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OF
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INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

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OUR Executive Vice-President, who has accomplished such a difficult and important task as that of framing a programme of papers around a central theme, has been generous to me in that he has not fettered me with a too tightly worded subject; he has left it to me to define the area of discussion as I wish. Obviously, my part in this should be to deal with that international aspect of co-operation which is accomplished on a voluntary basis from the individual point of view. This is distinct from and complementary to the papers already given dealing with the place and function of international organizations founded on an official basis. Here I mean those where their members have to act for and respect governmental policies. As most of you will be aware there is almost an unlimited variety and number of international organizations which either have a direct economic approach or are loosely attached and allied to the economic field. It would be fruitless as well as difficult for me to give even a crisp catalogue of them. (At this stage may I make my apologies to our friends from areas other than Europe, for although I know there are international organizations in their areas equally suitable for inclusion, I had for fairly obvious reasons to confine myself to European examples.) I think it will make the purpose of my choice clearer if I give some indication of how I should group them according to their natures, their objectives, and their functions. Although there are several ways in which they can be broadly classified, for our purpose they can be divided into two groups :

1. Those that are allied to, and supported to a considerable extent by, national organizations.
2. Those that have only loose national connexions and whose membership is personal and directly international.

They may be very diverse in the way they approach their problems. For example, we have organizations which emphasize humanitarian and religious principles, while others lay more stress on purely technical and materialistic aims; others again have been formed to facilitate professional interchange of techniques and discussions, while

others concentrate on the study of practical problems and the development of professional techniques.

To illustrate these I have chosen six organizations all of which in some measure demonstrate the voluntary principle in action, so far as constitution and objectives are concerned. These six fit roughly into two groups: the first to a greater or lesser extent have been formed (as has, for example, the European Association of Animal Production) to promote the interests of special groups, through dealing in a practical way with the problems in their particular fields. The findings of bodies of this kind are frequently formulated as resolutions directed to legislators in the hope that they may stimulate government action. They wish such action to be directed in the first instance towards the welfare of particular groups or sections of the community.

The other group, of which our own I.C.A.E. is typical, comprises those organizations whose orbit is world wide in the sense that their efforts are not directed towards any one section of the community, except in so far as there may be specific problem areas requiring attention of thought or action.

To illustrate the first group I have chosen three organizations: the International Federation of Agricultural Producers, the European Association of Animal Production, and the European Confederation of Agriculture. I have selected these not only for their particular activities but because I have noted with interest that some of our members have taken, and still are taking, an active part in their promotion. This should enable them to correct any weakness in my presentation and thereby add interest to our discussions.

The first with which I wish to deal is the I.F.A.P. I give it pride of place simply because it deals directly with farmers, covering as it does farmers' organizations the world over. It is an international body directly interested in producers' problems, and looking therefore at the world's economic scene in a highly realistic way. It attempts to assess the economic position so as to establish prosperity trends and the status of its members generally throughout the world. I judge it to be of the utmost importance that there should be a body with direct access to farming opinion, and able thereby to make a farmer's appraisal of conditions affecting farmers. It is of great moment too that such a body can work on a world scale. The organization is based mainly on national groups which in turn reflect not only the economic climate of each area but also its psychological pattern. The elected representatives of each country are delegated to put forward the views of their areas but at the same time to seek to

reconcile any conflicting views and interests of different regions and countries. The Federation has carried out a dual task, first by bringing agricultural problems to the notice of governments, and secondly by making producers in any one part of the world more aware of the difficulties and aspirations of producers in others. This is particularly important now for areas where producers compete with one another for international markets, or where domestic products may be in conflict with imports. The British scene is an obvious example at the present time.

The I.F.A.P. not only organizes meetings of delegated representatives on a global scale every year or so to discuss at first hand how best to present the farmers' case, but has a central office in Paris (the head of which, Mr. Savary, I am glad to say has honoured us with his presence here) where they collect and collate statistical data pertaining to agriculture. In a real sense they are studying, in a dynamic way, the very theme of this Conference: *Agriculture and its Terms of Trade*. Although in the main they use financial and physical data, their object is to measure and assess the relative position of producers the world over and to see as far as possible that each is given a fair deal.

