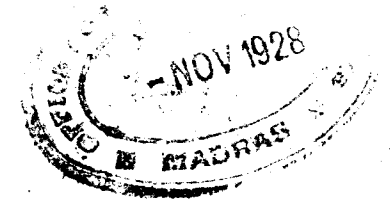
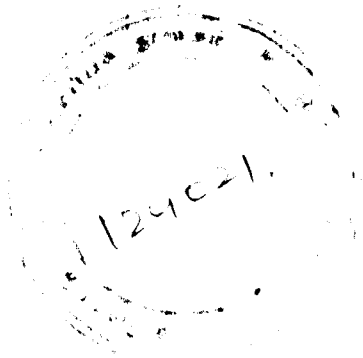


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Rural India.

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August, 1928

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A. Swaminatha Iyer, B.A

RURAL INDIA

(Journal of the Madras Forest Panchayats)

A monthly periodical devoted to the discussion of all
Topics of Rural interest.

EDITED BY

A. SWAMINATHA AIYAR

Office—No 9, Brodie's Road, Mylapore, Madras S.

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CONTENTS.

No	Page.
1. Agricultural Progress in India	25
2. Colour Inheritance in Rice	28
3. Panchayats in the Past	30
4. The Rural School Teacher	34
5. Artificial Farmyard Manure	36
6. Empire Forest Conference	37
7. Village improvement work	38
8. Fruit Culture in Southern India	39
9. Village Topes	40
10. Notes & Comments	41
A generous gift—Instruction to Panchayats—The Linlithgow Report—Rural Educational Conference —Co-operative Rural Scheme—A District Rural Re- construction Scheme—Agricultural Co-operation— Federation of Agricultural Associations—Crop growing contests—Prickly-pear nuisance—Co- operation in France—Fish Curing Industry—The Lilac Devil—Farm Buildings—City Life and Drun- kenness—	
	48

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No. 2.

Agricultural Progress in India

We have received a copy of the Review of Agricultural operations in India during 1926-27, issued recently by the Agricultural Advisor to the Government of India. It is an interesting record of progress in various branches of agricultural activity. Mr. Clouston, the Agricultural Advisor lays much stress on the need more especially for research which is and always will be the basis of further agricultural progress in this country. The Royal Commission on Agriculture have in their report devoted special attention to this aspect of the agricultural problem and discussed its importance at length. He points out that the money spent on agricultural research has already proved a sound investment, that the money spent by the Provincial Governments and the Central government for the development of agriculture the premier industry of India is after all only a little more than one per cent of their revenues. It is hoped that the recommendations of the Agricultural Commission will receive due weight and consideration at the hands of Government and the future agricultural development will be more rapid and assuredly beneficial to the millions of the agricultural population of this country.

Under the economic work on crops during the year, rice, the premier crop of India both as regards value and outturn, has received considerable attention and several improved varieties

of paddy have achieved popularity. Wheat, cotton, sugar-cane, ground-nut, jute, tobacco, tea, coffee, rubber, etc. have also received their due share of attention.

It is gratifying to observe that there has been an increase in the production of refined sugar in India, both by modern factories and refineries. The Imperial Cane Breeding Station at Coimbatore has continued the breeding of sugar-canes, but with considerable change in the parents used. While the annual expenditure on the Imperial sugar-cane breeding station is estimated at half a lakh, the annual increased profit to the ryots from growing Coimbatore canes is estimated at 73 lakhs, and the economic work on sugar cane has thus been of immense benefit to India.

To the two main aspects of the cattle problem namely breeding and feeding, special attention is now being given in most provinces. Detailed studies are being made of the principal breeds of cattle and improvement is being effected by selection and by cross-breeding. With a view to stimulating and to some extent co-ordinating the efforts made in various provinces and Indian States towards cattle-improvement, the Government of India have established in Bangalore, a Central Bureau for animal husbandary and dairying with the Imperial Dairy Expert as Secretary. Much valuable work is being done there and His Excellency the Viceroy also visited the Institute in July 1927. Cattle breeding is being carried on in Hosur, Chintaladevi, and Guntur, in the Madras Presidency. At Hosur, Kangayam and Scindi bulls are bred and Chintaladevi is devoting itself to the improvement of the Ongole breed and Guntur to the breeding of buffaloes.

In addition to the economic work on crops, a considerable amount of research work bearing on fundamental problems of agricultural chemistry, bacteriology, plant pathology, mycology and entomology has been done by the various departments of Agriculture in India. Among the investigations in progress during the year, may be mentioned those dealing with the movements of nitrates in the soil, the conservation of soil moisture, the fixation of nitrogen, the nitrification of manures in the soil, the possibility of producing artificial farm-yard manure,

the influence of manures on the quality of crops, the detection of adulterants in ghee etc., may be mentioned.

