

SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Regional study, whose pathway we have followed insofar as was possible, goes on here to consider the "Regional Trade Balance in Goods and Services for 1956," and the "Regional Economic Balance." The overall total of the resources of the Region is deduced after examination of the uses to which these resources are put: private or public consumption, net investments, amortization and reserves.

It is general knowledge that these evaluations are extremely problematical, since there are absolutely no statistics available on the movements of goods, which represents the major item in the balance. Therefore, it would be foolish to attempt any such deductions in relation to the territory we are considering.

The most eloquent figure that can be found to complete the overall picture is the percentage of expenditures for food: in the Abruzzi, this one item accounts for 70% of all expenditures, as against 62% in Italy as a whole. The percentage is most certainly even higher in our group of communities.

The report then goes on to make a prediction of the employment situation in the 1956-66 decade, beginning with the hypothesis that income and employment will continue to increase at the same rate as in the past periods examined. The conclusion is that ten years is not enough for the Region, by its own efforts and with the aid that presumably is to come from outside, to provide complete satisfaction for the job needs of its labor force, and to create "that automatic income and savings expansion mechanism that will lead to a final solution of the problem of structural unevenness that besets it today."

The report then goes on to extend the prediction and the planning to a period of fifteen years, between 1957 and 1971, calculating the demand for capital which a build-up in the supply of labor would require, and the increase in income which, together with the foreseeable aid from outside during the fifteen-year period, would be adequate to supply, with the greatest availability of savings compatible with the conditions in the zone, the necessary mass of capital.

Referring once again to the Preface, we shall limit ourselves, in view of the different scale of our study, to a few particular considerations.

Placing Graphs P, O, N, I, and C next to one another, and re-considering them in the reverse of the order listed, we get a conclusive correlation among the various facts we have thus far considered. We see the convergence between the rise in income and that in productivity, which led us to find a drop in employment at the same time as we found a very slight drop in unemployment. This apparent contradiction finds an explanation in the overall decrease in the number of active individuals (whose living standards are also improved). The rise in emigration, which differs in the two sectors, fits in with the preceding facts, as does the equally different decrease in the overall "population present."

Here we are dealing with a strictly mountain economy, within which it would be vain to hope for any far-reaching changes. The altitude and the climate are rigidly limiting factors. We must therefore be content to make a few general suggestions aimed at correcting small details, in the hope that this will provide the needed impetus for an overall transformation, but without forgetting

the other limiting factor that lies in the traditions and the psychology of the people. Nor must we forget, above all, to fit every problem into the recollection that everything that is, in the current state of affairs, be it good or bad, has its reason for being so; and this reason must be kept in mind every minute, even while we go ahead to modify or to correct.

We have already said - and the evidence we have seen clearly shows it - that the economy of these little towns is very largely an agrarian economy. And we have seen just what sort of agrarian economy it is. On one particular point it seems to us that there should be no doubt or question whatever. Recall the incongruous extent of seeded crops in high mountain land, such as that of most of the Aventino, and the hopeless grain plantings, which find their origin in hunger, yet tend to perpetuate that hunger. Obviously, the thing to be done is to increase by every possible means the growing of livestock, and, within the limits allowable by the immediate problem of employment, restrict the planting of seeded crops to the zones that can profitably be put to that use, fostering a gradual return of the land to its natural destiny as meadow and pasture.

Another corrective measure of the greatest urgency is to put a stop to the two-year crop rotation cycle, which we find is still very widespread in the zone, once again both the effect and cause of hunger. And lastly, (and here we get into the delicate field of "education,") it must be brought to the attention of the proper authorities that the closed consumption economy must be opened up (even though at the moment there is no visible way to do so), and that an attempt must be made to start it towards an exchange cycle, within the limits imposed by the gradually improving state of

communications.

Here, and on this subject, we can hazard a suggestion: and that it, to make generally known, I might say to spread, illustrative material concerning the present state of the zone, in an easily assimilable form. Such, for example, might be part of the graphic material gathered for this report, perhaps integrated with other material more simply and pleasingly presented, and keeping always in mind the proper comparisons and juxtapositions.

And we dare hope that an effective and widespread explanation of this kind can serve as leavening for the otherwise all but inert mass, and to transform the individual (be it in ever so small a degree) from the object to the subject of the betterment of his own state. And lastly, may we be pardoned for recalling once more the dangers inherent in all outside intervention - and here we are speaking chiefly of financial help : this is the danger of offering a carriage, a seeming benefit, but necessarily not a permanent one, to a man who should be building up his strength so he can learn to walk alone.

Rome, 31 July 1958.