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AIRGRAM

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ADMINISTRATION

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FROM: MONROVIA

SUBJECT: End of Tour Report Sandy J. McCorvey

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REFERENCE: (Check one before each address)

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1. Objectives.

The objectives of the program were set forth as follows:

a. To produce an adequate supply of food for the local population both in quantity and quality. The production and consumption of protein and protective foods are grossly inadequate.

b. To raise the economic level of the hinterland farmer through the introduction of such cash crops as cacao, coffee, kola, oil palms and rubber.

c. To develop a sound program for the utilization of agricultural and forest resources on a perpetuating basis.

d. To raise the general level of the Liberian economy.

e. To develop an understanding of the democratic process through participating in local and national organizations.

The undersigned spent 7.3 years in Maryland County and the Eastern Province (10-1-1951 to date) as an Area Extension Advisor. Reports covering this period were submitted at the conclusion of each respective tour. They remain unchanged and are available for reference.

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The undersigned was assigned to the Central Office staff of the Food and Agriculture Division of the USOM at the beginning of his present tour with responsibilities as follows:

a. Acting Chief of Food and Agriculture Division, with responsibility for planning and directing USOM policy and assistance to the Department of Agriculture and Commerce, GOL.

b. Serves as Agriculture Extension Advisor with special emphasis on the expansion of production, diversification of crops, and the development of livestock, forestry, fisheries, and marketing facilities as they serve the needs of the farmers.

c. Assists with the development of training program for agriculture extension workers, community development, research and national planning for an over-all agriculture program.

2. SUMMARY ACTIVITIES

Organization.

Although progress was initially slow, within the past year a general reorganization of personnel and activities within the Department has taken place. The Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce transformed the Department from a one-man regime into an effectively and efficiently administered organization.

There has also been a reorganization of the USOM Agriculture Program. The present program is attempting to strike a balance between research, extension, production, and marketing.

RESEARCH

Achievements. The Central Research Station was established at Suakoko in 1951. Since that time, the physical plant, organization, and staff have been developed and personnel trained in principles of management and research methods. Research projects have been assigned in the following fields: agronomy, animal husbandry and veterinary service, entomology, fresh water fisheries, and horticulture.

EXTENSION

Achievements.

a. National and field organizations have been developed in the DAC with the specific objective of marshalling and regimenting all available resources to the end that maximum productivity is obtained. The National staff is not complete but will be completed as personnel and funds become available.

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The Department of Agriculture and Commerce has given rice top priority in its "Freedom from Hunger Campaign". The GOL insists on becoming self-sufficient in the production of rice in three to five years, and if necessary at the expense of higher income yielding crops such as rubber, coffee, and cacao. National security is given as the basis for this decision. Special effort is being made to overcome this deficit by the DAC.

The Protein Problem and Proposed Solutions.

Shortage of protein is an acute problem in Liberia. The Department of Agriculture and Commerce has been very concerned about it and has taken three steps toward a solution:

a. Developed a poultry expansion scheme.

b. Development of a Freshwater Fisheries program with emphasis on farm fishpond development, and

c. Establishment of a Game Reserve Law enforced by the Bureau of Forest Conservation. Only moderate results may be expected from the third step.

Poultry improvement over the past ten years included the replacement of several thousand non-descript mongrel roosters by Improved New Hampshire cockerels and the establishment of improved field flocks.

During the past 12 months poultry development has been given second priority (next to rice production) in the DAC's "Freedom from Hunger Campaign". The trend is for improvement in the production of eggs and meat.

Processing and Marketing.

a. The introduction of hand powered coffee pulpers and palm nut cracking machines stimulated much interest in improved methods of processing coffee and palm kernels among many native villagers.

b. The results, although on a limited scale, have been gratifying thus far in terms of improved quality of the end product, better prices, and greater conservation of labor. One of these machines does the work of twenty laborers in a given period of time.

c. The first unit of the Gbarnga Market Center is near completion. The site of the Ginitown market has been cleared.

b. The training program, including pre and in-service, has been organized and is being executed to meet program demands for training, research and extension. The scarcity of competent personnel for training is as much a limiting factor as the scarcity of funds.

c. Effective coordination has been established between research, education, and extension.

FORESTRY

Achievements.

The forestry program has been one of the most successful F & A Division activities. The progress of this program can be considered an example which could be followed in the development of other technical assistance programs. The step by step development began with the initial reconnaissance survey by U.S. forester in 1947 and 1948. As a result of this survey, a technical advisor was assigned to Liberia to assist the Government in 1951, with a team being assigned in 1953. Between 1951 and the present time, there were organized and established (1) a Bureau of Forestry, (2) a College of Forestry in the National University, (3) a National staff of 10 professional and 86 sub-professional foresters, (4) creation of a National Forest reserve system of 3.5 million acres, (5) initial establishment of a field administrative organization to implement forest reserve management.

