

# SVERIGE

## CONFINED CO-OPERATIVE AGRICULTURE

### Church's Challenge

I found my biggest problem, along with the rest of the Canadians, was that of prejudice or a tendency to apply Canadian standards in evaluating Swedish achievements and developments instead of using a European yardstick which would have been more realistic in formulating objective conclusions.

Like the Swedish landscape, agriculture presents an infinitely varied picture from the rich southern plains to the small barren holdings in the north. Between these extremes are innumerable intermediate types.

The average farm is not favored by nature, but production is increasing due to research and technique. A feature is the highly developed co-operation among farmers in economic associations which make a vital contribution to the efficiency of the industry. I might add that forestry plays an important role in the farmer's economic situation.

### "BARREN HOLDINGS"

The average Swedish farmer is 54 years old, belongs to at least one co-operative, and farms about 20 acres of land. There is a decrease of 4,000 farmers a year due to reforestation and urban expansion. Most of these farms are very small, in the five acre class. Eighty per cent of the farm income is from livestock. Finally, Swedish farmers have the most extensive and probably the most successful co-operative federation to be found anywhere.

Virtually 100 per cent of the farmers belong and all products are included. There are 12 producer organizations which are federated to form the Sveriges Lantbruks förbund (SL), a central co-ordinating body. The direct membership Farmers Union or Riksförbundet Landsbygdens Folk (RLF) is the agricultural policy making body. The huge Federation (SL) insists on the following co-operative principles:

1. Same payment for similar quality regardless of the amount delivered.
2. Compulsory delivery of produce to the co-operative by the member, and compulsory acceptance by the co-operative of a member's produce.
3. Rationalization of the Co-operative's facilities to insure the producer the largest possible share of the consumer dollar.
4. Each member has one vote regardless of the amount of capital invested or shares owned by a member.

The SL has a virtual monopoly on all agricultural produce in Sweden. Swedish farm prices

### "SHACKLING PROGRESS"

are set by a Negotiating Board made up of representatives of the SL, RLF and the Government. The object of the agricultural policy is to enable the efficient farmer, farming 20 to 30 acres, to obtain an income equal to that of the rural industrial worker. This formula acts as a basis for farm prices and usually sets prices about 30 per cent above Danish export prices.

The price objective is reached in two ways: by supporting prices and by rationalization. Price support is given mainly in the form of restricted imports and by direct subsidy as in the case of milk. Rationalization is increasing production at about three per cent per year or comparable to Swedish industry.

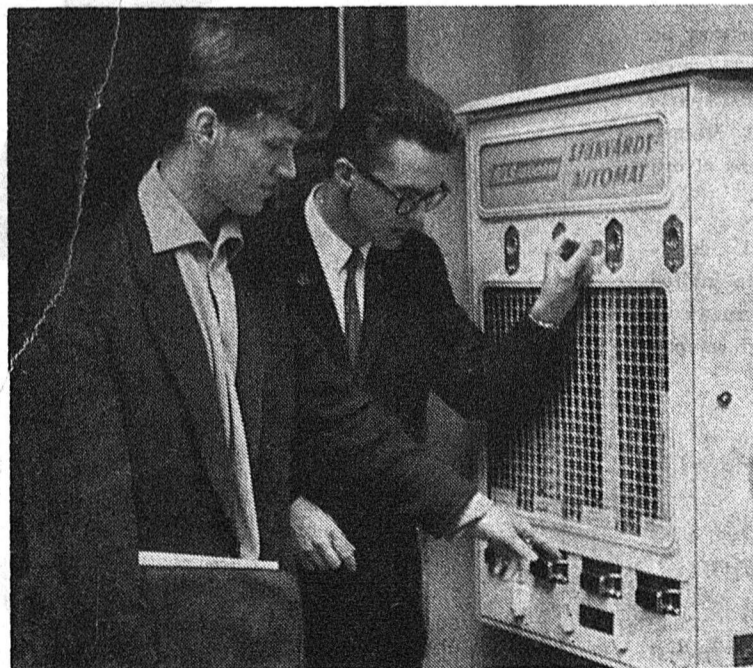
To me, it seemed as though

traditions and past government regulations were shackling the progress of Swedish agriculture. For although prices were relatively high the average farmer is not well off due to the extremely small units and lack of operating capital to become intensive and efficient.

I also noted that very few young people were in agriculture due to inflexibility of government regulations and an easier life awaiting them in the cities.



**COWBOY BOB**, who constantly wore his western hat and boots, caused quite a stir in Sweden (understandably!). Swedes fought to take pictures of the first genuine cowboy they had seen. When, to mark the end of their stay, the 40 Canadian delegates presented a medieval play for their host. Bob was given a soldier's outfit to wear. He convulsed the Swedes with his hat and boot revisions to the assigned uniform.



