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SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL

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This report represents the joint effort of a number of research workers in its field in the United States. The Special Advisory Group listed below made suggestions as to the content and outline of the report. Professors H. R. Tolley and M. R. Benedict and Dr. J. S. Davis prepared the discussions.

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This report is No. 21 in a series on "Scope and Method" of research in the various sub-fields of agricultural economics and rural sociology. This series of reports is part of a program of assistance to research in these fields, upon which the Advisory Committee on Social and Economic Research in Agriculture set forth in 1925 under instruction from the Social Science Research Council. Each report undertakes to outline the research of some sub-field of agricultural economics or rural sociology and then discusses the problems in methodology that are peculiar to it. The outline of any sub-field is in large part in terms of a listing and discussion of specific research projects that have been undertaken or might be undertaken. Hence the discussion of methodology is largely in terms of specific projects.

It is expected that these reports will be useful in the following ways: First, directors of experiment stations and chiefs of divisions of agricultural economics and of rural sociology in land-grant institutions in the United States, and persons similarly responsible for direction of the research in agricultural economics and rural sociology of other types of institutions, will find the outlines of the various sub-fields of much help in laying out continuing programs of research for their institutions. Second, individual research workers, graduate students looking for thesis subjects, and teachers conducting research seminars, as well as the agencies above named, will find the listing and discussions of projects helpful in choosing suitable research projects. Third, the descriptions of research already done will save research workers from duplicating other work and help them to find a way of building upon it successfully. Fourth, the discussion of the nature of a project and the qualitative background will reveal the body of the subject-matter which needs to be mastered for its intelligent prosecution, and the difficulties involved, and thus save many research workers from launching forth upon projects for which they have not yet qualified themselves, or which may be too difficult for all but the chosen few. Fifth, the analysis of methodology will furnish a basis for a more intelligent decision as to the procedures and methods which will lead to valid and usable results. Sixth, the discussion of methodology will also suggest helpful devices in technique and details of procedure that might not otherwise be brought to the attention of the research workers. Seventh, the discussions of both scope and methods will make clear to those organizing research in any field the contributions which workers on different subjects have to offer to it, and point the way to the form of collaboration needed.

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Research Relating to Agricultural Policy --Scope and Method

INTRODUCTION

The need for research in agricultural policy presents a challenge to the present generation of agricultural economists. In no field of agricultural economics are more important decisions being made, or courses of action of more far-reaching consequence being taken, than in that of agricultural policy. Yet in few fields, either of agricultural economics or natural science, as it pertains to agriculture, has there been less conscious, objective research upon which decisions and courses of action might profitably be based.

The reasons for the limited and tardy development of research in agricultural policy are not far to seek. The field is large and complex, and for the less mature and less experienced especially, exceptionally difficult. While it can be effectively studied segment by segment, each part must be viewed in relation to the whole. This necessarily involves a breadth of vision and training which few workers have. A further limitation has arisen from the failure adequately to recognize the need for this type of research.

It is to be hoped, however, that a growing consciousness of the need for a more adequate basis upon which the many groups concerned with agricultural policy may proceed, and the development of personnel, methods and opportunities in agricultural economics generally, will extend the scope of study in agricultural policy. Should well-planned and authoritative studies of the problems giving rise to agricultural policies replace the narrow empiricism which at present so frequently serves as the basis of action for the many groups concerned, there would be little need to stress further the importance of research in this field. Research of the type here outlined will also aid in the identification and understanding of specific policies as such; in the evaluation of the desirability of policies—at least from the standpoint of certain groups—and in the appraisal of the probable efficacy of programs designed to put accepted policies into effect.

* * * * *

The intention in this outline has been to furnish a suggestive introduction to agricultural policy as a field of research rather than to summarize past or present policies or to formulate new ones. This has involved the clarification of certain essential concepts, the indi-

cation of certain promising lines of approach together with useful methods, and the presentation of certain significant types of research project.

In large part this outline is necessarily tentative. There has been little crystallization of thought as to what is involved when specific research tasks are undertaken in this field. The Committee frankly hopes that the results of its efforts will not only serve as a useful guide for a limited period, but will also pave the way for the preparation of a far better outline than is now possible.

SOME BASIC CONCEPTS

The various terms used in ordinary discussions of agricultural policy are employed in a number of different senses. The Committee recognizes that the terminology is in a formative stage and that nomenclature is little standardized as to usage either by the professional economists or by the man on the street. To avoid confusion and simplify presentation, it seems best, therefore, before attempting to discuss the problem in detail, to state the sense in which certain terms are used in this outline.

A *policy* relates to an individual or a recognizable group and is a recognizable attitude or purpose, more or less clearly and consciously crystallized, though not always explicitly defined or expressed. Policies are often implied in actions rather than clearly expressed in words, and when actually revealed in actions are sometimes at variance with the written or oral statements purporting to set forth the policies of the individuals or groups concerned. The policy group may be any one of many kinds, e.g., a governmental unit (as large as a nation or as small as a town); a business firm or corporation; a university; a farm organization; a trade association; a labor union; or one of the local units of one of these.¹

A *program* is a procedure to give effect to a policy. It may be either *adopted* or merely *proposed* for adoption. As an example we may consider the United States government's announced policy of putting the agricultural industry on a basis of equality with other industries (as expressed in the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1929). Proposed programs for accomplishing this purpose included the equalization fee plan, the export debenture plan, and the development of large-scale coöperative marketing associations. Of these only the

(1) With respect to policies of governments or organizations we may well differentiate between an *accepted policy* expressed in action (or refusal to act), and a *proposed policy*, not yet thus expressed. More or less well-defined measures may be proposed to give effect to a policy not yet accepted.

last has thus far been adopted. Programs may or may not involve public legislation and official administrative action.

The existence of positive policies and programs on the part of specific groups or governments implies a combination of the following: (1) a dissatisfaction with prevailing conditions and trends; (2) a conviction that it is possible through group or governmental action, to improve them; and (3) some measure of agreement on the nature and sources of the unsatisfactory conditions to be corrected and the mode by which the correction should be attempted. The absence of positive policies and programs implies satisfaction with prevailing conditions and trends; inability to agree upon "desirable" policies and programs; or perhaps continued faith in some form of "natural order."

Since policies as here defined are reflected and expressed in programs of action, it is usually necessary to consider both as belonging in the same general field of research. For purposes of brief expression, as in the title of *this report*, the term policy is employed to cover *both concepts*; but this may easily lead to a confusion of thought which it is desirable to avoid.

In practice policies are distinguished (or classified) with respect to:

- (a) The group or groups whose policy is denoted, e.g., British policy, Farm Bureau Federation policy, Federal Reserve policy.
- (b) The groups toward which the policy is directed, e.g., agricultural policy, Indian policy, labor policy, policy toward railway companies.
- (c) The specific phase of social activity affected, e.g., land-use policy, land-settlement policy, reclamation policy, transportation policy, marketing policy, educational policy.
- (d) The machinery through which the policy operates, e.g., tariff policy, discount policy, open-market policy, collective bargaining policy, local option policy.
- (e) The objective of the policy as it is popularly conceived, e.g., the Homestead policy, Open Door policy, closed shop policy, prohibition policy, isolation policy, the policy of national self-sufficiency.
- (f) The name of some individual actually or popularly associated with the policy in question or with some similar policy in the past, e.g., the policy reflected in the Monroe doctrine, Bryanism, Georgian liberalism, the Dawes plan.

Frequently two or more of these ideas are linked in a single expression, as, for example, the American agricultural policy, the

British wheat policy, Republican tariff policy, Federal Reserve discount policy.

Agricultural policy denotes an attitude or purpose with respect to agriculture as an industry or some phase thereof, or with respect to farmers as a class or some group of farmers. The student of agricultural policy will usually be interested not only in agricultural policy as such but also in policies directed primarily toward other industries or groups of people, for example, railways, manufacturing industries, immigrants from foreign lands, or handlers and processors of agricultural commodities, where these policies affect significantly the agricultural industry or farmers.²

Broadly viewed, therefore, agricultural policy is interpreted to embrace attitudes and purposes directed toward:

- (1) Farmers as a group or a series of groups diverse with respect to types of product grown, location, tenure, etc.
- (2) Agriculture as an industry or a complex of different supplementary, complementary and competing industries.
- (3) Other groups or industries, but having some significant effect upon agriculture and/or farmer groups.

Viewed in this light, agricultural policy embraces much more than the attitudes and purposes expressed in governmental action. It includes various group policies that are not expressed in legislation and which involve no governmental action. For example, in furtherance of the policy to raise the plane of living of farm people, the National Grange and other farm organizations have a settled program of fostering better social organization in farming communities. Their program involves the establishment of local units of the national organization in every farming community, and the development by this means of improved social contacts and a consciousness of the dignity of farming as a profession. No governmental activity whatever is involved in this agricultural policy and the programs for giving effect to it.

With respect to a group such as a farmers' organization we must distinguish between:

- (a) Its policy toward agriculture and farm people as expressed in those activities which are designed directly to improve the social and economic status of its members (self-help), and
- (b) The agricultural policy that it supports or advocates for adoption by state or federal governments, and in behalf of which its leaders devote part of their energies (government aid).

(2) In this connection H. C. Taylor states, ". . . at the present time, policies relating directly to other industries and occupations, which gravely affect the field of agriculture and the farm income, are quite as important to farmers as those which may be classed as agricultural policies."

