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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Agricultural Extension.* By DONALD B. WILLIAMS. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1968.) Pp. 218, \$6.90.

This book is sub-titled 'Farm Extension Services in Australia, Britain and United States of America'. In the process of examining the scope, purpose, structure and organization of agricultural extension services in the foregoing countries, Professor Williams elaborates on the many possible (and changing) objectives of extension services and the ways in which these objectives might be achieved. At the outset then, one can say that this book will be useful for at least two kinds of people. Firstly, for those who want to know in detail how agricultural extension services are organized in Australia, Britain and the U.S.A. Secondly, for policy makers who wish to re-direct agricultural extension programmes in Australia, and who are looking for a range of alternative lines of action to choose from.

The first three chapters of the book (there are 12 in all) are about general aspects of agricultural extension such as the definition of the term itself, and the reasons for the need for government assistance in the extension field.

Chapter 4 deals with the scope and purpose of agricultural extension in the United States. The Smith-Lever Act, on which the Co-operative Extension Service is based, figures prominently since it defines the purpose of the Service. Associated acts, reports, and scholarly reviews are also discussed, all in the context of the changing purpose of agricultural extension in a changing world.

Chapter 5 describes the structure and organization of agricultural extension in the United States. There is, for instance, an excellent description of the county agent, his responsibilities, and his relationship to other organizations such as the land grant colleges and the U.S.D.A. At the end of this chapter Professor Williams discusses the significance of United States extension to Australia, a country where funds for agriculture extension are steadily being increased. In the United States, he writes, the scope and purpose of agricultural extension are continually being debated leading to learned papers, changes in formal policy decisions, and changes in legislation. He suggests that in Australia the same things should be happening whereas in fact there is scarcely any formal policy at all, let alone any debate to change it.

Chapter 6 covers the scope and purpose of agricultural extension in the United Kingdom. In effect this is a description of the evolution of the aims of the National Agricultural Advisory Service established under the Agriculture Act 1944. As in the United States, the stated aims of agricultural extension have evolved from the purely technical to a much broader educational base. Chapter 7 describes the structure and organization of agricultural extension in the United Kingdom.

The scope and purpose (or lack of it) of agricultural extension in Australia are examined in Chapter 8, and in Chapter 9 the past history and present structure of extension services. In this latter chapter the organization of State, C.S.I.R.O., Commonwealth, and commercial extension services receive detailed attention and comment.

Professor Williams briefly discusses the use of farm management and agricultural policy in extension in Chapter 10, and in Chapter 11 the kind of training needed for extension officers. In this connection it is of interest to record the fact that Professor Williams is at present Visiting Professor of Agricultural Economics at Melbourne University and is responsible for a post-graduate Diploma in Agricultural Extension.

Several themes recur throughout the book.

The first is that a sound agricultural extension policy can only be achieved if policy makers are aware of the range of problems that extension can help to solve. In the absence of such knowledge it is impossible to choose rationally those problems which deserve attention first. On pages 107 and 108 of Chapter 8 Professor Williams lists several of these problems (e.g., 'What of extension programmes for protected industries?—what if the best interests of individual producers conflict with those of national growth?') One feels that rarely, if ever, are any of these problems given more than a passing thought by policy makers. There are no doubt good reasons why they are not, not the least of which is that a firm decision might cause offence. It is hard to disagree with one despairing sentence on page 109 that 'Almost any attempt to define the scope and purpose of extension services in Australia would help to avoid misunderstandings and improve working relations between the participants.'

A second theme throughout the book is that change is continual in the farming community, and as a result the government extension services which advise that community also need to change. For example the increase in recent years in the number of private agricultural consultants and qualified farm advisers employed by commercial firms are two changes which desirably should result in a formal revision of government extension policy.

A third major theme is that Professor Williams sees the modern agricultural extension worker as an educator (i.e. one who draws information out of people) rather than as a purveyor of agricultural facts. On page 180 of Chapter 11 he says of the extension worker that 'his purpose is to help and train farmers in decision making rather than to provide such detailed help that the decision is made for them'. He may or may not be right. The point is that if a rational policy decision on this aspect of extension work were made policy makers would have firm grounds for agreeing or disagreeing with him. After all, this must be a vital matter, but at the present time one does not know what policy makers think.