**CONTRACEPTIVE MACHINE**—A Swedish high school boy, left, nonchalantly shows a contraceptive machine to an unidentified bug-eyed Canadian tourist in the above picture. The machines, which sell the goods to anyone regardless of age, stand on busy streets in all Swedish towns.

## WORLD'S PENAL LABORATORY

Jailbird Jenkins

Compared to the Swedish prison system, the Canadian system can only be described as backward.

Ideas that Canadian prison officials have considered and dismissed as being financially impractical, are expressed in very palpable brick and glass in Sweden.

While many hundreds are crowded into Canada's large penitentiaries, Swedish prisons are designed to hold only 30 to 200 men each—thus providing for efficient control and more specialized attention. Armed guards walk the walls at Kingston penitentiary in Canada, while at Norrtälje prison in Sweden, an officer watches a bank of television screens and communicates by short-wave radio to patrol officers in the yard.

Why such a disparity? Since Canada and Sweden have roughly the same standards of living, why should Canada be lagging in prison fields? The answer lies in the concern the Swedes have for the harm prison may do. "Until we can be sure what a good prison system does, the fewer the people committed, and the shorter the time, the better," seems to be the consensus.

As a result of this concern for the effect of prison terms on its errant citizens, the Swedish state had the impetus to spend a great deal of public money on its penal system. Imaginative ideas have been quickly translated into brightly painted concrete.

Imaginative programming does not mean that the Swedes rush frantically like an affluent moth after every new flare of an idea. Under the brilliant Torsten Eriksson, director general of Swedish prisons, transformations have been made on the basis of four ruling ideas:

First, prisoners must be put to work. In Canada, prisoners work at half speed, many of them at useless "make-work" tasks. At the Fort Saskatchewan jail near Edmonton, short-termers play cards all day in dormitories. How can a man be expected to take a regular job and hold it upon release from jail, after he has been in the habit of wasting day after day playing cards? In Sweden, prisons begin with a clean, well-lighted, well-equipped factory in which inmates learn to work at the tempo required by normal industry.

Second, prisons should take ad-

vantage of modern technology. In Canada, newer institutions such as the Calgary Provincial Jail are clean and modern. However, it is apparent the huge, almost medieval structures now in use throughout the country will be with us for many years to come. Except for crumbling old Longholman in Stockholm, Sweden has eliminated its ancient fortresses and is using buildings of more recent construction. Turning to automation, the gadget-mad Swedes are always the first to install anything of this

### "PEOPLE FEEL BETTER"

nature. At Hall prison in Sweden a voice crackled out of a loudspeaker at my elbow when I pushed a button at the gate. In many Canadian prisons, a face peers out of a chink in the door in response to one's ring.

Third, the principle of the small group is followed in Sweden. New Swedish prisons house fewer than 200 prisoners. Torsten Eriksson feels the ideal figure would be about 60. In Canada, Kingston Penitentiary has a capacity of 450 men but is now housing 930. Joyceville has 420 inmates and Collins Bay 450. In Sweden, Hall has 200 inmates, Norrtälje 150, Bogesund 70 and Nackahemmet only 8. The anachronistic Longholm has 650 inmates. In the smaller prisons the superintendent can know every prisoner. The groups are small and manageable. I doubt if anything like the Kingston riots will ever trouble Sweden.

To me, the most impressive principle was the fourth: a good prison plan must deliberately minimize the psychological unhealthiness of confinement. People feel better if they work in good light; they adjust more readily to society upon release

### "TAKEN FOR A DRIVE"

if they have been given responsibility while in prison. In Canada, as a novel experiment, prisoners are sometimes taken out by prison staff members for a drive and a meal on the outside. "If a man has been 'inside' for any length of time, he always vomits while he tries to eat that first meal in any ordinary cafe," said one prison official. "The shock of seeing other people is too much." Ivar Hojer, secretary of the Social Board of the Swedish prison administration, told me all Swedish prisoners receive a 48-hour leave after serving six or 10 months of their sentences—depending on the length of the sentences. Further leaves are granted every two or three months thereafter.

Even more spectacular are the "open" institutions. At Hall, 18 of the 200 inmates live in "open" buildings. One guard is on duty between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. The rest of the time, guards make only periodic checks. The doors are unlocked during the day, and the prisoners go to and from their jobs in the fields as freely as Canadian farmers. At night the doors are locked, but since there are no bars on the windows, if a man chooses to drop out of a window he can. However, when caught he will not be allowed to stay in an open section of a prison.

The most startling example of an attempt to inculcate a sense of responsibility in prisoners was at Nackahemmet, a pre-release home just outside Stockholm. Nackahemmet is a \$40,000 house in the suburbs which contains eight men who have two to five months remaining in their sen-

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