A further distinction must be made between the policies of farmers' organizations toward agriculture and farm people (their agricultural policies) and their policies toward other industries which have a bearing on agriculture and toward other groups whose activities or aspirations have an influence on the well-being of farmers. A similar distinction applies to the policies of all groups, agricultural and non-agricultural.

Differences in the programs adopted or advocated by various groups do not necessarily mean differences in policy. They may represent differences of opinion as to the best method of attaining certain objectives concerning which there is substantial agreement.

In little of the recent writing and discussion has the term *agricultural policy* been used precisely as defined above. The Committee that prepared this report found, in examining statements bearing on agricultural policy and in discussing the subject with many agricultural economists and others, that few have had a well-defined and clear-cut concept of the term *agricultural policy* or the scope of the subject. Most of the writings and discussions seem to imply that agricultural policies are policies of the nation, or the public, toward agriculture and that the subject matter of agricultural policy is confined largely, if not entirely, to "public" or "national" problems concerning agriculture as a single industry and the farm people of the nation as a unit.

Presumably a student with this concept of agricultural policy would be concerned mostly with studies from the broad social viewpoint of "desiderata" for agriculture and with governmental measures designed to accomplish the ends desired. He would seek answers to national questions such as: What volume of agricultural production in the nation does the public desire? What is the size of the farm population desired by the nation? What plane of living does the nation desire for its farm people? When the student has answered a broad national question such as one of these to his own satisfaction, presumably he would usually turn his attention to the consideration of national laws or regulations which would help effectuate the desired policy.

The Committee that prepared this report was forced to the conclusion that a somewhat different view of the field of agricultural policy is desirable. The nation is not a single homogeneous group with a single set of attitudes and purposes. Nor is agriculture a unified, homogeneous industry. National agricultural policies as reflected in laws and administrative action are the outgrowth of differences and conflicts in the attitudes and purposes of the diverse agricultural and even non-agricultural groups of the nation. More often than not such laws and courses of action are compromises which are not wholly in accord with the attitudes and purposes of any one group. Hence it would appear that a comprehensive program of

research in agricultural policy must, in considerable measure at least, be concerned with the attitudes and purposes of groups smaller and more nearly homogeneous than the nation. This will also bring attention to bear on narrower but more specific components of national policy.

AGRICULTURAL PLANNING AND AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Agricultural planning is essentially program making. The term may be used, however, in a broader or narrower sense. In its broadest sense it signifies the formulation of a coherent, consistent program of action or *laissez faire* with respect to agriculture in all its phases. In a narrower sense, agricultural planning may signify the formulation of specific programs with reference to:

- (a) The attainment of a specific policy objective, as for example, to raise the plane of living of farm people or to hasten or facilitate the development of the agricultural lands of the nation.
- (b) Some special field of agricultural policy, as for example, land-use planning.
- (c) Some one factor of production as land, population or capital.
- (d) The agriculture of a more or less limited area, as for example, a type-of-farming area or an irrigation district.

In a still narrower sense, *agricultural planning* means the detailed planning involved in carrying into effect a program that has been adopted by a group or a government, for example, the Federal Farm Board's efforts to assist wheat farmers in the establishment of a nation-wide coöperative wheat marketing agency. As this work progressed, increasing detail in planning the procedure both of the Farm Board and of groups of wheat growers was necessary.

Agricultural planning thus includes the planning of machinery and procedures for giving effect to a policy, but need not be interpreted to exclude the actual execution of plans. In much of the recent writing and discussion on the subject agricultural planning has been interpreted to include both making plans and putting them into practice, and the type of planning considered has usually covered many phases of the agricultural industry of the entire nation or of one of its major agricultural regions. While the distinction between making plans and executing them is of importance to the research worker, the two phases of planning will often not be separate and

distinct in practice. The formulation of plans and their execution may often proceed side by side, each reacting on the other. Plans and programs may be modified materially if, as they are put into execution, they are found to be ineffective for the achievement of the desired ends.

Some agricultural plans contemplate a vast extension of governmental machinery and procedure, involving a large additional amount of public control, direct or indirect, and a corresponding limitation of individual freedom of action. On the other hand, if the policy contemplates adjustment mainly along the lines of *laissez faire*, plans designed to effectuate the policy may call for the elimination of considerable amounts of governmental machinery and control that have already been developed, and for a correspondingly greater amount of freedom of enterprise among farm people and people whose activities are connected with agriculture.

Agricultural planning may be done either by individuals or by groups. It cannot be expected, however, that plans will be executed or programs put into practice on any large scale until they have been accepted and sponsored by a group or groups of considerable magnitude. Thus a given farm bureau local or farmers' union group may become convinced, through the efforts of a single individual, that a certain plan of procedure is the one best suited to accomplish given ends. It will first seek to convince a larger unit of its own organization, possibly the state or national body, and to obtain its official support. If that is achieved the next step may be an endeavor to persuade Congress to accept the program or, possibly as an intermediate step, to attempt to enlist the support of other national farm organizations.

Research workers in agricultural policy can contribute both in the formulation of plans and programs designed to attain specified objectives and in the critical appraisal of plans formulated by others. The execution of plans is, of course, beyond the scope of research.

Many projects of the types outlined under Groups III and IV might be classified as studies in "Agricultural Planning". They involve study both of purposes and attitudes and of the programs and procedure for making such purposes or attitudes effective. Their emphasis is more largely on the planning or program-making phases of the problems considered. The projects outlined under Groups I and II place more emphasis on the study of the purposes and attitudes of the various groups.

GROUPS CONCERNED WITH AGRICULTURAL POLICY

To understand how policies and programs have come to be adopted, and how these work, it is essential to recognize that farmers do not constitute a homogeneous group; that agriculture is not a single uni-

fied industry but a complex of different supplementary, complementary and competing industries; that many groups not actively engaged in agriculture are concerned with agricultural policy; and that farmers as a heterogeneous group, and agriculture as a complex industry may be profoundly affected by policies (e.g., immigration, international relations) adopted with no intention of affecting farmers or agriculture except as the former are members of the national community and the latter an important part of its economic life.

Apart from local, state and national governments, there is a large number of distinguishable groups, more or less diverse in point of view and interests, which are concerned with agricultural policy. Some are highly organized, while others are unorganized. Some have a more or less clearly crystallized agricultural policy and have adopted a program to give effect to it. Many of the organized groups actively seek to influence the agricultural policy of other groups or of governments. All respond in more or less effective ways when their interests appear to be touched by policies or measures adopted or proposed for adoption.

Perhaps the best method of illustrating the numerous different groups and the widely divergent viewpoints that are concerned with agricultural policy is to make an informal list or classification of a few.³

It may also be helpful in assisting the student who is planning to do research in this field to focus attention on the specific types of group, organization and agency concerned with agricultural policy.

A. Non-governmental Groups Concerned with Agricultural Policy.

I. Farmer classes producing—

- (1) For world markets
- (2) For domestic markets
- (3) For narrow local markets
- (4) Largely for home consumption

II. Farmers' organizations—national, state, and/or local

- (1) National Grange
- (2) American Farm Bureau Federation
- (3) National Farmers Union
- (4) Irrigation and reclamation districts
- (5) Coöperative marketing associations

III. Political parties

- (1) Democratic
- (2) Republican

(3) Such a list is necessarily far from complete. Moreover, the bases selected for sub-dividing certain of the classes, e.g., farmer classes, are in each instance but one example of many possible types of sub-division as noted later.

- (3) Socialist
- (4) Farmer-Labor
- (5) Non-partisan

IV. Other groups

- (1) Private marketing agencies
- (2) Processors (e.g., millers, packers, canners) and their associations
- (3) Holders of farm mortgages, or of irrigation and reclamation district bonds
- (4) Commercial banks serving farming areas
- (5) Railway companies and their associations
- (6) Manufacturers of farm equipment and supplies, and of goods consumed by farmers
- (7) Merchants who sell to farmers
- (8) Industrial laborers and labor organizations
- (9) Consumers in general
- (10) Chambers of commerce—local, state, national

The above list could be extended almost indefinitely but it has been carried far enough to indicate the large number of groups more or less separate from government itself that are concerned with agricultural policy. For many purposes, policy considerations from the standpoint of the farmer group will involve sub-division of the latter on some basis other than that of the market for which production is being carried on. Groupings according to region; tenure; type of farming; race; or according to commercial scale of operations may all be required at one time or another when circumstances give rise to different viewpoints and policies on the part of western producers as against eastern producers, owners as against tenants, white farmers as against Orientals or Mexicans, or large-scale farmers as against small-scale or subsistence farmers.

B. Governmental and Publicly Supported Groups Concerned with Agricultural Policy.

I. National

- (1) Congress
- (2) Department of Agriculture and its various bureaus and offices, as the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the Forest Service
- (3) Department of the Interior, particularly the Land Office and the Reclamation Service
- (4) Tariff Commission
- (5) Interstate Commerce Commission

- (6) Federal courts
- (7) Other agencies of the legislative, executive and judicial machinery of the federal government

II. State

- (1) State legislatures
- (2) State departments of agriculture
- (3) Other departments and offices in the executive branch of state governments
- (4) State courts
- (5) State universities and agricultural colleges

III. Local

- (1) Boards of supervisors or other county administrative groups
- (2) City councils, boards of health, etc.
- (3) Local courts

As in the case of groups exogenous to the government, this classification of governmental and publicly supported groups is by no means complete. For example, the student of national agricultural policy may desire to consider Congress as being made up of many different groups, each of which has a policy with respect to agriculture. These groups are exemplified by the various committees and blocs of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Their policies are expressed by the measures bearing on agriculture which they support (or oppose), by committee reports on various bills, and by statements of members of the different groups. The policies of Congress as a whole find expression in the measures which it enacts or refuses to enact.

