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## BOOK NOTES

**The Wheat Industry in Australia.** A. R. Callaghan and A. J. Millington. Sydney: Angus and Robertson Ltd., 1956. Pp. 486. 63s. od.

This is without doubt the most comprehensive book yet published on the wheat industry in Australia. It will probably remain the standard work on the subject for quite a number of years.

It is, nevertheless, a somewhat disappointing book. The reason for this probably lies in the extremely comprehensive cover of the whole wheat industry which is attempted in such a relatively short space. Everything, including the rainfall characteristics of the wheatbelt, soil structure, fertilisers, milling and baking qualities of wheat, plant breeding, wheatgrowing machinery, marketing, bulk handling, the economics of the industry and even "the farmer and his technical advisers" are discussed. As a result of this attempt to deal with the industry in such a comprehensive fashion many aspects are treated rather superficially.

In all probability the book has been developed from lectures delivered at Roseworthy Agricultural College in South Australia. Both of the authors have been associated with this College and the general approach would suggest that this is the case. It would certainly appear that the book is likely to have its greatest appeal to students at agricultural colleges, although no doubt, the general reader who wishes to obtain a comprehensive background to the development and the present position of the Australian wheat industry will find it of considerable value.

The book is a rather strange pot pourri. It can hardly be described as an historical study of the Australian wheat industry, and yet the approach throughout is largely historical. This is rather surprising as both authors are technical agriculturalists.

It is also somewhat surprising, in view of the authors' background, that almost a quarter of the book—the latter part—is devoted to the economic and marketing problems of the industry. To the agricultural economist it is this latter part of the book which appears to be least satisfactory.

The wheat industry has such wide ramifications that it is probably impossible to produce a book which will appeal to all those who are concerned with or who are interested in the industry. Yet this is what the authors of this present work have attempted to do. It may well be that, as a result, very few people closely associated with the industry will feel entirely happy with the result.

As an example of the superficial treatment which has been necessary as a result of this extremely broad approach, the activities of the New South Wales Government Grain Elevators Board are dealt with in less than one page of text, despite the fact that it was the first and remains the largest bulk wheat handling system in this country.

The marketing of Australian wheat in all its aspects provides the subject for a full length book in itself; to attempt to deal with it, as is done here, in 50 or 60 pages (many of which are devoted to illustrations), must of necessity prove somewhat unsatisfactory.

The book is particularly well produced; it is copiously illustrated with nearly three hundred well-chosen photographs and charts, including two colour plates.

**Beef Cattle in Australia.** Frank O'Loughlen (Editor). Sydney: F. H. Johnson Publishing Company Pty. Ltd., 1956. Pp. 378. 40s. od.

In editing this book Mr. Frank O'Loughlen has done a valuable service to all who are interested in the cattle industry in Australia. The first section contains over 30 short articles covering many facets of the work of producing and marketing beef. These articles are all concise and give a good insight into the organisation of the industry, especially as it exists in northern Australia. As several of the writers are graziers with long experience the book is especially useful for its first hand accounts of management problems. On the other hand, many readers will be interested in the articles which discuss relevant current research projects.

The inclusion of a lot of excellent photographs helps make the book unique in its realistic treatment of the topic. The aerial photographs of some of the northern stations, including the great Wave Hill station of 6,158 square miles, are interesting in themselves and serve to illustrate the vastness and loneliness of the Australian outback.

Although most of the articles deal with northern Australia, the significance of the southern states in beef production is not overlooked. A contribution by J. H. Kelly indicates the key position of Queensland as "the beef State", with about 53 per cent of the total beef cattle population, but he and other writers indicate the difficulties of achieving a rapid increase in production in the north. The problems of improving transport, fencing, pastures and water facilities in the north are now well known but they bear repetition. The task of increasing production in the south is easier because settlement is closer and the basic facilities are already in existence. The southern states already produce over 50 per cent of Australia's beef and some recent developments have opened the way for further expansion. As C. C. Bradley points out in his article, the spread of myxomatosis, increased sowings of improved pasture and prosperity in allied agricultural and pastoral industries (notably wheat and sheep) have had a stimulating effect on the beef industry in the south. Bradley suggests, however, that there is still room for improvement and his summary of future objectives will meet with general agreement. He says:—

"The onus is on us to still further improve our cattle, and very definitely to improve our methods of converting them into the high-quality beef that our own citizens, as well as our overseas customers, want. This means, in the first place, concentrating on well-bred cattle of any of the pure beef breeds that will mature quickly at 16 to 20 months of age to about 500 to 600 lbs., well fattened, but not too fat. It is this class of meat that the

customer wants and is willing to pay for, both on the local market and overseas. The only way to get it is to keep the calves fat and growing all their lives. There must be no check in their development; they must be placed on rich fattening pasture or growing crops, such as oats or lucerne, straight from their mothers at nine to ten months old."