The Liberian timber industry has been greatly stimulated.

FISHERIES

Achievements

The fresh water fisheries program was initiated at the Central Experiment Station in 1953. Research facilities, buildings, and equipment have been developed, and an organization established and staff trained.

a. The training plan of the program has received special emphasis. One trainee is now in the U.S. studying for a Master's Degree in Zoology. Another is assigned to the project, two are studying for a B.S. degree at Cuttington College in Liberia, and three aides are assigned to this project.

b. During the past year 53,000 pounds of fish have been produced from farm ponds valued at $17,000.00.

Rice. Rice is still the most popular or basic food crop grown in Liberia, but in spite of this fact; a ten to fifteen percent (10,000 to 18,000) tons deficit tends to persist in production from year to year.

Training

The development of the agricultural potentials of Liberia cannot be achieved without greatly increased number of trained personnel, in research and extension, backed by men and women operating at the community-village levels, and by a strong National Extension staff in the Department of Agriculture and Commerce.

The projected minimum number of Agriculture Extension personnel needed by 1970 is 585 or a net increase of 473 above the 112 now on the payroll. Although the Department of Agriculture and Commerce is apparently stretching every nerve to live up to its commitment to supply acceptable counterparts to each U.S. Technician, it is evidently approaching its limits in this respect with some lags already developing in budgetary and logistic support to its personnel.

Today there are 50 participants in various categories of training and 10 more candidates for FY 1961.

There are 13 elementary and secondary schools with Vocational Agricultural Departments, and one vocational secondary school, Booker Washington Institute, which offers a 4-year course in Vocational Agriculture. The College of Forestry at the University of Liberia was initiated and organized for academic work in 1955. Cuttington College, a private institution, initiated training leading to a Bachelor of Science degree in General Agriculture in 1953.

The USOM Agriculture Division has been instrumental in initiating and expanding sources of training over a broad front. There are approximately 55 Liberians who have had professional level training in Agriculture, 46 of whom are presently employed in the Joint DAC-USOM Agriculture Program.

3. Favorable and Unfavorable Factors

Budgetary Support for The Department of Agriculture and Commerce as It Relates to Production and Exports.

a. The DAC is presently operating on roughly one percent (315,000) of the National GOL budget. This amount is inadequate to maintain the present level of operation, saying nothing about matching any increased USOM support. The inadequacy of budgetary support for the DAC becomes more critical when it is realized that 85% of the Liberian people are engaged in agriculture. The importance of agriculture is further illustrated by the fact that, percentage wise, agriculture accounted for a range of 93 to 45% of the value of all Liberian exports over the past 10 years.

The lack of adequate funds for Joint DAC-ICA operations reduces morale, mobility, efficiency, and effectiveness of personnel. The expected rate

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of progress toward goals is not achieved. This situation is further aggravated by a one to three month time lag in the payment of wages and salaries by the DAC.

b. Rice. The ultimate outcome of the DAC's effort to make Liberia self-sufficient in the production of rice will likely be determined by labor and land economics. Rice brings an average gross income of $50.00 to $75.00 per acre whereas coffee and cacao brings an average of $100.00 or more and rubber brings $100.00 to $300.00 per acre. Rice Production is losing out to tree crops, mining construction, etc.

Rice exporting countries either have a surplus population and animal power, or use machinery. Liberia has neither. So her prospects for becoming self-sufficient in the production of rice is not too bright. The likely solution to her problem is a shift in the pattern of her diet, and a more favorable price to present and prospective rice producers. A shift in the eating habits of the people is essential to good health and would stimulate further diversification of crops, poultry, and livestock production.

c. The Gbedin Rice Project. The Gbedin Rice Project was initiated as an extension demonstration in the culture of small plots of bottom and swamp rice by hand tools in 1954. This and similiar ventures at Salala, Gbarnga, and Tappita were a great success on family size farm units of several acres each.

The success of these small demonstration plots led to the decision to attempt mechanization of swamp rice production in the greater Gbedin swamp area. Unfortunately, necessary precaution to develop adequate water control measures were not taken. Consequently the Gbedin rice crop was lost in 1956 due to the lack of water. The 1957 crop was lost due to over flooding in the absence of flood controls. Never-the-less, the swamp rice venture has encouraged the use of swamps for rice culture to an appreciatable extent in both the Central and Western Provinces, thus affording some increases in yields and production, and better land use and better conservation of timber resources.

This project appeared to have hit the rocks due to the lack of planning, organization, clear-cut administrative procedures, accounts and records. It has been converted into a testing - production unit demonstration supported completely by the DAC.

d. The following difficulties have been encountered in the forestry project and partially overcome.

(1) Lack of trained and experienced personnel.
(2) Immaturity of personnel non-on the job.

