Perhaps the central task of modern democratic society is the creation of truly representative participation in the governing process, and the reconciliation of such participation with a continue and integrated development of governing policy. During the 1930's, the Department of Agriculture was directed by Congress to take action to check the waste of the nation's agricultural resources, provide agriculture with a stable income and a balanced relationship with the total economy, facilitate efficient farm production and distribution, obtain greater security of farm tenure, and promote higher levels of living in rural areas.

Five years of exercising so large and intimate an influence over farming life brought into sharp focus for top agricultural administrators the growing need for new devices which could incorporate representative and responsible farmer thought into a process for the formulation of agricultural policies.

The thought of the Department of Agriculture and the Land Grant College Association, in 1938, was to develop a new form of group participation in the governing process which recognized and gave real representation to the heterogeneity of classes within the large agricultural group; and which was so organized that it could implement the Department's basic effort to develop continue and integrated public agricultural policies.

Their purpose was to create a new government-group relationship; to organize at all levels of agricultural administration a responsible partnership of the farmer representatives of all agricultural sectors and government administrators and technicians. The special experiences and knowledge of each group were to be combined in planning for agricultural policies adaptable to local conditions and changing circumstances.

The Department of Agriculture and the Land Grant Colleges officially pledged themselves in the Mt. Weather Agreement, in 1938, to undertake the experiment in government-group planning. During 1939, the planning process was institutionalized in memoranda of understanding between the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and each of the colleges and each of the federal action agencies. The agricultural planning organization, created under the memoranda, extended from the rural neighborhoods and communities to the Department of Agriculture in Washington.

Agricultural planning was to be carried out through a series of community, county and state committees, composed of representative farmers and agricultural agency representatives. Pooling their knowledge and judgments, farmers and agricultural officials were to study jointly the agricultural conditions within the area of their committee, formulate adjustment objectives, and arrange for unified action to achieve the objectives. Community, county, and state planning reports and recommendations were to flow upward through the committee levels to the Department of Agriculture.

Within the Department of Agriculture, the BAE was made the departmental staff planning agency which was to integrate state and local planning into the "general planning and program forming activities within the Department."

The memoranda of understanding specified in general terms the functions, responsibilities and authority of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Land Grant Colleges in organizing, guiding, and servicing the planning process. Within each state, the Extension Service was given direct responsibility for organizing and giving operational guidance to the community, county, and state planning committees.
Within the counties, the county agent, working with cooperative employees, was given the immediate responsibility of organizing and servicing the county and community committees.

A representative of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics worked with the Extension Service in each state in guiding and servicing the agricultural planning process. The Extension director was made chairman of the state land-use planning committee; and the BAE representative, its secretary. The Extension project leader, the BAE representative, and a representative of the State Agricultural Experiment Station together formed a Joint Land-Grant College-BAE Committee. This committee, according to the Bureau's interpretation, was to give over-all directional guidance to planning within the state.

The process of agricultural planning was rapidly carried into 2200 counties and 10,000 communities in 47 states. By 1942, over 125,000 farm people were participating as planning committee members. Thousands of planning reports and recommendations for improving agricultural life were developed by state, county, and community committees.

But in July 1942, less than four years after agricultural planning was inaugurated at Mt. Weather, the planning organization was abolished by Congress. It refused further funds for "State and county land-use planning." This congressional proscription on cooperative agricultural planning is still carried in the Department of Agriculture appropriation bill.

Cooperative land-use planning, therefore, can no longer be analyzed as a living institution exerting a large influence upon future agricultural policy. So great, however, is representative government's need for developing new techniques for bringing into itself constructive and responsible citizen participation that an examination of any experience in group participation in government is of value to students of government's relationships with the society it serves. The history of democratic agricultural planning is particularly worthy of analysis because of the great innovations it made in government-group relationships.

For over a quarter of a century economic groups have been systematically brought into the administrative process through the device of the lay advisory committee. Although the use of advisory committees by the executive branches of federal and state governments represented a real step forward in the development of representative government, the device as generally used was primitive and undeveloped.

In the first place, the group representatives on an advisory committee usually represented only the organized members of the group--those least dependent upon the government to protect their well being.