In this book no attention of any consequence is given to techniques of quantitatively assessing the effectiveness of agricultural extension programmes. This will be regarded as a defect by many, but it was not one of the author's objectives in writing the book. What he has done is to show, and argue the case for, the activities to which agricultural extension programmes in Australia might be re-directed.

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*Contemporary Agricultural Marketing.* Edited by IRVING DUBOV. (University of Tennessee Press, 1968.) Pp. 270, \$U.S.5.95.

This is a collection of papers presented to the Marketing Section of the 1964 Annual Convention of the Association of Southern Agricultural Workers.

It is divided into three parts—Background Issues, Emerging Problem Areas and Methodological Developments. Most of the papers are likely to be of limited interest to Australian research workers. Three papers which caught this reviewer's interest and attention are briefly discussed below.

The first is a paper by Eldon D. Smith of the University of Kentucky who examines the institutional problems which arise in farmer-controlled co-operatives which are competing with commercial organizations. Since virtually no attention has been devoted to this problem in Australia, Smith's article and his references would provide a useful starting point for some Australian work in this area.

Secondly, Leo Polopolus provides a transportation cost-minimization model for two or more raw products which is a generalization of Stollsteimer's well-known single product plant location model. This should be of interest to research workers in location theory.

Lastly Joseph Havlicek Jr. of Purdue examines the use of linear programming techniques to obtain minimum absolute-deviation estimates of functional relationships. Such techniques allow one to place *a priori* restrictions on signs (and on magnitudes) of the coefficients. They also give less weight to extreme isolated values which may conceivably be the result of errors of observation or of bias etc. Havlicek provides a convincing illustration of the advantages of his technique from a study of broiler prices. A disadvantage of the technique is that standard errors of coefficients and tests of significance are currently not available. However Havlicek's technique may be a useful supplementary technique, rather than a substitute for single equation least squares methods of estimation.

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*Managerial Economics*. Edited by G. P. E. CLARKSON. (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin, 1968.) Pp. 429, \$1.55.

This book consists of selected readings relating to the economic aspects of managerial decision-making. It is divided into five parts: Economic Theory and Business Behaviour; Some Managerial Decision Models; Financial Decision Making; Production and Inventory Systems; and Mathematical Programming. Each part contains two, or in one case, three selected papers.

Given the breadth of the main title and the substantial literature which exists in this area, it is certain that any selection of eleven papers must omit many important contributions. The book must be judged, therefore, by what is included rather than by what is left out, and on the whole it measures up well against this criterion. Practically every paper in the collection deserves the acclaim of the editorial introduction as being 'an outstanding member of its class'. The contents include such renowned authorities as Weingartner on capital budgeting, Charnes and Cooper on linear programming and Howard on dynamic programming. Nevertheless, the sins of omission do lead to a rather biased view of some topics. For example, the first part includes an excellent but rather individualistic treatment of decision-making theories, by H. A. Simon, followed by a somewhat unusual treatment of business decision-making by G. P. E. Clarkson. Fortunately, the omissions of this part are largely made good in another recently published Penguin book of selected readings, *Decision Making*. Edited by W. Edwards and A. Tversky.

Most of the papers in *Managerial Economics* have been culled from readily accessible sources, chiefly *Management Science*. The value of separate publication of this type of material might be questioned, especially in view of the absence of any strong, cohesive theme running through the whole book. However, workers in managerial economics and related fields may find it useful to have this book on their shelves. While by no means comprehensive, many of the papers provide a useful entry to particular aspects of the subject, and the extensive lists of references at the end of most of the papers are very valuable. Penguin Books' policy of publishing selected readings of this kind relatively cheaply in paperback form seems wholly commendable.

J. B. HARDAKER

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*Regional Analysis*. Edited by L. NEEDLEMAN. (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin, 1968.) Pp. 398, \$1.55.

*Transport*. Edited by DENYS MUNBY. (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin, 1968.) Pp. 334, \$1.55.