Similarly, the entire executive branch of the federal government might be considered as a single unit, and a unified study made of the policy of all the executive branches of the national government as reflected in the administration of laws and in all other activities of the federal departments, bureaus, offices and commissions that have a bearing on agriculture. Again, specific studies of the agricultural policy of each of several branches of the national government might be made.

Governmental groups in the various states are classified in a manner similar to those for the nation. The agricultural policies and programs of state governments may be considered from the standpoint of all branches of the government of a specified state, or even of several states, or from a narrower standpoint, as a single department or bureau of a state government or a small group in one of the houses of the legislature. Governmental groups in counties or other local units may not in all instances have significant identifiable

policies with respect to agriculture and farm people; yet in some, as in the setting of county tax rates or in making sanitary regulations covering the agricultural products that enter a municipality, definite policies are revealed.

DEVELOPMENT AND PRESENT STATUS OF RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Definite and orderly research upon the problems of agricultural policy is relatively new. The few examples that can be found in past or contemporary research make, for the most part, rather limited use of quantitative data and formal analysis. Consideration of agricultural policy by economists and economic historians, however, is by no means new. Economics as a separate discipline owes much of its early development to the contemplation of problems of state policy toward agriculture. In the middle of the eighteenth century the Physiocrats were already attempting to crystallize views concerning both the place of agricultural production and of agricultural people in the social structure as a whole, and the tax policies appropriate for agricultural lands. The writings of Malthus, Ricardo, Mill and of other early economists likewise reveal a recognition of problems of policy concerning agricultural production and, as in the case of Mill, of those having to do with agricultural people.

These, however, were not systematic studies. Agricultural policy was treated mainly as a phase of national or public policy in general. The approach was largely philosophical. Though some rough and general observations of specific situations were utilized, there was little analytical or inductive study such as is contemplated for the researches outlined here. The spectre of food shortage was so prominent in the minds of some of the writers of those times that agricultural policy appeared more definite and simple than it has since become. For Ricardo and Mill, the "spectre" was perhaps more one of high prices for food than of absolute shortage, but still the emphasis was on a rather definite and simple menace.

During the nineteenth century new developments in transportation, the introduction of important mechanical aids in agricultural production, and the opening of vast new areas of good agricultural land, tended to push into the background the concern over possible food shortage or high prices for food which had been so prominent in the thinking of the economists who were writing about 1800. In the first half of the nineteenth century the continuing high degree of self-sufficiency of farms in the United States and the abundant opportunities for the acquisition of desirable lands tended to hold

in abeyance any very marked emphasis upon the viewpoints of farmers with respect to agricultural problems other than that of the land question itself. Certain attitudes and objectives, such as those associated with the Jeffersonian and Jacksonian campaigns and some others, had, to be sure, marked agricultural aspects and have given rise to certain excellent historical studies of the agricultural frontier and its characteristics; for example, those of Turner and F. L. Paxson. The slave situation in the South likewise gave rise to problems of policy which had important agricultural manifestations, and has led to considerable historical study.

With the development of the Grange in the 'seventies and with the later Populist movement, a more definite class consciousness on the part of farm people arose. This visualized, even if somewhat indistinctly, certain objectives which the farm people sought for themselves, which were not looked at from a national viewpoint, and which had little to do with the problem of food supply. The commercialization of agriculture had given rise to a new emphasis upon inter-occupational relationships and the distribution of the nation's income. Conflicts of interest and in the programs of different groups led to the crystalization of policies and issues which dealt usually with very immediate problems and seldom reached down to the more fundamental difficulties. But even these gropings toward an organized and recognized policy and program for agriculture were more or less stilled by the mild prosperity of the early part of the twentieth century.⁴

The more troublous periods above mentioned have been subjected to considerable, in some instances to excellent, historical study which deals to a large extent with agricultural policy. However, it may be questioned whether such studies have provided an adequate economic analysis of the phenomena described.

Beneath the surface during both the last decade of the last century and the first decade of the present century ran an undercurrent of a different though not very clearly recognized policy. This visualized a greater technical efficiency in agricultural production, and a farm population that understood the chemical and biological processes going on about it and could use this knowledge to its advantage. It seemed to imply a belief that anything which would increase the output of agricultural products was inherently

(4) Discussion in this section is restricted primarily to the United States. A more extended résumé would necessarily include a consideration of agricultural viewpoints and policies as they have been generated, crystallized and broken down through many centuries of change in Europe; and of the few but excellent interpretations which have been made of them. Historical experience in agricultural policy, both romantic and instructive, is written in the views and conflicts of plebeian and patrician, lord and serf, squire and yeoman, sheep raiser and cotton mill owner, "Junker" and laborer, and land-owner and industrialist. In few fields of research, in fact, is a broader appreciation of both the past and contemporary experience of other countries more necessary than in agricultural policy.

good, especially if this could be done with a smaller proportionate input of human labor. World conditions and the United States' position as a debtor nation were conducive to a sanguine and possibly naïve development along these lines. Little effort was devoted to following out the full implications of such a policy or to gauging its probable ultimate results. The developments of this period nevertheless laid the foundation for a large and prompt increase in production in response to the heavy war demands which came soon after. This policy represented perhaps a national point of view rather than one which the farmers themselves sponsored actively. It took form in agricultural experiment stations, agricultural colleges, the country life movement, agricultural training in the high schools, and later in the large development of agricultural extension work. Accompanying this, or possibly as a part of it, was a policy which visualized a higher plane of living on the part of farm people, materially, intellectually and æsthetically. The agricultural policy of this period has apparently so far been subjected to little competent analysis and study.

The period of severe agricultural depression which began shortly after the World War gave rise to a different type of agricultural policy problem. Almost for the first time farm people, and to some extent other groups, began to think definitely in terms of a persistent tendency to excess production and production capacity. Even this condition of over-expanded production and of sharply reversed foreign relationships did not stand out clearly in the minds of farmers as a whole, and both the proposals for meeting the difficulties and the programs adopted were not only much more numerous than in any previous period but also often in direct conflict with one another.⁵ The proposed methods of attack and the basic objectives underlying them varied widely. In some instances a highly protected self-sufficient home market was visualized. In others a world market with a relatively free flow of goods. Often these purposes were unconsciously confused, thus giving rise to inconsistencies and illogical proposals. All of these manifestations have been emphasized and magnified by the further intensification of agricultural difficulties since 1929.

The conditions discussed above have given rise to many expressions of opinion and to much controversy, but only here and there has the result been to develop any orderly and considered research, and where it has developed it has usually been confined to certain rather narrow phases of policy or even to specific measures. In much of the writing (not necessarily based upon research) concepts are ambiguous and loosely handled. Research which applies sharply defined concepts, careful inductive study, and detailed treatment is

(5) For example, the aggressive efforts of the Department of Commerce to extend and build up the export trade of the United States and the concurrent erection of ever increasing tariff barriers which tended to throttle such trade.

thus in large measure still to be anticipated. Some exceptions are to be found, especially in the historical studies and in some of the analyses of specific measures and their results and implications.⁶

Something approaching a research program on a segment of the field is developing in the work of the National Land Use Planning Committee and its technical sub-committees. Likewise, the development of the background material for agricultural outlook work and its interpretation, and of the material to aid in the formulation of agricultural programs for counties and states as undertaken by some of the state extension services, touch closely upon the field of research in agricultural policy.

RELATION OF RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL POLICY TO OTHER AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND TO RESEARCH IN OTHER SOCIAL SCIENCES

Research in the various fields of economics and in sociology is tending to be centered more and more upon the impersonal study of events and relationships and the natures of the reactions resulting from given dynamic influences. Value judgments, that is, considerations of the desirable or undesirable aspects of these relationships and reactions, tend to be pushed into the background as belonging more properly in the sphere of some other discipline. This elimination of the "reformer" attitude has been conducive to more accurate and scientific analysis in economics and in sociology. It is not a trend to be deplored, and it may well be fostered so far as analytical procedure is concerned.

Nevertheless such an approach is inadequate for a program of research which is intended to be of direct usefulness in education and administrative decision, either private or governmental. It needs to be supplemented by study which seeks to appraise the effects of given activities and relationships in terms of some recognizable economic, social or ethical aims, although these are ordinarily implied

(6) Illustrative of the historical studies may be mentioned S. J. Buck's *The Granger Movement* (Harvard University Press, 1918), B. H. Hibbard's *A History of the Public Land Policies* (Macmillan, 1924), and D. G. Barnes' *A History of the English Corn Laws* (London, G. Rutledge and Sons, Ltd., 1930).

