

A Glimpse at E.D.I

By M. Aref Ghaussi

Mr. Ghaussi, from Kabul, Afghanistan, is the youngest participant at the E.D.I. He has a Master's Degree in Economics from the University of Illinois.

When I joined the Economic Development Institute, I had no definite picture in mind as to what it would really be like. Now that I have become a somewhat seasoned participant I am able to describe how it works, and how it appeals – to me, at least.

It is like an international economic forum. Economic development problems are discussed from all angles. The diversity of our backgrounds makes the rather informal discussions cover a variety of approaches to growth problems. Now that the Institute is half-way through, we are well acquainted with each other and, as a result, our remarks are very frank. Our discussions are characterized by non-unanimity of conclusions.

We explore growth problems ranging from those facing an encircled land like Afghanistan to those encountered by an overwhelmingly export economy like Ceylon. Thus, we often come to conclusions which are sometimes interesting and amazing.

The method of conducting discussions is extremely beneficial. The participants are given an opportunity of analyzing the main idea put forth by the speaker. Then each one interprets it in the light of his own background. Our problems vary and it is in these discussions that we often see expressions of amazement on the faces of our colleagues.

We have enjoyed several interesting field trips. In my view our visit to Oakridge and TVA headquarters in Knoxville, at the end of October, was very informative. So was our trip to New York. However, the schedules, which were arranged so as to give as full a picture as possible of the operation of the various agencies, tended to be rather tightly drawn. In TVA, for instance, some participants found that a considerable portion of the time was spent in traveling to and observing one dam after another while some might have preferred to spend more time in one of them and to have a sort of panel discussion on the problems of particular interest to economists and administrators. However, it was delightful to me to see so much water as I come from a rocky country. This trip also gave us the added pleasure of seeing the Smoky Mountains at the peak of their beauty.

Our recent trip to New York was a special attraction. We spent many hours visiting in the Financial District and were entertained at luncheon by the Irving Trust Company. We also visited the Port of New York Authority and, of course, we could not leave New York without seeing the United Nations. A tour of television and radio studios one evening gave us a glimpse of New York's entertainment world.

The second course of the Institute will be concluded in March 1957. I will miss our informal discussions and the helpful and invaluable guidance of the staff members. It is my hope, and I believe of other participants too, that it will be possible for the Institute to devise some means through which the participants can be kept informed of economic developments in the countries of their colleagues, say through a regular circulated report to which each would make a contribution.

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