchange, the devaluation of currencies, the establishment of central banks, and similar undertakings including price fixing.

It is now a recognized fact that in periods of declining prices those of agricultural products and of other raw materials decline most rapidly and reach lower levels than do the prices of most other things. When they reach such levels as they did a few years ago agriculture is paralysed, the standard of living is seriously affected, social conditions become extremely acute, and the repercussions on society at large are a matter of major concern.

It is not a mere coincidence that L. H. Bailey and others at the meeting of the American Economic Association in 1897, to which reference has already been made, asked, 'Is there a distinct agricultural question?' and then proceeded to discuss mortgage indebtedness, credit, the drift to cities, and other questions. Neither is it surprising that these and other similar questions came in for so much discussion in the early twenties and again in more recent years. To the generally increasing interest in such matters the inequality of prices during such depression periods gave added impetus. Is there any doubt that for years to come governmental policies will be directed in ever-increasing degree towards ensuring price stability, without which in this commercial age there can be little social stability?

Before the days of mechanization and before the scientist made possible the present extension of agriculture into 'one crop' areas, farming was conducted in the more fertile regions where a variety of products could be produced and where most of the comparatively few necessities that must be purchased could be obtained from local craftsmen. This was the condition obtaining until the middle of the last century and later in some of the New World countries.

Under such conditions, depressions and declining prices did not present the problem that such occurrences produce to-day. The depression following the Napoleonic Wars and those of later periods, serious though they were, did not bring forth the efforts to alleviate agricultural distress that more recent disturbances have produced. Governments, under such circumstances, were not compelled to take action on behalf of farmers. The variety of products produced on the individual farm was, in most instances, such as to ensure the

family living. Since all products did not decline with equal rapidity there was usually something that could be sold or traded for the few things that must be purchased. Declining prices and depressions passed without serious effect upon agriculture, and in legislative bodies produced little more than discussion.

The age of agricultural specialization has changed this picture. Industrial development, transportation, mechanization, and scientific achievement have expanded the agricultural frontier and changed the character of agriculture the world over. There are still general farming areas where a variety of products are grown and where, despite commercialization, farmers are still able to carry on with a minimum of assistance in times of economic distress. In most countries, however, specialization in agricultural production has attained some significance; in some the production of a single product, or group of closely related products, characterizes the type of farming in large areas. Wheat, cotton, coffee, wool, sugar, tea, dairy products, and tobacco are examples of such products, the production of which frequently dominates the economy of states and nations.

When the prices of such products decline as they did during the post-War depression, and again during the period 1929-33, the situation becomes serious not only for the producers themselves but for those in secondary industries and in other occupations. Under the extreme conditions of the periods mentioned, large numbers of producers were virtually bankrupted, and the standard of living reduced to a very low point. Political unrest is a product of such conditions, and in some countries violence has taken command.

What should governments do under such circumstances? Sound economics and rigid application of the doctrine of 'the survival of the fittest' suggest that the best thing to do is to let competition and the play of economic forces run their course. In the end the inefficient producer will be eliminated, the unproductive land will go out of use, supply will be reduced, prices will rise, and favourable conditions will again be restored. But is the problem as simple as that when adversity of the type described strikes; and how long can a government remain inactive under such circumstances?

Most post-event descriptions by economists of such activities have been critical; many at the time have opposed government intervention or assistance. Must we recognize a conflict between economic and sociological principles and forces in the analysis and treatment of such cases? Can we justify government action as a 'short run' necessity, and if so, what are the 'long run' consequences? While admitting that certain kinds of activity are ill advised and likely to

prolong or increase the difficulty, can we justify the general principle of state intervention in the interests of groups of agricultural producers?

Before even the process of pioneer settlement had reached its zenith in some countries, others were experiencing the exodus of population from rural to urban centres. At first it was the competition of the New World that caused agricultural abandonment in the Old. Later, the areas first settled in the newer countries began to feel the competition of still more pioneer areas. Finally, improvements in agricultural technique and increased volume of foodstuffs resulted in a relative decline in rural population that exceeded the increases due to settlement still in progress. Even in Canada, in Australia, in Northern Africa, and in other countries where lands are still available, and where transportation and other facilities have been developed to handle larger volumes of farm products, opposition to continued immigration and land settlement has been experienced.