Recent treatments of specific measures and segments of agricultural policy may be illustrated by such studies as those of the Rawleigh Foundation dealing with the tariff on sugar, and J. S. Davis's *The Domestic Allotment Plan as Applied to Wheat* (Wheat Studies of the Food Research Institute, November 1932), and such articles as E. G. Nourse's "The Economic Philosophy of Cooperation", *American Economic Review* (December 1922); also his *Legal Status of Agricultural Cooperation* (Institute of Economics, 1927).

in social science research even when not clearly recognized. Research in policy needs to identify and crystallize these aims, to bring out the relation of various measures to them, to follow out the various implications of given objectives, and to provide a more efficient means of appraising them in terms of the personal philosophies of individuals affected by them. By the prevention of lines of action which, through failure to recognize clearly the implied objectives or the probable results, run counter to, or at cross purposes with, other lines of action undertaken by the same groups or individuals, such clarification should be useful in promoting consistency among the programs supported by given groups or individuals, and also in improving the understanding of the relation between the objectives and programs of different social groups and of possible means of achieving a better balance in their functioning. Research in agricultural policy, by providing better criteria, should aid also in the appraisal of the methods and machinery used, the types of activity studied, and the objectives implied, in research in the other narrower fields of agricultural economics.

Thus the field of agricultural policy necessarily touches upon practically all fields of agricultural economics. The research here outlined therefore cuts across the fields of research in agricultural economics and rural sociology which have been outlined in other publications of this series. Where the ground is common, however, the viewpoint is different. With respect, for example, to credit policy or to marketing and production policies, it seeks to discover where the whole body of views and activities is leading, and to ascertain and appraise the aims and objectives of legislation and governmental activity pertaining to agriculture in terms of certain underlying philosophies which it endeavors to identify and make explicit. It will be found that the research outlined in practically all of the various publications of this series contains very definite considerations of policy. Usually, however, these are concerned with the study of somewhat limited objectives of given groups which are based upon assumptions that often are not clearly recognized. The most usual of such implied objectives is that of increasing the money returns to some particular group or of decreasing its costs. Such limited group objectives and the procedures growing out of them are not always consistent, one with another, and, still more frequently, are not visualized in relation to one another in such a way as to make effective coördination among them.

As an example, we may point out such a possible conflict of policy as may arise between the field of farm management and that of marketing. The farm management policy may point to lowered costs per unit of product and to larger individual profits through increases in acreages, yields, etc. The marketing policy may look toward a stabilized production and maintained prices. Either policy may, in the light of its own objectives, have considerable merit.

Either may be desirable provided the other is properly related to it. This is not the case, however, if the other policy stands at cross purposes, and the research worker in agricultural policy should seek to visualize the two in conjunction. Possibly it will even be desirable to consider several more at the same time. For example, the policies with reference to the amounts and kinds of agricultural population, the amounts and kinds of agricultural credit, and the tariff policy of the country as a whole may well be visualized as a background for the policies of more restricted scope in marketing or farm management as mentioned. In brief, any of the policy considerations developed in the studies outlined in the various sub-phases of the field of agricultural economics may be logically consistent within itself, but may be inconsistent when related to policy in some other phase.

* Researches undertaken primarily under certain of the other disciplines, such as history, political science and sociology, are closely interrelated with some of the studies outlined in this report. Generally, however, the point of view and emphasis are different. The historian, depending on his special field of interest, will usually seek to trace broad developments in which agriculture, transportation, manufacturing and mining, as well as the military, diplomatic and governmental agencies all participate. To follow out the more elusive and specialized phases of these developments, however, this broader approach needs to be supplemented by workers who are at home in dealing with the special conditions and technical aspects of these various industries and agencies. Such developments, for example, as the irrigation activities of the West involve many special aspects—agricultural, engineering, economic and sociological—with which it would be difficult for many professional historians to gain the familiarity that is requisite for the purposes of agricultural policy.

Thus in an attempt to identify and understand the objectives or policies of the agricultural people of the United States with respect to the settlement and holding of land, the researcher in agricultural policy will inevitably resort to the methods of the historian, but usually with a more informed and penetrating consideration of strictly agricultural influences than is likely to be possible for the historian, with his lesser degree of specialization in the economic and sociological aspects of agriculture. Ideally such a body of research will probably involve close collaboration between an agricultural economist and a historian of some closely allied field.

An understanding of the attitudes and reactions in terms of policy will likewise frequently involve the use of the tools and methodology developed by the psychologist and the sociologist, or perhaps the active participation of specialists in these fields. Possibly in lesser degree from the standpoint of analysis, but in greater degree in matters of appraisal, it will be necessary to call upon the specialist in political science.

The effects of geographic relationships and of biologic influences, such as population pressures and rates of growth, will inevitably find a place in the thinking and analytical procedures of the research in agricultural policy. Inevitably final appraisal of policies and programs must rest upon some identification of the ends which individuals and groups regard as desirable. The ultimate ramifications of this aspect of the problem carry far beyond the scope of this publication. However, clearer statement of the existing and of possible alternative philosophical ideals will aid materially in intelligent appraisal of them and in considered efforts in the direction of well-defined improvements consistent therewith.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES IN AGRICULTURAL POLICY

The foregoing discussion has presented some of the reasons why research in this field should be undertaken. The need for clearer definition of policies and their implications, of the backgrounds out of which they have arisen, and of the various conflicts and unities of interest among individuals and groups, must be evident to every thoughtful person. The further need for more competent analysis of the various programs for given policy objectives must be similarly apparent.

It seems worth while, however, to focus attention on a different classification or cross-sectioning of agricultural research which applies not only to that in agricultural policy but to research in other phases of agriculture as well. *This has to do with the nature of the objectives, not of the agricultural groups concerned, but of the research workers engaged in the task of analyzing the various problems.*

The primary objective of research is to analyze, elucidate, and clarify, not to persuade or convince. The significant questions to be answered are *what, how, and why*, not *what ought to have been or to be*. For the most part, research projects in this field are concerned with bringing out principles and relationships of general or lasting significance, and illuminating analytical appraisal of past experience or current proposals. Even in projects of a constructive type, exposition rather than argument is called for, and even the appearance of propaganda should be avoided. There is, however, a place in the field of Agricultural Policy for research of a somewhat different type, designed to be of immediate service by a specified group in a particular situation. Here the question is usually somewhat as follows: Given certain objectives, certain conditions, and a certain broad scheme, how if at all can the scheme be developed so as to achieve the given objectives under the conditions at a minimum

of cost and incidental disadvantage. Such research falls clearly into the field of applied science, whereas much of the other type of research belongs rather in the field of pure science or history. Even here, however, the utmost pains must be taken to insure that the bias of those whom the research is designed to aid shall not affect the "scientific" quality of the research itself.

The distinction is significant for planners and administrators of research work in that considerable differences in the methods of attack are likely to be found advisable in the two types. There is reason to think that considerable amounts of research work undertaken in the various phases of agricultural economics fail to achieve significance because of the failure to recognize this distinction between the objective of identifying and describing some fundamental or continuing relationship and that of providing a basis for definite and immediate activity. Neither type of objective is achieved, and the research becomes rather pointless. It is not directed to any specific immediate problem, and it is not done with sufficient thoroughness to be of lasting significance, or, perhaps more commonly, the conditions with which it deals will presently have changed to such an extent that the findings become inapplicable. Research in economics is particularly subject to this type of obsolescence, and the study of current problems can easily be carried to such a stage of refinement that the expense involved more than outweighs the advantages gained. Possibly a good illustration is to be found in some of the farm cost studies which were popular during the early part of the past decade. In these the proration of costs on the various machines and buildings was carried out often in minute detail and frequently far beyond any practical use. A similar over-refinement is often found in the seeking of shades of difference by using different methods of computing index numbers, when the purpose to be served is merely the indication of broad general tendencies.

These considerations direct attention to the associated problems of the methods of presenting results and of the relation of research to action. Both will be affected by the type of research objective which is visualized. If the problem is one that is immediately before some specific group or groups, research concerning it will probably be undertaken as a direct result of a request. Such a relationship of the research agency to its constituency is similar to that of the research department of a corporation to the company's board of directors. It is a very wholesome relationship where specific, immediate problems are concerned, especially from the standpoint of effective use of results. If an organization or agency has asked for a study to use as a basis for its decisions on policy, it is likely to consider carefully the conclusions submitted, and to counsel freely with the research worker. Such a relationship between a research agency and its constituency results, of course, only from a record of accomplishment which is of such quality and depth or of sufficiently

non-partisan nature to command the confidence and interest of the groups concerned.

Nearly all research agencies will be better qualified to develop worthwhile findings in connection with immediate and specific problems if they have previously done effective work of the more basic and lasting type. This basic research may well, therefore, be directed definitely to the establishment of a better understanding of relationships between the objectives of different groups and of criteria whereby the more immediate objectives and programs can be judged. Such research seeking to uncover and clarify the larger ultimate goals in the activities of agricultural groups and of research agencies, can be of inestimable value in coördinating and guiding into significant channels the many different kinds of research work carried on by such an agency as an agricultural experiment station.

In general, however, experiment station work has grown up as a mass of unrelated strivings toward a multitude of minute objectives, and the visualization of the net result of these many and sometimes conflicting efforts has been meagre indeed. Possibly the main general objective has been that of greater efficiency in agricultural production; and this goal, like the old assumption of freely competing individuals in the economic world, afforded a semi-automatic guide for all the activities. Like the assumption of free competition, the goal of increased efficiency had much to recommend it so long as the bases upon which it rested could be accepted. Rather recently a search for means of changing agriculture with a view to better adjustment of its production has developed. As yet there is little in the way of recognized goals in such endeavor. With the tendency to abandon former assumptions, both the nation as a whole and its agricultural groups are confronted with the necessity to find some basis on which they can estimate how much should be produced and to choose the social institutions and sociological relationships under which efforts at restriction should be made. Further, they are faced with the necessity to recognize more clearly the directions and strengths of given social pressures which have significant influences upon the goals sought and upon the programs and measures developed for their attainment.

