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into profits rather than lower prices to consumers, competing organizations might develop in order to enter such lucrative fields. This would probably lead to competitive expenditure which would add to marketing costs and neutralize or reverse economies that might have been intended.

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### BOOK NOTES.

**Proceedings of the Seventh International Conference of Agricultural Economists.** London: Oxford University Press. (Geoffrey Cumberlege), 1950. Pp. xii, 372. 47s. od.

This volume, the seventh of a series dating back to 1929, contains substantially verbatim reports of the papers and discussions of the International Conference of Agricultural Economists held at Stresa, Italy, in August, 1949. The conference was attended by agricultural economists and others from twenty-five countries, and papers were read on a wide variety of subjects.

Superficially, it might appear that international conferences of workers in a specialist field, such as this one, provide a useful means of furthering the study of the subject matter of that particular field. The Proceedings under review suggest, however, that international conferences are not characterised by the level of discussion necessary to promote a fuller understanding of their subject. Their atmosphere of self-conscious internationalism tends to stimulate the patriotic and ideological sentiments of the participants, some of whom seem obliged to disguise these sentiments with an uncritical tolerance of all points of view.

The conference did not conceive the subject matter of agricultural economics narrowly, as economics with application to agriculture; speakers insisted on the right to draw on the fields of sociology and political science as well—sciences which, since they contain a larger normative element than economics, are more subject to ideological confusions. The choice of topics for the three main theoretical discussions—"Diagnosis and Pathology of Peasant Farming," "Agricultural Co-operation and the Modern State," and "The Spread of Industry into Rural Areas"—attests to the Conference's interest in sociological and political questions. The wide scope of these topics, together with the time limit imposed upon the speakers, led to a fairly low level of discussion, most speakers being content to either express opinions without corroborative argument, or give factual accounts of happenings in their own countries. Professor Ashby's closing remarks in the discussion on co-operation, that "the day's proceedings have brought together an interesting and useful collection of information on the condition of agricultural co-operatives in various countries, but we still need further study of relationships between co-operatives and the State," would apply, suitably amended, to the other theoretical discussions.

Professor Ashby's paper on "Agricultural Co-operation and the Modern State," although penetrating and provocative in many respects, is questionable in others. In the first place, his insistence that co-operatives are organised "for the benefit of the members and not for the benefit of the co-operative as a legal entity," prevents his analysis from dealing adequately with co-operatives as independent institutions which have interests of their own, separate from the collective interests

of their members. This denial of the independence of co-operatives leads, on the economic level, to the refusal to apply to them the analysis of the firm. This, in turn, leads to a denial that co-operative surplus is profit, a confusion between profit, economies of sale and monopolistic surpluses, and a denial that co-operatives' operating funds constitute capital. In line with the comments made earlier in this review, it is suggested that these biases spring from Ashby's advocacy of the "co-operative commonwealth" as the "only option for those who fear collectivization."

In addition to the three theoretical papers already mentioned, thirteen others, on a variety of topics, were read. These include "The Machinery of the Forward Price-Fixing in British Agriculture," "Farm Prices and the Outlook in the United States," "The Principal Problems of Italian Agriculture," "Food and Agriculture in the European Recovery Programme," "Some Aspects of Canada's International Trade in Farm Products," "Land Valuation and Credit in the United States," and "Reducing Costs of Agricultural Production in a High-Cost Area." Most of these, dealing as they do with more specific questions, are not open to the same criticism as was made in respect of the theoretical discussions, but, at the same time, are likely to be of less permanent interest.

In summary, this book contains, in convenient form, a considerable amount of valuable factual information about the economics of agriculture in various countries. In addition, it raises many theoretical and practical issues of interest to agricultural economists, but its treatment of these issues is, in many cases, disappointing. Nevertheless, the book is worthy of serious consideration by workers in agricultural economics and related fields.