(3) Lack of adequate financial support by GOL.
(4) Slow development of industry due to:

(a) Complex distribution of species.
(b) Inaccessibility of forest areas.
(c) Lack of transportation and harbor facilities.
(d) Lack of skilled management personnel, technicians, and permanent labor force.

4. Evaluation of Results.

Under the previous administration in the DAC, there was little evidence of any appreciation for planning, organization, and evaluation of program, so little or progress was made toward developing a National staff, although a functional field staff was developed.

The first step toward developing a National frame of reference for program coordination in the DAC took place at Suakoko in the form of a National Agricultural Conference in April, 1958.

The first National officers were appointed in January, 1960. Newly created positions and appointments in the DAC included a Director of Extension and Research, a Deputy Director of Extension, a Coordinator of Technical Programs in the DAC, and five college-trained Agricultural Demonstration Agents.

Highly centralized nursery work was de-emphasized with greater emphasis being placed on general extension methods and techniques supported by stepped-up activities planning, training, organization, administration, promotion, and evaluation of program.

Living quarters of the USOM personnel at Suakoko were refurbished and improved along with some major improvements in utilities, an integrated poultry unit was developed, and substantial improvements made in the warehouse and utility shops on the station.

The USOM assumed greater responsibility for logistic support of its technicians with substantial improvements in morale and working efficiency.

The above changes took place during the undersigned's incumbency as Acting F & A. Officer. Keeping supplies moving to our technicians often required personal intervention by walking the requisitions through with time consuming effort. The division was under-staffed in the Central office and the majority of the sub-division chief's posts were vacent, thus a disapproprite share of routine responsibilities added excess weight to the duties of that office. Relief was requested but to no avail for a year. Since that time the F & A Officer arrived and three additional staff members have been added to the

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Central Office with one additional staff member scheduled to arrive soon. This is the first time that the F & A Division has been adequately staffed since the inception of the program, and that is one major reason why the program has not progressed as fast as many of our critics of the past have charged it should. This staffing pattern will not be complete until a full time secretary is assigned to the F & A Divisions.

The above condition was further aggravated by the lack of adequate funding by the DAC and inefficient logistic and budgetary support. These conditions must also be corrected before efficient and effective program implementation is achieved.

The National Extension Service described elsewhere in this report was established in the DAC in January of this year.

A personnel system is needed to provide standard guidance for DAC personnel.

5. Recommendations for the Future

Increase USOM Extension Advisors by three. Establish new posts at BWI, the RAD, and reestablish the post in the Western Province. This will facilitate better utilization of the National staff toward meeting overall program objectives.

The DAC has grown to the point that Commerce and Labor should be separated from Agriculture, for administrative reasons, to achieve a greater degree of specialization in the division of responsibilities and more effective administration and supervision.

The development of a system of market demonstration centers on a national scale as a crash project would, no doubt, have a most effective impact on both rural and urban Liberia, thus enhancing social and economic progress on a mass basis in a most unique manner at a comparative but modest cost, $1,500,000.00.

Training.

Provisions for all types and levels of training appear to be functionally adequate except for in-service and on the job training, and the training of voluntary local leaders for youth and adult work. Future progress of the program will likely be hampered unless effective support is provided for these categories of training. The sum of $8,000.00 per annum is recommended for these categories of training.

Poultry.

That the USOM provide the services of two consultants for a period of

six months to assist the GOL in conducting a Feasibility Study to determine the feasibility of encouraging private interest to establish a poultry and livestock feed mill in Liberia. Estimated cost of the project: $15,000 for technicians and $5,000 for Other Costs making a total of $20,000.

Fish

Recommend that assistance to this project be stepped up to provide three additional US advisors, three mechanized units for fish pond construction, and the necessary commodities for project support.

That a feasibility study be made to determine the potentialities for expanding marine fisheries operation by private interests.

Rice.

This project may be expected to enjoy moderate success. However, there are several other available alternatives which possess high potentialities for a solution to this problem, and perhaps should be given high priority.

Some of these alternatives include the following:

a. The situation presents basis for engineering a shift from a predominate rice diet to a more equitable balanced diet with vegetables, fruits and proteins. An efficient Home Economics program is essential to this approach supported by project concentration in the direction of food crops other than rice.

b. Put a floor under the price of rice, which would give the producers a chance to earn a reasonable return from their effort. At present there is a ceiling on the price of rice ($7.50 per hundred), which protects the consumer most effectively, but producers are subjected to being exploited by the middle man to the extent of destroying any incentive to grow rice beyond the individual family's immediate needs.

c. A subsidy weighted in favor of swamp rice to be paid out of the import duty collected on rice.

d. Put more stress on good seed and seed selection, better preparation of land, planting on time, the use of ertilizer, and machinery where applicable.

The undersigned has enjoyed his tenure of service in Liberia. Working relations with mission personnel, private enterprise, local Government officials, the people, and their hospitality have been all that one could ask for, and the experience gained - invaluable.

ADLER (ACTING)