It may be specially noted that the investigations into the possibility of producing artificial farm yard manure has reached at Coimbatore a stage when it can be demonstrated with advantage to the ryots. Many waste products have been successfully and quickly rotted down by using cattle urine as the starter and the comparative field trials have shown that the organic matter so produced is as good as cattle manure. It has been found that a seed from a crop treated with cattle manure is superior to that from a crop manured with artificial fertilisers. A study of organic matter in plant nutrition has shown, that it has a direct action in supplying some substance which stimulates the crops.

The importance of the Co-operative movement as affecting agriculture has been little realised by the people and the Royal Agricultural Commission has laid considerable emphasis on this aspect of the agricultural problem. It is regrettable that societies specially devoted to production and distributive business have in the majority cases proved failures in the absence of business-like and honest management. The success of some of the societies has given the hope that co-operation will play in course of time, if the recommendations of the Agricultural Commission are accepted, as great a part in assuring the cultivator of the full return of his labour as in providing him with cheap capital. The recommendations of the Agricultural Commission on the subject are of extreme importance and it is hoped that they will be given effect to without delay.

Agricultural research has no value to the country, unless the results achieved by research work are actually demonstrated in the most effective manner possible, so that the ryots may be induced to adopt the improvements. More attention has been paid year after year to the organisation of demonstration work in villages under village conditions. In most provinces lectures illustrated with magic lanterns are a regular feature now. The two most recent innovations are travelling cinemas and demonstration trains. We are soon to have in the Madras Presidency some such innovations as the demonstration cars. The several

provincial agricultural colleges and the Research Institute at Pusa, have been doing good work as usual. In some quarters here is a demand for agricultural vacation schools, but in several provinces they have proved a failure and it is found that it is better to attach a small farm or plot to ordinary vernacular middle school and to give elementary training in the practice and principles of agriculture by teachers specially selected for the work, the aim in view being to give a bias in agriculture as a vocation and to stimulate interest in the boys in the land, and to equip them to be better farmers. This form of education tends in short at adapting rural education to rural needs by utilising existing schools.

On the whole the year has been one of progress all round and we hope that the recommendations of the Agricultural Commission will soon take shape and accelerate the agricultural development of this country which is chiefly dependent on agriculture for its continued prosperity.

Colour inheritance in Rice

Among the workers on rice in India, Hector and Parnell have devoted sufficient time to the study of the inheritance of character in rice. They studied the effects of natural cross-fertilisation resulting from the cultivation, side by side, of a large number of different varieties. In their work on cross-fertilisation both Hector and Parnell realised the difficulty of working with so many different varieties with their respective colour combinations exhibiting in various parts of the plants as different patterns. As a result of successful investigations they have come to definite conclusions on many interesting phenomena. Doctor S. K. Mitra M. S., Ph. D., Economic Botanist to the Government of Assam and messrs S. N. Gupta and P. N. Ganguli assistants in Botany have been continuing the same work since 1921 and have obtained some definite results which are described in the Memoirs of the Department of Agriculture, Botanical series, Vol. XV No. 4.

In the work on cross-fertilisation with rice, attempt was made to study the inheritance of colour in rice following the standard of mendelian system of heredity. As observed by the

authors such a work on cross-fertilisation has a scientific value of its own as well as a direct economic value in the line of genotypic selection, i.e. the breeding of improved pure strains. It is with this dual purpose in view that attempts were made to try artificial cross-fertilisation in two varieties of rice separately. In all cases, only pure types that have been grown successfully under observation for four or five years or more were used in crossing. The study of colour inheritance in rice was taken up both in connection with the vegetative as well as the floral parts. In a number of cases where two plants bearing the same characters were crossed, such as green and green, the progeny became distinctly coloured which was not visible in any of the parent plants. It was noticed that in all cases where a colour factor had come up from two noncoloured (green) plants, one of the parent plants had colour in some parts of it. The colour of rice was found in different parts of the plant as red, yellow, brown, purple, black and different shades of each as light or deep. The pigmented sap that causes the colour, changes with the vegetative growth of the plant so markedly that in the mature plant the majority of the colours disappears except in the mature spikelet. It was noticed that the colour which was found in the early part of the plant disappeared with later growth and a plant which appeared slightly coloured when observed in the field, became distinctly coloured when grown in a dry condition.

As the result of detailed investigations and experiments spread over a long period, the authors have come to the following conclusion—(1) The inheritance of the colour in rice is very complicated. The colour complexes are not fixed in a particular part of any organ. (2) The factor that produces the colour exists in some part of the parent plants either visible or invisible, which effects the expression of colour when suitable factor combinations occur by cross-fertilisation. (3) The factors for purple, pink, brown, yellow, red, black, white and green are independent of each other and so is the actual shading of each one as light or deep colour. (4) Generally, coloured factors are dominant over non-coloured ones. Purple is dominant over green or white, red over white, green or yellow over brown, and black over green or yellow.

Panchayats in the Past*

By P. V. Balakrishna Iyer, I. C. S., Sub Collector,
Sivakasi.

