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AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT,
SALERNO PROVINCE
FEB. 1944

Declassified E.O. 12356 Section 3.3/NND No.

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HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION
Agriculture Sub-Commission
APO 394

ES/NAH/wt

27 February 1944

SUBJECT: Newspaper Article - Paolo Searfogle.

TO : Vice President, Administrative Section, ACC.

1. On 25 and 26 February 1944 a reconnaissance was made of the Salerno Region by the Agriculture Sub-Commission (referred to in the last paragraph of newspaper article). Findings are summarized below:
see attached

a. Three land improvement districts (Bonifica) are located south and east of Salerno. The one closest to Salerno is a comparatively old project consisting of a total of about 16680 hectares. This project is fully developed and no land suitable for cultivation was found to be idle.

b. Of the total areas in the two remaining projects (7276 hectares and 17250 hectares respectively) preliminary survey revealed that approximately 5000 hectares of good tillable land may remain idle this crop year unless action is taken to obtain essential seed, tractors, and farm machinery and induce the owners to cultivate the land. Of these 5000 potentially idle hectares, it is estimated that 1000 are suitable for potatoes and 1000 for corn. The remaining 3000 could be used for tomatoes or other crops if canning and other facilities are made available. In previous years the major portion of the idle land in question was used for either tobacco or sugar beets. Army installations have taken over most of tobacco installations and AFHQ has ruled against importation of sugar beet seed.

2. Results of preliminary survey were discussed with and made available to Region II Agricultural Officer located in Salerno Province and to our liaison officer with Ministry of Agriculture.

3. Items in plan of action agreed upon follow:

- a. All facts obtained to be made available to Minister of Agriculture.
- b. Detailed survey of three Bonifica to be completed immediately in cooperation with Minister through Provincial and other local Italian officials.
- c. HQ/ACC/Agric to take necessary action to divert adequate seed potatoes to meet needs as revealed by detailed survey (3 & 6) and to endeavor to secure other seed needs.

d. Program to assure utilization of all idle land to be formulated in cooperation with Italian Agriculture officials. This program to be executed by Bonifica officials under supervision of Ministry if necessary to induce

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large land owners to participate in program. Information, which may or may not be reliable, suggested that a few large land owners refused to buy available potato seed; first, because price was too high; and second, because they were unwilling to obligate themselves to sell surplus produced through official channels.

4. About two months ago the Agriculture Sub-Commission and Region III agricultural officer agreed to maximize potato production in Campania to:

a. assure adequate supplies for Naples and other Civilian and Military needs. Campania was until last year or so major surplus potato area. Land and climate are well suited for that purpose.

b. utilize land formerly used for flower seed production and other non-essential crops.

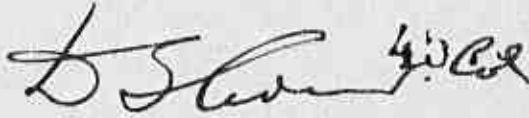
c. eliminate seed potato transport and spoilage problems, if at last moment ships from U. K., or elsewhere were forced to upload on west instead of on east coast as scheduled.

5. To assure availability of maximum proportions of total productions for military and civilian needs, special contract forms were prepared and are being used in Region III. These forms specify both the price of seed potatoes, and the amount and price of fertilizers to be sold to each potato producer. In return the potato grower is obliged to amass at specified price about 95% of all potatoes produced. Recommendations were made to other Regions to use a similar contract form modified to meet special local conditions. It was also recommended that every effort be made to concentrate distribution of seed in surplus potato producing areas such as are usually represented in land development projects (Bonifica).

6. To implement the efforts of the limited number of Allied officers available for work on agricultural problems, instructions have been issued to Regions and to the liaison officer of the Agricultural Sub-Commission to work through the Ministry and field officers thereof to maximize production of potatoes on such areas.

7. A special survey will be made of the situation on the Tanagio Valley land development project, also referred to in newspaper article, at earliest possible date.

8. Attached is copy of self-explanatory memo to Regional Agricultural officers concerning the distribution of seed potato imports. In addition to assigning several officers for work with the Regions, the Agricultural Sub-Commission is encouraging, directly and through the Ministry, Italian Agricultural officers in the field to concentrate on securing most advantageous distribution of seed potato stock.

for 
HENRY GRADY
Vice President
Economic Section

TRANSLATION

GOVERNMENT AND POTATOES 13

In spite of the distance at which they want to condemn it, the Government must make Naples feel the proximity of liberated Italy. Up to now the cure of this great patient has been carried on through correspondence, and what a correspondence.

Anyway the Neapolitans have not altogether given up hope, and that is something. Just as no one will be able to testify sufficiently to the horrible life of the people of Naples during the bombings, so no one will understand in future the strange miracle by which one forgotten people, who have neither work nor savings, have created a kind of fictitious circulation by which the black stock exchange both bleeds and feeds the same poor creatures, who by a contest among these forces when Schneider called a "justification of strength", are deprived of what was sold before, or they are called to account for that manly dignity that has been successively snatched away from them with a degrading gesture, or they have been reproached for their condition of a beaten people which only a few seconds before the radio has assured them it was a moral duty to accept.

I wish the Government of Marshall Badoglio would listen to me, not only because I thought it my political and journalistic duty to support him when he did his best to save Italy from the danger of being asphyxiated by the cadaverous stench of the fascist lazarus; nor did I think it honest, even if dangerous, to follow the easy demagoguery of "not being entangled". I wish he would pay me for attention in the name of the sorrows of a city which even in its present abjection appears magnanimous to me like the women of Messina who naked carried the stones to the soldiers for the defense of the walls of their town; because the striking impudence of this sinister and beggarly life is nevertheless like the fighting of wild beasts to defend their young or like an array of wolves who know how to bite and live. But you should know that bestiality can go no further. We have reached the limits of the amends which belongs to every Italian. Henceforth you should throw in the sea the ruins of this institutional question and stop playing politics to pass over to human work. There are only a few months left to reach the harvest which would mean the death of tens of thousands (also if you had the power to enforce) deliveries to the ammassi and transportation in the provinces. In Campania sewing has been almost nil. Grain in the province costs between six and seven thousand lire per quintal. Naples cannot receive same for perhaps less than twelve thousand lire. How can we get out of this abyss.

The Allies have been generous with us. Not to acknowledge that would be rank ingratitude. And we must help them, not render more difficult their task. The main problem, which is that of the distribution of a single food, but in unlimited quantities, has not been studied yet. The black market cannot be uprooted until in the lower as well as in the first stage, there will be one dish only, but abundant. There is but one efficient remedy; to take steps toward a quick but fruitful sewing and there is but one plant that can save us, that is the potatoe.

In Salerno region, in front of the most fertile plains in Italy, the Battipaglia-Agro oli zone, the reclaimed land of the Sele, the Tanago valley, the government might mobilize a hundred thousand men, requisition twenty or thirty thousand hectare, perhaps from those fascists who have stolen all the public land of that region, and take steps, right now, to prepare the large underground harvest that would be our safety. One hectare can produce a hundred quintals of potatoes; twenty thousand hectares can produce two million quintals that by themselves and alone, would suffice to feed Naples well for a year. Vicinity helping the price could be lowered to seven lire and would finish off at once the black market and its demon.

Think of this, you men of the Government. It is a question of living and with sweat; any other way leads to a cross roads and a bloody cross roads.

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