

The village Panchayat

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THE
VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

(A MONTHLY PERIODICAL)

NOVEMBER 1930

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WELCOME TO THE PANCHAYAT MINISTER.

We welcome the selection by His Excellency of Dewan Bahadur B. Muniswamy Naidu as Chief Minister and Minister in charge of Panchayats. Whatever views may be held in regard to political policies by different groups of individuals in a state, it is a sound constitutional principle that His Excellency has adopted that *he* should be called to office who has a real majority of the elected members of the Legislature—a majority that has been returned on a ticket to which he and his men have openly subscribed. We welcome this selection all the more, because we know that in Mr. Muniswamy Naidu we have one who, amongst the communal constitutionalists, has by far the greatest interest in rural affairs. As President of the Chittoor District Board Mr. Naidu's administration has received the unstinted admiration of all concerned without distinction of party, caste, creed or colour. It is equally an open secret that Mr. Naidu was one of the very few, practically two or three, in the last council who were insistent on building up, as quickly as possible, a Panchayat Rule for the land. We know the Act that is now on the statute book does not go far enough to achieve that end as soon as one would desire, but with Mr. Muniswamy Naidu as the Chief Minister in charge of the Portfolio, it should not be difficult, to make fair headway so as to reach early a stage at which he himself may shape the Act further to suit a fast developing circumstance. If we may make a suggestion in passing, we recommend the following for consideration. The Amended Local Board's Act contemplates the appointment of a District Panchayat Officer. Though the District Board has to sanction the appointment, the making of it is practically in the hands of the Government. If the Government should

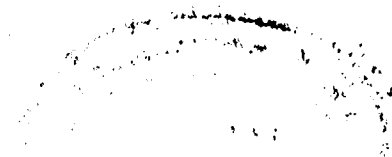
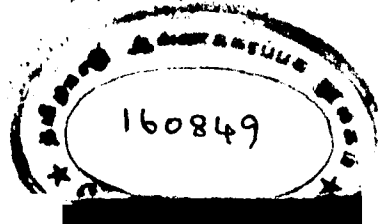
liberally interpret the provision and enable the appointment of well-tried public workers with enthusiasm for Panchayats as District Panchayat Officers without trusting to the old beaten channels of appointing some one from the Services it is quite possible to carry out the programme of Panchayats speedily. However, this is by the way. We need hardly mention that the Rural Development Fund of the Amendment Act is the outcome of Mr. Naidu's earlier efforts to find some way of meeting the growing needs of the rural areas. We congratulate the Hon'ble Dewan Bahadur B. Muniswamy Naidu upon the good fortune he has had in coming to office to work out a programme of his own, at least in regard to panchayats. We wish him and his co-workers, the Hon'ble P. T. Rajan and the Hon'ble Kumaraswamy Reddiar God speed and on their behalf extend prayers to God that at this great critical moment in the history of our country they may have the strength and courage to achieve, what may be given to them to achieve, for the good of the country.

CURRENT HALF-YEAR FOR THE PANCHAYATS

October last ushered in a new half-year for all Local Board administration after the new Amendment Act came into force in August. Every Local Board should now examine its present activities and act in accordance with the provisions of the new Act. In regard to the Panchayats they have had no experience of the Local Boards Act hitherto. Therefore, the Panchayats have not only to note the differences that have arisen between the old Act and the Amended Act, but also to digest the unamended portions of the old Act so that their action may be in consonance with the new environment to which they have been transferred. In one article it is not easy for us to give, even in a general way, all the implications of the change. Mr. Rutherford has fairly done the general survey in his article which we published in our last issue. Our attempt in this article will be to deal in further detail with certain aspects of the question, more particularly, with the provisions relating to taxation and finance which are deserving of immediate attention. Under the Amendment Act of 1930, Part IV dealing mainly with duties of local bodies under Public Health, Safety and Convenience, the Panchayat is the authority exercising almost all the functions except in regard to vaccination. It is no doubt true that in the schedules an attempt has been made to give some share of administration of local areas in these matters to other Boards by classifying

choultries, libraries, markets, fairs, and festivals into district and taluk and village varieties. But that is only to make provision in cases where these serve purposes very much higher than the purposes of the Village Panchayat area. Therefore, it must be presumed that in so far as rural areas are concerned, the Panchayats will have the fullest scope. If this scope should be well utilised even from to-day, the village Panchayats now in existence should realise what great field is open before them and conserve all resources with the one intent of going forward. The old Union Boards (about 470 of them) have had a uniformity of existence and therefore guidance given to one such may be easily copied by the others. But in regard to Panchayats under the old Panchayat Act XV of 1920 they were all voluntary associations taking up such work as they thought they could do. We give below an extract from the Report of the Registrar-General for 1928-29 to point out how the panchayats were taking up duties. Out of 3,343 Panchayats in existence, 1164 Panchayats maintained 1190 schools. 199 Panchayats had their own school buildings. Compulsory education was in force in four Panchayat areas, 167 Panchayats cleared prickly pear, 116 attended to lighting their villages, 109 maintained sanitary staff, 8 planted trees, 196 maintained libraries, 481 undertook the provision of improved water supply and village communication, 81 carried out Kudi maramat, 21 managed irrigation, 26 undertook the management of crop protection, 26 managed markets, 4 maintained tank watchmen. Some Panchayats undertook the management of religious festivals, repairs to temples etc. It is an encouraging sign that schools, water supply, and village communication have attracted the largest number of the Panchayats. It also appears from the same report that there were seven Panchayat Unions with programmes of their own to push. The Administration Report for 1927-28 says, however, that it is difficult to get Panchayats to realise that the improvement of the village site and surroundings is one of their primary duties. This aspect is brought out in a more emphatic way in the administration report of 1928-29. It is here that the Panchayats have very grave responsibilities under the new Amendment Act. All the Panchayats have these responsibilities; not only those that may choose. Therefore all the well-wishers of Local Self-Government in this country must be up and doing the educative part of the work, while all the existing Panchayats must forthwith take steps even in this current half-year to discharge the duties entrusted to them.

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Taxation is the great question in all administration. So far as Village Panchayats are concerned they now get a share of the land cess. They need not levy it. The power of Levy is not now in the District Board either. It is a settled tax of Rs. 0-1-6 per rupee on the assessments. The collection is in the hands of the Revenue Department. The District Board had hitherto power to levy a companies tax. The companies tax is now abolished. Tolls were another form of taxation the District Boards were empowered to levy. They have still that right. The Panchayat has no part or lot in the levy or the collection or the enjoyment of this toll income. The District Board has the full control. As Panchayats may be formed for any area of a Revenue Taluk, the position is conceivable where a village Panchayat may be called upon to maintain fairly long roads with a toll station right in the centre. It will then be open to the Panchayat to ask for a share of the toll income and the Government to make the District Board pay. The profession tax is a tax whose collection and administration is now in the hands of the Panchayat while its levy rests with the District Board. Some existing Panchayats must have levied the profession tax under the old Act. They should now require their District Boards to pass resolutions levying the said tax in their areas. A new provision has been, no doubt, added to section 75 to the effect that where any resolution has taken effect for a particular year no proposal to alter the rates or the dates fixed in such resolution, so far as that year is concerned, shall, without the sanction of or a direction from the Local Government, be taken into consideration by the District Board. But this applies only to a resolution of the District Board. It does not apply to the levy of the tax by other agencies. Moreover, the whole principle of the levy has been changed by the Amending Act. Hitherto the levy was based upon monthly income. At present it is the half-yearly income that has to be taken into account. It was hitherto the President that was classifying. He has no longer the power. Whereas hitherto the classification fell only into ten groups, it now falls into 12 groups. Even in the grouping the grades have been changed between 3,000 and 6,000. Three fresher groups have been added beyond 12,000. The inclusion of companies under the profession tax is the greatest change. Therefore, it appears evident that the whole fabric of the taxation has been changed. Transitional Provisions 7 and 10 are so defective in wording that it appears not prudent to trust to them for any escape. If panchayats which have been getting an income from the Profession

tax should not lose that income for the present half-year prompt steps should be taken by the District Boards concerned to publish the necessary notice in the District Gazettee and otherwise as prescribed, call for objections and declare the levy.