The Panchayats at present may be regarded as an endeavour—whether it is a conscious effort aiming at a goal clearly visualised or an instinctive falling back, the materials on hand do not permit to say—to restore, so far as altered political and economic conditions will admit, the village institutions which form the basework of ancient and mediaeval Indian Body Politic. The earliest glimpses that we get of the political life of India reveal a multiplicity of small kingships coexisting with more or less autonomous republican institutions. When the beginnings of the ancient Empire of the Mauryas was being unconsciously prepared for by the Saishunagas and the Nandas, North-west and North-east India near the hills were under the occupation of tribes definitely oligarchical or republican in character. Under the stress of war, monarchies absorbed the republics and the principles of free institutions receded in the background. They did not wholly die but found a safe refuge in the organisation of the village. Thus ancient India reveals a compromise of two political ideas which one might at first sight imagine would never mix and the rather anomalous phenomenon of a union between autocracy and self-rule. Some historians are fond of the theory that the East knows only of one form of Government viz. Autocracy; others more full of sentiment than learning nourish the delusion that in India of the past, autocratic Government never filled any large space. Both views are untenable. For, the main characteristics of Hindu political forms are (a) autocracy in the central and provincial Governments; and (b) autonomy in the local Government. With the tenacity which institutions in the country very often exhibit this politically unnatural compound survived through the centuries and ages. Under the impact of Persian and Arabian civilisations signs of decrepitude began to appear and under the East India Company, village republics knocked, splintered and died.

During the period of their life the village republics played a remarkable role. One reads in the history of India of nume-

*Presidential address delivered to the Srivilliputtur, Sator Panchayat Conference.

rous invasions of the country from across the passes and of yet more numerous internal wars and uprisings. Yet throughout all the troublous times the current of national life flowed on with scarce an interruption. Kings fought and died, empires waxed and waned, yet the life of the peasant continued along much the same lines generation after generation and the spirit of Indian civilisation marched on unruffled. The amazing vitality and cohesive power of the village corporations furnished the key for the reading of the strange riddle. The village corporations behaved like the particles of water in the ocean. When a hostile army penetrated into the country it went like a ship through water. The army cut its way through the countryside as a ship cleaves through water; but as the water closes up again in silent contempt so the countryside came together anew.

Through wars and rebellions the villages formed a duct through which the inheritance of an earlier generation was transmitted to a later.

An institution so racy of its soil and that had with so little parade rendered much service towards the preservation of the Indian civilization would, I presume, be able to blossom into life again if properly nourished. The past bids us hope and work.

I am asking you to give this institution the best of your good and effort not merely because of the services rendered by its political ancestors but for the additional reason that the principle behind it appears to be in accordance with India's political future. The ultimate goal of India has been authoritatively defined as self-government within the Commonwealth of the Empire. But if self-government or political responsibility is to become a real force and not a legal truth merely it is necessary that the practical political freedom must find a nursery in the village. To build safely we must make certain the foundations are well and truly laid. Let the village be well and the country would be well.

The strength of democracy depends entirely on the political capacity of the electorate. Whatever be the forms unless the electorate is enlightened and inspired by democratic rule, democratic institutions will remain merely empty shapes. Before the access of Signor Mussolini to power Italy had more or less a form of democracy based on the English model: now the Government in Italy, whatever the supporters of the Facisti may proclaim, is a thinly veiled autocracy. Extra radical constitutions were provided for France by the legislators of the period of the revolution: but one and all failed to function and a dictator was accepted amidst rejoicings. Why these failures of democracy? The explanation is that either the electorate was not enlightened enough or had not yet learnt to mobilise its voice. It lacked wisdom and it lacked experience.

The panchayats, if properly utilised, are to afford a wide field for gleaning the necessary wisdom and experience which will enable future legislators to function with care and to the national welfare. It is not book learning that you ought to seek and that is not the real need, but the training of the capacity to choose men and select proposals regardless of the colour or the caste of the man putting forth platforms and policies. When a constituency returns a particular member it ought not to consider what Gods he worships or if he worships a God at all its primary consideration ought to be, "Will this man help to carry out the programme we have in view? Has he intelligence enough? Has he character enough? Has he industry enough?" And if the constituency is satisfied it ought to vote for that man or woman if the rules allow it. Similar considerations ought to be applied in choosing between parties. Will this party benefit the country. Or is it mere class legislation? Having chosen your man and your parties you ought to give them a fair trial. And if at the end you are dissatisfied you ought to have the courage to change the man or modify the measures. You ought to be able to make up your minds to say: Here, we do not want this man. He has not been sufficiently loyal to his programme or his programme will not suit us. It does not lead us whither we want to go.

In working the village panchayats we have a really unique opportunity of cultivating those habits of mind and of forming

judgments which applied on a larger scale (Legislative Councils and Legislative Assemblies) will alone make for true and real responsible Governments. You elect a panchayatdar he sits for three years, you live in close proximity to him, you have opportunities of judging whether he is taking a real interest in his work, whether he is only professing lip service to your cause while really aiming at his own personal profit and aggrandisement or for that of a section of a community. And if after having followed his activities you are not genuinely satisfied that he is not really looking after the larger interest of the village you say to him when elections come round again: "we do not want you any more: we have had enough of you." You thus learn to choose the proper man and to reject improper ones.

