

INTERVIEWS: JEJ

Diary Note

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IADS, Washington, D.C.

January 12, 1984

My visit was made for the purpose of discussing with appropriate staff members their impressions of problems of agricultural development in African countries and to get their suggestions for program activities which the Foundation might initiate in that region. Arrangements were made for the visit by Dr. Guy Baird who, while not assigned exclusively to Africa, has either participated in or coordinated most of their activities in the region. He had assembled a set of documents which he felt would be of interest to RF. A list of those I selected and brought back with me is attached. In addition to Guy, I met with Dil Athwal, IADS Vice President; Colin McClung, President; Jim Maner, animal scientist; and Frank Byrnes, communications specialist. All but Athwal are former RF staff members.

Guy has led missions to both East and West Africa. His general reaction was that the opportunities for a Foundation initiative dealing with agricultural research and development were much greater in East and Southern Africa than in West Africa. This opinion related more to the openness of these countries to assistance and potential for improvement than to the language difference. In West Africa he singled out Cameroon and Senegal as the most promising countries. One of the reasons for his interest in Southern Africa is the fact that he headed the USAID funded study of "Cooperation in Agricultural Research" for the countries of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC). I have a copy of the report. There is to be a meeting of the SADCC Agricultural Research Directors February 20-23, 1984. Guy will participate (with USAID support) and spend the following 6 to 8 weeks in the region following up on conference decisions and related matters. Botswana has been selected to coordinate agricultural research in the SADCC region and it has been proposed that a "Coordination Center" be established in Botswana to implement the activity. It has been proposed that the Center be funded multi-laterally to avoid any suspicion of political influence. Baird suggested that the RF might consider joining the funding group. As an apolitical agency the Foundation could probably serve in a leadership role. I did not endorse this suggestion, although it could be an option to be considered.

All of the IADS staff members with whom I spoke raised the question of whether RF might consider using the still to be organized Winrock International Agency as implementing agency for any African program we might design. This may have been "organized" in anticipation of my visit, but I doubt it. I expect that it was rather a reflection of the confidence that they have that the new organization will come into existence, as well as their tendency to make a sales pitch to any potential donor. In each case I responded that it was an option, but that it was too early to say.

Dil Athwal and Frank Byrnes both raised a question about the possibility of RF support for a seed training and research unit for Africa. A copy of the proposal and support documents is in the file. This is based on the CIAT program led by J. E. Douglas, which we initiated and the Swiss picked up. Again, I was non-committal. While I agree with a need for seed production, I could not give it highest priority in Africa and it would be an expensive undertaking. The CIAT program was low risk for the RF since we provided little more than JED, and CIAT took the responsibility for raising the major funding.

I spent the entire day in discussion with the staff. (The staff "brown bags" so I purchased my lunch at Roy Rogers and joined them.) Since I was provided with copies of the documents in which I was interested this seemed the best approach. In retrospect, however, Guy Baird was the most helpful in giving me information on the African situation. I will, however, find another opportunity to meet with Leon Hesser and Pierre Antoine who were both on missions, but also have significant African experience.

Documents Provided by IADS

1. Improvement of Agricultural Research in Sub-Saharan Africa, (February 1, 1982). This was prepared by IADS in an effort to convince USAID to use it as part of its effort to coordinate support for agricultural research under the CDA (Consortium for Development of Africa).
2. Cooperation in Agricultural Research - Prepared for USAID as a contribution to the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC).
3. Senegal - National Institute for Rural Development - Prepared for USAID.
4. ISNAR Document - Report of an ISNAR - IITA mission to the Institute of Agromomic and Animal Research of the Economic Communities of the Countries of the Large Lakes (Burundi, Rwanda, Zaire).
5. Malawi - Agricultural Extension, Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, IADS and University of Florida
6. Seed Training and Research Unit: Africa - Preliminary proposal

End of Diary Note