Secondly, the advisory committee was never organized for economic group participation at all levels of government--an arrangement which would permit mass group participation.

Thirdly, the advisory committee device was usually a part of a pattern of spotty, piecemeal development of public policy. Ordinarily, the advisory committee was set up to consider only one small segment of the problems of an economic group, and was not organized on a continuing basis.

Finally, although the advisory committee sometimes brought the economic group into the administrative formulation of governmental policy, public officials and group representatives were not joined together as partners in policy formulation. Government technicians and administrators might service, advise and guide the
deliberations of the committee; but the two were not made partners with equal voice in committee decisions. The group and the government, rather than being coequals working together towards the promotion of social welfare, were still over and against each other.

In contrast, cooperative agricultural planning represented a thoughtful, systematic effort to develop a new type of government-group relationship in the governing process, which more nearly met the needs of modern society.

First, agricultural planning was to be organized for the mass participation of an economic group. All sectors of the agricultural population, whether organized or unorganized, were to be given specific representation in the committee process. Through the localization of the planning process into thousands of county and community committees, great numbers of farmers could be brought into active participation.

Secondly, the essential community of purpose of citizen and official for achieving the common good was recognized in a formal partnership between the two in the committees. The thinking of both was to be blended together in a common development of public agricultural policy.

Finally, agricultural planning was to have a continuity and scope which the traditional type of advisory committee never possessed. The planning process was to consider government's total relations, at all administrative levels with one of the three great economic groups. Moreover, the process was to be a continuing one which permitted a continue, as well as an integrated development of over-all agricultural policy.

This discussion of democratic agricultural planning can only point out in brief fashion a few of the many problems which the new group-government planning process encountered as it attempted to make itself both democratic and effective.

To make planning truly democratic was the first of these two large institutional goals. Officials shaping the development of the cooperative planning institution believed that it had to be so organized that it could secure a wide-based farmer participation.

Perhaps the greatest problem of democracy is the achievement of representative participation in the governing process. Despite the continuous effort of planning administrators, the committees never approached vertical representation. In all states, regardless of rural economic and social patterns, the more prosperous and progressive farmers of an area made up the preponderant farmer membership. Regional differences in the problem of representation lay rather in the consequences of vertically unrepresentative committees. The failure to secure representative committees had more undemocratic results in those sections of the nation where systems of land ownership and exploitation made for deeper conflicts in economic class interests. Committeemen were variously characterized as "leading farmers," "successful farmers," "key farmers," "active leaders in organized group and community activities."

Although all the philosophical arguments which were offered in defense of unrepresentative committees in a democratic society can be successfully refuted, the practical barriers to building representative committees were discouragingly difficult to overcome. To paint the failure of the planning committees to become representative as the machination of the dominant farm groups is completely unrealistic.

The economic, social and educational limitations of the disadvantaged sections of the agricultural population limited very really their effectiveness in planning
by: making them reluctant to become planning participants; and by lessening their capacity to contribute in all the activities of planning. A feeling of social inferiority was probably the chief barrier to participation by disadvantaged groups. Not only were they reluctant to attend meetings, but when they did attend, they were hesitant to speak up. Economic reasons also limited the participation of low income farmers, who could not afford to take time off from the business of making a living. Finally, the lack of all types of educational opportunities, together with an economic and social status which often deprived them of the physical bases and psychological incentives for becoming alert farmers, combined to limit the contributions members of the disadvantaged groups could make.

A large problem facing agricultural planning, therefore, was to discover how these groups, whose needs and problems most required representation, could participate most effectively in agricultural planning.

As the planning organization matured, it gradually turned to the democratic election as the most promising device for securing representative committee personnel. None of the procedures used in appointing committermen resulted in the securing of a representative cross-section of the agricultural population. Moreover, the democratic election was viewed as the key to resolving any conflict between "representativeness" and "competency." Whereas an appointed committerman, in order to represent a group of farmers, had probably to be typical of the group, an elected committerman might properly be above the average of his group. For representation was seen as a "psychological phenomenon." By the very act of a group of farmers freely choosing the farmer they wish to represent them and their interests, that chosen farmer may indeed become their representative, whatever resemblance he may bear to the majority of the group. Both the group and its farmer representative know that it is by the choice of the group's majority that he is its committerman.