These two books are among the first of a new series of 'Modern Economics Reading' being published by Penguin. Although it is claimed that 'central topics of economic thought and research' will be covered the volumes available so far are in areas of applied economics.

Australia shares with New Zealand the honour of being top of the international league for equality of income between its different regions. This is shown in J. G. Williamson's article 'Regional development in particular countries' reprinted in *Regional Analysis*. Regional economics has never been a particularly coherent or well defined part of the discipline. Most parts of economic analysis can be applied to regions and the result as shown in this book, is a series of disconnected contributions, answering different questions which have little in common except that they have a regional dimension. John Meyer's survey article in the *American Economic Review* (reprinted here) has been the most successful attempt to give the field some framework.

Some of the contributors to the field concentrate on tools of analysis, represented in this volume by the critical articles by Charles Leven on regional accounts and Charles Tiebout on regional input-output models. Other writers are much more concerned about regional inequalities in income and level of development, and policies which can be used to stimulate growth in backward regions. Williamson falls into this group. His main conclusion is that the level of inequality tends first to rise and then to fall with general economic growth. Borts and Stein develop a neoclassical growth model for regions which is consistent with a good deal of the experience in the United States during this century, and suggest that it could be useful in other areas, such as Western Europe. H. B. Chenery is concerned with the problem of Southern Italy and with the long standing attempts to reduce the disparity between the north and the south. He suggests that the policy of spending a great deal on improving the infrastructure in the south has had limited success because of the south's continued concentration on slow growing industries.

Since Ohlin's classical *Interregional and International Trade* (1933) some economists have attempted to apply the well developed tools of international trade theory to regions. In this volume J. C. Ingram, 'State

and regional payments mechanisms' and J. R. Moroney and J. M. Walker, 'A regional test of the Heckscher-Ohlin hypothesis' take this approach.

Reflecting on U.S. experience S. Engerman concludes that regional fluctuations are not just a result of differences in industrial structure, but also occur because a given industry behaves differently in different regions. He goes on to argue that monetary and fiscal policy should be exercised differently in different regions. William Alonso's article 'Location theory' deals very largely with the individual firm in a neo-Weberian manner. Finally an article by G. Fisher is included mainly because of its interesting use of statistical tests of significance of differences between regions.

Altogether this book, though it suffers acutely from the lack of coherence which is usual in a book of readings is a good introduction to the literature. There are suggestions for further reading in the areas covered by each of the authors. Unfortunately the editor in his introduction does not attempt to place the articles reprinted in any framework but rather gives his own general view of the economic case for a regional policy.

By way of contrast, Denys Munby uses the introduction to *Transport* to provide a very useful outline of the economic nature of transport and of the major policy problems which arise. The outline sets the selected contributions within a framework which will be very useful to anyone who is new to the field. Of course transport economics itself is quite well established, though it has been very much neglected in this country. The first article in this volume was published in 1844 by the French engineer, Jules Dupuit—'Public works and the consumer'. It contains the classic analysis of consumer surplus and its implications for pricing of the services of public facilities such as bridges where the marginal cost is very low.

The implications of high fixed costs are pursued further by Arthur Lewis in 'Fixed costs' and by William Vickrey in 'Marginal cost pricing'. Vickrey is the more uncompromising marginalist while Lewis maintains that there is a need to cover fixed costs as well as marginal costs (where the latter is less than average costs) by some type of charge on users—preferably some that do not affect demand for the service. William Baumol and others in 'Costs and rail charges' provide a businessman's explanation of why marginal cost is the relevant minimum level below which railway rates should not be permitted to fall, and dismiss alternatives that are sometimes used by regulating authorities in the U.S. Stewart Joy uses comparisons between British Rail and the railway systems of other countries to show convincingly that much of the track cost which British Rail claim to be fixed can be varied in the long run, and even in the relatively short run with advantage to net revenue.

An excerpt from the Buchanan Report *Traffic in Towns* presents the essence of the Report's analysis of the relationship between level of traffic, extent of urban development, environmental quality and the extent of investment to keep traffic out of environmental areas while maintaining accessibility. Alan Walters was one of the originators of the idea of charging road vehicles for the congestion costs they cause each other. His original 1961 article in *Econometrica* is reprinted. The urban transport section concludes with a short piece from Meyer, Kain and Wohl (*The Urban Transport Problem*) in which the costs of vari-

ous modes of urban transport are related to the number of passengers carried. Under virtually all circumstances buses using their own rights of way for most of the journey, and downtown streets in the city centre, are as cheap as, and usually cheaper than any of the alternatives.