The House Tax is another source of income that some Panchayats must have hitherto adopted. In regard to this tax also there appears to be trouble enough. Under the Panchayat Act XV of 1920 the Panchayat was the levying authority subject to the approval of the Local Government. But as per the new Amendment the District Board in some cases and the Local Government in other cases is the levying authority. The basis of levy is either capital value or the annual value. As per old rule 13 of Section IV, which is retained in essence, the Panchayat has to resolve to adopt either basis. Therefore, if the house-tax should be a source of income to any Panchayat during the current half-year, such Panchayat must first resolve what basis it adopts for the levy and get either the District Board or the Local Government to levy the tax, according as the Panchayat had or had not levied house tax prior to the 1st day of April 1930. After the levy is made and proportionate rate fixed by the District Board or the Local Government, the Panchayat may group into classes and also exempt as per provisions of the new Rules 15 and 16 of Schedule IV of Amended Act. In regard to all other forms of income Panchayats may now be getting, they are fairly protected because the provisions in regard to them have not materially changed.

The Panchayats have to remember that they have to frame budgets for the next official year during the present half-year. The Panchayats have first to sanction the budget and then submit it to the Taluk Board. The Taluk Board can alter or affect the budget only if the Panchayat has not made provision for loan responsibilities or working balance. District Boards have to fix dates for preparation, sanction and submission of these budgets. It is to be hoped that the District Boards will act promptly so as to avoid unnecessary delays. The Panchayats have power to modify budgets later. For affecting debt items and working balance, the consent of the Local Government is necessary.

Editorial Notes.

The world's prices are ruling very low. The highest industry is but a transformation of material raised on land. **THE GREAT FALL IN PRICES.** Therefore by fluctuation in prices the man that suffers most is the producer of raw materials. So all round the world the agricultural population is hit very hard. It is however necessary to realise what has happened. The present drop in prices must have been long expected. There was a certain level of prices before the war. The war came on. Producing countries like Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Russia, British Colonies along with Britain were all involved. Production of even necessities was contracted. So, prices rose, and rose abnormally. The war closed no doubt in 1918, but countries devastated in war have to take time before they regain their earlier level of production. Moreover, after war, political world-policy carved out a large number of free and independent states in areas which had no freedom to develop before. Thus, the World's production within recent years has not only regained its lost position but has outstripped its old self. What wonder then, prices badly fall. If prices inflated at one time and the producer had an advantage of money value between 1914-21, it was due to a world's accident which is not there to-day. That is not merely the position. Owing to the realisation of large profits due to inflation of prices, the ordinary man went in for luxuries and, in certain lines, capitalised industry, after the war, dumped its goods. Now that the prices have gone low, there is no power in the man in the street to enjoy luxuries. Not only does that produce discontent but it also unnerves all industries, equally. Therefore this is the time of examination for the world. Lesser luxuries, cutting down of expenditure, encouragement of such production as can satisfy local needs have all come to be advocated. Let us find our food and clothing within our own limits, is the slogan of the day. All industrial lands are diverting attention to agriculture. Let India learn her own lessons.

It is impossible not to mention our worst sufferers in Southern India. The ryot growing groundnut is the poorest. He has no organisation. He has sown and probably harvested about 30 lakhs of acres. The price to-day is not yet Rs. 25 per candy. There are no sales even at that. As Lancashire has great stakes, and Bombay has great stakes, there is some organisation for cotton. But for

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groundnut there is none. December is coming, the month for government revenue. May not the ryot expect that he will be helped by Government to the extent of not being obliged to sell his crop for a song, because of his incapacity to wait for better times? Suspension of Collection of Revenue as also a scheme of advances to the ryot on an organised basis may be useful at present.

For the future, the Bengal Government has begun moving in the matter of jute restriction. May not the Madras Government move in the matter of groundnut restriction?

On the 23rd of October last the Hon. Mr. H. G. Stokes presiding over a meeting organised by the Madras Libraries **INFORMATIONAL BOOKS.** Association referred to the second annual report of the association and spoke of the need that existed for informational books in our vernaculars. The report had appealed to the University or the Government or both to supply the want. He said that it was not impossible that the Minister for Education might see his way to make a grant in aid of a publishing scheme out of the funds placed at his disposal for Educational purposes. Though he later on proceeded to caution against a rapid programme, we feel sure he was keenly appraised of the great want. A co-ordinated effort in Telugu, Tamil, if not also in Canarese, to produce standard works of information in easy style and short compass is an immediate necessity. The Vignanaachandrika and other bodies in the Telugu country did make an attempt of this type years ago, but owing to the diversion of attention caused by acute political issues, the movement has not proceeded apace. The Andhra University was anxious to open its publication department and do something to spread books for adult culture. For one reason or another, funds were not forthcoming and the University has had to remain where it was. Though Western Universities are doing extension work for adults very well, it is too soon to expect that our Universities will get out of "Panditism" and cater to popular needs. The best thing to do however appears to be this. The Madras Libraries Association may form quite a small and distinctive organisation out of itself for publication of informational books for popular library use in two vernacular languages to start with, Telugu and Tamil.

This organisation may undertake publication. More than that, it may bring together all such as have a real enthusiasm and capacity for work and by constant collaboration with other publishers, and

exchange of thought with them, plan a great upheaval in true informational literature. By a proper control of books supplied to schools and a due encouragement and advertisement of good work done, it is still possible to induce solid production in this line. We are glad to learn that the Libraries Association is well supported by Local Boards and Schools are being enlisted as institutional members. If earnest men set about the work, it should not be difficult to produce two volumes of informational value every month on a fairly paying basis.

Why Organise a Panchayat?

(By H. S. G.)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Why should we organise a Panchayat? That is probably the question you are asking yourselves. Why do you build a temple or grow a tope? I ask. Do not get angry. But please answer. Do you say you do that because it is service of God? True, just see how it is God's Service. To the temple, all your neighbours come. They may be rich, they may be poor. They may be men, they may be women. They may be grown up, they may be children. They may be of this caste or the other caste. They worship God, inhale the holy incense, breathe God's good air. They all enjoy religious life with you. You spend your money and yourself. You feel repaid. In the case of the tope, it may not grow to full maturity in your time. But you know your ancestors planted topes and you enjoy them. Even there, it is God's service that you do. Examine for one minute how that is God's service. In summer time poor people walk along dusty paths. They get tired. They want shade and rest. Your tope gives them that shade and rest. If you have dug a well in the tope, so much the greater service you have done. The tired man drinks of the well and blesses you. In the case of the tope you create comfort not only for man, high class or low class, but also for animals and birds that pass by. Do you not see therefore that really service of God lies in the service of man and God's other creatures. You are anxious to serve God by providing man and other creatures with shade and water when on way. You are anxious to give men clean and airy surroundings in the temples. May you not then see how much your family and your neighbours require greater services in your village to keep them clean, healthy and cheerful to

go to the temple to worship God. That is what a village Panchayat is expected to do for you.

