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# **The Problem of Surplus Agricultural Population**



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## FOREWORD

By L. K. ELMHIRST

*President of the International Conference  
of Agricultural Economists*

AS President of the International Conference of Agricultural Economists, I have a very special interest in welcoming the advent of the *International Journal of Agrarian Affairs*. Ten years ago the first International Conference was held, and at the four succeeding meetings a steadily increasing number of agricultural economists from a wide range of countries have seized the opportunity which the Conference provides of meeting their colleagues from other lands and discussing their common problems. For those who have been unable to attend all the Conferences, the volumes of *Proceedings* published after each have laid a solid foundation for common thinking.

So many and great are the implications of agricultural economics which require discussion on an international scale that even a week's gathering every two years has been all too limited for a proper interchange of thought and experience. At the meeting in Canada last year the period between Conferences was extended from two to three years, so that it now becomes all the more necessary to carry on some continuous interchange of ideas during the long interval.

The *International Journal of Agrarian Affairs* represents a bold attempt to meet this need. It does not and cannot claim in any way to be an official organ of the International Conference. The Council of the Conference has approved the idea of a Journal but, as the Conference is not yet in a financial position to undertake such a project, felt that its publication must await the finding of finance from outside. Funds have now been raised from private sources, and this *Journal* therefore represents an experiment upon the success of which the Conference and its Council can express an opinion during the meeting in Hungary in 1941. It has been designed as a medium of expression for members of the Conference

in all parts of the world, and it will be circulated to all members without further charge.

In yet another respect the *Journal* may prove to be a useful experiment for the International Conference. Recent Conferences have established a type of programme which concentrates a major part of the time on the discussion of basic economic and social problems which, as the editor says in his preface, are international in the sense that they are evident in one form or another in all countries. Thus the Fifth Conference at Macdonald College, Quebec, discussed in this way:

The Social Implications of Economic Progress in Present-day Agriculture.

Land Tenure and the Social Control of the Use of Land.

Farm Labour and Social Standards.

International Trade in relation to Agricultural Development.

The plan of the *Journal* is to extend facilities for the discussion of this type of subject. The topic raised in this first number is of almost universal interest, and speaker after speaker in Canada referred to it. This issue therefore makes possible the continuation of discussion opened up at earlier Conferences and anticipates further discussion at subsequent Conferences. In succeeding issues the subject-matter of the *Journal* will be closely bound up with lines of thought which have become characteristic of the International Conference.

The close association of the Conference with the *Journal* is made possible because the financial and editorial work of the *Journal* is jointly in the hands of Mr. J. R. Currie, Honorary Secretary of the Conference, and of Mr. J. P. Maxton, who has edited the last three volumes of the Conference *Proceedings*.

I wholeheartedly commend this project, therefore, as furnishing the means of continuous exchange of thought and experience of a kind which the International Conference of Agricultural Economists has already established and has tried to maintain in the limited scope provided by its periodic meetings. By means of such a journal I am confident that the discussions at subsequent Conferences are likely to be enriched, and that fuller use than ever before can now be made of the special opportunities which the personal meetings in the conference hall give.