The final section on project appraisal includes the Foster and Beesley assessment of the Victoria Line in London, the U.K. Ministry of Transport's appraisal of the case for a channel bridge or tunnel and an article by R. O. Goss on port investment. The application of benefit-cost analysis to transport investment is quite well established and the first two of these articles are careful and interesting members of the species. The Foster and Beesley article has some historical interest in that, when it was first published in 1963 it did break new ground. Possibly because it raises some new problems encountered in dealing with a novel set of institutions, and raises some fascinating pricing problems, Goss's article is of particular interest. Its discussion of containerization is very topical and its brief section on the implications of port investment decisions for the international distribution of income raises very significant analytical issues.

MAX NEUTZE

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*The Economics of Agricultural Policy.* By GRAHAM HALLETT. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968.) Pp. 292, 50s.

There is a tendency amongst some writers on agricultural policy to become too involved in historical detail, at the expense of economic analysis. In 'The Economics of Agricultural Policy', Hallett successfully steers a middle course between these two extreme positions. The book is in three parts. Parts I and II cover the economic characteristics of agricultural production as a background to state intervention. Hallett stresses two basic agricultural problems which give rise to state intervention—low incomes and fluctuating incomes—both of which result from the maladjustment of demand and supply forces in agricultural markets. Parts I and II (particularly Chapters 4 to 9 inclusive) analyse the characteristics of the agricultural demand and supply curves. There is little new in these chapters: most of the analysis has been written before—by Ann Martin in *Economics and Agriculture*; by Edith Whetnam in *The Economic Background to Agricultural Policy*; and particularly by G. S. Shepherd in *Agricultural Price Analysis*. The most interesting section is Chapter 9 on distributive and processing margins. It contains useful data on the size of retail margins for a number of farm products (drawn mainly from European sources) and concludes 'on the whole, the behaviour of retail margins is, from the distributors point of view, not unreasonable, and it seems probable that a certain degree of stickiness in prices, or underproportionality in margins is something which the agricultural industry will have to live with'. It is difficult trying to imagine an Australian cockey agreeing with this view when he compares his farm gate return for milk with the retail price of butter or cheese.

Part III deals exclusively with state intervention in agricultural price formation. It contains separate chapters on agricultural price policies, the role of marketing boards, agriculture and the European Economic Community, problems of world trade and structural policies. The attractiveness of this section is the critical approach that Hallett has adopted

in his treatment of each topic. Its major weakness (at least from the standpoint of Australian readers) is that his examples are drawn exclusively from Europe (particularly the United Kingdom) and the U.S.A. This is understandable; Hallett is a British economist, who has spent two years as a Research Fellow in Western Germany and a year as a Visiting Professor in Canada. But it does cause the Australian reader to wonder whether the economic problems of agriculture are exclusive to Western European and North American economies. The section on marketing boards, for instance, relies solely on British experience; there is no mention of the Australian Wheat Stabilization Scheme or of the Reserve Price Scheme for wool. In his treatment of the European Economic Community, Hallett spells out in considerable detail the agricultural provisions of the Treaty of Rome and the mechanics of the common agricultural policy. But the implications of British membership are reviewed solely in respect of the British economy. There is not a single reference to the effects of membership on the agricultural sector of Commonwealth countries, particularly Australia and New Zealand. This is a pity, as it tends to reflect a parochial outlook on the part of the author, and makes the book less attractive to oceanic students.

Hallett, in Part III, leaves the reader in no doubt as to his position—he is a little right of centre. He admits that ‘some degree of protection for agriculture may be desirable’, but suggests that its level ‘should be judged by the more efficient rather than the less efficient farms’. He condemns tightly organized, monopolistic marketing boards, but favours the establishment of commissions designed to exercise general supervision over marketing. He argues that the International Wheat Agreement is ‘largely irrelevant to the factors which actually determine prices on the world wheat market’, but supports the International Wheat Council as ‘a forum at which marketing agencies in the exporting and importing countries can meet, review problems and exchange ideas and criticisms’.