The Panchayat is nothing new. In Indian life it is literally as old as the hills. It is to-day not as all round as it was once. Still, examine how the Erukakas, the Venadies, *ie.* the backward classes settle their social affairs. The Panchayat is their instrument. Even crimes are sometimes tried and settled by the Panchayat amongst them. Why talk of backward classes? Do you not hear almost every day that so and so has gone to such and such a place for a "Panchayat". This Panchayat is sometimes of one powerful man. He dictates. That is no doubt true. But yet you see how your heart yearns for a Panchayat. Why does it so yearn? Because the Panchayat is of your blood. It was born with your forefathers. It struggles to live with you. It can only die when you and your progeny are all dead. If you and your progeny desire to live, it can make you live.

Do you know how great the Panchayat was? In pre-British days Emperors came and Emperors went, Empires rose and Empires fell. But the Panchayat was the people and it lived. The Panchayat is really our heritage.

In spite of centuries of domination by others the Panchayat is still there. The co-operative movement has made it more familiar to you. The Panchayat Act also has familiarised it. The Government in its Forest Panchayats, Irrigation Panchayats, and similar other things, has retained the name of the Panchayat. But none of these, except the Panchayat under the Panchayat Act to some extent, looked to your daily needs of water, air, cleanliness and health as bodies created by you. The Panchayats you are asked to form are successors of Panchayats under Panchayat Act XV of 1920. For the present they may be doing only sanitary duties. But be sure, if you strive, you can absorb all other Panchayats into yours and slowly make your Panchayat the real government in your village. Therefore, do not delay. Stand up and ask for your Panchayat. You sow, you reap and you eat. You dig, you build and you live in your house. In a similar way you know your needs, you form your Panchayat, you rule yourselves. Panchayat is, by nature, your instrument of Rule. Grasp it and you grasp all life.

Round Local Bodies.

The Government of Madras have declined to assist local bodies in understanding technically the implications of amendments made in the District Municipalities Act and Local Boards Act. They have asked every local body to consult its own lawyer and fashion its action. However, they have asked the Inspector of Municipalities and Local Boards to issue suggestive instructions to Panchayats only.

The attention of the District Boards has been drawn to the necessity of consulting Taluk Boards in making appointments, though the meaning of this is not very clear. It appears that the Government intends that Taluk Boards also should have their say in the matter of making appointments to local bodies under the supervision of the District Board.

The Government have issued a G. O. constituting all public roads within the limits of a district which are wholly maintained from the funds of the District Board, as District Roads. All the remaining local fund public roads (including village roads) in a district shall be classed as taluk roads. All local fund choultries in a district shall be classed as district choultries, all public markets within the limits of a district, as defined in Section 167 of the Madras Local Boards Act, as taluk markets. This classification will continue to be in force until the new classification is made by the Local Committee to be appointed under Rule 3 of Schedule V of the Madras Local Boards Act as amended by the Amendment Act of 1930.

The Salem Taluk Board has a dispensary at Erkad. The Erkad Panchayat makes a contribution towards the expenses of the same. There was a dispute in regard to the amount. The Taluk Board claimed Rs. 17,541-3-9. The Inspector of Local Boards gave an award for Rs. 6,984. The Taluk Board has protested. The Union Board passed a resolution pleading inability to pay any part of the contribution. The Taluk Board as a counter has closed the dispensary.

The President of the Taluk Board, Calicut, raised a question. He wanted to know whether sanction of the Local Board was necessary to retain in service a non-ministerial servant after he had attained the age of 55 years. The Government have given the opinion that it is not so necessary on the strength of Rule 99 of the Local Boards Manual.

THE VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

Mr. A. Rudrappa Naidu was an overseer in the Tenali Municipality. He was under suspension for a month and a half for misconduct. He was dismissed afterwards. His pay for the period of suspension was disbursed. The Auditor held that was not right and surcharged. He said the suspension pay of a Municipal servant could be paid only if he were re-instated. Mr. Rudrappa Naidu has been re-entertained.

On October 11th, 1930 the District Board of South Arcot passed a vote of censure against the President, 27 of the members voting for it. The strength of the Board was 40 on 26-8-1930 on which the new Act came into force. The President was a supernumerary. The President, District Board, would not accept the resolution as having been passed, because 27 was not two thirds of 41 including himself. But the Government compelled him to hand over charge.

The Palghat Taluk Board in October dismissed as *ultra vires* the G. O. warning Local Bodies from participating in political activities connected with the Civil Disobedience movement. As many as eleven members were neutral.

The Mysore Government have adopted a new scheme to afford greater facilities for well-boring. They have undertaken a half-grant subvention to the District Boards and called upon the Board to buy their own sets. In that way they hope to be able to meet the insistent demand from all over the State.

During the month of October (27th) the Presidents of the District Boards in the Mysore State met in a conference. Mr. Vema Reddi of Kolar presided. Resolutions were passed which in effect asked for greater autonomy.

The North West Frontier Province is a non-regulation province. The local bodies there have all along been nominated. Steps are now being taken to introduce an elective element in the Local Bodies. A special officer has been deputed from the Punjab for this purpose.

Rural Interests.

Mr. G. K. Subramaniam draws prominent attention in the Madras Agricultural Journal to the development of "Cotton seed Societies" on a co-operative basis in the Coimbatore District. In that district the area under Combodia Cotton is above one lakh of acres. The Department of Agriculture after years of attempt through seed farms, issuing seed to ryots, insisting on pure cultivation, and ginning of the kapas under the supervision of the Departmental officers, was but able, from a total of 1000 acres of seed farm area, to supply seed to about 10,000 acres of land. Therefore, "Seed Societies" have been encouraged. There are now 200 members with an area of 1200 acres of pure strain of Combodia cotton supplying seed of about 400,000 lbs to suffice for 16,000 acres. These seed farm ryots have been getting Rs. 6 more for every 260 lbs. That works out to Rs. 10 per acre on an average. Four of these societies have maintained breeding bulls of good Kangayam type out of Common Good Fund for the benefit of their locality. As the ryot sells kapas and is unable to keep back good strains of seed, if he has to deal in the usual way, the only solution to supply seed for him is to encourage co-operative seed societies supplying good seed, ginning kapas pure and conserving seed of the best type in larger and larger measure.

The Department of Agriculture is trying to build up a dual purpose breed of Ongole cattle to produce good work cattle as also good milkers. The experiments are fairly successful, three or four cows at Chintaladevi having reached 5000 lbs of milk in a single lactation. Ongole cows may be used for milking purposes in preference to she-buffaloes, in Vizag, Godavari, Kistna, Guntur and Rayalaseema.

ELECTORAL ROLLS— COSTS.

NEW RULES.

The Hon'ble Diwan Bahadur B. Muniswamy Naidu has given notice of certain draft rules under the revised District Municipalities and Local Boards Acts. The Government propose to take power, in virtue of these rules, to recover from the Local Bodies the expenses that may be incurred by the prescribed authority in the preparation of Electoral Rolls and in the conduct of elections. The expenses which are made obligatory on the local bodies will be met by Government in the first instance.

These rules will be laid on the Table of the Madras Legislative Council and probably approval asked for at the meeting on the 18th inst.

RURAL INTERESTS

The last report of the Madras Agricultural Department brings to public notice the tendency for ryots in the Tinnevelly area to grow *pulichai* which is of an inferior spinning value with Karunganni cotton to pass the mixture as Karunganni cotton. This, the department says, is a serious menace to the popularity of the Tinnevelly cotton. As the ryots are not amenable to persuasion and advice, the Director considers more drastic action required. Legislation will probably be asked for.