About half of the book is devoted to histories of the various beef breeds and notes on the achievements of about 100 beef cattle studs. This section should be particularly useful as a comprehensive reference for beef producers and breed societies.

**Agriculture in the World Economy.** Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1955. Pp. vii, 76.

It is hard to know to what audience this short booklet is addressed. It is too elementary to be of interest to agricultural economists or even, probably, to undergraduates in agricultural economics. On the other hand its very conciseness will most likely prevent it from appealing widely to the general reader. It is full of generalisations and for this reason, and because it is written with little imagination, it is hardly likely to prove successful in demonstrating "the importance of agriculture in the world's economy" to a wide reading public, as according to its introduction, it sets out to do.

The booklet may prove of value to high school teachers in economics and to agricultural college students. It contains a number of quite useful charts showing trends in population and in world food production and related topics.

**Yearbook of the United Nations 1954.** New York: Department of Public Information, United Nations, 1955. Pp. xii. 656, \$10.50, £3 10s. (Stg.).

This is the eighth of the series of annual permanent reference books published on the work of the United Nations. Because of the wide range of activities covered by the Organisation and reported on in this publication, together with the brevity of these reports, the choice of topics worthy of mention in a brief review is somewhat difficult. The book can best be described as a catalogue of United Nations activities; it serves the useful purpose of directing those who wish to know more of the Organisation's work in specific fields to the appropriate reports.

Those aspects in Part I of the book (consisting of an account of the United Nations' work) which are likely to be of most interest to the Australian reader are the brief but clear discussions of the major political events which occurred during 1954. These included the troubles in Palestine, Morocco, and Tunisia, the question of the representation of China on the United Nations and the situation in Cyprus. Of more immediate interest to Australia was Indonesia's claim to West Irian (West New Guinea); the arguments advanced by both the Indonesian and Dutch delegates are of particular interest.

In the section on economic and social questions, also in Part I, the world economic situation during 1953 is considered; while in addition problems of economic development, full employment and economic

stability, human rights, including problems of trade union rights, forced labour and prisoners of war and freedom of information are discussed. Of these, the section dealing with the economic development of under-developed areas is the most pertinent and the methods envisaged during 1954 to achieve this aim are briefly described. The proposal advanced some years previously for the setting-up of a special United Nations fund for economic development was again examined although no concrete steps were taken to have the fund inaugurated. In addition a proposal for an international finance corporation to encourage productive private enterprise and an attempt to devise ways of increasing the international flow of private capital were also explored. The wide difference of opinion between the under-developed, capitalist and planned economies is clearly shown in the summaries of the discussions on world economic and social problems and it is apparent that successful international co-operation on these problems will continue to prove extremely difficult.

The remainder of the first part of the book deals with questions concerning the non-self-governing territories and the international trusteeship system, legal questions and finally administrative and budgetary matters.

The work of the specialised agencies of the United Nations makes up the second part of the book. Of all the agencies, the work of the Food and Agriculture Organisation is likely to be of special interest to Australian readers. Its work in economics during 1954 reflected the changing world supply-demand relationship as can be recognised in two of the principal recommendations of the FAO Conference of the previous year. It was suggested to governments that they plan for the selective expansion of agricultural production and the consumption of specific foods and other agricultural products most needed to raise world nutritional and general living standards. The other recommendation was concerned with the problem of dealing with agricultural surpluses and a set of general principles to be observed in their disposal was made to Member Governments. These were designed to prevent any interruption to the normal pattern of production and international trade.

This attractive and well documented book should set the standard for all yearbooks. The brief and precise presentation of discussions within the United Nations must act as a guide to all engaged in the preparation of such books. The wide range of United Nations' activities comes as a surprise when summarised in one volume and it is of particular interest to read of some of the activities of this Organisation which are seldom publicised in Australia. There can be no doubt of the value of this volume to the student of international affairs as well as to the general reader.