The European Confederation of Agriculture is another international organization which seeks to deal with general agricultural and economic problems but, unlike the first, it is limited in membership geographically. It consists mainly of scientists whose training and primary interests are more technical than economic, though their conference programme places considerable stress on economics. Meetings are held each year in a different part of Europe so that members may build up an intimate picture of agricultural and social conditions throughout the continent. They have a central secretarial office at Brougg (the head of which, I am glad to say, is also an honoured member of the I.C.A.E. though unable, I regret, to be present here). All the representatives are selected as *individual* members; but most European governments give considerable support to the Confederation and in particular help members engaged in government service to attend its meetings. I have an impression that members who are supported in this way may be expected to take a special interest in their own national problems and, perhaps, to promote their national policies. To the extent that this may be so it would limit the objective approach and even create a partisan attitude in considering problems of different countries. A characteristic feature of their conference is that final resolutions are formulated and put forward as policy statements indicating the lines on which they hope that governments will take action.

Another organization on a continental scale, which can also be considered international, is the European Association of Animal Production. Membership is confined to Europe and the countries around the shores of the Mediterranean. It is composed of national groups, whose primary interests originally were confined to seeking out those physical factors in animal husbandry which affect the general welfare of agriculture. Its horizons are now wider and it is apparent in their discussions of the farmer's problems that much greater weight is given to the implications of economic and social factors. The society is mainly supported by scientists trained in the various pure and applied sciences, with a sprinkling of economists. Most of the members are experts engaged in governmental and university research work. To a considerable extent therefore the organization is financed by governments, both as regards the central executive office in Rome, and as to attendance at the triennial meetings. But other bodies, as for example voluntary agricultural societies, have played no mean part in giving support and also in nominating members to attend not only the regular meetings but also the commissions which are called together as occasion may arise. This Society, like the C.E.A., chooses a new site each time so that members may widen their experience. The purpose of the meetings, of course, is to discuss technical and economic questions affecting agriculture. A great deal of individual freedom is expected, but there is a natural tendency to stress the problems of particular countries, especially where economic questions arise. Like the C.E.A., the Society adopts the principle of formulating resolutions. I myself incline to the view that this may detract from the objectivity of the discussions and could even leave room for pressure groups to operate.

Turning now to my second group it is interesting to note the width and variety of motives and objectives of the three types. On the one hand, we see the efforts made in a very practical form by the World Council of Churches, which was established in 1951 at Evanston, Illinois. (One of the founder members, Professor C. von Dietze, who I am glad to say is present, was I think a leading personality at its initiation.) Although the Council is not primarily concerned with material needs, it took a very important step at the outset by establishing a commission to study and collect data on the tragic problems of refugees on the one hand, and how best to render first-aid in all emergency situations on the other. This they are well fitted to do as they can act more swiftly than a more formal international governmental body could possibly do. Being non-political, and having no frontiers, they escape many restrictions and frustrations, a most

important consideration at any time, but especially just now when barriers grow more numerous and no less formidable. Membership is individual but is closely associated with and to a certain extent governed by religious bodies. The organization forms a remarkable bridge between official bodies and voluntary effort, and does much by its practical work and even more by its humane influence to enlighten world public opinion.

The International Economic Association which probably has the closest affinity to our own Conference was established nine years ago, largely I think through the agency of U.N.E.S.C.O. whose members, and particularly the Director, appreciated the importance of economic factors in determining the social and cultural status of the world's population. The Association is made up mainly of pure economists, a fact which clearly distinguishes its membership, its function, and its outlook from our own organization with which I shall deal shortly. They tend to approach their problems somewhat in the abstract and aim at the formulation of fundamental principles. They deal also, of course, with concrete economic facts and take a lively interest in national and international programmes and policies. The organization links twenty-five or so national associations who have individual memberships. Incidentally, I think Professor A. Lewis, who so ably paved the way for us at the outset of our meetings, is a distinguished member. Meetings are held, as with us, every three years, each time in a new place. Also, like ourselves, a central theme is chosen around which all the opening papers and discussions are related. Possibly this is a case of 'imitation being the most sincere form of flattery', since we, historically, are the greatest in years and adopted this practice as one of our principles at the outset. We have yet another feature in common in that the International Economic Association are thorough believers in discussion. Their speakers are leading authorities covering a wide range both geographically and professionally and representing a great variety of schools of thought. Free discussion from the floor is encouraged and recorded, to be printed later with the speakers' and openers' contributions. No attempt is made to arrive at any firm set of conclusions that could be put forward as resolutions. All the discussions are obviously designed with the central objective of establishing fundamental incontrovertible truths. Care is taken to clarify the meaning of terms and to explain all analytical processes. This is important, as some terms in economics, as in other branches of learning, are liable to vary in their usage. The Association has the distinction of being highly abstract in its procedures and objectives. This makes it a very necessary