There has been a definite drop in the price of rice with no hope of rise in the near future. The Government therefore propose to redirect the work on that crop towards discovering means of reducing the cost of production and of altering the system of cultivation to permit of other more profitable crops being grown in rotation with it.

The Government of Bengal is attempting to educate the Bengal Jute grower to restrict jute cultivation. To a large extent, the government think that the present state of affairs (*i.e.*, low prices) is due to events in other countries and trade conditions abroad. The condition of the cultivator has been rendered worse owing to the fact that this year more jute has been cultivated than ever before except in 1926. It is for the cultivator to take care not to sow too much.

A decoction of tobacco is about the best spray to be used against insects attacking the rose.

The "American issue" gives prominence to a piece of news which proves Prohibition has been a benefit to agriculture. In 1917 the average per capita consumption of milk was 754.8 pounds. Ten years later the consumption was 967.3 pounds indicating that milk was taking the place of beer throughout the land and that children were enjoying health and life-giving materials with which the dairy cow—the foster mother of mankind—blesses society.

There was a violent decline in wholesale commodity prices of 3.8 per cent in September in London. This follows a decline of 1.9 per cent in July, 1.5 per cent in August. Taking the 1927 level as 100 the complete index figure at the end of September stood at 73.2 as compared with 93.5 a year ago, an average fall of 20.3 per cent during the 12 months.

Back to Agriculture.

Till yesterday England was the last agricultural country in the world. To-day all the different parties are feverishly anxious to promote a revival of British agriculture. There are two million wage-earners out of work. As the "Co-operative Official" puts it, no responsible statesman expects a trade revival that will create employment for them. Agriculture can feed; agriculture can clothe. So, back to agriculture is the only way to keep men from starvation.

America is full of banks. Every State has its Bank. They have realised the value of money for the farmer. The American Bankers' Association has an agricultural commission of its own. Under its direction Banks in the States are carrying on a raging propaganda amongst the ryots. The highest officers in these Banks are going round with magic lanterns and slides into forests evolving newer forms of farm business and financing it. Country life conferences are being organised and the farmer is encouraged not only to live but to live successfully.

"Efficiency in production, justice in distribution, success in living" are being pushed. The ryot in America is being taught that he has the right to live clean and happy. He is taught how to make the most of home resources. He realises that time is a great agricultural resource, learning to balance its use for acquiring and using the desired material things on the one hand and for direct recreational and cultural activities on the other. He is being trained to a deepening sense of appreciation for beauty by expanding the possibilities for developing the artistic in the home and its outdoor surroundings. He is afforded community opportunities and policies by the advancement of such social institutions as school, church, hospital, library, and Local Government. Public Relief for rural families is being put on an organised basis. Distinctive qualities in rural culture are being encouraged with a new emphasis given to fundamental objectives in rural life of to-morrow.

Canada is organising in 1932 at Regina a World Grain Exhibition. Its activity in Agricultural Industry is growing apace and is such as to attract World's attention. It has discovered new machinery which makes hemp a possibility. This crop is re-established by inventive genius. "How could hemp harvested by the highly paid labour of North America hope to compete with the jute grown on the plains of Bengal by rice-eating ryots or with the hemp harvested by the poverty stricken peasantry of Italy, Belgium or France?" This is the question that has been answered in Canada by the introduction of machinery for harvesting hemp. The hemp-harvester cuts 8 acres a day. It not only cuts but spreads the crop on the ground so that dew, rain and snow might ret it. The activity of this machine is supplemented by another which lifts 8 acres of retted hemp per day. The hemp-lifter is drawn by a tractor.

The Law of Madras Local Boards.*

The first Volume of the Law of Madras Local Boards by Mr. C.V.Naidu, Advocate, High Court, has just been published. The present is the third Edition of the work. As the Local Boards Act has undergone very material amendment the book is rewritten, revised and enlarged. Dr. P. Subbarayan, Ex-Chief Minister, has introduced this third Edition. The whole book is planned to include the Madras Local Boards Act, the Madras Oath of Allegiance Act, the Madras Local authorities Entertainments Act, the Indian Election offences and inquiries Act, all with elaborate commentaries, the Election rules with commentaries and other rules, Government Orders etc. passed under the Local Boards Act. The present Volume of 724 pages closes with the Madras Entertainment Tax Act and rules thereunder.

Mr. C. V. Naidu's work has been before the public for long years and it does not require fresh commendation from us. There is no question that this work is a monument of intelligent labour. The author has put into the book all that one would desire to have. There is a fairly exhaustive historical sketch of Local Boards with objects and reasons of the Original Act and the Amendment Act and the Select Committee's report with the dissenting minutes on the Amendment Act. The whole Act is well summarised in 67 paragraphs. The more important chapters are introduced by a concise thesis on the subject of the chapter. To illustrate, introducing Chapter 2, the author has dealt with Village Panchayats in general giving the opposition views when the matter was discussed in the Council, the Minister's reply and the author's own opinion. We may, in passing, point out that, according to the author, in many ways, the inclusion of Panchayats is an advantage. He takes exception to the cost involved in running the office of the Panchayat, and to the control by the Taluk Board. He strongly criticises the Government's apathy in having stood against the compulsory formation of Panchayats in villages with a population of 1000 or more and says that the Select Committee's recommendation was lost because of the absence of the Congress members. The introduction to Chapter VI, which deals with taxation is full and interesting giving information on taxation in general, Taxing or Fiscal Acts, Taxing provisions in the Act and its Amendment, the taxes and the liability of the Crown, civil court jurisdiction, Tax payers and their rights, non-payment of taxes and its offences, and many other matters.

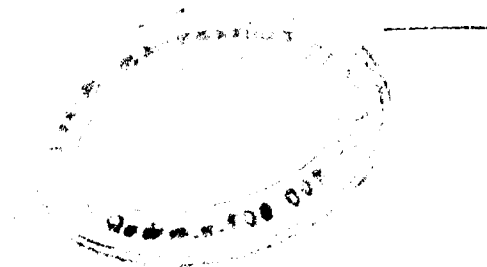
*Price of the Book up to end of 1930 is Rs. 11 net in one Vol. and Rs. 11-12-0 in 2 volumes. Later it will be Rs. 12-8-0 and Rs. 13-4-0.

THE VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

The commentary on every section is full. A cross reference to all the other sections and schedules of the Act is given to begin with. Where a section deals with details a general running commentary is first given and the details are discussed in seriatim. Case law is summarised in every one of these discussions and references to it are given as footnotes to the page. Where no direct case law exists case law on analagous acts is cited. Miscellaneous Acts like the Madras Revenue Summons Act and important G. Os. like the one relating to Bar-marked funds are incorporated at the proper place in the commentary.

It is needless to say that the work will be found immensely valuable in the hands of all those who have anything to do with Local Boards.

G. H. S.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

(1) To the Panchayats and Presidents of Taluk Boards.

The Editor of the "Panchayat" will be pleased to have short occasional notes from and about all the Panchayats now existing in the Presidency for publication in this Journal. Irrigation, Forests, Co-operative Panchayats and Panchayat courts and voluntary organisations doing arbitration work are all requested to send notes of interest. It is desired that the notes should be fairly brief and to the point so that the Editor may be able to deal with the maximum matter in the minimum space without sacrificing clearness.

(2) To the Readers.

The Editor will always be pleased to hear from the readers any suggestions for the improvement of the Journal.

Any contributions bearing upon the Panchayats and their future in particular and all rural development in general are welcome. Contributors are requested to note that an article covering more than a thousand words may not be in form for this Journal.

(3) Please Note.

All copies for the Press have to be legibly written on one side of the paper. It will always be helpful if contributors note that quarter sheets of foolscap size make a standard manuscript.