It is this balanced, middle of the road approach that will make Part III enjoyable both to those who demand more state intervention in agricultural activities and to those who extol the virtues of the free market mechanism as the proper and only allocator of resources and determinant of incomes in society.

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*The Labour Market: Selected Readings.* Edited by B. J. McCORMICK and E. O. SMITH. (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin, 1968.) Pp. 393, \$1.55.

These readings fall into nine parts, each dealing with an important facet of the labour market. In an introduction it is stated that the readings do not seek to be comprehensive. Nevertheless, the articles selected cover a range of topics which are of interest to the economist and to students of economics, particularly those at the post-graduate level desirous of extending their reading in the sphere of labour economics.

It is not possible to comment separately on each of the sixteen articles included in the readings. A general comment, however, could be that these articles lend support to the view that efforts to arrive at propositions having validity for all labour markets are misplaced. Clear-cut solutions in this area are difficult to achieve. The complexity of labour markets is such as to play down the chance that any single factor



will predominate over all others. The factors at work are not all quantifiable and are often interdependent. For example, wage differentials may result in part from changes in the availability of jobs in key sectors of the market; and changes in relative wages may in turn cause changes in job availability. Other relevant factors might be differential productivity gains, the strength of trade unions, and the force of custom and social justice (perhaps coupled with trends in living costs). Weinstein notes the growing interest of UK industrial unions in employment security and less emphasis on wages. Economic and non-economic factors combine to produce a given outcome. And it seems clear, following the classical model back to Adam Smith, that occupational choices are made in terms of comparative total net advantage and not merely in terms of comparative wages (Rottenberg).

The articles in this book are based largely on United Kingdom experience, with particular stress on trade union structure and development in the United Kingdom. The conclusions reached do not necessarily have validity for other labour market structures. For example, government policy and the machinery of arbitration would have a special bearing on the level and structure of wages in Australia, although there is, of course, room for debate as to whether decisions of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission merely reflect underlying market forces or in some degree help shape those forces.

In the introduction (see pp. 8-9) several important questions apropos the labour market are posed. But while the articles throw some light on these questions, readers may well feel a sense of disappointment in many instances. How do we react, for example, to the statement that 'an agreed wage depends upon the abilities of the negotiators'? While containing, no doubt, a kernel of truth, this statement does not take us very far towards an understanding of the forces which underpin the bargaining power of each group. Stevens adapts a psychological choice theory model to the analysis of negotiation, but his failure to arrive at and justify a general statement of negotiation theory is hardly surprising; it is not a great help to be told that in collective bargaining the parties 'would probably prefer to play the game negotiation rather than the game take-it-or-leave-it'.

Most of the articles arrive at conclusions only after a careful statistical analysis, and sometimes supported by a sophisticated model. However laudable the techniques used, there is, of course, always the problem of identification in time-series analysis—and this problem is especially troublesome in labour market studies because of the number of variables, many of which are difficult to quantify. Consider the range of factors which can cause wages to rise: the availability of jobs (itself a function of several forces) may influence wage levels which in turn may influence the number seeking jobs in certain industries and occupations. We do not know which of these factors comes first or predominates. The reader of these articles may have an uneasy feeling that the problems posed in the introduction are still unresolved, that each period selected as the basis for analysis may not in any sense be representative but contain features not present in other periods. The predictive power of the models is therefore severely limited.

Some economists have drawn attention to these 'special factors'. Thus Lipsey, who sets out to justify the proposition that 'money wage increases may be dependent on the demand for labour', does not lose sight of the

importance of changing institutions; increased union power may mean that wages are pushed up faster (e.g., in the 1950's) and cost of living adjustments may enter as a special factor in wage determination. For Australia we could readily add to the list trends in the balance of payments, the importance of which has clearly varied over the years.

