

World Parley Warned Of Short Food Supplies

By GLADWIN HILL

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 10—A somber picture of prospects for feeding the world's rapidly multiplying population was limned today as several thousand nutrition specialists of some 50 nations met in the Third International Congress of Food Science and Technology.

"Even if man can double food production by the end of the century—no trivial feat—he will at best have succeeded only in preserving the sorry conditions that exist today," said the keynote speaker, Dr. George W. Irving Jr., administrator of the research service of the Department of Agriculture, a principal sponsor of the assemblage.

Up to half of the world's 3.6 billion inhabitants are estimated to be undernourished, and an oft-cited statistic is that 10,000 persons die every day of starvation. At present growth rates, the population will double in the next 30 years.

Lord Ritchie-Calder, the British nutrition and population specialist, said that by 1980, three-quarters of all the people on earth will be citizens of the underdeveloped countries, where nutrition problems are most acute.

Dr. Gunnar Myrdal, the Swedish economist and social scientist, told the assemblage that in the non-Communist underdeveloped countries food production since World War II "has barely kept pace with the population increase." He cited two major obstacles to increased production.

Myrdal Cites Obstacles

"Measures to improve yields in agriculture in underdeveloped countries will not be effective without radical reforms [chiefly redistribution of land ownership and tenancy," he said, yet "even the discussion of land reform has been toned down and has almost disappeared from agricultural planning."

A bigger basic problem, he continued, is that in underdeveloped countries—where the farm population runs as high as 70 per cent—the introduction of labor-saving technology to spur crop production would greatly increase unemployment and thereby aggravate poverty and malnutrition.

Even foreign aid, by obviating increased local agricultural production, he said, "could make political, social and economic conditions still more precarious and indeed, unbearable."

The solution, he suggested, is for such countries to promote high-yield agriculture that would also require much manpower, adding that in India, for one, "It is a disquieting fact that there are no indications of either policy or research be-

ing directed toward this combined objective."

Dr. Myrdal, whose racial studies were cited extensively in school desegregation litigation on this country, recently had a heart attack, and his address was read to the conference.

Secretary of Agriculture Clifford M. Hardin, in opening the congress, said food imports held little promise for the underdeveloped countries because "most of them will be short of foreign exchange in the years ahead, and 90 per cent of the food they consume will have to be produced on their own soil."

The "Green Revolution" — an effort by agriculture experts to greatly increase world food production with high-yield seeds, chemicals and advanced farming methods — drew only guarded optimism from the principal speakers.

"I personally feel, along with many agricultural specialists, that it is technically feasible to more than double present levels of food production, and to create a system of world agriculture that—coupled with requisite limits on the size of the population — would provide adequate diets for all," the man speaker, Dr. Irving said.

The congress is being held at the Park Sheraton Hotel. It will continue through Friday. The sponsors, besides the Department of Agriculture, are the International Committee of Food Science and Technology, and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

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