The election procedures with which the states were experimenting were necessarily undeveloped and crude. Many officials sincerely believed that a representative committee could not be secured through an election process. In the first place, the mechanics of nomination were imperfect and undemocratic. Secondly, lack of interest and sometimes even of knowledge of the election, also resulted in unrepresentative committees. These faults of the election process were held by its advocates to be temporary phenomena--the attributes of any new and undeveloped institution.

The planning organization, consequently, turned to the refinement of an election process which would result in the securing of representative farmer personnel. That is, efforts were made (1) to provide the bases for meaningful representation by isolating the significant areas of interests in the community and county; (2) to develop nomination mechanics which provided farmers with a choice of candidates genuinely representative of the areas they were to represent; and (3) to secure widespread participation in the election itself.

In developing planning into a democratic process, the planning organization had to do more than provide maximum opportunities for participation of all farm people. It was also necessary to arouse so active an interest in agricultural planning that rural people would fully utilize the opportunities provided them for both representative and direct participation. The planning organization could provide no direct incentives for participation such as per diem for time spent in planning activity, favorable distribution of cash allotment benefits, governmental activity which increased the productiveness of soil or stock, or the concrete privileges derived from membership in farm organizations.
The task, then, was to convince farmers of the vital importance of planning to their welfare. Planning organizers, first, felt that planning could only be made meaningful and significant to farmers through a preliminary process of educational orientation. But as experience in planning accumulated, workers in the field soon saw that the preliminary educational stage was killing off farmer interest in planning. Thus the preparatory state was gradually, even officially, abandoned.

A corollary to the discontinuance of preparatory planning was the growing realization of professional workers that planning, to secure farmer participation, must first attack local problems of real concern to the farmers within the area. No other trend in the planning process was as widespread or definite as the swing away from land-use classification and mapping to the "problem approach" in planning.

In the process of solving their problems, committees were to be gradually equipped with a basic view of agricultural conditions in their county, with a perception of larger, more intangible problems, and with an understanding of relationships between problems. The first approach to planning, however, had to be specific and realistic.

By attacking problems of vital concern to farmers, the planning organization sought to break down farmer indifference to agricultural planning. The sense of frustration which farmers participating in planning too often experienced was only to be dispelled, however, by making the process for dealing with problems a satisfying and rewarding experience. This could be accomplished only if planning resulted in action which relieved or overcame the problems confronting the farmers. In the counties, by 1940, professional planning workers were experimenting with several techniques for making planning vital through action. One simple device was concentrating planning energy upon only a few problems--perhaps only one--then driving for action upon these problems. Another technique frequently used in the counties was first to attack problems which lend themselves to relatively easy solution--on the theory that nothing succeeds like success. In the effort to secure action at all planning stages, planning workers also began systematically to strive for the establishment of short-term, as well as long-term goals. Further, they studiedly began developing plans calling for local action, which could be effected more expeditiously than plans for action by federal or state agencies.

Planning could not be a satisfying and rewarding experience to farmer participants unless the process itself was meaningful and intelligible enough for them to take real part in committee discussion and decisions. First, this meant limiting the scope of committee activities to functions a committee could comprehend and perform.

Secondly, it was necessary that the data and background information committee-men were to use be intelligible to them. It was increasingly recognized that informational materials given committees were usually too lengthy, detailed, and technical for farmers easily to assimilate. More positively, the need was for developing visual and graphic tools. Currently reporting to planning committees upon action resulting from planning, was also a means for creating an appreciation of planning objectives and the rewards derived from planning.

If the first large problem in developing a democratic planning institution was to secure wide-based farmer participation, the second was to develop a working process which enabled farmer participants to assume to the limit of their capabilities, actual planning functions and responsibilities. The planning organization had inherent within it two distinct, perhaps conflicting, institutional possibilities. Widespread farmer participation in a planning process might be turned into an
instrument for securing popular acceptance, in the counties, of predetermined national programs developed without benefit of farmer advice. On the other hand, the planning organization possessed real potentialities for developing a farmer participation which took a positive, creative share in planning at all stages in the development of agricultural policy. The second democratic drive, then, within the planning organization was to achieve a full and positive farmer contribution.