At the same time you will be able to realise the difficulties of your nominees and learn to avoid carping criticisms and be able to censure rightly and to support loyally—this piece of discipline will become a part of yourselves.

At the same time you enlarge your mental outlooks. You see how things run and you are able to suggest how things ought to be done.

So long I have been examining the question from the historical aspect and also from the standpoint of abstract political theory. I shall now turn to the further side of question.

As an instrument of rural development the only organisation besides that thrown on the idea of co-operative societies which holds up clear possibilities in view is that of panchayat. Now-a-days whenever anything is wrongly done or anything is left undone one hears the blame straight-away laid on the invisible shoulders of Government. "They should have turned to it or they should not have done it" This has become almost a *mantra* way of explaining unsatisfactory positions. If a village school is starved or poorly housed the local vocalists start the song Government takes no interest. If a couple of persons die of snake bite the same story is repeated: "Government have done nothing." Now it is very convenient to make government a weeping boy. It does not hit back and ask: "What were you doing?"

But blaming never removes obstacles; work, action and persistence alone does. Now the truth is that no government administering a large area can do everything that the citizen needs. Even if State socialism were adopted as a proper creed we can't get everything we want done through government. The process would be ever so expensive and the results ever so disappointing. Personally I would not like either a dictator or socialism. I would rather have no help and interruption than live in a hot-house where your food is put into your mouth and you die from the ennui of having nothing to do.

The only way to avoid too much interference, too little done in local matters is to suffuse with life local bodies of the panchayats. Make the move and you will find most of the everyday problems solved. Local men and local money for local needs. If this becomes a reality the almost impossible would have been achieved. Taxation would become a source of investment and the bill-collector instead of as at present being the best-hated person under the sun would come to be recognised as a human being.

Some of you might properly ask: Where are we going to get the hard cash necessary to do anything? Without money unless you are a dreamer, you never move an inch. My answer is two-fold: 1. The Act of 1920 gives power to the panchayat to levy certain forms of taxes—choose those which will be most equitable and the most productive. It may be unpopular at first; but if you have spent the money wisely you will find that a fresh demand causes much less grumbling.

There are several things which you can get done in a village without having to pass silver, gold or paper. It is notorious that under-employment in India is chronic. The panchayat-dars, I expect, are usually men of substance and influence in the village. They can easily mobilise their hours of unemployment and divert them along useful channels.

The Rural School Teacher

In any scheme of rural reconstruction, the rural school and its teacher have necessarily to play a predominant and a very useful part. If the rural school is to be the centre from which

would radiate all the good things having for their object the improvement of the village folk, the teacher is and should be the best person who could help in this endeavour. Consequently the rural school teacher must be specially trained for his job. One who has a distinctly rural bias and is intimately acquainted with rural conditions and takes a sympathetic interest in them is the fittest person. Unfortunately many teachers who take to teaching do so just as a means of living and they can do very little. The rural school teacher must be one who feels that he is one of the village folk and who takes a lively interest in the economic social and religious life of the village. Most of our villages have temples with inams attached to them for their support. A Rural school teacher who may happen to be the most literate person in the village should help in the proper administration of the temple endowments and funds and the due performance of the services in the temples. He could arrange village socials on all festive occasions. On such occasions he could get the officers of the Educational, Agricultural, Veterinary, Co-operative and Health departments to give talks to the villagers, preferably magic lantern talks. National village games should form part of the programme of these socials. Other activities which come more or less within the scope of the teacher's legitimate work will be in the direction of encouraging the pupils to lay out a small garden as part of the school and to let the pupils sow cereals and vegetable crops. As observed in an informing article contributed to the "Educational Review" by Mr. N. G. Ranga B. Litt. (Oxon), pupils working irrespective of their religious, social or economic distinctions side by side and vying with each other in growing the best trees, plants, fruits or flowers are sure to be able to develop a spirit of lasting understanding and thus will be enabled to look on the land, and the business of agriculture with love and affection. The responsibilities of the rural school teacher do not end here. He will have much educational work to do among the village adults and to that end he should endeavour in co-operation with the Educational Department to organise a village library and a night school. This will be the place where the old classical and puranic stories which have a lesson to teach should be told to the village folk. Sometimes Bhajanas with rural dancing like the Rasakrida may be

organised and some of the classical dramas, illustrative of stories from the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha may be staged. The teacher will have plenty to do in improving the health and the sanitation of the village and his services will be in great requisition when epidemics break out. The village drinking water supply on which the health of the village mainly depends should be preserved from contamination and the teacher is the person who can instil into the minds of both young and old, habits of cleanliness. We have said enough to show what a really willing rural school teacher could do for the benefit of his brother villagers. There must be other useful objects in which he could employ himself outside his regular teaching work. We have only indicated some of the lines of work just to shew the position of the teacher in the rural economy of the village and what the villagers expect of him.

Artificial Farmyard Manure.

