Impressions of Europe by an American Grassland Specialist

D. R. Dodd

I RECENTLY returned from a 21 months tour of duty in Europe. During that time, I was with the European Office of the Food and Agricultural Division of our government's Foreign Operations Administration.

My headquarters was in Paris, but most of the time I was working in one or another of the various countries associated with us in our defense against Russian aggression.

My work took me into 14 countries, from Greece and Algeria on the East and South, to Scotland and Ireland on the North and West.

It was the aim of our government to aid the various European governments in improving their respective situations economically, socially and politically. My responsibilities were those of a pasture and forage production consultant. In all countries there was need for more and better animal products more economically produced, usually for local consumption but sometimes for export. Improvement in the production and utilization of pasture and forage was generally recognized as the most effective means of producing better animal products at lower cost.

My work in various countries was upon invitation from the ministry of agriculture of the respective country through our mission office in that country and our European office in Paris.

Everywhere I went I was warmly received, diligently worked, and cordially treated. The native people made me feel that they were glad to see me, that they appreciated the help, and that they were sorry to have me leave.

Upon my first visit to a country, I was hesitant to express my opinions freely since conditions were frequently very different from those in the United States. The right answer in America was not always the right answer for the situation at hand.

However, as time passed, I found myself in a more favorable position. Not only did I have my own American background, but, I had opportunity to see what was being done in the various European countries. I also had a chance to see what results were being obtained on the research and demonstration farms in the country where I happened other countries, including the United States, procedures and techniques were giving best results for any help which I might give, I was confident that would be helpful to me and our American mission office in that country and our European office, a report giving the effectiveness of new procedures and techniques.

The second phase was an on-the-spot study of projects, farm demonstrations and extension programs in representative areas.

The third phase was a joint evaluation of projects, farm demonstrations and extension programs.

Before leaving a country the consultant prepared a final report and results for future action. These final reports contained in requests for return visits of the consultant for new phases, to review new or revised projects and the effectiveness of new procedures and techniques.

I left the job unfinished, but think much accomplished. I was only one of a group of consultants working in a different agricultural subject matter area. The consultant work is not an expensive feature of the Foreign Operations Administration program, but in all respects, it is one of the most valuable phases of good will and progress and a minimum of friction.