RESEARCH METHOD IN AGRICULTURAL POLICY

The methods of research that would be required for the successful prosecution of all of the studies that might be undertaken in agricultural policy would include the methods of practically all the social sciences.

The various methods described in *Research Method and Procedure in Agricultural Economics* (as for example, historical, statistical,

case, etc.) all have a place in research in agricultural policy. Often several methods will be required in a single project. However, research in this field, as outlined in this publication, calls for deductive reasoning and for making inferences from non-quantitative information to a much greater degree than does research in most of the fields outlined in other publications of this series. For example, to identify and appraise the objectives of the agricultural policy of a given group (Project 5) will require among other steps a study of the records of the activities of the group, of the statements of spokesmen for the group, and of similar sources. Very little of this will lend itself to quantitative treatment; and more often than not, the objectives that really underlie the activities of the group or the utterances of its members will not be stated explicitly, or cannot be accepted if and as stated. Exercise of the imagination in creating hypotheses and relentless skepticism in verifying them by the use of logic and induction is especially important in discovering the implied objectives and the underlying philosophies of individuals and groups. The reasons given for an action are rarely an adequate explanation of it.

The methods of the historian will be used in some projects, as for example, in studying, historically, the policy of a government with respect to some specific phase of agriculture (Project 10). This will involve search for sources, appraisal of their authenticity, attempts to harmonize conflicting statements in source material, inferences concerning events not described, etc. Similarly, in the study and evaluation of a specific program or measure for giving effect to a particular phase of agricultural policy (Project 15) one would have to rely on historical sources unless the measure were a contemporary one. Not infrequently unpublished materials, collected in a few great libraries, or sought out elsewhere, will supplement published materials significantly. Likewise in attempts to identify and classify points of view and philosophies with respect to agriculture (Project 1) the methods of the historian must be relied upon to a large extent.

In studying a recent or contemporary measure, its implications and ramifications (as in Projects 15, 17, 18 or 19), the researcher can advantageously supplement published and unpublished sources by interviews with persons who had a hand in framing the measure, or who have been or are responsible for its administration, or who have been or are affected by it. Most of the information obtained from such interviews is necessarily qualitative rather than quantitative, and the person interviewed may not be entirely free from bias on the subject. Statements and opinions obtained in a series of interviews of how a particular measure has worked, and how it has affected various groups or individuals, would very likely not all be in harmony, and the researcher would thus be confronted by a difficult task of appraisal.

Contemporary studies of the attitudes of members of a group or groups concerning policies that have been adopted by other groups or towards programs that have been adopted or proposed for giving effect to specific policies would be very helpful in many projects; (for example, Projects 17 and 19) provided, of course, that a satisfactory method of measuring "attitudes" is available. Since policy is defined as an attitude, or purpose of an individual or group, it is apparent that measurements of individual and group attitudes, and identification of conditions which give rise to recognizable attitudes on the part of individuals and groups will have a place in a large number of projects in agricultural policy. This leads into the field of psychology and the methods of research being developed there.⁷

Published statistics and the statistical records of organizations or institutions under study may often be used. In fact, statistical data—primary and secondary—should be used in every study in agricultural policy if data bearing on the subject are available or can be made available without too much cost. In some projects, as for example most of those in Group I, statistical data, if available, would be used mostly in a descriptive way—for instance, to reveal social and economic conditions within the groups under study. In other projects, as for example many of those in Group III, thorough-going statistical analysis for the purpose of obtaining quantitative measurements of the relationship between variables is needed. It must be remembered, however, that the collection and analysis of statistical data will not play as important a rôle in research in agricultural policy as in research in most parts of the fields of agricultural economics and rural sociology.

Research in Agricultural Policy cannot be routinized to any considerable extent. In most projects the significance of the results will depend largely on how well the researcher succeeds in raising all pertinent questions, distinguishing their relationship and relative importance, bringing to bear upon them all relevant information, testing his answers by reasoning and inference as well as by more obvious checks, and presenting his results in well-organized, clear-cut, and readable form.

In the preliminary work of outlining a specific project, deciding upon its scope, and determining what methods will be most fruitful, as well as in the study itself, it is essential that the researcher keep clearly in mind the distinction between *description and analysis of policies and programs*, and *formation of value judgments* concerning them. As conceived by the committee, research in Agricultural Policy will be concerned largely with the first rather than with the second. Formation of value judgments implies considerations of what *ought* to be. There is a field for research in this realm, but it

(7) See the report on Rural Social Psychology.

is one in which the committee is not prepared to suggest projects or methods.

For the most part, the methods adopted with reference to the field outlined in this Handbook should be directed toward answering such questions as the following: What were or are the real objectives of a specified policy, program, or measure? How has it succeeded or how will it succeed, in attaining those objectives? At what direct cost and with what indirect consequences? How has it affected, or how will it affect agriculture and other industries, farm people and those in other occupations? The research objective is not to answer such questions as: Ought farm people to support the policy, program, or measure in question? Should the nation adopt it?

The judgment of an individual as to the value or desirability of a policy or program will depend in large measure upon his economic interests, his personal philosophy and viewpoint, etc. The ultimate policy objectives of individuals, groups, and nations have their roots in desires and motives that research may identify and classify but not significantly influence. Research may, however, contribute heavily toward furnishing an adequate basis for value judgments, by clarifying the relationship between ultimate and immediate objectives, bringing out the implications of the policy and program in question, and setting forth clearly how, in its various ramifications, it has worked or will work. Thus the results of studies of the implications and ramifications of specific policies (as in Projects 11, 12, 13, and 17) and of studies of programs proposed or adopted for giving effect to policies (as in Projects 14, 15, and 16) will be helpful to individuals and groups in deciding whether to adopt specific policies or to support specific measures. Some individuals and groups may decide that it *ought not* to be adopted on the basis of analyses such as are suggested in these projects. The results of such research may lead some people to change their minds as to the "desirability" or "undesirability" of a specific measure. This, however, should be regarded as a by-product of the investigation rather than an objective determining the methods used in investigation or in exposition. The finished product of research should be such as to aid persons of diverse interests and viewpoints in reaching well-grounded conclusions as to what they desire to support or oppose.

TYPES AND QUALIFICATIONS OF RESEARCH WORKERS IN AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Research in agricultural policy, of the several types outlined above, affords opportunities for persons of various types, interests and qualifications. For the most part, however, effective research

in this field requires maturity, breadth of knowledge and experience in research of a less difficult nature.

In general, younger and inexperienced research workers may wisely confine their efforts in this field to simpler projects of limited scope such as that indicated in Project 5 (objectives of a specific group) and those which would be included under Project 13 (studies of specific measures). Young researchers with a good training in history as well as in agriculture may find within their powers certain projects of limited scope which would be included in the class illustrated by Project 10 (governmental policies with respect to a specific phase of agriculture). Effort is wasted and discouragement ensues when an inexperienced student undertakes a research project far beyond his ability in respect of the scope involved and the qualifications demanded, or one for which materials are not accessible to him. An adequate study of the wheat stabilization policy of the Federal Farm Board cannot yet be made with data publicly available, and in any event, aside from exceptional instances, it would be scarcely fair to expect an inexperienced research worker to do justice to the subject.

For most studies of the types indicated in this outline the researcher needs special ability to draw correct inferences from qualitative (as contrasted to quantitative) information. Considerable use of deductive reasoning is necessary, which, to be worth while, requires a high order of judgment and keen discrimination. There is also need for sufficient knowledge of human nature and of group psychology to be able to perceive the relationships between the attitudes of groups (and of individuals within the groups) as expressed in their programs and activities, and their underlying motives and objectives. Possibly one of the most important requirements for significant research in this field is a relative adaptability of viewpoint as well as freedom from bias. To illustrate: it would not be wise to undertake a study such as that indicated in Project 4 (to identify group attitudes) unless the investigator had worked with farmers, bankers, merchants and others sufficiently to have some knowledge of their usual reactions to given situations. Such a study would make it necessary for the investigator to be able to put himself in the place of an individual in the group whose attitude he is studying, and to view problems and policies as that individual views them, rather than as they are viewed by a farmer or an academic research worker.

For studies of a historical type, such as Project 10, a bent for historical study and a good training in historical method are obviously desirable if not indispensable. The researcher needs to have or acquire a good grasp not only of agricultural conditions, but of the political, economic, and social history of the country and period involved. Invaluable also are: discrimination in the use of materials of diverse quality, command of simple statistical techniques applicable in historical studies, and an understanding of economic principles

and governmental machinery, both in general and with special reference to the specific problem studied. As in all historical study, diligence in search for relevant material needs to be supplemented by a trained imagination and ability to formulate and test working hypotheses; and ability to assemble all significant details needs to be accompanied by ability to coordinate these into a whole, in which the forest is not obscured by the trees.

Studies of the evolution and emergence of policies and programs demand most of the qualifications mentioned above, and also training in the evolution of political and economic thought.

Studies of proposed policies and programs call for a sound understanding of the ways in which other more or less similar policies have worked out, under various conditions, in the country concerned and in others; and an ability to envisage the manifold consequences, direct and indirect, which the proposed policies would have if carried into effect.

Most projects of a constructive type make especially heavy demands on the qualifications of the researcher. Among the essentials are: understanding of the diverse and often divergent interests of different groups; ability to envisage and balance the probable results to the various groups concerned; understanding of economic and political conditions and machinery; insight into social forces and their operation; and ability in constructive thinking, involving fertile imagination, keen discrimination, and a strong sense of the practical.

