

other commodities; the world witnessed the Gilbertian tragedy of farmers in the Western World poor because they had produced too much, and in the rest of the world poor because they could not produce enough.

This is not the place to enter into a discussion on the merits and drawbacks of *laissez-faire*. It is sufficient to point out that, while the spur of free enterprise unquestionably has been a major factor in the great productive developments of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the system has carried within itself certain defects which have manifested themselves in two ways:—

First, there has been the phenomenon of food piling up in storehouses and eventually being destroyed, of farmers being paid subsidies not to produce, in a world where millions went in want not only in the backward countries, but in those very countries which were the producers of "surplus" food.

Second, and especially in the newly developed Americas and in the British dominions, where free enterprise inevitably meant freehold land tenure, there has been a tendency to "mine" rather than to farm the land by the use of farming methods which gave little heed to posterity. The term "erosion" is often used instead of "faulty farming," but nevertheless millions of acres of once-fertile lands have been impoverished to varying degrees and their restoration is proving costly and difficult.

#### INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE

FAO cannot be claimed as the first organization of its kind. In 1905 there was founded in Rome the International Institute of Agriculture (IIA), the result of a convention between representatives of forty countries. That organization, which by 1930 had representatives from seventy-four countries, may be regarded as the pioneer of official international institutions, but it confined its activities to the international sphere and its essential objects were much narrower in concept and scope than those of FAO. They may be summarized as follows: "To collect, examine, and publish statistical, technical, and economic information about all phases of farming, including such things as trade in agricultural products, prices, wages paid for farm work, the recording of new diseases of crops and stock and, where possible, effective measures for their control; to study problems of agricultural credit and co-operation and publish available information; and, should occasion arise, to submit for the approval of the various Governments measures for the protection of the common interests of farmers and the improvement of their conditions." Thus IIA did not envisage dealing with the huge problems of overproduction in the Western World and the raising of nutritional standards over the greater part of the Eastern World.

IIA was taken over by FAO on 1st August, 1946. The employees of the Institute have been placed on the temporary staff of FAO, and the Institute's comprehensive library of statistical data and technical information will prove a valuable asset.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF FAO

Just as it is almost impossible to deal with the food problems of any one State alone, so it is almost as difficult to regard the machinery set up to deal with international food problems without mentioning the background of the new international machinery of which it is a part.

The United Nations came into being on 24th October, 1945, when the first twenty-nine of the fifty-one United Nations had ratified the Charter formulated at the San Francisco conference the previous spring. This new international structure is, in reality, composed of a number of functional or specialized agencies which are international and permanent. The General Assembly of United Nations, on which each of the member