Hines, however, seems to move to an extreme position in arguing that trade unions affect the rate of change of wages *independently* of the demand for labour. The operative factor specified is the rate of change of union membership. Once again, this conclusion has claim to support from extensive empirical analysis. Yet, as a proposition, it seems quite unacceptable. Time series analyses, as noted by Reddaway, can only suggest: they do not prove. For example, a higher wage may have been accompanied by increased employment but we cannot assert from the data that the wage increase was *necessary* to attract additional workers; similarly, observations which purport to convey a positive relationship between trade union membership and wage increases cannot be taken as evidence that there were no other factors which prompted wages to rise in the first place.

Moreover, as pointed out by Reder, it is not only union power which is important, but how that power is exercised; and this in turn tempts one to use an hypothesis which indicates the existence of a close relation between the use of such power and the strength of market forces, such as demand for labour and the level of employment.

Empirical work by Lipsey lends strong support to the Phillips relation (namely, that there is an inverse relation between the level of employment and the rate of change of money wages). But it may be questioned whether it is satisfactory to take the rate of change of unemployment as an index of the demand for labour. Surely it is possible to have excess demand for labour in certain industries (with a consequent rise in wage rates and earnings) without there being any significant change in total registered unemployment or job vacancies.

On the basis of a study of hourly earnings and employment in manufacturing industry in Great Britain, Reddaway inclines to the view that a redistribution of the labour force is attainable through variations in job opportunities; and this contrasts with the view of the Cohen Council that changes in relative wages might be necessary to achieve the same end. Support for the Reddaway hypothesis could be expected from those who stress the practical difficulties which beset attempts to change the wage pattern. Turner notes that high employment has strengthened the comparative principle of wage fixing for several reasons, including more powerful unions and resentment by workers to any departure from established relativities.

It seems likely that issues surrounding the efficient allocation of labour and the upward drift of wages and earnings in a full employment situation will continue for some time to be at the forefront of interest to economists in government, universities and industry. It is becoming increasingly evident that, in formulating policies for economic stability and growth, governments are finding that the behaviour of the labour market is of crucial importance. Income policies are now in vogue and have become almost a fad. This collection of readings, like others of its kind (e.g., Australian Labour Economics Readings, edited by Isaac and

Ford), helps us to grapple with important issues in this area and is therefore a very welcome addition to the literature.

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## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

### BOOKS

- DAGLI, VADILAL (Ed.). *Foundations of Indian Agriculture*. (Bombay: Vora, 1968.) Pp. 378, \$7.00.
- DOWNING, R. I. *National Income and Social Accounts*. (Melbourne University Press, 1968.) Pp. 102, \$1.80.
- KULKARNI, V. G. *Statistical Outline of Indian Economy*. (Bombay: Vora, 1968.) Pp. 293, \$6.00.
- LIPTON, MICHAEL. *Assessing Economic Performance*. (London: Staples Press, 1968.) Pp. 257, \$4.90.
- ROBSON, PETER. *Economic Integration in Africa*. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1968.) Pp. 320, 45s.
- VAKIL, C. N. and RAO, G. RAGHAVA. *Economic Relations between India and Pakistan*. (Bombay: Vora, 1968.) Pp. 214, \$5.00.
- VENKATESWARAN, R. J. *The Tragedy of Indian Rupee*. (Bombay: Vora, 1968.) Pp. 131, \$2.50.

### BULLETINS

- FRANCIS, T. W. *Capital Formation in New Zealand Manufacturing Industries 1910 to 1964*. (Lincoln College, Agricultural Economics Research Unit, Technical Paper No. 6, 1968.) Pp. 60.
- KITSON, G. W. *Fresh Vegetable Retailing in New Zealand: An Economic Survey*. (Lincoln College, Agricultural Economics Research Unit, Research Report No. 50, 1968.) Pp. 45.
- MASSELL, BENTON F. and JOHNSON, R. W. M. *Economics of Small-holder Farming in Rhodesia*. (Food Research Institute, Stanford University, 1968.) Pp. 74, \$4.00.
- MORRIS, J. L., PLUNKETT, H. J. and JOHNSON, R. W. M. *Livestock Targets in North Canterbury Hill Country: The Impact of Changing Prices*. (Lincoln College, Agricultural Economics Research Unit, Research Report No. 51, 1968.) Pp. 40.