

January 5th, 1912.

Hon. Marchese Raffaele Cappelli,  
President International Institute of Agriculture,  
R o m e .

Dear Mr. President:

I have the honor to present the following remarks on the subject of advertisements in the Institute's publications, and ask you to place the matter on the order of the day of the first meeting this month of the Permanent Committee.

When the question of making a contract with an advertising agent for advertisements to be inserted in the Institute's Bulletins was up, you will remember that I placed several protests against such a contract before the First Commission and before the Permanent Committee.

The first advertisements appearing in the Institute's publications that came to my notice were in the December number of the English edition of the "Bulletin of Agricultural Statistics", upon which I will comment later.

At the Permanent Committee meeting of March 25th 1911, I pointed out the danger of any advertising arrangement, and suggested that before any decision was arrived at, the President should communicate with the following journals, asking their opinion before proceeding further in the matter: the "Tribuna" (Rome), the "Tageblatt" (Berlin), the "Times" (London), and the "Evening Post" (New York).

The Committee then decided to refer the matter back to the First Commission. As I was not a member of that Commission, I sent a protest on the subject to its President, Mr. de Miklos, part of which I will quote:

"The Institute is not a private publishing company, but a Government Institute, backed by the authority and standing of 48 Governments...."

"The Institute is supported by the contributions of all the adhering countries, and therefore has no right to lend the weight of its authority to advertising...." "It is a mistake to suppose that the Institute can free itself from responsibility for the advertisements in its publications by printing a statement to that effect; the advertisements will always be given on the ground that the moral weight of 48 Governments is behind the Institute, and the public will, likewise, attach that weight to them"....; "The Institute has no moral right to indirectly involve the responsibility of the adhering Governments in a scheme which <sup>may</sup> have very unpleasant aspects".

And now let us see what the advertisements are which appear in the December <sup>Statistical</sup> Bulletin. There are two of them: one of an oil-engine, which seems innocent enough, and so we will pass that by. The other is headed "A new Industry", being an advertisement of the "Wood Waste Distilleries Co. of Wheeling, West Virginia, U.S.A.", and if evidence is required that a scheme of advertising "is dangerous" it may be had in this advertisement, (which, as you will see, differs in the English edition from the form in which it appears in the French).

If I read this advertisement correctly, it is a proposal for furnishing the public with books and <sup>distilling</sup> apparatus whereby any farmer, anyone, will be able to make wood=alcohol, and out of this wood=alcohol make concoctions of "apple=jack", "agardiente" (a Mexican whiskey) "Mescal", "Peach brandy", etc., etc., etc.

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As is well known, wood=alcohol is not merely poisonous but is a deadly poison; and can the International Institute of Agriculture lend itself to advertising such a scheme? If I have rightly understood this advertisement, the term "immoral" is hardly strong enough to characterise it; the way in which I understand it, it seems to me to be nothing short of criminal. Should the proper authorities in the United States take the same view that I do of this advertisement it would, I believe, end in the arrest and imprisonment of the Wood Waste Distillery Co. At all events, if so construed, the Post Office authorities of the United States would surely prohibit the carriage of the Institute's publications containing such an advertisement through the United States mail.

In view of the above I would request that you suspend the publication of this advertisement until the Permanent Committee has had an opportunity of deciding on this point, and I must object to any of these advertisements going to the United States. As I have stated, at the next meeting of the Permanent Committee I shall bring this matter up, and propose that the Committee either cancel the contract for advertisements with the agent, or order the withdrawal of this particular advertisement, or cease the publication of same in that portion of the Institute's publications which goes to the United States.

With high esteem, I am,

Yours very sincerely,

P.S. I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. de Miklos. I enclose advertisement, please read marked passages.