

The Visitor

Devoted to the Interests of Agricultural Education in Minnesota Schools

Vol. LIII

January, 1966

No. 1

A LEADER RETIRES: DR. M. D. MOBLEY

by

MILO J. PETERSON, *Professor and Chairman*

Dept. of Agricultural Education, University of Minnesota

Dr. M. D. Mobley, executive secretary of the American Vocational Association, retired at the close of 1965 from his position of leadership in vocational education. He was honored at the Minnesota Vocational Association convention, the American Vocational Association convention and at ceremonies in his native state of Georgia, as well as at numerous other events. Dr. Mobley has been instrumental in shaping the future of vocational education in the United States and throughout the world during his long and illustrious career.

Excepting only the Smith-Hughes Act, no piece of major national legislation bearing on vocational education in the United States has escaped the scrutiny and constructive influence of M. D. Mobley. The latest chapter in service to vocational education was written during the events leading to the passage of the Morse-Perkins Act (the National Vocational Education Act of 1963).

Retirement is a misnomer for Dr. Mobley's immediate future. He remains active in international programs for vocational education and has an extended schedule of consultants'hips, speaking engagements, writing and teaching in the months ahead.

The University of Minnesota has secured the services of Dr. Mobley as visiting professor in agricultural education during the first summer session of 1966. Dr. Mobley's background and experience suggests that as he resumes his role as teacher, vocational education will continue to benefit.

In a recent address to the Minnesota Vocational Agriculture Instructors Association Dr. Mobley discussed "Vocational Agriculture — Past, Present and Future." A digest of his remarks follows.

Dr. Mobley suggested, and we agree, that we might well recast the vocational agriculture program if by this we mean expanding the program to include training individuals for off-farm occupations involving knowl-

edge and skills in agriculture. This does not mean we should cease to provide programs designed to increase the efficiency of adults engaged in production agriculture and those youth who are preparing to become farmers. We must never forget the basic responsibility to provide training programs designed specifically for those engaged in farming and those preparing to become farmers.

Under the Morse-Perkins Act of 1963 it is possible to use any available federal funds to train persons for off-farm agricultural occupations requiring less than the baccalaureate degree. This opens a whole new vista for vocational agriculture. But it does not, in any sense, lessen your responsibility to production agriculture training.

For some years many teachers of vocational agriculture have offered training that prepared youth for off-farm agricultural occupations, that is, "occupations involving knowledge and skills in agricultural subjects." This was done even though there were some who questioned its legality. It is well that the language of the Morse-Perkins Act has broadened the responsibility of vocational agriculture to include the entire agricultural industry.

In Dr. Mobley's estimation many agricultural educators have not yet realized the full significance of the broadened provisions of the Morse-Perkins Act even though such training has been provided for many years. This is evidenced by facts uncovered in three states (Georgia, Minnesota and Virginia). Unemployment among those who had completed four years of vocational agriculture was at the one percent level or less. (Ed. Note: See *The Visitor*, Vol. LII, No. 4, October 1965). These facts indicate that vocational agriculture, as carried on in Georgia, Minnesota and Virginia, has provided training that fits students for employment in a number of off-farm agricultural occupations as well as in production agriculture.

ices to the agricultural industry. The job ahead in vocational education in agriculture is indeed bright with challenge and promise of new worlds to conquer.

Dr. Mobley pointed out that past history should teach us that those nations that have neglected the proper education of farm people and failed to help them acquire knowledge and skills to increase and improve farm production have been the nations that have ceased to be or have greatly lowered the standard of living of their people. An efficient and effective agricultural education program is essential for the economic well-being of any nation. Without such a program many nations are doomed to economic failure and to a low standard of living. Let us dedicate ourselves to the proposition that we will never let our vocational education program in agriculture be scuttled or weakened, because the economic well-being and the standard of living of the people of our nation would then be in jeopardy.

Farming is more complicated than ever in the history of mankind. There is more knowledge about agriculture than ever before. We have improved varieties of plants. Animals and poultry have been bred to produce more efficiently on a given amount of feed. We also have more plant and animal diseases and insects — but our methods of control are more efficient. A farmer to be successful must know about all these things. He must be better educated and possess more skills and greater managerial ability than his predecessor. Improved management is of special importance.

The teaching of vocational agriculture is MORE important today than ever before since its beginning. We may be dealing with better varieties of plants, improved breeds of animals, new insects and diseases and their control, but we are dealing with the same kind of people — and people must be educated and vocationally trained in order to be successful in our ever increasing competitive society.

