

## MEMORANDUM SUBMITTED BY THE NEW ZEALAND DELEGATION

1. "The dominant conditions after the war," a competent authority has written, "will be short-term deficiencies and long-term surpluses." This forecast seems to summarize in a useful way the problems which face this Conference and which will face the permanent organization that must necessarily be set up to continue our work. These problems will be: first, to increase production towards meeting the threatened deficiencies, and, secondly, to initiate plans to ensure that the "surpluses" so-called—for they are, of course, not surpluses relative to human needs—will be coped with by expanding consumption, not by restricting production. The task, in short, is to raise standards of living by matching production and consumption at higher levels.

2. It is a task that in its entirety must go well beyond the scope of the present Conference and of any organization resulting from it. Trade, monetary, and broad governmental policies, internal and international, are relevant; for, in the ultimate, the problem of malnutrition is the problem of poverty.

3. New Zealand has progressively increased her farm production for export, mainly in butter and cheese, lamb, mutton and beef, wool, fruit, and other products. Given suitable conditions for their production and sale we can continue to increase the output of these and other commodities; our delegation can provide, as required, details of potential outputs. Exports represent a very large proportion of New Zealand's total production, in the case of some commodities over 90 per cent., and virtually all our exports are farm products; to them our whole economy is largely geared. We have shared the common experience of disastrous price fluctuations in agricultural products, and our Government introduced in 1936 the principle of guaranteed prices for the purpose of giving security to individual producers and enabling them to plan for the future with confidence. Experience has shown that we should not hastily scrap wartime controls and organization, but should adapt them to the solution of post-war problems. Planned increases in production will be difficult to achieve unless based on stability of market and value.

4. What can this Conference do in those fields in which there is manifestly a large measure of agreement? It will be agreed that malnutrition and low standards of living abound; and this is true of all countries. Nor will the Conference dissent from the proposition that improved nutrition is everywhere desirable. Though statistics of need are valuable and their compilation now and later is essential, we feel that in the limited time available to the whole Conference the elaboration of this aspect is needless, if only because it is already so clear that needs in food far exceed present or any probable early production totals. The factual and statistical function is by its nature a continuing job, and falls more appropriately to the permanent organization to be set up. Defining the possible functions of such an organization seems to be a key part of our common task.

5. Duplicating, no doubt, what other delegations will submit, and not attempting to schedule all the functions of the permanent organization, we would suggest consideration of the following:—

- (a) Immediate collaboration with the appropriate United Nations' planning authorities in food, raw materials, &c., to submit to Governments recommendations for production of commodities required for immediate post-war relief. It is not too soon to set up joint planning staffs for food and for other farm products. This primary function to include the maximizing of production towards meeting post-war needs, and to involve the adaptation of wartime arrangements for co-ordinated purchase, allocation, and transport of farm products:
- (b) Collaboration with existing international and other appropriate authorities (such as the International Labour Office and the Health and Economic Sections of the League of Nations) to make full use of, and to extend, their current work on problems of improving living standards:
- (c) Documentation of wartime and other emergency measures which aim to make food available in greater or less measure proportionate to individuals' need, not just in proportion to ability to pay. When production is sustained and increased by governmental and other collective measures, corresponding action on the side of consumption seems clearly indicated by experience to be essential, in the interests of producers as well as consumers. The function of a clearing-house for information and for making recommendations to Governments should be of value:
- (d) Recognizing that freedom of choice by the consumer is essential and that planning can increase, not abate, that freedom: to examine, in their bearing particularly on food consumption, possible national as well as international governmental measures to augment purchasing ability and make it more secure. These measures, while it is not suggested that they would be appropriate to all areas or all times, might include, for example, provision for social security, family allowances, &c. Such measures would call for domestic rather than international action, and are hence appropriate for treatment on clearing-house lines to enable any country to gain the value of others' experience:
- (e) To examine, in conjunction with appropriate authorities and experts, the detailed application of (i) resolutions from this Conference and elsewhere in favour of increased consumption, and (ii) plans for buffer stocks, price stabilization, &c.; these to be considered in relation to particular commodities or groups of related commodities—e.g., dairy products and all animal and vegetable fats; or wool, cotton, and staple fibres:
- (f) To assemble and disseminate statistics and other data on farm products, having regard particularly to their bearing on measures to extend and improve consumption, marketing, and production.

6. We raise for consideration the question whether the permanent organization to be set up in this field might not appropriately be confined to foodstuffs, leaving, for example, wool, cotton, and related products to be covered by a separate suitable organization; the body now contemplated, such as the International Food Office, to be integrated later with any other parallel commodity organizations in an international economic authority.

7. Because of the exclusive concern of this Conference with farm products, we feel it necessary to record our sense of one danger to be guarded against. Plans to increase farmers' output, well founded as these may be in themselves, may not be duly balanced by needed expansion in industrial production. Such a neglect could worsen rather than improve the position of the farmer, changing to his disadvantage the real terms of exchange between what he sells and what he buys. In its wide implications this is an issue beyond the scope of the present Conference; it is not, we think, a matter that can be neglected by Governments.