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* Story in brief is published on page 135 of August issue.

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THE VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

With this issue we have despatched to our subscribers three numbers of our Journal. A fair number on our list have already sent their subscriptions by M. O. There is however a very large percentage of those who have not so remitted. From the 1st of January we intend sending V. P. P. to recover the subscription amount, if, in the meanwhile, we have not received remittance by M. O. To save unnecessary work in this office and some little extra loss, we request that all our subscribers note that it would be to mutual advantage to send the Subscription by M. O. so as to reach us before the 31st of December. We take this opportunity to thank all those who have been helpful to us by prompt payment and we are sure that the others do deserve our thanks in anticipation.

(Sd.) V. VENKATASUBBAIYA.

Hon. Joint Secretary.

and poet,—this was the staff of functionaries, artisans and traders by means of which the village communities carried on their internal government. Be it noted that all of these were not mere names. They were live personalities, the very blood of the villages, connoisseurs in the subjects that they were required to handle, models for other lands to copy at the time. Add to this the great social discipline of yore which, in a very large measure, manufactured public servants by its insistence upon Ashramite life, the eldest and the most experienced turning into Vanaprashts and Sanyasis to devote themselves to the service of humanity. In such a society of the village as this, the village headman, revered for a hereditary bent of

THE VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

leadership, held sway, most often acting more as a conciliator, than as a judge and in harder situations calling to his aid, not merely the village service, but the elders of the village who formed the unelected panchayat of the village.

With an extended existence, with an ampler life, with a very much wider contact, it may not be possible to reproduce the old as it was. That simplicity with all its grandeur, and all its limitations may not return. But nothing stands in the way of developing our life on the old essentials of our inherent nature. To throw up hands in despair has not solved our problem of national life and it can never solve it. We must courageously go forward and explore all possible avenues of progress and start afresh to attain the same end of village autonomy with a proper leadership. Swaraj in the village is the real Indian swaraj. Dilatoriness in establishing this swaraj, a policy of laissez-faire in this matter, has truly contributed more to our unhappiness than any other single factor. A rigorous, nay a compulsory, policy in this behalf is the only possible solution for the future.

It is therefore with pleasure that we have read what the Royal Commission on Agriculture had to say in regard to village leadership. They have examined the work of the Medical and Health Departments. They have examined the work of such bodies as the Poona Seva Sadan, the Co-operative anti-malaria Society in Bengal, the rural Reconstruction work of the Y.M.C.A. They are impressed with the fact that the revival of the spirit of community is essential. "If revival is not possible", they say "hope of radically improving the amenities of the village must be abandoned".

The Commissioners are equally convinced that the cultivator cannot reasonably be expected unaided to revive this ancient system of corporate action. To find that assistance is really the problem.

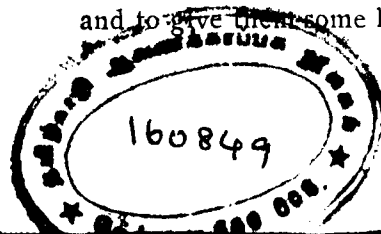
The system of Village Guides devised by Mr. Brayne I. C. S. in the Gurgaon District of the Punjab is mentioned by the Agricultural Commission with approval. Let us describe that system in the words of the Commission itself. "Young men are given a special course of training which, in addition to imbuing them with a sense of the dignity of corporate labour for mutual benefit, is designed to familiarise them with the principles of sanitation, elementary medical aid, co-operation, and agricultural improvement, and to give them some knowledge of the simpler home industries in

VILLAGE LEADERSHIP

order that each man may, when his training is completed, act as "guide, philosopher and friend" to the group of villages to which he is posted. In technical matters, his knowledge is meant to enable him to direct the villagers where to go for advice rather than to give the advice himself. This system of the village guides is part of an organisation in the Gurgaon district which has as its aim the general uplift of the rural community.

"The scheme embraces the work of every department of Government engaged in rural areas; it seeks to assist in securing the adoption of the advice of the expert by a well planned propaganda campaign; it depends for its success on the enlistment, in the cause, of every one willing and able to assist, official or non-official, and more especially, of the people themselves whose welfare is in the balance. Lecture, song, drama, magic lantern, cinema and even the loud speaker are made to contribute what they can to arouse the people to a realisation that they themselves are largely responsible for their own undesirable condition. The attention of the villagers is thus attracted. Side by side with the propaganda campaign, there are provided facilities for those who wish to try the advice so tendered. Good seed, selected bulls, ploughs, well gear, quinine, inoculation, and so on, are readily available. Co-operative societies, adult schools, domestic economy classes and every other means calculated to assist the spirit of service and self-help are at hand. Everything useful is brought within easy reach of those who need it. The chief value of the scheme, in our eyes, is its illustration of the great benefit which accrues from an all-round effort at village improvement by everyone interested."

The Guide in this scheme is designed with a view to make some one in the village capable of playing "guide, philosopher and friend" to the villager. He is not very much different from the Rural Reconstruction worker now being employed by several agencies, more especially the co-operative movement. There is, however, one small weakness in the Gurgaon system. This adds a new person to the village service, if he is not already a schoolmaster, and except where enthusiasm is very great, it is materially costly. Whereas the Rural Reconstruction agent is at least a full-timed worker with better equipment for a group of villages, the Village Guide may, when spread over a large area without adequate finance, prove no more than an occasional volunteer. The Commission were probably conscious of this difficulty. They examined the prospect of utilising the village school master as the "guide, philosopher and friend" but they came to the conclusion



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that he had already enough work to do in taking care of his young wards. Ultimately they hit upon the old ideal of the village leadership. The following passage from the report is of interest. "In most parts of the country, each village has a headman and, in addition, there is in most provinces a numerous staff of subordinate revenue officials, known variously as patwaris, Kulkarnis, tapedars, talatis, or karnams; and in some cases, these men are put through a course of training in their duties. If ideals of village improvement were instilled into these thousands of humble officials, we cherish the hope that some seed might fall on fertile ground." We commend these words to all Governments. We wonder why the government of Punjab broke off the experiment as far as Patwaris are concerned.*

The Village Panchayat may be re-established as quickly as possible. The village schoolmaster, the Village Munsiff, and the village accountant may all be trained periodically in the more and more advancing aspects of village life. The Village Panchayat and these other natural leaders of village life may be brought into close touch with various organisations like the Rural Reconstruction Associations as also with committees of officials and non-officials carrying on the work of the Development Departments like Agriculture, Co-operation, Health, Industries and Education. The linking up of all effort with what may be rudimentarily established in the village is truly necessary for healthy, continuous and harmonious growth.

The village Panchayat, the village headman, the village accountant and the village school-master deserve therefore the first attention. Is it too much to expect that ere long some scheme shall be evolved which will give these people training and provide them with the necessary equipment to develop our villages into units of true and free life?

A central rural up-lift education programme may immediately be drawn up and instead of wasting, as at present, the resources of the development departments in trying each to carry its own little flickering light to the doors of the villagers, strenuous endeavour may be made to educate and enthuse the select from every village,—more especially the Village Munsif, the karnam, the school master, the panchayatdars, and the co-operators, where there are such,—at least once a week while the ordinary villager is also visited as often as may be possible. District officers of Panchayats, Health, Education, Medicine

*Mr. Brayne in his book on "Remaking of an Indian Village" States this at Page 56.