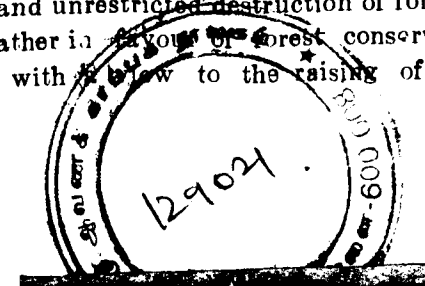
The common manure in use is what is known as farmyard manure which is the excrement of domesticated animals *plus* litter and other organic refuse. With the increase of the population and the contraction of jungle areas the supply of fuel has become lessened with the result that cowdung which should serve as manure to the field is used as fuel with the necessary loss of nitrogen to the soil. Other manures such as oil cakes, bone and mineral manures may be substituted for farmyard manure but none are so uniformly satisfactory. The necessity of providing the ryot with artificial farmyard manure has therefore become pressing. Work on this subject has been done at the Government Central Research Station at Dacca and in the Agricultural Journal of India (see volume XXIII part II). Mr. Carbery, Agricultural Chemist to the Government of Bengal and Mr. R. S. Finlow, Director of Agriculture, Bengal, have given an account of the work done and the results obtained. Cattle urine and washings from the cattle shed collected in a sump, *plus* a small amount of bone meal were successfully used, in the preparation of artificial manures. Weeds, Jungle grass sugar cane trash, and bagasse, refuse straw, etc., all proved capable of breaking down into excellent manurial material, approximately more or less closely in appearance and in

composition to that of cow dung. Latterly other nitrogenous substances have been used in the preparation of artificial farmyard manure. Ammonium sulphate with bone and without bone are two of these. Cowdung mixed in about twenty times its weight of water is a third. The cowdung gave very satisfactory results. It has also been found that phosphate of ammonia is an excellent "starter" in the manufacture of farmyard manure and that it is an efficient substitute for ammonium sulphate *plus* bone meal or for cattle urine and bone meal. For the first time in its history, the Dacca Farm had an ample supply of farmyard manure and the success obtained was repeated in other farms and sericultural nurseries of Bengal have been making their own farmyard manure which means a very considerable increase in the supply of available manure.

Empire Forest Conference.

We said last month that an Empire Forest Conference would be held this year in Australia and New Zealand. This will be the Third Empire Conference. The war has prominently brought to notice the limitations of the world forest reserves and the necessity for taking steps to safeguard the future. That is the object of these Conferences. An important feature of these Conferences is the preparation by all the units of the Empire of Statements shewing their forest resources and how they are utilised having regard to present and future requirements. And India with its immense forest area is vitally interested in this endeavour.

Forests are destroyed for the sake of agriculture, that is for giving place to cultivation. As the area under cultivation increases and consequently the domestic needs of man, the destruction of forest will go on increasing proportionately. But at same stage destruction will have to stop and serious attention directed to conservation. A study of the history of man in the past affords ample evidence of the disaster wrought by the wholesale and unrestricted destruction of forest growth. The aim now is rather in favour of forest conservation than forest destruction with a view to the raising of forests for



safeguarding climatic conditions in the interest of agriculture and water supply. A sound forest policy will aim at not only limiting destruction and encouraging conservation but devote attention to the economic management of the forests so that there will always be sufficient area of forest growth to meet the increasing needs of man. It takes many years to bring the forest into a condition in which there are adequate supplies while the demands of man for timber, if unchecked, will end in our eating up our resources or as financiers say, living on capital which cannot go on indefinitely.

India will be represented at the Conference by as many as seven delegates, the Chief Conservator of forests, Madras, Mr. R. W. Richmond, being one of them. The proceedings of the Conference which it is hoped will evolve a sound forest policy for the benefit of mankind will be awaited with interest.

Village Improvement work

Writing in the *Mysore Economic Journal* on "Rural Reconstruction in Mysore," Mr. B. S. Suryanarayana, District Economic Superintendent says as follows on the arduous nature of the duties of those who are engaged in Village improvement work:—

"The task is comprehensive and difficult. Much of immediate spectacular effect ought not to be expected. It has to be worked out by slow degrees. At every step there is the conservatism, obstinacy, superstition and ignorance of the villager coupled with poverty. These difficulties have to be got over by perseverance and genuine patriotism and then our country will once again be prosperous and happy. In such a work, a batch of scouts, teachers and officers, lawyers and public-spirited men, going to the villages on fixed days and getting things done, will go a great way in the rapid advancement of our country. I would also suggest that each District Board member, Representative Assembly and Legislative Council member must each take up a Village Panchayat and devote himself to make it a model for others. This sort of service will be of tangible and meritorious service to the country. There cannot be a better field for selfless workers trained in social service than in a Village

Panchayat. By a stay for about 6 months or a year, if one Panchayat is made to function most efficiently in every way and all possible improvements are done in the village, a life-work may be taken to have been done. So many of our young men educated at ryots' expense and quite a number of them maintained at their expense with munificent scholarship owe a duty to them. The University and the Government ought to be in a position to send every year, at least, a dozen workers for this sort of social work on a suitable allowance. I am of opinion that the University Hall mark—the Degree—ought to be given only after an approved apprenticeship for a year as a Social Worker in a village. If the University has really imparted liberal education the young graduate must be able to do this and acquit himself well and be of some service to his Motherland". [Journal.