Such full participation in planning was to be accomplished, first, by giving all farm people maximum opportunities for sharing in, or exercising control over the development of agricultural plans. The open neighborhood and community meeting was to provide a floor of direct democracy under the total planning process. The direct expressions of farmer opinions in such meetings never reached a stage where they were formally organized into official expressions of group opinion binding on committees. But, the general agricultural population was gradually achieving the ultimate democratic control of the popular election over policies shaped by committees. The planning referendum was another instrument of direct democracy, which had potentialities for the popular development and control of planning policies and decisions.

Secondly, optimum farmer participation in planning was to be accomplished by localizing the planning process. Local government is by no means synonymous with democratic government, but the organization of collective activity into local units makes it mechanically possible to bring large numbers of persons into the governing process. Through the organization of county and community planning bodies, farmers generally could exercise more influence upon the planning process. As the planning process was centralized, the problem facing the planning organization was to counter the developing leadership of the higher planning levels by establishing a systematic procedure for local review and criticism of state, regional, and national planning reports.

The third, and most important, means of achieving the fullest farmer contribution in planning, involved the adjustment of functions and authority between farmer and official committee members. Here, the first problem was the determination of which planning activities farmer committeemen could adequately perform and which must be carried on by the official members. Farmers were not equipped with time, interest or training to carry on research necessary for providing data, for the making of planning decisions. They did have special knowledge and local experience to contribute to the development of factual information. Not only did farmers contribute to their empirical knowledge of local soil resources, but also their awareness of the problems most concerning local people. This intimate knowledge of their area's people enabled farmer committeemen to provide planning committees with their probable opinions, attitudes and reactions to specific types of proposed agricultural activity.

Farmer committeemen generally demonstrated little capacity or willingness for the detailed preparation and writing of reports. If, however, farmers offered their information, suggestions, and criticisms in the progressive development of a planning program, and fully reviewed the completed report, it was not an undemocratic procedure to leave the writing of the report to the committee's official members. Planning workers commonly agreed that farmer committeemen usually saw their review function as their primary task in committee work.

Farmer experience and thinking could not influence the development of committee policies merely by giving farmer committeemen a maximum of functions commensurate with their capacities. Farmer members also required certain controls and authority to balance the inherent authority and dominance of official members. The first step in achieving the goal set forth in the Mt. Weather Agreement, that "farmer-
thinking should dominate the work" of the committees, was creating mechanical
devices for farmer control of committee deliberations. Specifically, the establish-
ment of farmer majorities to give voting control to farmer personnel, denying
official members voting privileges, and giving official committee leadership to
farmer members through lay chairmanships.

Farmer leadership in the planning committees was not to be achieved merely
through such mechanical arrangements, however. Rather it had to be built upon the
willingness and capacity of farmers themselves. The requirement, then, was to equip
farmer members both psychologically and intellectually to perform their functions,
Perhaps the first necessity was to develop within farmer members a sense of leader-
ship of, and responsibilities to, the farmers in the areas they represented.

Perhaps the most important factor in balancing the dominant position of offi-
cial members with lay leadership, was equipping farmers with a competence for plan-
ning. Not only did competence give them a confidence and willingness to assume
planning responsibilities, but it was the necessary corollary to lay control. For
it was not the goal of democratic planning to achieve lay participation per se, but
to secure intelligent, thoughtful farmer suggestions and judgments. Uninformed lay
participation could have but one of two results--unwise, short-sighted planning
decisions, if farmer personnel took over all of the controls they possessed, or the
rubber stamping by farmer committeemen of plans prepared by technicians single-
handedly.

The first requirement for developing farmer competence was giving them some
conception of the purposes and potentialities of the planning institution.
Secondly, farmers needed to be equipped with an understanding of the background and
ramifications of the problems the committees were attempting to solve. To develop
this understanding, such means as the following were used: The advance distribution
of informational material upon subjects to be discussed at committee meetings, and
use of functionalized subcommittees.

