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Discussion Report

The Conference noted the need for effective agricultural policies if the benefits arising from tourism and industrialisation were to be achieved. One speaker noted that in the case of Barbados there has been an increase in the country's food import bill with the expansion of tourism, and he questioned whether these increased food imports were not eroding the benefits to be derived from tourism.

Professor Lundgren questioned whether it is possible to determine the optimum number of tourists which can be absorbed by an island in view of the labour and land requirements of tourism. He suggested certain indicators of tourist capacity, such as tourist/agricultural land ratio and a tourist/total population ratio. He felt that while Jamaica may not have reached the optimum level given by such indicators, Antigua may have already passed this level. In certain cases it has even

become necessary to import labour into some islands. He noted that North American experience of haphazard development had shown similar social costs and problems, and that we could learn from such mistakes by establishing common basic standards within which tourism could develop, up to certain limits. Mr. Archibald questioned whether the optimum level can be determined. This question was not resolved.

The discussion then turned to the question of reducing the labour outflow from agriculture. Mr. Innes suggested a prices and incomes policy to bring down the level of tourist sector wages. Dr. Johnston suggested the need for an intermediate agricultural technology to reduce the irksomeness of some agricultural labour. Until this is done, he felt the outflow will continue. Mr. Archibald replied that tourist wages were high due to the highly capital-intensive nature of the industry giving rise to high labour productivity.