We have more to teach and our problems in agriculture are much more complicated than ever before. So, don't ever get discouraged and think that vocational agriculture has no place in the scheme of things today. There will always be a need for vocational education in agriculture and the need will increase as the complexity of the world's economy increases.

Reports From Afar

During the recent holiday season news has been received from many parts of the world. In the belief that *Visitor* readers will find news of former classmates and colleagues of interest a few highlights are shared here:

from José Zarraga . . . (Philippines)

"I am taking up a new assignment with ILO (International Labor Organization) to be attached to ILO Liaison with the Economic Council for Asia and the Far East. I will be stationed at Bangkok, Thailand, leaving Geneva, Switzerland, on January 15. I am really looking forward to this assignment hoping to gain practical field experience in vocational education and related activities. I expect to stay in Bangkok for a year or two. Eventually, I hope to return to the Philippines . . . This year has been a very busy one. Recently I have been busy with the Permanent Agricultural Committee of the ILO and prepared one of the working papers for the Committee."

Dr. Zarraga further reported spending Christmas holidays in Salzburg, Vienna and Munich. His many friends will join *The Visitor* in wishing Dr. Zarraga success in his new assignment.

from Tam Murton . . . (Rhodesia)

"I work in African Tribal and farming areas a lot of the time . . . There is no hint of any disturbance or unrest and we are all on the best of terms . . . The conservation education program we were commencing in our Province — using the background of much I saw in the States . . . has begun to show some excellent results, so much so that in the African Tribal area, which comprises a large part of my supervisory area, they have taken over their own conservation work under our training and supervision."

Mr. Murton, an agricultural education and extension leader in Rhodesia, visited Minnesota as part of a study program of agricultural education. His grasp of the community school philosophy and interest in vocational agriculture, assure a significant contribution on his part. *The Visitor* shares with others the hope for a speedy and peaceful solution to the political prob-

lems of Rhodesia in order that Mr. Murton and his colleagues may devote themselves unhindered to the improvement of agriculture education.

from Roar Bruun . . . (Norway)

"Very often we speak about our stay in Minnesota and it goes like this: Do you remember . . . ? And we do remember. We had so many nice experiences that we will never forget . . . I have told you about the possibility of a department of agricultural education at the University here in Norway. The proposal should pass the Parliament and the government sometime this spring and we hope it will be a reality. I have been asked to prepare myself to compete for some of the new jobs in such a department but we haven't decided yet. I have had some lectures at a preliminary course and that was interesting, but time will show what we should do in the future."

Mr. Brunn and his family contributed much to the University and to the community during their stay here. It is good to know that Mr. Brunn is being sought for a leadership position in the developing program of agricultural education in his country. *The Visitor* wishes him all success and good fortune as he assumes new responsibility.

(Japan)

from Dr. Morino and Dr. Tajima . . .

Dr. Morino and Dr. Tajima were among the first Japanese citizens to receive advanced degrees in agricultural education, earning M.S. degrees at the University of Minnesota and subsequently their Ph.D.'s in Japanese universities.

Dr. Tajima reports that at the last annual meeting of Sogo-Nogaku (The Vocational Agriculture Research Association of Japan) word was received that the Association

"was recognized as one of the regular member organizations of the Japanese Academy of Science. Since it has long been awaited by us, we welcomed it very much . . . In the field of agricultural education great changes and progress are being made in Japan. The importance and need of training farmers' successors were appreciated by the government, farm organizations and the public because of the tremendous migration of rural youth . . .

recognizing the need for manpower in the field of agriculture the public turns its eyes to the significance of rural youth training. We are very busy revising curriculum and improving teaching conditions for making vocational agriculture more attractive . . ."

from Dr. Atsushi Miyawaki . . . (Japan)

Dr. Miyawaki is one of the truly great pioneers of vocational education in Japan. A graduate of Kansas State University (1904, Dairy Husbandry), Dr. Miyawaki returned to Japan and was instrumental in developing the dairy industry. He exercised leadership in initiating vocational education in agriculture and home economics in his country. Although he has retired as President of Obihiro Zootechnical University in Hokkaido, Japan, Dr. Miyawaki remains active and influential in shaping educational policy and program development.

In a recent letter Dr. Miyawaki writes: "We old-timers in agricultural education often meet to talk about the past . . . I sometimes hear criticisms of having vocational education courses in teacher education at the university level from some academicians. They are misjudging the courses with their innocence of the real meaning of vocational education. But this is a matter of difference of opinions . . ."

To Dr. Miyawaki, now in his 80's, *The Visitor* wishes many more years of productive and creative leadership.