The counterpart to equipping farmer members to assume committee leadership
responsibilities, was preventing the domination of committee activities by officials.
The technicians' responsibilities in keeping planning vigorous and moving were neces-
sarily great, at least through a long stage of tutelage. Nevertheless, the planning
organization insistently urged planning workers in the counties to withdraw, as much
as possible, from leadership of committee activities.

Several devices were used for making farmers realize their role as co-equal partners,
with actual leadership responsibilities. One method was arranging for committees
to carry on occasional meetings without professional workers being present. A
second was the county agent's deliberately withdrawing from a position of leader
ship in community and county meetings. A third was the training of farmer chairmen
in the effective conducting of meetings.

However democratic the agricultural planning process might be, if it were not
effective in developing planning programs which brought about a real improvement in
rural living, the planning organization could not become a vital, continuing force
in public agricultural activity. The second large institutional goal of the plan-
ing organization, therefore, was to make itself effective in developing sound,
feasible plans and in securing their translation into action. The task, then, was
(1) to develop a planning process which could be effectively used by thousands of
committees to develop planning programs; and (2) to build an organization which
could carry such a process.
In developing an effective process in the uncharted field of national democratic planning, planning officials were confronted with a series of basic problems: The first of these was adjusting committee activity to its optimum scope. What type of functions could a committee process competently carry out?

Agricultural officials who were building the planning organization saw the "correlation" or "coordination" of public agricultural activity, as one of the chief objectives of the planning process. Planning committees were to make critical appraisals of specific programs, and recommend adjustments in such programs, as the basis for inducing coordination. Committee experience in attempting to exercise the coordinating function, however, soon demonstrated, not only that farmers were unequipped to perceive the nice distinctions and relationships between programs, but that asking farmers to make decisions on how to gear programs together actually endangered the success of the planning process. Furthermore, the committees, as advisory, consulting, and negotiating bodies, were unable to enforce real coordination of agency programs. For the action agencies, almost unanimously, balked at the idea of being thus coordinated.

Therefore, despite the importance the Mt. Weather conference placed upon the coordinating function, the committees in themselves did little to coordinate agricultural activity. The numerous accounts of agency coordination obtained through the planning process, usually represented little more than each agency representative's focusing attention on the problems his agency saw as critical, and then explaining how his agency proposed to solve such problems. Thus by January 1941, everyone was convinced that the coordinating function must be de-emphasized and given a different orientation.

The second large problem of functional scope, which the planning organization had empirically to answer, was: What was the proper area for planning by the committee? Should boundaries be imposed upon the range of a committee's planning activities? In the first place, was it feasible for the planning committees to attempt the development of new national farm policies?

Those establishing the planning process at Mt. Weather envisaged the committees as eventually formulating plans for the construction of a new, integrated national farm policy. Nevertheless, doubts soon arose within the planning organization concerning the feasibility of developing new national policies through grass-roots planning. Planning committees could not be adequately provided with, and perhaps could not have understood and intelligently utilized, those economic assumptions necessary in developing national agricultural programs. Such assumptions as trends in output in other sections of the country, the expanding or contracting nature of markets for various products, and industry's capacity to absorb surplus agricultural population. Secondly, even if planning committees could have proceeded from a uniform series of assumptions, it was soon clear that the accumulation of their "grassroots" plans could be of small value in forming new national policies, because of lack of timing and procedural uniformity in their development. Finally, planning recommendations of county committees were often so widely conflicting on matters of interregional agricultural adjustment that they could not form complementary parts of a national program.

Limiting the planning process to an assumption of the existing statutory framework of the farm programs, however, would not have eliminated the problems involved in local planning for national public agricultural activity. In fact, real doubts were soon experienced concerning the feasibility of the planning committee process introducing flexibility into national programs through regulations to suit local circumstances. The aggregate effect of local piecemeal adaptation in an agricultural
program might often be to distort the nature and purpose of the total national pro-
gram. Also, because of the limited funds and personnel available to the agricultural
agencies, the agencies, as the number of counties carrying on planning increased,
could not "tailor" their programs to the needs of all the counties as expressed by
the committees.