We quite agree with the writer in the *Mysore Economic*

Fruit Culture in Southern India

Successful experiments in the culture of fruits are being made on the Nilgiris in the three experimental gardens maintained by the Agricultural Department under the superintendence of Mr. F. H. Butcher, Curator of Government gardens.

The three experimental gardens are the Pomological Station Coonoor, and the Burliar and Kallar Experimental fruit gardens.

The Pomological Station adjoins Sim's Park and is situated at an elevation of 5,800 feet above sea level. This station established in the year 1920 is about twelve acres in extent and is almost completely planted up with fruit trees of temperate and sub-tropical climates, such as apples, pears, plums, peaches, figs, oranges, lemons, etc. The main objects of the station are to grow the different kinds and varieties of fruit trees that are likely to thrive on the hills of South India; to test the different "stocks" and to use the most suitable for grafting purposes; to propagate those varieties and kinds that are most satisfactory and to distribute them and to carry out experiments in farming, manuring and cross fertilisation. Already ten varieties of Japanese plum have proved successful. About thirty kinds of

apples are being tested. The Japanese persimmon is also thriving and is gradually becoming popular for dessert purposes.

The Burliar garden is situated on the Coonoor Ghaut near the toll bar, and is 2,500 feet above sea-level. It is suitable for the cultivation of tropical fruits and spices and contains five specimens of mangosteen, nutmeg, clove, cinnamon, mango, orange, langsat, litchi and allspice.

The Kallar garden stands half a mile off the Ghaut Road from its junction with the new Ghaut Road at the foot of the Coonoor Ghaut, about $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Mettupalayam. Its elevation is 1,400 feet above sea-level, and it was opened in 1901 for the experimental cultivation of the Durian, a fruit much prized in Malaya. Many of these have already come into bearing, for instance, a giant variety of the Sapodilla. Among the fruit trees being tested are the mangosteen, sapodilla, orange, avacado, papaya, mango, litchi, the different spices of anona and citrus. Pineapple is also being tested on a large scale.

Village Topes

The following extract from the Presidential address of the Deputy Commissioner at the Chitaldrug District conference will be read with interest:—

Our countryside looks bleak and bare and there is very little of tree growth in it to relieve the barrenness of the landscape. Large stretches of roads are left unprotected from the hot sun. The pest of prickly-pear unfortunately seems to have taken possession of the field and flourishes in profusion. Both from the artistic and economic points of view, continuous and vigorous attempts are urgently called for to promote the growth of plants and trees all over the district. Earnest attempts were made in this direction during the year with the result that 241 village topes and 1640 avenue trees were planted in villages and by the side of roads respectively. We should not forget that mere planting of trees will be of any use if sufficient atten-

tion is not bestowed upon them, till they come up well. School boys and teachers in villages should also be interested and take special delight in planting trees and laying out gardens and parks in open grounds; and the Village Panchayats and District Boards should also assist and encourage them in this respect."

It should be the pride of village Panchayats to plant village topes wherever conditions are favourable and plant avenue trees on the edges of streets, round the village temple and the village Chavadi, and on the four sides of the village drinking water pond. Village and forest Panchayats should be ever ready to devote their attention to this highly desirable object which will in no small measure add to the amenities of village life.

Notes and Comments.

A generous gift.

It is understood that the Rajah of Parlakimedi has made a gift of a sum of Rs. 20,000 representing the allowance he had drawn as a member of the Royal Commission on Agriculture. The Rajah and the Government of Madras have after consultation decided to set up a scholarship at Pusa for men who have already served in the Department for a period of at least five years and shewn that they are likely to benefit from intensive training at Pusa to enable them to take a post-graduate course in plant genetics and fit themselves for the higher ranks of the service.

Instruction to Panchayats.

If the Panchayats which are being formed throughout the Madras Presidency and in other parts of India should function properly, they need to be instructed in respect of the objects for which the Panchayats have been formed and the duties they have to perform. A training class has been opened at Akola, Central Provinces, under the auspices of the Berar village Panchayat Board, the subject of instruction including civics, co-operation, village sanitation etc. The Registrar-General of Panchayats Madras, may consider the desirability of giving similar instructions to village Panchayats in that Presidency.

As regards Forest Panchayats the same instruction as in the case of General village Panchayats should be given supplemented by special instruction suited to their special work. The stage of the formation of the Forest Panchayats is practically over. Now is the time to conserve and improve the growth in the Panchayat Forests. From an inspection of some of the Forests, it seems to us desirable that the Panchayatdars should be given instruction on the technical side of the business. A few centres may be selected in each Taluk where sessional schools may be held for the instruction of Forest Panchayatdars and the staff employed by them for the protection of the forests. Experienced forest rangers should be deputed for this work and the schools which may be held for a couple of weeks or so should also be attended by the Special Forest Panchayat Deputy Tahsildars. The instruction should include lessons with demonstration in the preparation of the soil, preparation of seed beds, sowing the seed, weeding and thinning out, removal of plants from the nursery and transplantation and irrigation where necessary and possible. Also the raising of grass for pasture and economic management of the grass plots and ensilage.