**Wartime Economic Planning in Agriculture—A Study in the Allocation of Resources.** Bela Gold. New York: Columbia University Press (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege), 1949. Pp. 594. 44s. od. (sterling).

Dr. Bela Gold has written a detailed and well-documented account of the allocation of agricultural resources in the United States during World War II. In doing this, he also had in mind a broader objective, namely, to draw inferences with regard to national economic planning in general. He sought to analyse how wartime economic planning worked in American agriculture and concluded that there were many shortcomings. From his account, it is apparent that America did not do all that it could have done to increase food production in the directions considered most urgent. In addition, some of the expansion that did take place was due to fortuitous circumstances, such as favourable weather, rather than planning activities.

The main portion of the book, as far as the analysis of resource allocation is concerned, is contained in Parts B, C and D. Part A contains two introductory chapters and part E discusses practical difficulties in planning.

Part B deals with agricultural production in the United States. The author shows how allocation of the various resources (land, livestock, manpower, farm machinery, and fertilizers) fell short of planned objectives. Shortcomings in this phase of agricultural mobilization were, in Dr. Gold's view, due mainly to ineffective leadership in the administration and lack of perseverance on the part of officials responsible for

the execution of plans. The author argued strongly that changes in the scale and composition of agricultural output during the war years should have been greater in view of urgent needs and practical potentials. He held that officials were too willing to reduce goals in the face of opposition from various interest groups rather than press for the fulfilment of plans. In his opinion, changes in the channels of production would have been greater if more had been done to provide incentives and encourage farmers to make changes in the directions required. He went further and argued that Congressional insistence, particularly in the early war years, on fair returns to the producers of all farm products did not result in sufficient shifts in output in accordance with the relative urgencies of war requirements.

Part C deals with the distribution of food produced. In this field, too, the shortcomings are emphasized and the author indicates that domestic food consumption was not sufficiently restricted. Part D is concerned with agricultural mobilization after 1944. This section seems to repeat some of the argument found earlier and might well have been abbreviated or incorporated in parts B and C.

In part E, Dr. Gold discusses planning more broadly and considers in more detail the various pressures encountered in carrying plans into effect. Mention is made of the difficulties of planning (especially in wartime) due to indeterminacy of future needs and potentials. However, the author considers the influence of extra-governmental groups caused more pressure on planning than did uncertainty. Among the more important of these pressure groups, he lists farmers, processors and distributors of agricultural products, consumers, the suppliers of farm machinery, fertilizers and credit, and the other war industries competing with agriculture for scarce resources. In addition to external pressures there were problems within the government framework itself which hindered mobilization plans. The most important of these was the number of disagreements between Congress and the executive agencies. Others were frictions between and within executive agencies.

Although most of the shortcomings indicated by Dr. Gold reflected on the administration, in the case of food rationing he pointed out that shortcomings were concerned with the policy pursued. He argued that the potentialities of rationing, as a means of diverting resources in accordance with war urgencies, were reduced by lack of integration with the over-all policy objectives of food control.

Beside being useful in giving a detailed account of the utilization of American agricultural resources during World War II, and immediately thereafter, the book will be of interest to economists for its analysis of the issues involved in attempting to direct the allocation of agricultural resources in order to produce a certain scale and composition of output. The length of the book could have been reduced by eliminating some repetitive detail in connection with shortcomings. There is sometimes a feeling that he has over-emphasized his main arguments. The more general work on planning has interesting implications for political theory but the length of the book could have been reduced, without affecting its main purpose, by a more summary treatment of this section.

**Economics of a Fruit Farm.** R. R. W. Folley. London: Oxford University Press (Geoffrey Cumberlege), 1951. Pp. xi, 104. 23s. 9d.

In this volume the author presents an economic biography of the first fifteen years' experience in the management of a hundred-acre orchard situated in a favourable locality of England and specialising in the growing of dessert apples.