The planning organization therefore necessarily turned to a reshaping of its
working process. The question was: Should planning be continuously oriented only
towards problems which could be solved through local action? Or could procedures be
developed through which local planning committees effectively contributed to a verti-
cal planning process which produced plans of use and value in the development of
national programs? Although the planning organization appreciated the real progress
that could be made toward the achieving of a better rural life through local action,
it continued to believe that through the democratic planning committee process, na-
tional plans might be more wisely developed in the light of regional, state, and
local needs. In short, the planning organization turned from "grass roots" county
planning to centralized vertical planning. The effort was to develop a synchroniza-
tion of the planning activities of thousands of community and county committees.

The second large problem confronting planning workers in their effort to make
agricultural planning effective, was that of building an organization which could
carry the maturing planning process. The development of a centralized vertical plan-
ning process required gearing together the thousands of state, county, and local
planning committees throughout the nation into an organism capable of synchronizing
committee activities into a purposeful pattern of operation. Within each state, by 1941,
the planning committees were being integrated into an hierarchical organiza-
tion. That is, the state committee emerged as the single head of the committee sys-
tem; complementary functions and responsibilities for each committee level were
delineated and intermeshed; and multiple, routine channels of communications among
the committees were developed.

When the functions and responsibilities of the planning committee levels had
been hierarchically organized, the task of developing a mechanism for localized na-
tional agricultural planning was only partially completed. For cooperative agricul-
tural planning was not planning by members of an economic group alone. Not only did
government representatives participate as partners in the activities of the commit-
tees, but government officials sponsored, promoted, serviced, and gave advisory
guidance to planning.

Thus there remained the problem of integrating functions, responsibility and
authority among the participating federal and state agencies into governmental
machinery capable of organizing a democratic and effective national planning pro-
cess. In such an administrative federalism, what type of governmental machinery
was it possible to establish? What type of machinery was necessary for the effec-
tive administration of the planning process?

The two basic objectives of cooperative agricultural planning probably precluded
the possibility of setting up within each state integrated machinery for administor-
ing planning. The first objective, that of formulating, correlating, and localizing
national agricultural programs, apparently required the creation of a national plan-
ning organization. Only at the national level could be developed the uniform pro-
cedural arrangements which would permit the data of thousands of county and local
committees in 47 states to "reach the Secretary in truly significant and usable
form." Only at the national level could timed patterns of planning activity be
developed which, when carried out by the committees, would provide the Department
with the information, opinions, and conclusions of thousands of farmers and local
officials, in all communities of the nation, on problems confronting the Department in building its programs.

The second large objective of cooperative agricultural planning was the promotion of more harmonious relationships between the federal department and the land grant colleges. Cooperative agricultural planning was conceived of originally not as a democratic process for bringing farmers into public agricultural policy formation, but as a means of giving the colleges an effective voice in the development of national programs. Thus the colleges were to exercise large authority and responsibility in cooperative planning. When the planning process crossed the state line, a state, as well as a federal agency, was to give it service and direction.

Could a federal administration for planning be devised which would permit the effective carrying out of these goals? The Mr. Weather agreement, made of the substance of these two basic, sometimes conflicting, needs in public agricultural administration, was diplomatically, but confusingly ambiguous, if not contradictory, in defining the functions and authority of each institution.

Given the responsibility, at Mr. Weather, for establishing a national planning process whose localized judgments were to form the basis for national agricultural policy, the Department envisioned the state colleges' collaborating with the Department in sponsoring, servicing, and guiding planning committees. The Extensions, however, carried a clear constitutional directive to establish planning committees within the framework of Extension program building. Moreover, because of their well-organized fund of knowledge, facilities, and trained personnel they knew themselves competent to initiate and service planning activity within their states. Therefore, they usually believed that all planning work within each state should be under their undivided policy direction and operational guidance. In the Bureau's negotiation of memoranda of understanding with each state, the weakness and strains, to which the joint machinery was to be subject, were unmistakably foreshadowed.