Co-operation, Agriculture, the President District board, and two non-officials of whom one at least shall be fairly full-timed and shall act as the secretary of the committee may be formed into District Committees. The Secretary shall be allowed the privileges of a first Class District Officer and put in charge of the Rural up-lift education work. The Health Inspectors, the Co-operative Supervisors, the prohibition propagandists, the Agricultural Demonstrators shall all be under the Committee so far as the propaganda side is concerned. The Prohibition Committee may merge into this Committee and its funds with some little addition may be placed at the disposal of the Rural Up-lift Education Society. A central Organisation in the head-quarters of the Government which shall consist of the three Ministers, their Secretaries, the Inspector of Local Boards, Heads of Development Departments and District Secretaries may guide the whole programme and effectively prepare and supervise the necessary reels, slides, literature and other equipment.

Our Ground Nut Crop.

Our Ground-nut Crop has been growing most rapidly. We, no doubt, consume part of the crop locally. But this is very greatly limited. The reasons are obvious. We have not developed industries enough to utilise locally a continuously advancing bulk of this agricultural product. Therefore, our ryot stands or falls by the prospect or failure of our Ground-nut trade in the international market.

The principal exporting countries of the world, so far as ground-nut is concerned, in order of the quantity exported, are, roughly, British India, Senegal, China, Nigeria, Gambia, Mozambique, Dutch East Indies, Tanganayika, French Guinea, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Brazil. Our country exports 1,676,871,000lbs., Senegal coming next with about 900,000,000 lbs., China coming third with about 500,000,000 lbs. The rest are very far behind. In 1913 our exports were only (average of 1909-1913) 813,149,000 lbs., Senegal coming next with 425,937,000 lbs. and China following with but 138,472,000 lbs. It will therefore be seen that between 1913 and to-day we have doubled our exports. Looking at the acarage sown also we have progressed at a tremendous pace. In 1880 the whole

of India sowed 112,000 acres; in 1895-96 it was 407,000 acres, in 1913-14 it was 2,100,000 acres, in 1914-15 it was 2,413,000; in 1918 it fell to 1,312,000 in 1922-23 it was 2,533,000 acres; in 1926-27 it was 3,863,486 acres.

From the export figures India may appear to be keeping a fairly steady ratio in relation to its competitors. However, the truth is not established in that way. The chief importing countries and their needs must set the pace for us. France which is really the greatest consumer of our Ground-nuts imported in 1913, 1,239,659,000 lbs. of ground-nut. In 1928 its imports had developed only to 1,727,894,000 lbs. rising slowly to 1,503,887,000 then to 1,516,515,000, dropping actually in 1927 to 1,454,257,000 and then rising to 1,727,894,000 lbs. Whereas our exports between 1913-1928 have more than doubled France has imported in 1928 no more than a third in excess of 1913. The next in importance as an importing country is Germany. Her imports have grown very rapidly. Whereas in 1913 her imports were but 174,970,000 lbs. in 1927 they had grown to 930,555,000 lbs. The 1928 figures available to us do not appear very reliable as there is a sudden jump to 1,883,601,000 lbs. The other importing countries are Italy, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the United States, Japan, Denmark, Canada, British Malaya, Belgium, Egypt etc. It is a fact that the total imports have greatly developed. We have shared very greatly in the trade with Germany. That cannot be denied. However, it must be remembered that most of the importing countries, more especially the large importers, are growing their own Ground-nut crops. To take but one example, the United States of America produced in 1929, actually 930,700,000 lbs. of Pea nuts. As a matter of fact, if the authority of the Journal of the Department of Agriculture, Western Australia, may be taken, the American grower is able to compete with Chinese grown Nuts. The State assistance in America for Pea-nut or Ground-nut is £ 1-14-6d. per ton in the shell and £ 3-9-0d. per ton of Kernels. It appears in Australia this aid comes to £ 37-6-8 and £ 56 respectively. On the strength of this, the Western Australian Advisor in Tropical Agriculture states that never, in that State, was the time more opportune for an expansion of the Pea-nut growing industry than the present. The price of first quality Pea-nut in Australia was £ 84 per ton in September which works out to about Rs. 12 per our maund, whereas in India the ryot was hardly able to sell at any price between As. 10 and As. 15 per maund during the same month.

There is yet another factor to be counted in the competition of other countries with us. It is the international trade in Ground-nut oil. We do produce Ground-nut oil. But all of it is crude. It is used only to adulterate our ghee or help our own brothers in Ceylon, Mauritius or elsewhere to eat. But our place in international trade in Ground-nut oil is not counted at all. The chief exporting countries are China, France, Germany, and Dutch East Indies. Leaving France and Germany aside, for the present, because they are mostly importers of Ground-nut, the finished product of China and Dutch East Indies must very largely affect our trade even in regard to nuts. In 1928 China Exported 78,889,000 lbs of oil and Dutch East Indies 9,974,000 lbs. France manufactures 40,000,000 gallons of oil annually from imported nuts.

Whatever Export and Import figures may or may not indicate the weakness of the Indian ryot arises out of his unorganised state. The buying countries and also better organised growing countries grade their nuts in three classes—(1) Confectionary (2) Roasting, (3) Milling. Salads, Medicinal purposes, high speed lubricants, cooking, magazine are some of the higher uses for the nut. Lower grades are used for soap-making and other industrial purposes. It is said that our Ground-nut sent to France, is not used for higher purposes than Soapmaking. Our ryot has no manner of grading his product and marketing it without middlemen of all sorts. He has no knowledge of the market itself as it is mostly a sealed book in possession of the foreign exploiting companies.

It is useless to complain that our nut is not converted into oil. It is probably impertinent to ask why France can convert our nut into millions of gallons of oil every year when we, the producers, are unable to do likewise. To talk of protection when we cannot convert what we grow into usable products is unwise.

It is time that the waste involved not only for us in this country but also for the world in general in our uneconomic export of Ground-nut is stopped by the Government taking proper steps to educate and organise the ryot and set on foot schemes that will lead to better utilisation of Ground-nut. If all this is not done, it is little wonder that our ryot, the largest exporter of Ground-nut in the World, remains the poorest and the least efficient producer and in time is bound to develop very bad discontent.

Distribution of Land Cess.

Of the land cess imposed by the Local Boards Act the Rural Development Fund gets $\frac{1}{4}$ th. This is ultimately distributed for Panchayat work. The Panchayats themselves get $\frac{1}{4}$ th. On the whole $\frac{1}{2}$ rd is devoted to the Panchayats. For convenience of administration the transitional provisions introduced into the Amendment Act of 1930 (Rules 9 and 12 thereof) give certain powers to Government. Rule No. 12 is a general rule that may be applied in case there is some insurmountable difficulty. It can reasonably be applied only in cases where the transitory provisions do not contain an escape. Rule 9 applies specifically to the distribution of the land cess amount. Therein it is provided that the land cess for the Fasli year in which the Amended Act is brought into force shall be distributed among District Boards, Taluk Boards, Panchayats and Rural Development Fund Committees as the Local Government may, by general or special order, direct. This rule does not contemplate handing over of the Land cess to any body or bodies exclusively. Nor does it contemplate that the Rural Development Fund Committees should not be formed or should not function. It is intended to give the Government power either to vary the rates, if need be, or, in special cases, to allocate funds between Taluk and District Boards and Panchayats equitably as per emergent needs.

The Government, however, have taken a very extra-ordinary step. In G.O. No. 4339 L and M they have decreed that the proceeds of the land cess levied in each district for fasli 1340 shall be distributed only among the District and Taluk Boards in the districts and the distribution shall be effected in the same manner in which it would have been effected if the Amendment Act had not been passed. Though we are doubtful if any court will issue a writ against the Government in view of Rule 12 of the transitory provisions, this is clearly a far-fetched interpretation of the powers of the Government.

