

LATIN HEADACHES

Paul Daum, Fred C. Gloeckner & Company, New York, recently told the Foliage Plant Growers meeting in Florida what can happen when they move south. To put it briefly, there are problems. They break down into problems on the site and difficulties in marketing the products in the U.S.

The areas currently being used for foliage plant production are Columbia, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Mexico.

As to problems on the site, transportation must be set up. The grower must have the ability to transfer his money in and out of the country with a minimum of delay. Power is difficult to obtain in many of the Latin countries; government decisions are always involved, and usually roads must be built to the growing site. "Practically everything involves an act of congress," said Mr. Daum. The laws are structured differently from those of the U.S. The foreign country will impose import duties on the equipment brought into the country.

As to the value of the exported product in the U.S., Mr. Daum said that an entire seminar would be needed to adequately explain the risks a grower takes. Basically, the grower is sticking his neck out with the U.S. government; he must declare a value on his product and make all the decisions without government help. The customs department will make rulings only after the fact.

The grower who has operations in South America must have patience. The Latin-American approach to business is slower, an almost complete turn-about from the speed with which business is conducted in the States.

Then there is the laborer himself; he has no concept of what the grower is doing, and the product has no value to him. It grows naturally all around him. Much basic product education must be given to the laborers.

The language barrier is a formidable one. Error Number One, Mr. Daum says, is to hire a bilingual foreman. The grower winds up obligated to him and is never quite sure of what is going on. The grower must learn the language, because he should be prepared to give minimal commands.

One of the best answers is to find a good single man in the U.S. and send him down there to be the firm's manager. If the manager decides to live down there, so much the better. (From *Florists' Review*, February 18, 1971)

Your editor,



COLORADO FLOWER GROWERS ASSOCIATION, INC.
OFFICE OF EDITOR
W. D. Holley
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, Colorado 80521

FIRST CLASS