complement to organizations such as our own, as it helps to clarify areas of thinking which otherwise might go unchallenged. Their work must also be of great value to legislators and governments, as it prevents action from being taken on false premises which may thereby endanger the welfare of the community.

May I at this point digress slightly in order to make my views clear? I have been attempting, thus far, to see something of the realm of international co-operation. The organizations I have mentioned were chosen as types to illustrate the variety of sources from which they have arisen, as well as the objectives of their founders. The techniques they adopt for fulfilment, the methods by which they are financed, and the limitations of their fields of study and discussion are also noteworthy. Each has its place in the unravelling of the tangled skein of social phenomena and in implementing such findings as may be soundly established by the endeavours of its members.

International Conference of Agricultural Economists

Finally we come to the study of our own organization, and I am certain I shall be forgiven if I deal with this in rather more detail than I have given to the others. This seems to be an appropriate opportunity also to guide the thoughts of some of our younger members to what we stand for and what we have always hoped to achieve. In this it is important to say something of our early history and the progress we have made over the last three decades since we held our initial meeting.

Although it is sometimes difficult and even dangerous to attempt definitions, I think we can safely distinguish our own organization by classifying it as belonging to the applied sciences. As such it is our responsibility to develop means of applying established fundamental principles the neglect of which is likely to lead to undesirable ends. We have not only to determine the soundness of general principles, but also to develop philosophies and techniques of wide application that will cover a wide variety of circumstances in both short and long run. This, we hope, will lead to improved practices and conditions not only for those engaged in agriculture but for mankind in general. Our final goal is not rural betterment but the uplifting of standards for all.

I have probably said enough to show the width of the field now open to the agricultural economist and (more important for our present purpose) the realm in which agricultural economics as a profession has a new and wider responsibility than was thought at one time to be the case. Of course, we have to attribute much of this new

responsibility to the keen observation of the few who had the zeal to make the knowledge of our science universal.

It may be interesting and helpful, even for those of us on the higher rungs of the age ladder, if we recapitulate here some of the statements of progress made by our President over the years, as well as the opening statement made by the late Dean Ladd, who along with the President was one of the leading founders. It was Ladd in fact who stated that the Conference was formed 'to bring together agricultural economists from many countries to discuss research results and research methods that were of common interest; to discuss national and international problems in the field of agricultural economics; and to promote a more effective and more rapid exchange of agricultural economic information'.

You may have noticed that in the preface to each volume of *Proceedings* Dr. Elmhirst, as President, recorded his views of the changing economic climate of each period and the major problems of the times; he also noted the progressive widening and deepening interests of agricultural economists; in addition he referred to the growing demands which are being made on economists by those in authority when they seek sound bases for their new measures. In Volume III, for example, he made reference to the fact that it was only then that the notion was being discounted that slumps and booms could be cured at the will of the natural sciences. He then urged that the various disciplines involved in the study of agricultural problems should come together, to study and synthesize their findings. He also posed as a leading question: What quality of life as well as what means of livelihood should social scientists have as their goal for the rural dweller? Again, in 1938 he stated that the circumstances of the previous ten years had imposed alterations in the scope and responsibility of agricultural economists that it had been too difficult to foresee ten years before. It is one of our constant duties to be up to date, a duty to which attention is continually drawn throughout the other volumes. I mention this to show how the agricultural economist over the years has been adapting his work and his thinking in response to the new pressures arising from the stress of the new age which was ushered in by World War II. More particularly I have mentioned it to show how the I.C.A.E. has functioned during that time, by greatly facilitating the flow of economic knowledge and experience between agricultural economists throughout a great part of the world.

