

Any sudden fall in the dollar earning of the food deficit countries or in the volume of United States gifts and loans might precipitate a food shortage in some countries and a surplus in North America. Experience early in 1949 showed how sensitive those dollar earnings (particularly those from United States merchandise imports) are to any fall in United States industrial activity and consumer purchasing power.

Thus efficient production in the soft currency and under-developed areas must be maintained and expanded to bring about a more balanced agricultural economy in the world. At the same time, in the face of extremely low consumption levels and exchange difficulties in many countries of this area, means must be devised to assist the maintenance of a high level of efficient agricultural production and a large volume of agricultural exports in North America.

### *Current Policies of Governments*

Government agricultural policies are an important force shaping the world food and agriculture situation. The following comments bring out some of the common tendencies :—

A number of countries report the continuation or initiation of programmes for improving the diet of vulnerable groups and poorer classes. Many more Governments need to give attention to this matter, especially in countries where over-all food supplies will for some time remain inadequate, and where, therefore, the most effective utilization of them acquires particular importance.

Most countries with relatively inadequate *per caput* consumption envisage an extension of their agricultural production, but, apparently, in most cases not an expansion of sufficient magnitude to remedy substantially their nutritional problem in the near future.

Most under-developed countries envisage reduced imports and expanded exports of food and agricultural products, even where food consumption is low. This is related to their desire to have the maximum possible quantity of foreign exchange for industrialization and general economic development.

Regional meetings in Latin America, the Near East, and the Far East emphasized that Governments may have to give greater attention to (a) production of more nutritionally valuable foods, (b) diversification from one or two export crops to a wider variety of products, (c) devoting more land to the production of crops, such as roots and tubers, having a higher calorie output per acre than bread grains, (d) development of extension and other Government services for agriculture, (e) policies of soil conservation and improvement, and (f) provision of adequate storage facilities for food and agricultural commodities.

The majority of the more developed countries intend to reduce food imports and expand food production. Most, though not all, are driven