

An instance of the type of work which FAO can accomplish is furnished by the International Wheat Agreement, recently signed by thirty-six countries. This agreement, which has still to be ratified by the signatory countries, had its genesis in the days before FAO, but it represents that type of inter-governmental commodity agreement which the Organization can implement for other commodities, working in close collaboration with ITO.

In the technical field much valuable work has been accomplished in the spheres of agriculture, nutrition, forestry, and fisheries, and the dissemination of technical information is a task of sufficient value and importance to justify the relatively small expenditure of 5,000,000 dollars annually.

NEW ZEALAND AND FAO

Membership of the United Nations and its specialized agencies does not necessarily mean the direct procurement of social or economic advantages: the main objective is co-operation among nations for the common good, and some members should be able to contribute more than others. In the field of food and agriculture New Zealand has much to offer.

In the first instance, we can contribute to the knowledge of the world, and can assist in the provision of technical advice to less-favoured members. Our farm productivity per unit of labour is the highest in the world, and that is not entirely the result of a favourable climate. If the experience and knowledge available in New Zealand could be utilized in the establishment and management of pastures throughout the suitable areas of the world, we should indeed contribute nobly to the production of meat, wool, and dairy products. Our standard of living is high, and from a nutritional viewpoint we rank among the first nations of the world. Therefore, FAO cannot help us greatly in this connection.

At the moment, and for some time to come, we are producing food which is in short supply. Long-term contracts and high price levels safeguard our overseas income and allow of full employment internally. An increasing population, however, demands a real volume increase in overseas exchange as a basis for an over-all expansion in our national economy. Our expansion and our future prosperity, in common with the future prosperity of others, depend on the successful functioning of the United Nations and its agencies. New Zealand is particularly vulnerable in view of our dependence on a narrow range of exports and limited markets, and it may well be that in the days ahead FAO and its activities in the field of distribution may be fundamental to our continued stability and prosperity.

E. J. FAWCETT, Director-General.