There is little need for me to deal at length with the work of the Conference. This is recorded fully enough in the nine volumes of the *Proceedings*, and in the *International Journal of Agrarian Affairs*. My

files bear witness to the value of the material contained in these volumes and looking back, as is the privilege of age, it is interesting to see how timely most of our themes have been. It was Dr. Warren of Cornell, a founder of the Conference and by general consent an outstanding professional colleague, who did more than anyone to start us off in the right direction.

From this brief historical picture of our activities I think we can safely conclude that our work has had considerable influence on the value as well as on the spread of agricultural economics. I know there are those who are slightly cynical and some who have the 'once and for all' attitude; there are also those who have an infallible faith in official statistics to cure all our economic ills. Regarding the cynics, I well recall being tackled by a scholarly divine at Stresa who, after briefly perusing the volumes of our 7th Conference, said: 'Words, words. It is deeds we need for curing the economic problems of Italy.' I shall not give my reply in full, but I reminded him how much he in his own calling used the printed word. Again, I have met some of my own countrymen who have said that a conference of our kind may have been needed thirty years ago but that now we have F.A.O., O.E.E.C., and similar bodies, there is no need to duplicate their work. Those who hold such a view can scarcely have made a serious study of the differences in our constitutions and, even more important, the complementary nature of the work of our Conference with that of official bodies. Obviously, the official bodies are made up of national groups financed by governments. They have to speak to national policies when discussing problems of an international character. There is nothing wrong in this but it is easy to see its limitations. In contrast, our members speak as free individuals responsible to themselves alone and guardians of their own reputations in face of the lively and relevant criticisms of their professional colleagues. In this way we can thrash out problems with absolute freedom and with none of the severe restrictions which frontiers place upon the individual who is appointed to represent his country's point of view. As evidence in this context, may I instance the first Director of F.A.O. who urged upon our President, as he himself told us in his address to the 7th Conference, that his duty was to get the Conference under way as soon as possible. He went on to emphasize the difference between F.A.O., which was inevitably composed of official representatives and government officers, while ours drew upon teachers and university research workers in addition.

In conclusion may I repeat that I am not making any special pleading on behalf of our Conference? On the contrary, I feel that its

place and function are so clear and secure that no effort of mine is necessary. It will also be clear, by implication anyhow, that I am not one who advocates clean and tidy planning for the sake of the sometimes fussy administrators. The experience of our science has shown the great value of variety in techniques and in approach when dealing with economic and social problems. At the same time we must not become too dispersed in our activities or parochial in our outlook. It is clear that we have to collaborate more and more with other disciplines; that our organization should take cognizance of what fellow organizations are doing and, more important perhaps, what they are thinking and saying. We are very dependent for much of our international economic data on agencies such as the United Nations, O.E.E.C., and the Commonwealth Economic Committee, all of whom, although their constitutions, objectives, and functions may differ, are alike in providing material which voluntary organizations can use. Our Conference is undoubtedly complementary with such bodies. Their primary function is to provide evidence on which economic and political relationships individually and collectively may be determined between nations. It is our privilege, however, and possibly our duty, to use their data as a basis for study and for discussion of the possible implications of the trends and policies revealed. Past volumes of our *Proceedings* bear some evidence of this. In this way co-operation and collaboration can have a very stimulating, fruitful, and possibly salutary effect on our ambitions as well as on our work.

Finally, it is clear that we have a deep responsibility to see that our work is such that world opinion may be influenced by it and that in all aspects of our endeavours it is truth that we are pursuing.

S. V. FRAUENDORFER, *Hochschule für Bodenkultur, Vienna, Austria*

The necessity of having organizations of an independent and private character can hardly be over-emphasized. It was mentioned in one of the preceding discussions that national governmental agricultural policy ought to have a counterweight in non-official bodies which are free to express unbiased public opinion. The situation is very similar in the international field, where an exchange of views without any consideration of governmental interference and national prejudice may be very helpful in getting a true picture of the situation.