The Government seem to be acting on the presumption that they should not be troubled with difficulties. In regard to markets and other institutions from which Panchayats might have derived some revenue, the Government have passed a delaying ordinance and shut out all chances. They have denied, for the present at least, Equipment grant to Village Panchayat schools as may be gathered from the Registrar-general's circular No. 95 published elsewhere. They have now issued this order which does not hand over the Land Cess. All the same, they have brought the Local Boards Act into operation and imposed upon the Panchayats statutory duties. They have not only done that but have envisaged elections and taken powers to impose upon Panchayats Election Expenses for the officers and the establishment of the prescribed authority and propose taking powers to recover such monies from Local Bodies if not paid.

The very incidental expenses in running the offices of Panchayats require additional sources of income for the Panchayats. To begin as the Government has begun would be not only to kill Panchayats already existing but also to discourage the establishment of further Panchayats in the future. The Hon. the Minister for the Panchayats speaking at the Rotary Club on Dec. 5th expressed his solicitude for Panchayats in the following terms. "In the matter of organisation of Village Panchayats we have not gone as far as we should". He was, while the "Leader of Opposition," for the establishment of a Panchayat in every village. We still believe that the orders we have referred to, are the result not of his mature consideration. They must have worked themselves out as of routine. We beg of him that he should look into the matter more carefully. We would ask him not to put too much stress upon the readiness of District Boards and Taluk Boards. They have their own difficulties, if not weaknesses, and it was those difficulties that played an important part in restricting the scope for Panchayat Liberties in the Amended Act. While taking the best help that District Boards and Taluk Boards may give, it is best that the Government gives the fullest scope to "Panchayats" to develop and to function side by side with the other Local Bodies. More, greater care is required on the side of the Government to nurture the "Panchayat" so that it may not get naturally choked by the more powerful neighbours who have a controlling part in regard to itself.

Writing to us upon the same subject of the Distribution of the Land Cess M. R. Ry, P. S. Kumaraswami Raju Garu, President Rajapalyam Union Board quotes the G. O. No. 4339 L and M which runs as follows.—

"The Governor acting with the ministers is hereby pleased to direct that notwithstanding anything contained in clause(a) of sub-section(2) of section 114 A and clause 1 of rule 5 A, clause 1 of rule 5 B and clause 1 of rule 5 C of Sch IV (Madras Act 14 of 1920) as amended by the first mentioned Act, the proceeds of the land cess levied in each district for the fasli in which the first mentioned (Act XI of 30) was brought into force namely fasli 1340 shall be distributed only among the district and taluk boards in the districts and the distribution shall be effected in the same manner in which it would have been effected if the first mentioned Act had not been passed".

Mr. Raju also says that the Panchayats and the rural Development Committees were expecting eagerly that they would be benefitted greatly by the newly amended Act. But by a stroke of pen, a death blow has been given to the Panchayats by not giving them an access to the land cess. It is highly deplorable that the Panchayats have been lost sight of by the minister concerned, who has not considered the new G. O. properly.

Therefore he hopes that all Panchayats would rise against the inequity of the new G. O. and see that it is repealed, and also appeals to the ministers in charge and members of the Council to reconsider the G. O. and do full justice.

Editorial Notes.

We have very great pleasure to announce that the first Panchayat Union under the new Act has been formed in the PANCHAYAT UNIONS. Namakkal Sub District. Elsewhere we publish the proceedings of its first meeting. The Union is formed under section 30 of the Amended Local Boards Act. It is a joint Committee of the Panchayats in the area concerned. Its constitution is by Regulations assented to by each of the Local Authorities concerned. It is competent to transact such business as the Local Boards are jointly interested in, or are jointly responsible for. A Panchayat Union is probably the best medium for settlement of difficulties that may arise between Panchayatdars and Panchayatdars, and Panchayats and Panchayats as also to give a true direction and push to the organisation and running of Panchayats. It is a welcome sign that the old Panchayat Unions are asserting themselves and reforming under the new Act. A well extended use of section 30, with such men as Dewan Bahadur R. Ramachandra Rau, C. S. I. and Rau Sahib N. R. Venkataramier added on to the committee as extra-members, is a sure guarantee that the village pauchayat movement will take its proper place in the administration of the land.

The Government of Bengal in reviewing the work of the Union Boards in Bengal which number 4089 on the whole THE CHIEF DANGER. and correspond to our Panchayats, makes the following observation. "The chief danger, apart from political campaigns, lies in the apprehension so often felt that the Union Board means increased taxation. Here and there, perhaps, the over-enthusiasm of supporters of the movement, anxious to see the powers of taxation for improvement made early use of by the new Boards, may have contributed to these apprehensions. Any such reaction is to be avoided, and the policy of Government would be rather to let a Union Board find its own specific needs and then have recourse to section 37 (b) of the Act to meet them, than to encourage recourse to this section in order to raise funds for comparatively aimless improvements, the need for which has not yet been appreciated by the villagers contributing to the cost."

The principle laid down is a sound one and we hope that the specialist officers in this Presidency will note the same. We would point out in passing that the income from pounds and ferries derived by the Panchayats in Bengal in 1928-'29 was as large as Rs. 1,73,000. The Revenue Department over here has been very tardy in recognising the claims of the Pauchayats. May we not hope that now, at any rate, our Panchayats shall soon have pound income to rely upon. We recommend that prompt steps should be taken to hand over pounds to village Panchayats.

EDITORIAL NOTES

The end of November was a trying season for Madras and the South. The great havoc wrought by wind and rain has badly hit the city as much as the Mofussil. THE RECENT HURRICANE AND FLOODS. True, these catastrophies are reminders of the great power of Nature. But from the human point of view they are cruel reminders, the poor being the worst affected. Our heart goes out to the sufferers and all glory to those that have patiently and unostentatiously ministered to the suffering thousands. May God grant us strength and fortitude to submit cheerfully to His Will and rise again out of the wreck with greater vigour.

Forest Panchayats.

The following article is an extract from the "Statesman" of the 23rd October 1930. It reviews the Presidential speech of M.R.Ry. V. Ramadas Pantulu Garu at the Forest Panchayat's Fifth Conference held in Madras on the 4th of October last. We commend the article to our Local Contemporary the Madras Mail who, at the time, could not see in Mr. Pantulu anything more than a lawyer eager for the formulation of a legal enactment and in Mr. Harisarvottama Rao, who, at the time, very largely wrote in the Press on this Subject on very similar lines no more than a man of "Extreme views and extravagant Language."

"Forest Panchayats in the Madras Presidency are governed by a special Act passed in 1882 and by administrative flats which have since been found necessary to reconcile the villagers to its working. Forest administration is of course a vexed question in most provinces, but according to Mr. V. Ramadas Pantulu, it has specially controversial features in Madras. Mr. Pantulu presided lately over the fifth Madras Forest Panchayats Conference held at Mylapore, and his review of the working of the forest panchayats certainly suggests that the system calls for a thorough over-haul. As he says, "the situation calls for a more thorough and radical reform than the mere codification of the existing practices with slight improvements." What is wanted, he points out elsewhere, is a change of outlook on the part of the Government—a remark which applies to a number of other subjects.

