

bassadors" a far more intimate glimpse into life than is accorded the usual tourist. The letters indicate that the host families and the entire communities make a real effort to see that this glimpse is meaningful. The families are carefully chosen, and The Experiment in International Living makes every effort to see that each is able to give the "ambassadors" lodged with them a good, representative experience.

The Community that decides to take international understanding as a personal responsibility by sending its own ambassadors abroad has in its hands the key to a number of questions. How to dramatize public affairs education? How to develop interest in studying one's own community—and then in relating it to other communities of the world? How to give young adults a re-

sponsible role in community life? How to achieve cooperative action among diverse groups? Finally, how to build even a single bridge over the fear and suspicion separating peoples?

Experience has shown that the project leads to other activities—home-giving to foreign students as developed in Jamestown, letter writing, exchange of books, sending packages abroad, organizing discussions, in short, a richly varied, active program of international education soundly based on a sympathetic and friendly interest in other people. No participating group is satisfied with what it is doing, but each feels that it has found a dramatic focus and an effective impetus for developing a good program. This is "education through the project" at its best and on a world-wide scale.

Grassroot Ambassadors

PAUL C. TAFF

Rural youth from the United States and from other lands are exchanged in a program designed to improve international understanding. Paul C. Taff, assistant director, Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa, last summer served as leader of the U. S. delegates and visited many of the countries participating in this program.

ACTING as "Grassroot Ambassadors" from the United States, 148 farm youth have visited foreign countries during the past four years. They went abroad under the auspices of the International Farm Youth Exchange program which in turn brought 123 foreign youth to the United States during the same period.

This two-way exchange of rural young people gave all of them an opportunity to live with farm families here and abroad. It has developed an understanding of the customs, problems, living conditions and philosophy of the families and the countries visited.

Getting this firsthand information on how people live, work and play in other

countries is believed to be an important first step toward better international understanding. Close contacts established through living in the homes of other people is recognized as a sure way to get an understanding of the thinking of people on international problems and of learning how people may be expected to react when world peace is at stake.

Delegates Report Experiences

While the above are the primary objectives, living in farm homes enables the exchangees to learn about farm living and farm methods of another country and to exchange ideas freely. Experience has shown that people from almost any nation can teach us some worth-while practices and there is no denying that many of our United States agricultural methods can be of help in other countries.

The results of the program over the four years it has been conducted are highly satisfactory. The author, acting as leader of the U.S. delegates for 1951, visited most of the countries involved this summer, and found great enthusiasm for the program among the officials, the hosts and others concerned. In this country the states which have participated feel it has been a concrete example of fine international cooperation. Each United States delegate for the three years not including 1951 has made an average of 78 talks to about 7,700 people about his experiences. Also each delegate has made an average of nine radio talks and has given interviews for eighteen press articles. This is an indication as to how widely the experiences and observations of the delegates have been spread.

It was also found in the foreign countries visited that the young people who have taken part in these exchange programs in past years are being drawn upon in many ways for positions of leadership. As an illustration, among three young men and women who were employed for a certain type of rural leadership work in England this summer, each one was a former exchangee. After this program has operated a few more years, this kind of result should be even more evident.

Those who have worked with this program here and abroad have commented many times upon the close relationship that develops quickly where the exchangee lives in the host family. This nearly always results in a kind of parent-son or -daughter tie, and parting at the end of a stay of an exchangee is much like that feeling which occurs when a child leaves home. Many delegates correspond with their hosts for years afterwards. This closeness is considered good evidence of the effectiveness of the policy of having exchangees live, work and share with their host family. It should result in better understanding and feeling between all people touched by the program.

Language No Barrier

The question is often asked whether the lack of a common language is not a definite handicap. It must be admitted a free exchange of conversation would be ideal and would make the contact even more fruitful. However, experience has proved that, where this is not possible, the program still goes on successfully. The author found instances this summer where our youth were with families in which little conversation was

possible at first. But in a few days this would be overcome and each party could make himself understood in some way. In most countries, as in the United States, exchangees are placed, if possible, in the home of, or near to someone who can interpret the needed language.

The National 4-H Club Foundation, with offices in the Department of Agriculture at Washington, and the Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture are responsible for organizing and supervising this exchange program. The State Extension Service in Agriculture and Home Economics of the Land Grant College in each state is responsible for selecting one or more delegates to go to a foreign country. These Extension Services are also responsible for accepting and placing on farms foreign youth assigned to the state by the above United States agencies. It is also necessary for each state to raise through contributions \$900 per delegate selected from the state. This fund is used in large part to send the United States delegates abroad, but a part is also expended in the transportation of foreign delegates from the ports of entry in the United States to the states and to return them to the ports of entry.

Selection of Delegates

No government funds are used to finance this project. In the states, a large portion of the cost of each exchange comes from the 4-H Clubs and other rural youth organizations, young men's and women's groups and service clubs. The remainder is contributed by adult organizations, business concerns and individuals.

State Extension Services usually place the responsibility on county extension services to nominate likely candidates for the exchange. Selection is then made from these nominees through state committees. To assist in this selection, delegates are asked to furnish complete information about their training, background and such matters as foreign language ability if any and preference as to countries. From the nominations made by the states, the Federal agencies make final selections of delegates to go abroad and assign them to appropriate countries.

Farms on which the exchangees are placed here and abroad are selected from among families who volunteer to accept a young person for a period of three to six weeks. Exchangees are expected to live with the family and engage in all of the work and activities of their host family. In some cases the family provides a small allotment or salary to give the exchangee necessary spending money. Trips to places of interest and events in the community are invariably part of the training provided by the host family. The family receives no remuneration for the board and care of the exchangee, except whatever work may be involved. Exchangees remain in a country from four to six months. Thus they are able to live on three or four different farms, often in as many states or areas; this helps them to learn more about their host country and its people.

The recommended age for the delegates going from this country is 18 to 28 years. Those coming from other countries are often 25 to 30 years of age. In many cases the delegates are college students or college graduates

but this is not a requirement. The qualifications most sought are that the rural young people be mature in their judgment, have an interest in contacting people in other countries, and be willing to spend some time in reporting their experiences after their return.

Program To Be Expanded

Countries that accepted United States exchangees in 1951 were Austria, Belgium-Luxemburg, Brazil, Denmark, England and Wales, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and North Ireland. Plans are being laid greatly to extend the program in 1952. A larger number of young people will be sent from this country and it is hoped a much larger number will be received from foreign countries. Also, about the time this article appears, announcement will have been made in regard to sending a large group to a number of countries in the Southern Hemisphere and some

of the countries in the southern part of the Northern Hemisphere. Thus, the program will be greatly expanded in territory covered as well as in the number of individuals involved.

The National 4-H Club Foundation is maintained through contributions. Recently the Ford Foundation has made a substantial grant to aid in the program and to expand it. Several commercial concerns and individuals make sizeable contributions each year.

For the past several years, the delegates going to European and nearby countries have been assembled in Washington for orientation at the time of the National 4-H Club Camp. During this period the U.S. State Department and other agencies have acquainted them with conditions they are expected to meet. At the same time, the State Department has given the delegates the unofficial title of "Grassroot Ambassadors." This title signifies in a few words the functions the young people perform in contributing to world understanding and peace.

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