The task which Mr. Currie had to perform was by no means an easy one, primarily on account of the very great number of organizations which claim to be international. If we compare the conditions

of today with those prevailing just after World War I when the League of Nations compiled its first handbook of international organizations, I am certain their number has at least doubled or trebled. I wonder whether this development is entirely satisfactory, because it involves certain problems which may be described by the German expression *Überorganisation*. I am doubtful whether the statement made by one of the previous speakers that 'a case can be made that the existence of such a variety of organizational structures is in itself evidence that each has its place' is tenable. I am less optimistic and think that a sort of co-ordination and, perhaps, consolidation of some of the international agencies may one day become necessary.

Even if we restrict our considerations to the international agencies dealing with agricultural economics we are faced with a variety of organizations which, as Mr. Currie clearly pointed out, are apt to enter activities of economic and social interest, at least as a sideline or by-product. This is true for organizations whose primary interests are in technical matters, as, for example, the European Association of Animal Production which he selected as a typical example. Mr. Currie might just as well have named a dozen other bodies. I do not intend to supplement his catalogue of organizations, but I would like to mention at least one organization which was recently founded and which we, as economists, have to watch closely. I refer to the European Society of Rural Sociology, which owes its origin to the initiative of our Dutch friends, mainly to Professor Hofstee of Wageningen.

Of course, I have very little to say about the excellent survey which Mr. Currie gave us on the development of our own organization which illustrates perhaps better than any other agency the scope and significance of private international groupings. There is, however, one point of practical interest which he did not mention and which in my opinion deserves the attention of this audience. We heard from him that the late Dean C. E. Ladd of Cornell University, in introducing the first volume of our *Proceedings*, mentioned among the primary goals and purposes of this Conference the promotion of 'a more effective and more rapid exchange of agricultural economic information'. Similar statements are frequently found in the statutes of other international bodies, the governmental ones by no means excluded. However, effective and rapid dissemination of knowledge on a world scale is a tremendous task, and the various bodies which have attempted to solve the problem have so far not always been successful. There is one kind of exchange of information, of course, which is,

so to say, inherent to any kind of international intercourse, namely the oral information gathered and exchanged through personal contact with colleagues from abroad and through the papers delivered at international meetings such as ours. But the impetus given by the meetings and the personal relations established there usually fall off in the intervals, and in the case of our own organization the period of three years would be dangerously long, were it not shortened by the publication of the *Proceedings* which takes place some time between the triennial meetings. But this is only a part of the problem I have in mind.

I believe that the agricultural economists of the world, and perhaps more particularly those in the smaller and less fully developed countries, are in urgent need of a current international information service on research activities as recorded in printed form. It is really surprising that such a service has not been attempted already—unless one is willing to consider the short-lived *International Bibliography of Agricultural Economics*, published between 1938 and 1946 by the former International Institute of Agriculture in Rome, as a forerunner of something better and more useful. The reason for this hesitation on the part of agricultural economists to tackle the big problems of providing an abstracting service may be that many had hoped that F.A.O., or another potent international or national agency, might be willing to start such a service. But this hope has been in vain and the gap remains unfilled. In these circumstances, and having gained—as librarian of the former Institute in Rome—some insight into the vastness of world literature in our field, I explored the various ways of coming to some positive result. After some failure, I presented to the newly founded (in 1955) International Association of Agricultural Librarians and Documentalists (I.A.A.L.D.) a proposal aiming at the foundation of a quarterly abstract journal on agricultural economics. This idea was welcomed and endorsed by the executive committee of I.A.A.L.D. at its meeting in Paris in 1957. The President of I.A.A.L.D., Mr. F. E. Mohrhardt, Director of the U.S.D.A. Library in Washington, was successful in securing financial help from an American institution for the publication of a preliminary issue of a publication which we decided to call *World Agricultural Economics Abstracts*. A limited number of copies of this sample issue are available for inspection. Other copies will be distributed by mail to all members after this Conference.

