

Our work was greatly facilitated by ample factual material, following the order of the agenda, that had been prepared by United States officials. We cannot speak too highly of the competence of their organizational work and of their help in the smooth running of the Conference.

4. The whole Conference was marked throughout by the utmost cordiality and sincerity of purpose. There was an awareness that if, as is stated in the declaration, we were meeting "in the midst of" a great war, this expression had a more literal meaning for many of the countries and people represented. The wartime waste of life and wealth was, inevitably, in every one's mind. All were conscious that, even as we met in the quiet of the Virginian Mountains, people in or from most of our countries were bearing the burdens of the war. Against this was the hopeful fact that more and more effectively the United Nations are co-operating to secure victory. The same spirit and practice of co-operation, carried forward to the constructive tasks of peace, were felt to be the basic requirement of the future. Nor was any one unmindful of the failures that had marred the decades between the wars. That memory, too, pressed us to seek the greatest common measure of agreement: that we might suggest, for Governments' consideration, procedures that could in some measure help to replace restrictive trade and production practices by mutual aid and co-operation to improve standards of living and make them more secure everywhere. These sentiments, we think, are nowhere better expressed than in the words of a United States colleague* :—

"We cannot have adequate food for the people of the world without working together in innumerable ways . . . within and between nations, and utilizing all of our knowledge and our resources, our will and our good will.

"We are starting this effort in the midst of the greatest of all wars. And there is no better time to start. For this is a time when men need to have hope worthy of the suffering they are now going through, and aims worthy of the heroism they are showing in war—when we need to seek new ways to continue the wartime unity of nations into the times of peace—and when the foundations must be laid for using our wartime miracles of production for peacetime purposes."

5. The same speaker remarked also that "the problems have their national and their international aspects. By far the greater part of what needs doing, nations must do within themselves." The truth of this will be borne out by noticing, as the detailed recommendations are examined, how largely they call for governmental and co-operative action *within* countries. That emphasis was not there at the start of the Conference. Just because we were an international Conference, indeed, there was a natural inclination to stress the importance of measures on the international plane. But in discussing together how the agreed objectives could be reached, the primary importance emerged of action that lies within the competence of individual Governments. This, of course, in no wise belittles the importance of the international measures recommended.

6. Briefly, and without any attempt to paraphrase the considerable number of recommendations agreed upon, the work of the Conference's three main Sections can be sketched as follows :—

(i) *Consumption* : Present levels and requirements were discussed, mainly in relation to foodstuffs, in ample detail for some countries and less so for others; revealing always a wide and challenging gap between actual levels, even in peacetime, and the minimum that is necessary to health. Not, we hope, to give too many glimpses of the obvious, the causal relationship between poverty, malnutrition, ill health, and death are stressed in the report. More constructively, the success of particular nutritional measures is emphasized. It is a startling fact, for instance, that in Great Britain, where wartime food imports have been so much restricted in volume and variety, and housing conditions have deteriorated, the health of the nation has been maintained at a high level; "in 1942 the infant mortality rate was the lowest on record, and the general death rate showed a fall."

Though a good deal of ground was covered in the discussions and in the report, it was evident enough that the task even of assembling facts and figures for all countries was far beyond the scope of a short Conference. "It will be one of the tasks of the proposed United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization to complete the picture in dismal detail and to replace it by a brighter one."

Briefly only, some attention was given also under this general heading to agricultural and marine products other than food; their further study is remitted to the permanent organization.

(ii) *Production—Expansion and Adaptation* : As will be seen from the recommendations XII to XXII, a wide field was covered under this heading. The Committee looked first to the short-term period, where increased output of crops for direct human consumption is recommended for priority. The crucial importance is stressed of continuing, after the war, the principle of inter-governmental co-ordinated action covering production, transport, distribution, and utilization. Longer-term questions are likewise covered, with due stress on the part usefully to be taken by producers' co-operatives.

Virtually without exception, for all countries as for New Zealand, increased production was pictured as desirable and practicable, given, of course, "suitable conditions." Potential outputs were not tabulated, nor could they be with any precision; and compiling such estimates is, again, a matter better suited to the permanent organization. Yet, without requiring exact figures, it is abundantly clear that food production is possible on a scale far exceeding all realized totals. Even so, it is equally clear that human needs based on any adequate standards of health and nutrition must be far from satisfied. This truth makes sharper the challenge to men's capacity for sensible organization, and leads to the third main heading of the Conference's work.

(iii) *Distribution* : From affirming the over-shadowing necessity for international security and a "progressively expanding economy," to recommended governmental and other measures for wider food distribution, and to detailed suggestions in marketing technique, this Section covered a range of subjects to which we do no more than draw attention. It will be seen that, as in other parts of the report and recommendations, some measures are suggested of a kind already adopted by New Zealand in the recent or more distant past. Our experiences were naturally of much interest; and it was encouraging to see how closely, independently altogether of any reference to New Zealand experience,

* Paul Appleby, United States Under-Secretary of Agriculture, over Columbia Broadcasting system, 30th May, 1943.