The Linlithgow Report :

The Linlithgow report is properly drawing the careful attention it deserves. The other day under the auspices of the Indian Economic Association, Mr. E. V. Sundara Reddi led a discussion on the general aspects of the report of the Royal Agricultural Commission on Agriculture in India. Dewan Bahadur T. Rangachariar, C. I. E., who presided and several prominent economists and others interested in the rural problem, among others Mr. T. K. Doraiswami Ayyar, the University Professor of Economics, the Hon'ble V. Ramadas Pantulu, President of the Provincial Co-operative Union, Mr. K. C. Ramakrishnan, University Reader in Economics and Mr. A. Swaminatha Ayyar, Editor "Rural India", took part in the discussion which will be the first of a series of discussions on the report, organised by the Madras Economic Association.

Rural Educational Conference :

Opening another series of discussions at the Rural Educational Conference at the Y. M. C. A., Mr. R. D. Anstead C. I. E.,

Director of Agriculture, Madras, delivered an interesting address on the Linlithgow report and Rural education." Extracts from Mr. Anstead's address will be published in "Rural India."

A conference was recently held between the Minister for Development, Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Director of Agriculture and Veterinary Adviser to Government and some others to discuss the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Agriculture. This is preliminary to a similar Conference of departmental representatives from all provincial Governments proposed to be convened in October in Delhi.

Co-operative Rural Scheme.

A co-operative rural scheme has been inaugurated by Dewan Bahadur R. Ramachandra Rao, C.S.I. in Saen. The chief object of the scheme is to safeguard the moneys invested by the District Bank. The second object is to see that the primary societies serve all the needs of the people in the village selected for working the scheme. The third object is the promotion of cottage industries, like hand-spinning, (where it is already pursued but languishes for want of organisation) and provision of amenities of life such as reading rooms, circulating libraries and bajana parties. It is too soon to pronounce on the scheme. Our readers will be glad to know that Dewan Bahadur Ramachandra Rao has kindly promised to write to us sometime hence giving the results of a year's working of the scheme.

A District Rural Reconstruction Scheme.

The Chingleput District Board started in 1927 a scheme of Rural reconstruction selecting for intensive operation the three revenue firkas of Villivakkam, Utteramerur and Kannigainair in the Taluk Board areas of Saidapet, Chingleput and Tiruvallore respectively. The programme of work consisted in constituting village panchayats, making arrangements for medical aid and maternity, affording facilities for providing cart tracks and drinking water sources and co-ordinating the activities of the Agricultural, Veterinary, Co-operative and Public Health departments. 64 Panchayats have been constituted in the areas chosen besides a circle Panchayat Association in the Villivakkam firka. Three

Ayurvedic dispensaries have been opened in the respective headquarters of the firkas with six licensed midwives at two for each firka. They move from village to village, make house to house visits and maintain a register of expectant mothers, besides attending to delivery cases and treating minor ailments of children. Estimates to an aggregate value of Rs.62,420 have been sanctioned for the improvement of cart-tracks and attention directed to conserving drinking water ponds. Four stud bulls have been purchased by the District Board for service in the Reconstruction area and the Government Health Department carried an intensive propaganda with magic lantern and cinema shows. It is regrettable to note that the Agricultural department was not helpful in these undertakings. It is understood that a year's experience has encouraged the District Board to consider the possibility of extending the scheme throughout the District. Rao Bahadur M. K. Reddi the energetic President of the District Board deserves to be congratulated on the successful efforts he has been making for village uplift.

Agricultural Co-operation.

We are gratified to read from a report of District Demonstration work in the Central Provinces and Berar that there are several Taluk Agricultural Associations which are proving very useful in popularising the improvements recommended by the Department. The Associations have collected funds on share basis and are dealing with the sale of improved implements, seeds, fertilisers etc. Another desirable advance on which the Agricultural and Co-operative Departments deserve to be congratulated are the crop protection societies. To protect crops from stray cattle and thieves, crop protection societies on co-operative lines have been organised. Funds are collected at four to six annas per acre on the area to be protected and watchmen are engaged, their number depending upon local conditions. We learn from the report that these societies have proved of immense value to the cultivators. We have had complaints of damage done to standing crops by wild pigs in several districts in the Madras Presidency. The formation of crop protection societies on the model of those in the Central Provinces will be useful.

Federation of Agricultural Associations.

An interesting feature of the working of Agricultural Associations in the Central Provinces is the federation of the Associations which is successfully functioning. As observed in the Departmental report, the Federation will enable the Agricultural Associations to undertake other lines of important work than that on which they have hitherto been engaged:

Crop growing contests.