For the machinery established in the memoranda was the result of a balance of power between the Bureau, which had substantial federal funds to pour into the program, and the state colleges, whose sympathy for federal agricultural action programs was to be increased through cooperative planning and whose Extensions had personnel, organizational set-up and well-established relations with farmers in each county. Out of this balance of power did not come, however, a federal planning administration. That is, it was not an administrative arrangement in which a state agency, either alone or in partnership with a national agency, carried a national process into local effect under the unified joint direction of both the national and state institutions. Nor, on the other hand, was the resulting mechanism a purely state instrument. Although the administration of the planning process within each state was in the hands of the Extension Service, it vaguely shared the overall responsibility of determining substantive and procedural planning policies with a joint committee and BAE representative. The very balance of national-state strength created a situation which could only lead to a less effective administration of planning than if either a national or a state agency had been in complete control, or a truly federal planning administration had been established.

Within its four-year life, the planning institution made real progress in developing an organization and process for bringing great numbers of an economic group, scattered throughout the communities and counties of the nation, into a working partnership with agricultural officials for a joint development of public agricultural policy.
Yet, the planning organization failed in that it was abolished in 1942 by the nation's Congress. What then were the causes for this failure? In terms of power politics, land use planning failed because it had not succeeded in achieving that broad and active farmer participation which would have made it a genuine social force, strong enough to resist the organized pressure which built up against it. For it is a matter of historical record, of course, that the national office of the Farm Bureau, for reasons it considered good and sufficient, used its power in Congress to bring about its liquidation.

What, however, lay behind the real failure of the planning organization—that is, its failure to achieve broad, popular support? The planning organization's only chance of securing such farmer support was through the development of a process which could turn out wise and feasible plans which could be expeditiously transformed into local, state, and national public action.

Perhaps the task of organizing masses of people into a social process for effective national public planning is so tremendously difficult that it cannot yet be successfully accomplished. Public planning is so new a dimension in the American national life, that even those few best trained for planning still lack adequate tools in data and techniques. Moreover, even if a mass planning process could be adequately organized for competent planning, there still remained the problem of getting great numbers of farmers to devote their limited free time to the long hard task of planning for a broad social good for which they would receive no immediate returns.

Probably no group in the public service yet has the knowledge or experience adequately to promote and guide such a committee process. Because, however, the planning process had not yet met the test of minimum efficiency when it was abolished, it was almost inevitable that federal planning officials should look to the Extensions for whipping boys in explaining its failure. For the Extensions had had the responsibility for organizing the committees and giving them operational guidance and service. Federal officials, therefore, felt that it was the unsympathetic and disinterested attitude in the state extensions, which prevented their competent and energetic administration of planning. And there were two or three Extensions whose attitudes toward planning laid them open to this charge. However, the real reason for the ineffectiveness of the planning process was, of course, that the problems in mass planning were too difficult and complex to be solved adequately in so short a period.

The second large cause of the planning organization's failure did not lie within the planning organization. The end product of the planning process, if it was to be vital and continuing, had necessarily to be public action which bettered agricultural living. Although local and state action could work boundless improvements in agricultural life, the final productiveness of planning activity depended upon the degree to which federal agencies accepted planning recommendations for modifying or developing their programs. But the ambitious, self-sufficing action agencies, powerful from their support of the farmer clientele they directly served, never seriously accepted the democratic agricultural planning program. Only a strong secretary, earnestly convinced of the necessity for developing a democratic process for formulating public agricultural policies, could have disciplined the action agencies into giving real consideration to the planning suggestions. Such support was not forthcoming from the secretary's office. Thus, when it was abolished in 1942, the planning process, far from being the instrument which "correlated" and "localized" federal agricultural programs, had become little more than a "project" of an agricultural research agency.
When one looks back at the tremendous difficulties and obstacles encountered in the task of attempting to organize for democratic agricultural planning, one sometimes has the feeling that this four-year effort was as futile as that of a Don Quixote fighting windmills, and that the program was wisely abolished by Congress. Yet, today, the basic problems in public agricultural administration which democratic agricultural planning was designed to solve, are still unanswered. The need for developing over-all integrated agricultural policy, for bringing representative farmer experience and attitudes into the development of agricultural programs, for securing an optimum of local adjustment in national programs, and for developing fruitful working relationships with the Land-Grant Colleges has not yet been adequately filled. Perhaps, these needs are to be eventually met through the development of completely different administrative arrangements and procedures. Yet, only recently, the Land-Grant College association, in looking towards post war agricultural policy, reaffirmed its belief in the need for a process strikingly similar to this first effort at democratic agricultural planning.