I know well that the task of producing a regular quarterly journal of this type is not an easy one. Some courage was necessary in taking this initiative, which involves a certain risk, I say risk, because it is

to be expected that criticism will not be lacking and because it cannot be foreseen whether co-operation from the various countries will be sufficiently forthcoming. However, the experience gained in the course of preparing this sample issue justifies the hope that this co-operation—already effective in several important instances—will gradually materialize and eventually cover the world, including not only the countries using one of the traditional world languages but also the remoter countries with rapidly growing research and publishing activities which at present are little known in many parts of the world because of linguistic difficulties.

Before I close I should like to express my satisfaction that the Council of the Conference adopted a unanimous resolution last night endorsing the abstracting service just mentioned and inviting the national groups to co-operate with the editor of the quarterly journal which is about to be published.

E. M. OJALA, *F.A.O. of U.N., Bangkok, Thailand*

Mr. Currie has shown a characteristic breadth of approach. He has not only discussed the contributions made to the understanding of rural problems by various international bodies, but has also set before us some of the ends to be sought by international co-operation in agricultural economics.

He has confined himself to voluntary or non-governmental associations and has drawn his illustrations mainly from Europe. I should like to extend the subject to Asia and the Far East where I work.

Dr. Mosher has already painted an authoritative picture of agricultural economics in this part of the world, and I shall not add to it. He has made it clear that programmes of training, basic fact-finding, analytical research, and the imaginative designing of local measures geared to economic advance in agriculture need to be started, broadened, or accelerated in almost all the countries. For the sound and speedy growth of agricultural economics in this region international co-operation is almost indispensable. Two kinds of international contacts are needed—those with colleagues in advanced countries overseas and those with colleagues in other countries of the region. What are the channels for this international co-operation and how can it be facilitated and extended?

As a means of non-governmental contacts outside the region, credit must first be given to the International Conference of Agricultural Economists. It was the stimulus imparted to Indian agricultural economists by the Conferences in earlier years which resulted in the

tenth session being held here in Mysore. The attendance of Asian delegates at previous Conferences has not been large, but from now onwards the impact of the Conference on Asia will be greatly strengthened. Moreover, many delegates from the more highly developed countries have gained a deeper understanding of the economic problems of agriculture in under-developed regions, which will render their future collaboration with Asian colleagues all the more fruitful.

There are other world professional associations open to agricultural technicians and economists from this region. Asian participation in them has usually been numerically slight, reflecting the relative shortage of qualified personnel, but it is increasing. The World Co-operative Alliance which held its first Asian session recently in Malaya is an avenue for useful contacts.

Mr. Currie described the International Federation of Agricultural Producers as an important means of international co-operation. This is certainly true, but I understand that only two Asian countries, India and Japan, are members of the Federation. One must hope for an enlargement of its membership among under-developed countries, because of the desirable strengthening of producer opinion that could follow in such countries and the contribution they could bring to its deliberations. The authentic voice of the Asian cultivator needs to be heard in international as well as in national councils.

Next to this Conference the most important non-governmental source of oversea co-operation for Asian agricultural economists is probably that afforded by association between Asian and North American universities. There are many agricultural colleges or institutes in this region benefiting from co-operation with fraternal American colleges. Collaboration may take the form of the secondment of staff from overseas, the financing of local research projects, or the award of fellowships for overseas study to Asian professors and lecturers. The funds for these programmes are often provided by agencies such as the Asia, Ford, and Rockefeller foundations.

In the past the agricultural economists of Asian countries have had more contacts with their colleagues overseas than with one another. It is very different in Europe where there is a relative abundance of agricultural technicians and economists engaged in education and research both outside and within governments, and where conditions generally are favourable for the formation and activities of voluntary international or regional societies.

For Asia and the Far East the most notable means for serving the objectives of international co-operation in agricultural economics mentioned by Mr. Currie have been sponsored by governments, and

their discontinuance would leave our Asian economists much more lonely than they are. On a world basis there are the world conferences or councils of F.A.O., and on a regional basis the Colombo Plan is most important. Within the region there are a number of standing committees, working groups, or *ad hoc* meetings where international co-operation and exchange of ideas proceed. I can refer for instance to the Conference of Asian Statisticians established under the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East. At present most attention is being given to means of securing effective participation in the 1960 world censuses of population and of agriculture, aiming at international comparability of data.