The book aims to fulfil a two-fold purpose—first, to provide a guide to the practical farmer of the conditions likely to be experienced over a period of years if he follows certain management practices, and second, to furnish the professional economist with a more detailed and analytical treatment of data over the period covered.

The farm is said to be in a typical locality but some doubt remains as to whether the farm is itself typical. The author's statement that "it can be regarded in most respects as typical of its age" cannot be construed to signify that the farm labour, capital resources and the quality of management are typical of British farms in the same line of production.

Emphasis is placed upon the need for an adaptable farm programme and a worthwhile attempt is made to calculate the financial costs and returns resulting from the practice of adapting the farm programme to meet changing market situations. The book also attempts to assess the value of good farm practices, particularly in regard to grading and marketing.

The work provides information which should prove of value to the British orchardist. The grower himself, in a foreword, has said "it should prove extremely comforting to those who are reluctant to risk making mistakes, provided that in the absence of private means they are willing to shun delights and live laborious days." However, one naturally asks the question, how reliable as a guide to the future is a book based upon the experiences of a farm established in 1932 and selling its first full crop in 1939? It may not prove nearly so comforting to a man buying an orchard in 1950 or 1951.

For the economist there is material of some interest, including a final section giving economic derivations and graphical illustrations of "certain noteworthy features of finance, operation and performance" which the publisher has termed "an almost unique history of capital investment and returns." The history may be unique in a sense not appreciated by the publisher, namely, the farm and the period (1932 to 1947) may themselves be unique and not likely to be repeated.

**A Handbook of Tropical Agriculture.** G. B. Masefield. London: Oxford University Press (Geoffrey Cumberlege), 1949. Pp. viii, 196. 23s. 6d.

Within the space of less than two hundred pages the author has aimed to provide a detailed description of agriculture as practised in tropical regions. The style of presentation is necessarily compact.

The book is divided into four parts. Part I provides a general description of tropical agriculture. It deals with soils and environment, implements, irrigation and certain economic aspects. Part II, the major section of the work, discusses the many crops which are grown in these regions. The fact that more than ten cereal crops are dealt with in the space of eight pages while the discussion on twenty-one different types of fruit are compressed into eleven pages gives an indication of the summarised form in which the material is presented. Part III deals with agricultural diseases and pests and Part IV with livestock.

In his preface Masfield has anticipated any criticism on the score of undue brevity. His aim has been to provide a practical handbook for the benefit of the farmer, businessman and administrator. In providing this reference material for residents in the tropics he does not overlook the needs of newcomers. For example, he offers the following advice regarding small stock:

Newcomers to the tropics sometimes find difficulty in distinguishing the local sheep from the goats, and may be helped by the simple diagnostic feature that goats' tails stick up and those of sheep hang down.

Five short appendices are provided and also, as becomes a work of reference, a fairly complete index of topics discussed or referred to in the text.

**Farmers Progress.** George Henderson. London: Faber and Faber, 1950. Pp. 230. 10s. 6d. (sterling).

On the dust jacket the publisher has announced that "all through the book runs the true peasant philosophy." Having read the book one is left with the impression that peasants are inclined to dogmatism and are often apt to be dull. However, despite the author's blunt opinions, and notwithstanding the fact that the book is intended primarily for English farmers (therefore containing much that is inapplicable to Australian conditions), many of the farm management practices outlined by the author could be copied, with profit, by local farmers.

Henderson stresses the importance of using farm labour efficiently and gives details of some methods by which unnecessary effort can be eliminated from farm jobs such as milking. He also emphasises the need for proper care and intelligent use of tools and machinery, but the central theme of the book is the business of farming.

Although roundly castigating all theorists and academicians, Henderson is as keen to enunciate principles as any theorist is likely to be. The following quotations illustrate his approach to farm management:

The establishment of a profitable farm is dependent on three things. The gross annual output must be equal to the capital invested; and equal to at least twenty times the calculated or actual rent; while the total labour charge must not exceed one-quarter of the gross output.

