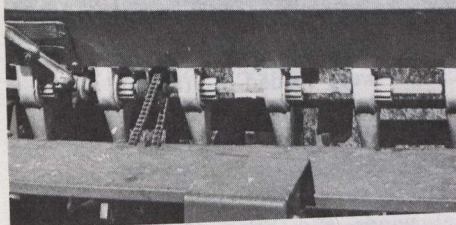


International body to fend for family farms

An innovative consultation on problems facing the family farm that recently brought together farmers and farm leaders from developing countries, Canada, the United States and Europe to discuss ways of overcoming threats to the farmer's way of life has resulted in plans to form what consultation organizers believe will be a unique international farm organization, reports Sharleen Bannon editor of *Development Directions*.



"G-100" Disker



Delegates from developing countries visit a Saskatchewan wheat farm during the international consultation on family farms. (Left to right): Tom Ahima from Ghana and Daniel Macheмба from Tanzania.

The group now struggling to establish itself as an organization grew out of a coordinating committee with representatives from North America, the Caribbean, Africa, South America and Asia; the body was elected by delegates at the conclusion of a two-week consultation which began in Regina, Saskatchewan, travelled to Quebec City and ended with six days of deliberation at the University of Prince Edward Island in Charlottetown, September 1.

The objectives of the new organization are to facilitate the formation and continuation of an international exchange network of contacts, information and expertise among farm organizations that work directly with farming families.

The new body also intends to bring to the attention of governments the importance of the family farm in ensuring na-

tional food self-sufficiency. The committee foresees that the organization will try to persuade policy-makers not to encourage the growth and exclusive reliance on large-scale, mechanized agricultural production and to consider that the small-scale farm may — especially in these days of energy shortages — prove even more productive and efficient.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Inter Pares — an Ottawa-based non-governmental organization involved in Third World agriculture projects — have been approached to help form the organization which would probably have its headquarters in a Third World country. The official host for the family farms consultation was the Prince Edward Island-based Institute of Man and Resources with financial assistance and co-operation from CIDA and the provinces of Saskatchewan, Quebec and Prince Edward Island. Inter Pares served as the secretariat for the consultation.

Participants

All delegates were invited as individuals rather than as official representatives for their country or organization. All had practical experience in farming. Third World participants came from Antigua, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cameroun, Dominica, Ecuador, Ghana, India, Kenya, Liberia, Mexico, Philippines, Puerto Rico,



Quebec farmer Celine Caron explains how maple syrup is made during a visit to a Quebec sugar bush by delegates to the consultation.

Senegal, Sri Lanka, St. Vincent, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad, Upper Volta, and Zambia. The Europeans were from Denmark, France, England, Ireland, Italy and Scotland. There were also Canadian farmers from Alberta, Quebec, Saskatchewan and the 30 host farmers from Prince Edward Island.

Debate and discussion centred around such topics as international market forces detrimental to small-scale farming, why certain crops are produced to benefit others than the farmer or the local community, the role of the state in relation to farm land and agricultural policies, agribusiness, technology, transnational corporations and land holding patterns.

Despite many differences in the crops and in methods of farming in the various countries represented at the meeting, there was universal agreement that the farmer receives a relatively small return on his investment and his family's labour, compared with the profits made by others in the market-place dependent on the farmer's produce.

Canada funds college

Canada is providing a \$12-million grant to help construct a natural resources college in Malawi.

The funds will be used to help design, construct and equip a training facility for about 700 students near the capital, Lilongwe. The college will offer courses in such subjects as farm management; crop, animal and land husbandry; fisheries; national parks; wildlife management; and veterinary science.

The total cost, including the Malawi contribution, is estimated at \$14.1 million.

The five-year plan is Canada's first involvement in this area of Malawi's development and is designed to integrate four existing training facilities. All teachers and administrative staff will be Malawians. Canadian involvement will be limited to the establishment of the building — including student dormitories — and initial organization of the college.

Canadian development assistance to Malawi amounted to \$15.8 million in grants during 1978-79 and is one of the largest Canadian International Development Agency programs in Commonwealth Africa. Until recently, Canadian activity in Malawi has been focused on transportation, particularly railways.