WHERE RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL POLICY CAN BEST BE DONE

The qualifications of the research worker for his chosen task are primary; but successful achievement in research in agricultural policy depends partly on the location and organization in which the major portion of the work is done. Ready access to essential documents and other materials, and in many instances to those individuals from whom valuable information can be secured; associations such as promote interchange of thought on various problems as they emerge; an environment that facilitates genuine search for the truth, and permits steady progress toward completion of the undertaking; and some opportunity to work in more than one place: these are distinctly favorable conditions. Absence of these conditions hampers effective progress, and under some circumstances may thwart it entirely. Most subtly dangerous is an environment in which pressure is exerted, directly or indirectly, to keep the work within certain limits of scope or direction determined by institutional or group bias.

Political phases of many problems either preclude their study by government research agencies as now conducted or introduce limits or bias into such studies; thus an objective study of the United States tariff program, and how it has worked out, is not likely to be made by the United States Department of Agriculture, and many state experiment stations would probably hesitate to undertake such a study. Numerous parallel examples could be given. To gain recognition and standing, such studies will usually have to be made at institutions in which the workers and administrators are not subject to political pressure or to the influence of persons or organizations who might desire to suppress the results if they could not be used to support a position which these persons or organizations had already taken or might wish to take.

Many studies involving the policy or policies of the national government or of nation-wide groups can best be made at institutions located at the national capital, where sources of information—laws, hearings, reports—are available. On the other hand, a study of the policy of a state government or of a local group could best be made at an institution located in the state concerned.

The non-governmental agencies can in many instances be studied effectively in the various states even though their activities may be national in scope. Not infrequently it will be found, however, that such studies cannot well be completed at any one place because of the need for contact with various people and institutions. The researcher, or someone through whom he can secure dependable information, must have a rather intimate knowledge of the men and events concerned.

Not every institution carrying on a program of research in agricultural economics and rural sociology has a staff member or members interested in, and qualified to conduct research on, the broader phases of agricultural policy, even if all other conditions are favorable. In view of this limiting condition, as well as of those hitherto discussed, it would seem that research in the broader phases of agricultural policy will probably come to occupy a major place in only a few peculiarly situated research institutions. Research in many of the narrower phases of agricultural policy can, however, be carried on to advantage at practically every institution. Often this can be done as an adjunct to, or by-product of, research in other fields of agricultural economics and rural sociology.

TYPES OF RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL POLICY

It has been felt that the purposes of this outline can be most satisfactorily served at the present time by indicating the major types of research effort in agricultural policy; by suggesting certain procedures; and by outlining briefly one or two projects of each

general type or suggesting certain projects that are illustrative of the particular type of research in agricultural policy that is under consideration. It has been felt that the field of agricultural policy is not now susceptible to detailed sub-division and the exhaustive consideration of specific research projects. Furthermore, both method and direction have to grow out of actual research in the field itself.

With full recognition of its provisional character the following classification of types of research effort in the field of agricultural policy is set up.

- Group I. Broad general research designed to develop principles of wide application.
- Group II. Research of a more specific character and of narrower scope.
- Group III. Research concerned primarily with programs for effecting given policy objectives.
- Group IV. Research concerned primarily with policies and programs as developed in the various fields of agricultural economics and rural sociology.
- Group V. Research in improvement of policies and programs and their formation.

In the following pages, a brief statement of the scope and character of the research in each group is given, together with a series of representative projects illustrating more specifically the nature of the research effort involved. In several instances, the project represents either a type under which many specific projects might be distinguished, or a comprehensive project or program that should be divided into many projects or sub-projects. The presentation is intentionally sketchy, for it seems inadvisable at this stage to list a great number of projects or to attempt to develop any in detail.

GROUP I

Broad General Research Designed to Develop Principles of Wide Application

Research in agricultural policy of the type here discussed falls under the general head of pure science, as contrasted to applied science. It cannot be expected to yield recommendations of specific courses of action as such, or to provide an immediate basis for the formulation of desirable policies applicable to specific situations. It represents rather the building up of a formative and critical equip-

ment to provide, in part, a basis for more specific research and consequent specific decision.

The necessary use of the terms "broad" and "general" in connection with research in this group does not imply that rigorous examination of assumptions, conscious and precise method, and exhaustive treatment are not essential. On the contrary, such work to be useful must be so characterized to the highest degree. The breadth and generality of the field grow out of the need for absorption and synthesis by the research worker of numerous relationships—relationships that are both qualitative and highly intangible. In this group as in others, data are from highly biased sources, and the research worker must frequently use material that is the product of intentional bias. A high order of ability and training is requisite for satisfactory research work of this character.

In distinguishing types of research in this group from those in the following, it should not be assumed that projects listed under Group I must necessarily precede those in later groups. While projects of the type listed here will provide a desirable foundation for more specific studies, it is also true that specific studies, as they accumulate will provide a framework upon which the broader studies of policy can be undertaken more adequately. Here as elsewhere, the development of ordered knowledge in all its aspects is a complementary process.

PROJECT 1

To identify and classify points of view (or philosophies) with respect to the place of agriculture in the social structure of the nation, state or community.

This will undertake to bring out more clearly the fundamental concepts underlying the more detailed and specific objectives and attitudes considered under later projects. It will be partly historical, partly speculative. For example, in given periods what was the point of view of the Greeks toward agriculture? Of the Romans? What place did they conceive it to have in a well-organized and well-administered state? In a similar way, what was the point of view of the Physiocrats? Of the French government at the time of the Physiocrats? Of the English government in the early nineteenth century? Of the United States government around 1850? Such attempts at identification need not stop with historical examples but may well include the setting up of possible points of view which have not appeared in the past, but which may be indicated by tendencies

of the present time or seem possible as developments of the future. To have real significance, consideration of future developments must, of course, be kept within the realm of reasonable possibility.

Study as conceived for this project will seek to bring out the fundamental points of view of peoples and nations, and of the major classes or groups of people within a nation, with respect to the place of agriculture in the industrial structure of society and the state, the place of farm people in the social structure, the relation between agriculture and other industries, between farm people and those engaged in other occupations, and other points of view which are based primarily on philosophical, moral and ethical rather than on economic considerations. More specifically, the student would seek to learn among what peoples, and in what periods of time points of view such as the following have been dominant: (1) national sufficiency in food supplies, (2) preservation of the fertility of the soil, (3) equality of opportunity and quality of living of rural and urban people, and (4) stability of the cultural characteristics of a people or a nation. A further step in this project would be to make some general classification of the identifiable points of view and philosophies with respect to agriculture and agricultural people.

This project might be split up into many sub-divisions. For example, one might study and seek to identify: (1) the national points of view and philosophies of various nations or even those of a single nation during a particular period, (2) regional or provincial points of view (or attitudes toward agriculture) within one country, or, even more narrowly, (3) local and community viewpoints. Again, one might study the points of view of a nation, a state or of a locality at different periods, looking toward an historical classification and an identification of changes in points of view that have occurred with the passage of time.

This project will not deal to any large extent with specific objectives, measures or programs. Rather, it will seek to bring to light the more fundamental considerations which give rise to the policies and programs of various nations and the points of view and philosophies underlying the attitudes and activities of various groups. Studies of specific policies, programs and measures designed to effectuate them are outlined in later projects.

This project should be undertaken only by a scholar who has a broad grasp of the subject matter of most of the social sciences. The willingness to search long and diligently for authentic sources, and the ability to discover the fundamental motives and points of view which underlie legislation, group action, and the statements of leaders and spokesmen are also essential. To carry the project out completely would require a long period of study, but it would help immensely to clarify the scope and content of the field of agricultural policy.

PROJECT 2

To appraise a given national, provincial or local point of view or attitude with respect to agriculture.

This will be an attempt to follow out in a careful analytical way the various implications of a given general attitude or point of view toward agriculture and agricultural people; to make clear the assumptions on which the attitude rests, the conditions out of which it has grown, and possibly the relationship of different social groups to it. In a project such as No. 1 above, various points of view and attitudes would be identified. In this project one of those points of view would be appraised, from the standpoint of a nation, of a state or locality.

We may take, for example, an attitude such as that toward the facilitation of technical improvement in agriculture by means of agricultural experiment stations, extension service activities or Smith-Hughes training schools. On what assumptions does it rest? Does it aim to gain advantages for farmers or for the nation's consumers? What complications are likely to grow out of it, and with what other attitudes does it come into conflict?

PROJECT 3

To appraise, from the standpoint of agriculture, a given national, provincial, local or group point of view or attitude with respect to a non-agricultural policy or program which has a significant influence upon agriculture or agricultural people.

To have significance for the agricultural population of a given country, a measure, program or policy need not be directed specifically toward agriculture. It may, in fact, be adopted with little or no thought of its agricultural implications, or be passed in some foreign country. Nevertheless, it may call forth a definite policy on the part of agricultural groups in the given country.

In the type of research indicated by this project are to be found a number of very significant policy problems for study and consideration by students of agricultural policy. Many of these have been subjected to considerable study in their more general aspects, but few have been analyzed carefully with respect to their specific agricultural aspects. Among others the following problems fall in this class:

- (a) The policies of the United States and of other nations in dealing with the war debts owed it.

The study should seek to set forth clearly what policies have been or might be adopted; to follow through, in terms of their agricultural implications, the probable effects of various possible programs of action; and to appraise from the standpoint of given groups of agricultural people, and

in the light of certain accepted or implied objectives, their desirability or undesirability.