Assuming that economic conditions the world over approach their pre-depression status, that urban industries again resume production on a basis that will absorb the surplus labour that increasing improvements in technology displace in agriculture, what should the agricultural policy of a country like Canada be? Should an attempt be made to prevent the urban-ward movement? Should immigration be encouraged and settlement assisted? Would the social conditions in rural areas be improved if there was closer settlement? Should settlement be encouraged and volume of output increased in order that the nation's physical plant and equipment may be used to greater advantage and costs reduced? Have we certain competitive advantages, including unoccupied areas, that justify a policy of agricultural expansion though other nations find it desirable to curtail production? Or have we even in Canada, as some contend, a surplus agricultural population the removal of which is necessary if economic and social conditions are to be bettered?

During the decade 1921-31 the net rural exodus to urban centres was estimated to have been 408,000. With emigration to the United States all but eliminated and 'assuming agriculture merely holds its own and other rural employment is not forthcoming, a rural surplus of 800,000 is quite within the realm of expectation during the next decade'.¹ It is understood that a similar condition exists in other countries.

¹ Hurd, W. B. 'Population Movements in Canada, 1921-31.' *Proceedings of the Canadian Political Science Association*, 1934.

Machinery contributes to increased agricultural efficiency and thus to a reduction of population engaged in agricultural pursuits. The net effect of mechanization is probably beneficial, but the by-products result in some serious economic and social problems. Mechanization increases the size of farms, eliminates the small inefficient unit, and displaces the employed worker. That it may, in the aggregate and over a period of time, increase employment, enlarge the output, lower the cost and raise the standard of living does not eliminate a very serious transitional unemployment problem. In a report presented to the Permanent Agricultural Committee of the International Labour Office in February last, Dr. Lowry Nelson, of the University of Minnesota, states that mechanization of the wheat harvest has eliminated the need for 250,000 workers who formerly harvested this crop. In the Canadian West a similar development has caused the disappearance of the 'harvester's excursion' that formerly took some 40,000 to the prairies every year and which ultimately led to much new settlement. In almost every field of agricultural production human labour is being replaced by mechanical power and other machinery.

Have the social advantages of urban life so far outrun those of the country that the drift of population is determined by these attractions rather than by the pressure resulting from mechanization and improved technology? Who has not heard of a shortage of agricultural labour in recent years while thousands of one-time farmers and farm wage-earners live on urban relief or eke out a precarious existence on a scanty urban income? What is necessary in rural life to compensate for the city's picture shows, schools, churches, shorter hours, electricity, running water, recreational facilities, and general social advantages? Is it possible or desirable to attempt a programme that will hold more of these people on farms?

The topic assigned us for discussion invites consideration of many other questions. We might deal with taxation and its social implications, e.g. the question of whether or not the present basis of collecting government revenues recognizes the shift of many forms of taxable wealth from rural to urban centres with consequent multiplication of the tax burden on farm properties. We might consider transportation problems, tariff questions, and other matters of economic and social significance, if time permitted.

Some may feel that national policies should be given consideration. What should be said of Great Britain's programme of regulated marketing, of controlled imports and bonused production; of the policy of the United States in restricting production and marketing

to conform with estimated demand; of Italy's efforts to prevent large-scale migration to cities when modernization and improved social conditions in urban centres inspired by governmental programmes widen the gap between peasant and city dweller; of Germany's regulated state with social equality sought by the fixing of wages, margins, and prices; of Canada's endeavour to raise the status of agriculture through the promotion of trade agreements and the restoration of international trade? These policies determine for good or ill the economic and social conditions for millions of producers. But any consideration of national policies and of what sort of a society we want brings us back ultimately to the questions discussed—price stabilization, the problems of areas of specialized production, surplus rural population, immigration and land settlement, the effects of mechanization and improved technology, the equalization of tax burdens, and others. With all these matters under consideration perhaps one may fittingly close an introductory paper with the observation that it is a far cry from the self-sufficient agriculture of a century ago to the highly commercialized industry typical of many countries to-day.