Another regular international group is the E.C.A.F.E. Working Party on Economic Development and Planning, which last year discussed in conjunction with F.A.O. procedures for agricultural development planning in the concept of general economic advance. Other bodies which meet regularly under the auspices of F.A.O. to discuss technical and economic questions in the field of agriculture in Asia include the International Rice Commission; the Committee on Economic Aspects of Rice; the Asia-Pacific Forestry Commission; and the Indo-Pacific Fisheries Council.

Also there are the biennial F.A.O. regional conferences, where agricultural policy-makers, technicians, and economists report on and discuss national policy for agricultural development more freely than is customary at F.A.O. world conferences. Among *ad hoc* official meetings of experts on agricultural economic matters held in this region Dr. Sen has already told us of the useful contribution made at the recent F.A.O. and E.C.A.F.E. meeting on agricultural price policies. The agricultural economists of Asian countries meet together much more frequently under these official auspices than in voluntary international societies.

Although discussions in these official groups are sometimes quite as free as at this Conference, such official groups cannot take the place of unofficial gatherings of scientists. As more economists in this region, both inside and outside government, come to grips with the basic economic problems of agriculture in their countries, they will feel a stronger need to compare research methods and results with their colleagues in adjacent countries. National societies of agricultural economists exist in India, Japan, Southern Korea, Pakistan, Philippines, and Taiwan. Here is a good framework for informal international collaboration. These societies might invite fraternal delegates from other Asian countries to attend and participate in their annual conferences. Maybe the travel expenses involved are a

deterrent. If this idea were found to have real merit perhaps the necessary funds would be forthcoming. Independent international discussion of common problems based on the analysis of reliable data might exert an important influence on national policies. This seems to be in line with Professor Lewis's thinking. In many Asian countries national science congresses exist; regional contacts might more frequently be introduced to their meetings.

Some of the more urgent questions which require international discussion in such informal groups of economists and others in this region are the procedures for agricultural development planning, techniques for the speedy and regular collection of basic economic data about agriculture, agrarian reforms, agricultural price policies, and research methodology. At inter-government level we are working on some of these, but more needs to be done.

N. WESTERMARCK, *Institute of Agricultural Economics, University of Helsinki, Finland*

The International Federation of Agricultural Producers, as you have already heard, is an association which embraces all the farmers in the world. Only national organizations independent of government can be accepted as members. The goal of I.F.A.P. is to work for the benefit of farm people, to improve their standard of living. The Federation has been at work for only ten years and the results of its activity so far cannot be considered very important. Nevertheless it has done good work in bringing together farmers from different parts of the world, from countries which are exporters and countries which are importers. I think we have been able to pool many valuable experiences, and I certainly hope that its activities will spread and grow in effectiveness within the framework of international collaboration.

W. J. ANDERSON, *University of British Columbia, Canada*

The U.N.E.S.C.O. is said to sponsor the International Economic Association. May I ask what the sponsorship means and what it involves?

J. R. CURRIE (*in reply*)

The International Economic Association was formally established in 1950. Its main purpose is somewhat similar to our own—to promote closer relations between economists and to stimulate the development of this social science. At first it held meetings annually

for a small number of selected economists, representing different branches of the subject. It is only recently that it decided to follow our example and hold triennial conferences with wider representation.

In its early stages it was sponsored mainly by the Director of U.N.E.S.C.O. who called the first meeting, I think, in 1949. At that time he felt that something had to be done to get at basic economic facts and that highly trained, mainly theoretical, economists were the most likely to help in getting a true picture. If I remember aright, U.N.E.S.C.O. undertook to carry the major financial costs of the conferences and of printing the proceedings. The Director laid down the principle that there were to be no conditions attached to the financial assistance. On the contrary, he desired the utmost freedom of action and speech for the participants. Needless to say, I think this a most laudable procedure.

Regarding the number of national affiliated associations, I think the number at present is about twenty-five, drawn from four continents. I have no real knowledge of the process by which the members are chosen, although I have been informed that great care is taken to see that the representation is wide, and that membership is drawn from various schools of thought as well as from many nations. I am very much impressed by the way they organize and carry on their conferences.