- (b) Other international relationships, such as trade agreements, non-recognition policies, embargoes.
- (c) The tariff policies of the United States as they are designed primarily to foster or protect American manufacturing industries.

Here the problem of maintaining an adequate volume of imports to permit of given levels of agricultural exports must undoubtedly be considered and analyzed.

- (d) The policies of a given labor group; for example, the American Federation of Labor or the Railroad Brotherhoods.
- (e) Transportation rate policies designed to foster the development of given types of market structure; for example, those designed to equalize rates between various market centers or producing areas, to facilitate certain methods of shipment as truck or water *vs.* rail.
- (f) Policies governing conscious efforts to expand or contract bank credit, to maintain, lower or raise price levels by certain consciously applied procedures, etc.
- (g) Price policies of various industrial and commercial groups, such as those reflected in programs for maintaining price through curtailment or control of production, fixed resale prices, and various practices such as the establishment of arbitrary base prices (Pittsburgh-plus).
- (h) Large-scale socialization *vs.* extreme individualism. The one may lead to rather wide dissemination and uniformity in social privileges of various kinds; the other to more localization and less uniformity. Because of the tendency for wealth to flow toward and concentrate in various strategically located centers, the interests of agricultural people may be significantly affected by policies which may be sponsored by important national, regional or local bodies not interested primarily in agricultural affairs.

PROJECT 4

To identify group attitudes in relation to a given point of view such as those indicated in Projects 1 and 2.¹

This project will require first that the attitude, point of view, or policy be clearly recognized and defined as contemplated in Project 1. It will then seek to relate this to the specific groups which have significant attitudes toward it, whether favorable or unfavorable. It

(1) See the report on Rural Social Psychology.

will in most instances also seek to analyze these group attitudes in terms of what they rest on; for example, whether they are due to misunderstanding and lack of adequate analysis of relationships, or are the result of fundamental and well-considered differences in interest. To illustrate: we may think of the attitude toward a highly protected self-sufficient domestic market as contrasted to an international market which looks to a freer exchange of products. The attitude of a given group toward this general problem of policy may be derived from reasoned and informed self-interest, traditional political views, misleading statements in uninformed or vicious publicity and speeches, or various other sources. The decision of the group or agency which finally determines the policy to be promulgated as that of the group as a whole will be better balanced in most instances and more effective if these various viewpoints and attitudes are recognized and their character and source understood.

PROJECT 5

To determine the objectives for the agricultural policy of a group, their implications and ramifications.

This project, instead of making the approach in terms of the policy or objectives, seeks first to specify a given group, and then to analyze the various objectives which have been or may be set up by it. It is not greatly different from Project 1 except in emphasis. Project 1 had to do primarily with a geographic unit, probably in most instances a nation. Project 4, on the other hand, may deal with various groups within a given geographic area, and will be concerned much more with present-day problems and less with historical treatment. This will mean in nearly all instances that the objectives will be more definite and less comprehensive in nature. The researches of this type which most agricultural economists will undertake will be included under No. 5 rather than under No. 1.

This project can seldom in practice stop with mere identification. It will include appraisal and some analysis of the conditions out of which the objectives have developed or are likely to develop, thus taking on the characteristics of Project 2.

GROUP II

Research of a More Specific Character and of Narrower Scope

The types of research effort in agricultural policy grouped under this heading may be held to a somewhat narrower compass than those

indicated in Group I. Partly as a result of this, attention is centered upon a more behavioristic view of the field. Specific development of such matters as the genesis of a given policy, its nature and objectives, its changes through time, and above all, its effects or results, both actual and indicated, as measured against the original objectives or economic social and ethical criteria, may be expected and asked from research of this type.

Studies in this group will not wholly justify themselves unless they provide a basis for inferring the future direction of the policies studied, or of other policies that are closely analogous.¹ It will be found that a considerable portion of the applied research in agricultural policy may be grouped under the present category.

The research approach in this section may well visualize the examination of rather specific parts or elements of a policy rather than what is logically or conveniently conceived to be the whole. Project 6, which seeks to determine merely the causes of change in a certain policy, is illustrative of such a limitation of the scope of study. In a similar, but even more arbitrary way, attention will have to be restricted to rather definite time periods in most instances. The roots of the public land policy of the United States are probably to be found in pre-Revolutionary developments. A project conceived to provide a basis for improved contemporary policy might not find it necessary to carry detailed research beyond the last decade.

PROJECT 6

To identify and analyze factors and events which have been significant in causing changes in attitudes or policies with respect to agriculture.

Here the emphasis will not be primarily on the various implications of the policy but upon when it changed and why. The project will, of course, be primarily historical in nature, and may be undertaken for a farmer group, a nation or any other significant aggregation having a more or less common point of view with reference to agriculture. As an example, we may consider the changes that are apparently occurring at present in the attitudes or policies with respect to maintaining competition in commercial activities affecting farmers. The previous attitude is apparently giving way to a rather widespread approval of some degree of group control over production and selling. From the early to the later years of the nineteenth century a somewhat similar, though probably less rapid, change occurred in the attitude toward protective tariffs.

(1) R. G. Tugwell has made the following comment relevant to this point: "It seems to me . . . that studies of this sort are worth making only if they promise to improve policy; and to achieve this something much more fundamental and imaginative than anything yet undertaken is certainly needed."

PROJECT 7

To make a comparative study of the policies of two or more non-governmental groups along the lines indicated under Project 6.

As an example, different farm groups have reacted differently to apparently similar sets of environmental factors. Careful analysis and comparison of these should throw light on the reasons for the differences in reaction, the extent to which they result from inadequate information, misconceptions, etc.

PROJECT 8

To identify the agricultural policy (and other policies bearing on agriculture) of a specific government at a particular time; e.g., the United States agricultural policy in 1932.

This may be looked at in at least two different ways. One is functional, viewing the agricultural industry as a whole as a necessary contributor to, and counterpart of, other economic life of the nation, but without considering very specifically the relations among groups within the industry. This viewpoint would consider mainly the adequacy of the agricultural industry as a whole in its function of supplying the nation's needs for food and raw materials. The other view considers a specific attitude toward certain groups of people within the agricultural industry or certain ways of carrying on agricultural production, favoring some, discouraging others, etc. The first type of policy may perhaps best be exemplified in the United States government's attitude toward agriculture during 1917 and 1918, when the outstanding desire was to bring about greater production without much regard for the means of accomplishing it. The second appears in the last decade in the solicitude for farmers as people, and in such specific measures as those fostering coöperative selling, more owner-operation of farms and better rural school systems.

One approach to this project might be a classification of the principal laws affecting agriculture and agricultural people that were in force during the period studied, the new laws that were passed, and governmental activities that had a direct or indirect bearing on agriculture. This would serve as a basis for inference concerning objectives of governmental policies and points of view underlying them. Objectives and points of view usually are stated only imperfectly or not at all by law makers and administrators.

PROJECT 9

To make a comparative study of the agricultural policies of two or more governments; as, for example, the policy of France and that of England in the post-War period.

PROJECT 10

To study, historically, the policy of a government with respect to a specific phase of agriculture; e.g., the reclamation policy of the United States, or the United States tariff policy with respect to wool and a small group of related products.

Projects developed under this heading may include a wide range of subjects. Among them may be mentioned the policy of the United States government toward:

- Coöperation among farmers
- The provision of credit to farmers
- The fostering of owner-operation of farmers as compared with tenancy
- The conversion of the public domain into farms or its continuance under federal control
- The expansion and supervision of forest lands
- The control of plant and animal pests
- The regulation of the marketing activities of private agencies
- The control of production.

PROJECT 11

To isolate and study the agricultural manifestations of a broad governmental policy which, as a whole, may or may not be conceived to have an important bearing upon agriculture.

An example of this type of project would be the examination of the immigration policy of the United States and the isolation and evaluation of such elements as its effect on the labor supply for agriculture. A more specific phase of this project might involve the examination of the Pan-American non-quota provisions as they affect the supply of Mexican labor in certain states, with consideration of the results of possible changes.

Another example of this type of project would involve the examination of policy with respect to granting independence or autonomy to territories or possessions, and of the effects on agriculture of the removal or sustaining of competition depending upon the direction which such policy might take.

PROJECT 12

To isolate and study the agricultural manifestations of the policy of a non-governmental, non-agricultural group which, as a whole, may or may not be conceived to have an important bearing upon agriculture.

This project is similar to Project 8, except that it involves a more specific consideration of results or effects, either actual or anti-

pated; and it parallels Project 11, differing only in that the policy group is non-governmental rather than governmental.

A study of the agricultural manifestations of the various policies of non-governmental groups mentioned in Project 3 would be involved, and similarly of various marketing groups such as milk distributors and wholesale dealers' association, also the agricultural manifestations of production or sales policies formulated by industrial groups such as those of recent years in connection with the nitrogen and potash industries. Examples of specific projects of this type are numerous.

PROJECT 13

To appraise the national or local agricultural implications of the policy of a particular non-agricultural group with respect to a specific or restricted group of activities.

An example of this type of project would be the appraisal of the policy of certain power groups toward government operation of Muscle Shoals from the standpoint of the area that might be served.