We are gratified to note a forward move made by two of these agricultural associations who have organised "crop-growing contests" in their Taluk. The movement aims at organised and systematic attempts towards securing maximum production. The main conditions governing the contests are that the competitor (1) must grow 10 acres of cotton (2) he must purchase seed from the local association (3) he must remove mixtures if any, from the standing crop and (4) he must sell his produce to the association at the market rate.

Prickly-pear nuisance :

The prickly-pear is becoming an intolerable nuisance in most villages. Tank bunds, village sites, foot-paths, cart tracks, in fact all available space in the village which is not actually cultivated is overgrown with prickly pear resulting in constant danger to the villagers and their cattle. If the Revenue officers could devote some attention to this matter during their inspection tours considerable improvement is likely to be effected. No doubt Local boards might take punitive steps against landholders who cause obstruction and inconvenience to the village people. But the Local boards are often not prompt in taking these steps and consequently the evil is allowed to go on. A recent authoritative decision of the Madras High Court (Cr. Rev. Case 214 of 1925) has clearly defined the responsibility of landowners in this respect which would go a great way towards checking the evil. The High Court have held that a landowner is under a legal obligation to take such precautions as would prevent the prickly pear being a nuisance to the public, that the failure to do this duty would be an illegal omission which would render the owner liable to punishment under section 268 I. P. C. and that any member of

the public is competent to file a complaint against a pattadar who has caused the nuisance.

Co-operation in France :

Quite a welcome feature of the development of the co-operative idea in France is the enthusiasm with which school children have taken to it. Its utility in building up character and in instilling in the impressionable minds of children wholesome ideas of social service and in doing methodically even the small things of every day life cannot be underrated. Thus says the *Times Educational Supplement*:—

"The reports received from the various schools state that the *co-operatives scolaires* have a direct educational value. The young members transact all the business of the fund, and letters must be written and circulars sent out. Accounts are kept, orders have to be sent to tradesmen, and postal orders sent in payment. Thus experience is gained of the ordinary transactions of life. By the election of office holders, the paying of subscriptions and the holding of committee meetings the children obtain some insight into citizenship, taxation, and legislation. There is developed in the children a sense of discipline and responsibility, and they take greater interest in their lessons and in their school."

Fish Curing Industry.

An Industry which affords living to a large number of poor people and which has possibilities of development in the interest of agriculture is the fish curing industry which is now unfortunately in a somewhat moribund condition. It was Sir Frederic Nicholson who with a keen foresight of the real needs of the country saw the possibilities latent in this industry but the early enthusiasm with which it was started and helped by the state was gradually allowed to evaporate. It is up to the Development minister who we are glad to note is already showing commendable zeal in effecting improvements in the working of the departments under his control, to see to the revival of the fish curing industry on up-to-date lines, especially the strengthening the research side of it. It is satisfactory to note that insistence has been laid on this aspect at the enquiry into the working of the Fisheries department which in our opinion has

not been started a day too soon. The result of the enquiry is awaited with interest.

The Lilac Devil.

A Government Resolution on the working of District Boards in Bihar and Orissa during 1926-27 draws attention to the spread of the water hyacinth pest in several districts of the province. This plant, which has long been a curse of Bengal is now afflicting several districts of the United Provinces but the efforts so far made for its eradication have been spasmodic and isolated. Very successful attempts have been made in Ceylon to eradicate the weed.

Farm Buildings.

We learn by experience. Formerly it used to be considered that for experimental farms we must have costly substantial buildings. In Bulletin No. 174 of 1928, Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa., Mr. G. S. Henderson, N. D. A., N. D. D., repudiates the notion and points out that farm buildings should be cheap, efficient and as portable as possible. He has found that in some cases buildings are most unsuitable and very expensive and observes rightly that this as a rule is not the fault of the agricultural authorities but is often due to the fact that the building programme is under the Public Works Department. Cases occur where the buildings cost more to erect than the site of the farm does to acquire so that these unnecessarily expensive buildings not only create a bad impression in the minds of the local land owners but practically render the farm a permanency even if the site becomes no longer suitable for the purpose for which it was acquired.

City Life and Drunkenness.

There seems to be some mysterious but not inexplicable relationship between life in over-crowded cities and drunkenness. It is stated that Paris is becoming a model city from the point of view of sobriety. In 1911, 23,852 persons were arrested for drunkenness. There was a steady reduction, and last year only 7,967 drunkards had to be taken in hand by the police.

What are the causes of this improved condition of things? They are numerous. First of all there is the increased price of

alcohol. Then, since the war, Frenchmen have paid more attention to healthy sports and the Institute of the "Semaine Anglaise" has taken them into the open air. Also the inherent desire of many Parisians to possess a little property in the suburbs even though it be only a plot of land, has forced them to economise. The average Parisian travels more than he did. He looks forward to his holidays every year and he lops off useless expenditure, and saves money in order to enable him to leave the city for a fortnight's rest in the quiet bracing atmosphere of the country. The lesson should not be lost on us.

The city is a place of appalling noises the effect of which on the citizens as aptly described by the Health officer, Calcutta, is "strained nerves, erascible tempers and generally impaired health." No wonder that they seek relief in drink.

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