And again:

The capital will have to be carefully laid out to give the very highest rate of return; nothing must be locked up in deadstock which could be growing in livestock. The stock with the very highest rate of economic conversion must play an important part, and must lend itself to the re-financing of other branches of the business, i.e., milk sold in the autumn will provide the money to buy day-old chickens in the spring; cockerels fattened early would pay for pullets reared later, and so it goes on.

Among the illustrations are some specimens of record sheets which would enable a farmer to keep detailed records of all his farm operations. The book also includes a section on the breeding and management of pedigree stock.

The intrusion of irrelevant anecdotes to illustrate principles and the tendency to judge entire branches of knowledge—genetics, agricultural science and economics—according to his personal opinion or preconception of people engaged in those pursuits detracts from the interest of what is otherwise a useful farmer's handbook.

**Swine Production.** W. E. Carroll and J. L. Krider. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1950. Pp. viii, 498. \$5.00.

The authors, both of the University of Illinois, intended this book primarily as a textbook for college students. Hence a wide range of authorities has been consulted and extensive bibliographies listed at the end of each chapter.

All aspects of swine production, both technical and scientific, are comprehended within the range of the text but, notwithstanding this diversity, cost of production is the focal point which is clearly highlighted as the climax to every section. Profit-making being the main stimulus to undertaking swine production in the first place, it is only logical that economic considerations should be used at each stage of production as the major yardstick of success in the enterprise.

Breeding, herd improvement and nutrition, *inter alia*, are treated in detail. Specific problems are discussed and recommendations, supported by experimental and other authoritative data, are made. All topics are grouped into four main parts, labelled respectively Organisation, Establishment, Management and Feed, and each of the four headings is designated "a factor in the cost of production."

Though it is principally intended to satisfy the requirements of college students, and therefore shows some pre-occupation with principles, the book also constitutes a first-class manual for the practical man, especially the specialised pig breeder.

**Agricultural Price Analysis.** Geoffrey S. Shepherd. Ames: The Iowa State College Press (Third Edition), 1950. Pp. vii, 270. \$3.50.

This is one of a group of three very useful books written by Professor Shepherd to cover the related fields of agricultural marketing, price analysis and price policy. The other two books, also published by the Iowa State College Press, are *Marketing Farm Products* and *Agricultural Price Policy*. These three works replace the author's original *Agricultural Price Analysis* (1941).

The present edition contains some new material and the statistics have been brought up to date. The chapter on "The Theory of Price Stabilization and Price Discrimination" has been extended by the addition of a brief discussion of the principles of export dumping and an application of the analysis to conditions in the United States. Three new chapters have been added, dealing, respectively, with differentials in prices with respect to geographical areas, time and the various grades of a product. This edition also contains a chapter on futures prices, with particular reference to the relationship of cash prices and futures prices in the United States.

The chapter on "Parity Prices of Farm Products" includes a new table (pp. 234-5), showing index numbers by months of prices paid (including interest, taxes and wage rates) and prices received by United States farmers during the years 1910 to 1949. A section has been added to this chapter to deal with movements in the purchasing power of farm products. A graph (p. 246) shows that the purchasing power of farm products varies about half as much as the price of farm products. Shepherd points out that, although these two variables move in the same direction, the prices paid by farmers do not vary so much as the prices received by farmers. "Thus the purchasing power of farm products does not go up and down in the same track. It loops the loop." (p. 248.)

The chapter on "Appraisal of Parity Prices," which appeared in the second edition, has been replaced by a new one on "Modernized Parity Prices," which contains a close examination and explanation of changes in the parity formula introduced by the Agricultural Acts of 1948 and 1949. The latter part of the chapter is devoted to a discussion on parity income and parity net income. The author claims that income provides a more accurate measure of agricultural well-being than prices, but points out some complications connected with the concept of parity income.