GROUP III

Research Relating Primarily to Programs for Effecting Given Policy Objectives

Types of research in agricultural policy under this heading will be chiefly concerned with the evaluation of the efficacy of actions or programs on the part of governments or other groups for effecting policies. Research of this type differs in emphasis rather than in kind from that discussed under the preceding groups, since policy considerations can rarely, if ever, be separated from the activities which make them apparent, while a study of ways and means is obviously allied with the aims or objectives to be consummated.

There is, however, a fairly distinct place for research which looks to the analysis of the efficacy of lines of action as such. Research in agricultural policy within the boundaries of the present group will in large part take the aims of the policy groups for granted. Qualitative analysis combined with the products of more basic research will determine for the research worker the justifiability of lending assistance to the improvement of a given program for the prosecution of given objectives. It may be possible to redirect the thinking of the policy group to what are conceived to be more desirable aims. Thereafter the research worker will be concerned directly with the evalua-

tion of the program or action, ordinarily with the objective of inferring changes which will make for more effective consummation of the aims of the policy group.

While successful research of the types included in this group will all add to the equipment with which research workers will operate in the determination of the efficacy of activities or programs, it will in most part be of an applied character and concerned directly with specific instances. Since it will be chiefly concerned with the determination of concrete measures for better achievement of a recognized goal, it will be the most objective of research in this field. In large part, it will be required to justify itself through improvement in the efficacy of activities or programs for effecting agricultural policies.

In a sense there are two aspects of the research effort included in this group. The first concerns the evaluation of actions and programs to endeavor to discover whether they are in harmony with the objectives of the policy group, or whether they indicate the achievement of some goal other than that desired. The second aspect is the evaluation of actions and programs to discover whether they represent the most effective and/or expeditious method of achieving the goals sought. In practice it is likely that any problem will combine to a greater or lesser extent both of these aspects. It may be noted, however, that the second aspect clearly expresses the demand for a research worker in this general type of research effort in agricultural policy who has a keen appreciation of the world of movement and action and of its methods, prejudices and reactions.

PROJECT 14

To evaluate the legislative program of a given agricultural, non-governmental group to determine the likelihood of its achieving the specific objectives of the policy to which it is giving effect.

An example of a study of this type would be the examination of the state tax program of a state farm bureau unit. The usual objective of the policy to which such organizations are pledged is the reduction of taxes on real property. Usually a comprehensive program involves some degree of re-organization of the tax structure and substitution of sales or income taxes for property taxes. This project would seek to determine the efficacy of the proposed substitutions, economies and other measures in relieving property. Among other things, it would determine whether the final incidence of new taxes would offset the relief gained from lowered property taxes. This particular project would ordinarily be undertaken as a joint project with public finance.

Another phase of this project, instead of merely ascertaining the harmony between policy objectives and the program designed to give

them effect, might seek more efficacious ways of achieving the objectives. The field of a study such as this is exceedingly broad.

PROJECT 15

To evaluate the program of a given government, national, state or local, for effecting a given phase of agricultural policy.

An example would be a study of the quarantine laws of a state, granting the validity of an objective of insuring the most economical control of plant and animal pests from the standpoint of the agriculture of the state. In complete form this project would include the ascertaining of both the harmony between the given program and its objectives, and if indicated, of a better program for effecting the policy.

PROJECT 16

To analyze a proposed legislative measure which constitutes a part of a program for giving effect to some phase of agricultural policy.

Taking for granted certain objectives for the restoration of farm prosperity, an example of this project would be the analysis of the Emergency Farm Mortgage Act of 1933, looking to the determination of its efficacy in relieving agricultural distress; its short- and long-run effects upon the prosperity of agriculture; its relation to other steps being taken to attain the same objectives, i.e., other parts of the same program; and many other more specific aspects, such as the cost of administration to the extent that it must be borne by the farmer and the effect on established institutions for providing agricultural credit.

PROJECT 17

To determine the influence upon agriculture of an anticipated or adopted governmental program for effecting an essentially non-agricultural policy.

A more specific example of this project would be the determination of the effect upon the agriculture of a locality or state of rate changes designed to further a national policy of rehabilitation of railways. Another example for purposes of influencing certain elements of international policy, would be the determination of the effects upon the agriculture of a state or the nation of the use of the economic boycott in certain specific instances.

As in preceding projects in this group, objectives of the policy will be taken more or less for granted. (It is in this respect that the

present project differs markedly from Project 11 above.) However, the research objective here will not usually be to increase the efficacy of the program, but rather to ascertain its desirability from the standpoint of agriculture. This, of course, will involve recognition of the fact that general or national advantages may need to be weighed against possible disadvantages to specific industries.

PROJECT 18

To determine and evaluate the agricultural implications of a program for effecting an essentially non-agricultural policy by a policy group neither governmental nor agricultural in character.

This project is similar to 19 except that it is concerned with the program for effecting the policy of a non-governmental group. It parallels to a certain extent Project 12, but is concerned not with the policy as such but with the mode of effecting the policy.

An example of this project would be a study of the national, state or local effects upon agriculture of the program adopted by a life insurance group to strengthen investment position, if an element in such a program were withdrawal or curtailment of activity in the field of agricultural loans. As in other projects of this group, the policy as such would not be subjected to critical examination, but rather the means taken for effecting it as they in turn relate to agriculture.

PROJECT 19

To identify and determine the efficacy of the program of a given governmental or other agency in a particular field of social endeavor.

A more specific example of this project might be the identification and evaluation of the program of a state extension service or of a county agent for adult education, taking for granted certain objectives of the latter. More or less parallel programs of 4-H clubs, churches and social welfare groups furnish other examples. These projects would often be joint endeavors of research workers in agricultural policy and in agricultural education, rural sociology, or other fields. (See certain projects in the report on Rural Organization.)

GROUP IV

Research Relating Primarily to Policies and Programs as Developed in the Various Fields of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology

Research in agricultural policy stands in the position of both coordinating and cutting across the work in other fields of agricultural

economics. Since policy considerations enter into practically every specific field, an attempt has been made here to clarify the interrelationships of policy research and other research; and a separate category for research effort which involves a particularly close coordination of research in policy and in one or more of the other fields has been set up.

The Committee is aware that an extended treatment of the relation of agricultural policy to each of the other fields of agricultural economics and rural sociology would be commensurate in breadth with the ground covered in all of the previous outlines of this series. Attention has therefore been restricted to a presentation of the joint character of agricultural policy research and research in agricultural marketing. While the latter field may not be altogether typical in its relationship to agricultural policy, it does serve to illustrate several major principles involved.

All of the projects outlined under this group might properly be included under marketing research. It will be found, however, that most marketing studies do not begin with the more basic phases, i.e., much that is suggested in the following group of projects is either assumed or implied, and the studies are carried through without explicit examination of such assumptions and implications. When brought into contact with considerations of agricultural policy, a closer scrutiny of all preconceptions becomes necessary if there is to be a clear understanding of the harmonies or disharmonies between research in marketing or any other field and considerations of agricultural policy.

PROJECT 20

Research in the policy aspects of agricultural marketing as an example.

As a preliminary to any or all of the sub-projects outlined below a careful analysis of the major objectives in marketing improvement is needed. This will be similar in nature to Project 1, but much narrower in scope. It will seek to identify various possible or actually accepted objectives of which the following will serve as examples: a marketing structure and procedure (a) designed to provide the various marketing services at the least expense in terms of real cost; (b) which looks to some degree of stabilization of prices to producers, or to consumers, or to both; and (c) which looks to certain types of control, as producer control through selling coöperatives or consumer control through buying coöperatives.

This first project of the series should aim to clarify such possible or actual objectives and to follow out their various implications in such a way that the more specific measures and procedures listed for

investigation from the standpoint of policy can be definitely related to them and appraised in the light of them.³

- (a) To analyze, in the light of one or more of the objectives developed in the above project, various policies with reference to the promulgation by governments of official grades for farm products.

This project indicates an attempt, first, to reveal more clearly the specific objectives toward which such measures have been or may be directed, and second, to appraise their effectiveness in the attainment of the objectives. Thus, if official grades are designed to lessen the costs of handling the product, investigation should lead to some sort of estimate of the reduction in handling cost, of the expense of accomplishing the saving, and possibly of the extent to which a given government or a given farm group may be warranted in carrying its activities or undertaking expense in support of the use of such grades. Such a project may, of course, consider such supplementary relationships as those between state and federal systems of grading. As in many of the earlier projects listed, it may be found desirable to approach the problem from the points of view of different groups.

- (b) To analyze, along lines similar to those discussed for Project 1, (a), the objectives and effectiveness of given amounts and kinds of support for domestic market news. Here, too, the interests of different social groups may be somewhat in conflict. Also it may be found desirable to take into consideration how, and by whom, and to what extent such market news will be provided if not provided by government agencies. Considerable discrimination will be needed also in distinguishing between assumed usage of such information, even on the part of the agencies or individuals supposedly making such use of it, and its actual usefulness to them as determined by more objective study.
- (c) To analyze in a similar way the objectives and effectiveness of the support of foreign market news service.
- (d) Same for inspection of farm products. This may apply either to governmental inspection or to that given by commercial groups such as coöperatives and trade associations.
- (e) To analyze the objectives and effectiveness of a public regulatory agency as the Packers and Stockyards Administration or the Grain Futures Administration.

(3) Examples of the sort of project visualized are to be found in the article by E. G. Nourse, "The Economic Philosophy of Cooperation," *American Economic Review* (December 1922), and in the study by J. D. Black and H. B. Price, *Cooperative Central Marketing Organization*, Minnesota Experiment Station, Bulletin 211.