This edition has been produced in a very readable manner, as was the last. Professor Shepherd has characteristically included a lot of factual material, from American agricultural statistics, to elucidate his theoretical discussion. This enhances the value of the book as a reference text.

**Rural Cuba.** Lowry Nelson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (London: Geoffrey Cumberlege), 1950. Pp. x, 285. 36s. 9d.

This book presents a comprehensive account of the conditions of rural life in Cuba. For the most part, the book has been written from detailed information gathered by the author during a year of investigation of the rural life of the Caribbean while he was acting as rural sociologist in the U.S. Department of State.

When engaged on his study, Nelson received full co-operation from Cuban Government officials. For the arduous task of surveying in detail eleven carefully chosen sample areas, he employed the assistance of a number of agricultural inspectors and trained interviewers who acted under his direction.

The book contains information on a variety of aspects of rural life in Cuba such as the factors—geographic, cultural and historical—which have influenced the character of contemporary rural life in that country. Nelson also presents more detailed data on such aspects of the rural scene as family habits, patterns and techniques of land use, farm tenure and farm income, the structure of Cuban rural society, as well as levels of education and social participation enjoyed by the people in country areas.

To the extent that many of the features and problems of rural society in Cuba are intimately related to ethnological and geographic conditions peculiar to that country, this book may have only a limited interest for those primarily concerned with the Australian agricultural scene. Nevertheless, by the same score, the book will be of value to those interested in comparative sociology and the study of those rural problems which spring from the cultural heritage of the people on the land as well as from the varied opportunity offered by geographical circumstance.

**Progress and Economic Problems in Farm Mechanization.** Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Washington: 1950. Pp. vii, 88.

This short publication, prepared by Dr. A. M. Acock, of the Economics Division of F.A.O., contains some interesting factual material about trends in the mechanization of agriculture in all parts of the world. However, it does not, in the reviewer's opinion, fulfil the promise of its title. The factual material, if not particularly detailed, is quite well presented. But the discussion of trends and particularly the problems associated with recent and current developments in farm



mechanization is very general and quite superficial. It is unfortunate that the first F.A.O. publication dealing with the subject of farm mechanization is not more thorough in its treatment of the problems confronting farmers and governments, particularly in the more backward agricultural countries.

The report is divided into two sections. The first deals in general terms with the use, production and trade in tractors and agricultural implements on a world basis. The second section is devoted to a discussion of trends and problems by regions. As might be expected, a relatively large space is devoted to mechanization in North America which, with the exception of the United Kingdom, is the most highly mechanized agricultural area in the world. Trends and problems in Oceania are dealt with in less than four pages, despite Dr. Acock's Australian experience.

The generalised approach adopted in the report leads to some statements of doubtful validity such as the following :

Where . . . land is plentiful and relatively cheap, there may be less incentive to adopt mechanical power requiring fuels which cannot be produced on the farm and involving repair and replacement costs. Thus in Australia and Argentina the horse is still widely used for draft power, though large modern machinery is in general use for soil-working, seeding and harvesting.

In fact, the draught horse has almost completely disappeared from Australia's wheat farms and, even in the more intensive farming districts, is rapidly being replaced by the small tractor.

**Statistical Yearbook, 1949-50.** Statistical Office of the United Nations. New York, 1950. Pp. 555. 50s. (Available in Australia from H. A. Goddard Pty. Ltd., 255A George-street, Sydney.)

This is the second issue of the comprehensive yearbook prepared by the Statistical Office of the United Nations in collaboration with the specialized agencies of the United Nations, other inter-governmental organizations and the national statistical offices of the various countries.

The yearbook contains an extensive collection of economic statistics and also international data relating to population and social and cultural subjects. Eight new tables, introduced in this issue, are valuable additions.

Detailed statistics are given for most countries, separately for the years 1930 to 1949. An appendix of conversion coefficients and factors is very useful.

The text is reproduced in both English and French.