The Forest Panchayat in Madras is the outcome of a committee appointed by the local Government in 1912 to enquire into the numerous complaints which had been made as to the oppressiveness of the existing methods of forest administration. The Forest Committee found that on the whole the grievances complained of were well founded, and expressed the view that the remedy consisted in reducing to a minimum the relations between the forest subordinates and the villagers; in other words

the villagers themselves must be entrusted with the management of those forest areas which are reserved principally or solely for the satisfaction of local requirements, so as to ensure a continuous supply of grazing, fuel and agricultural necessities. Such a course was expected to eliminate the existing friction between the villagers and the forest subordinates and secure to the ryots the enjoyment of their customary rights without irritating outside interference. The Government accepted the report, and the bodies created to give effect to its recommendations were not unhappily styled forest panchayats. At the present time there are some 1,100 forest panchayats operating over 22 districts and administering forests covering an area of about 3,500 square miles. Mr. Pantulu asserts that during the first decade of their existence they made "little tangible advance," and that even now it is doubtful how far they represent real autonomy "under a system of more or less personal rule of the Panchayat Deputy Tahsildar and the hierarchy of his superior revenue officials."

One of the chief complaints about the present system is that, like the existing financial agreements between the Central and Provincial Governments, it is not fair to the weaker party, in this case the Forest Panchayat. The Panchayat is supposed to hand over to the local Government the excess remaining over after its expenditure has been provided for. "There is a feeling," says Mr. PANTULU, "that those assessments are in many cases excessive and in the process of their periodical revision at intervals of three years and sometimes annually, even the benefits arising from the improvements made to the forests by the panchayats are taxed and appropriated by the Government." Another factor is 'the uncertainties and delays connected with the granting of leases' The uncertainty of the lease amounts, their frequent revision at short intervals, their levy in advance and other features connected with the assessments are calculated, in Mr. Pantulu's opinion, to destroy all incentive to corporate action for the improvements of the forests. "The benefits of all improvements made by the panchayats should be secured to the villagers. The profit motive on the part of the Government which seems to enter into the transactions, ought to be eliminated and the levy made by the Government must be a nominal one, collected in easy and convenient instalments and must not be frequently enhanced." This indictment appears to be borne out by the fact that the Government revenue now derived from these areas is considerably larger than its income in pre-panchayat days—a situation issued by the Government of Madras forty years ago denying the suggestion that the Forest Act "is to be worked for the profit of the Government rather than for the benefit of the people."

Tadepalli Gudem Taluk Panchayat Conference.

The Tadepalli Gudem Taluk Panchayats, West Godavari District, met in Conference on the 23rd November last at Badampudi, M. R. Ry., P. Peddiraju Garu, B.A., B.L., President, District Board, presided.

The Presidential Address laid very great stress upon the full autonomy that obtained in Ancient Indian Village Polity. The Village Panchayat was the fountain source of government. The Panchayats to-day were Panchayats enjoying some small delegated Powers. He said, however, that we must congratulate ourselves that some attempt was being made to rehabilitate the Panchayat. He took the audience minutely through the main details of the Old Panchayats Act and the new Amended Local Boards Act. He was, on the whole, of opinion that the Village Panchayats had better provisions enacted for them in the new environment. He maintained that financially the Panchayats had gained, pointing out the several sources of income now at their disposal. He pleaded, however, that the Panchayats should certainly have a simpler administrative machinery. He regretted that hitherto prominent men had not worked at Panchayats and hoped matters would improve.

He concluded as follows:

"If the panchayats bestir themselves and prove their efficiency, there are several benevolent provisions in the statute whereby the Government can transfer to the panchayat several powers which are conducive to the well being of rural population. India is already awake and is pressing for Self-Government and you, villagers, on your part, must rise from slumber and agitate for more powers. If you, by your actions, prove that you are worthy of taking responsibilities I am sure Government will gladly surrender most of their powers and you can establish village Republics.

The salvation lies in your hands. Arise and awake or be for ever fallen."

The Conference then passed resolutions on the following subjects:—

- (1) The return to the provisions of the Panchayat's Act in regard to the simplicity of keeping of accounts.
- (2) Handing over of Cattle Pounds to Panchayats where Panchayats ask for it.
- (3) Necessity of Government meeting 2/3rd cost of survey of village streets where the Panchayat is prepared to bear one third.
- (4) The necessity for change in law so as to allow a representative of the Taluk Panchayats to be added to the Rural Development Committee.
- (5) The need to start Panchayats in Villages and hand over Porambores, grazing grounds, topes etc., to them.
- (6) Requesting Taluk Boards to contribute, for the year, one-fifth of estimated cost of works carried out by Panchayats.

Inclusion of Panchayats within the Scope of Local Boards Act.

M. R. RV, M. AUDIKESAVULU NAIDU GARU,

(President, Cheyyar Taluk Board.)

I am only concerned now whether there is any scope for the development of panchayats under the present amended act. This is one of the Local Boards which has developed panchayats to the utmost extent and I hope I will not be regarded as one who is standing against its development if I offer a few criticisms on the difficulty in working out the Act.

The old village panchayats Act created a simple administrative machinery which, an average ryot, unacquainted with the technicalities of Western local Self-Government could administer fairly well. This has been done away with under the present Act. A Panchayatdar has to study and understand the implications of the numerous sections of the Act, rules and regulations framed thereunder, and correctly administer them, failing which, he renders himself liable to surcharge or suits. The high expenditure incurred by Union Boards on establishment is necessitated on account of the complex nature of the system which they are required to administer rendering the spending power of such Boards on objects of utility less. This is exactly what has been created in the case of panchayats also. It is for this reason also that the tax-payers resisted the attempt of introducing the provisions of the Local Boards Act in any village and in some cases caused the abolition of such Union Boards by "No Tax Campaign". I feel therefore doubtful whether the villagers would welcome the act in its present shape.

The inducement held out that the panchayats may share the 3 pies cess out of the Taluk Board funds may not be much as it will amount to very little in many villages and will only be just sufficient perhaps to pay a little extra to a school master. On the other hand the panchayats are able to realise that, with the break-down in the finance of the Taluk Board, they would lose the benefit of the services which it has been rendering till now. As a matter of fact this Taluk Board has to transfer Rs. 16,000 to the 300 Panchayats constituted and this means the reduction of services to this extent, which cannot be undertaken either by the District Board or the Panchayats concerned.

The taxes levied by the Village panchayats under the old act were treated as though they were arrears of land revenue and collected through the village head-men. This wholesome provision is absent in the new

Circulars.

REGISTRAR GENERAL OF PANCHAYATS.

CIRCULAR MEMO NO. 95, DATED 22ND OCTOBER 1930.

Sub:—Equipment grants—Sanction of for V. P. Schools—orders of Government communicated.

An Government have refused any grants for the purpose of equipments this year owing to financial stringency panchayats are informed that they will have to make their own arrangements to provide their schools with the necessary articles of equipment. This office Circular No. 87 of 30 is cancelled.

2. This order applies both to newly sanctioned schools, and those which failed to draw grant in time last year.

Continued from the previous page.

act; consequently, the collections have to be made by paid servants of the panchayats. This means additional unnecessary cost.

Moneys lost, wasted or mis-appropriated cannot be recovered by a summary procedure but the offender has to be prosecuted which means endless trouble in a village.

The functions like the revival of the ancient services such as nirgatties, carpenter, black-smith, etc., control of communal lands and forests, regulation of water from irrigation channels and the like, kudimaramath work, protection of village and standing crops by the village Police (Thalayaries) and similar functions of this nature are likely to be missed in working the act, as the underlying policy of the act is the development of Local Self Government in the sense in which these Local Bodies are performing from eighteen eighties. I know the scope has been given in the amended act also to carry on those functions but my fear is they are likely to be ignored.

The idea of merging the Forest, and Irrigation panchayats in the village panchayat Act has been made impossible as the entire scope of the village administration proposed to be carried out under the Local Boards Act has been limited to civic activities.

Whatever may be the present shape of the act, those who are interested in the development of panchayats should have a clear conception of what the ancient panchayat was and how far the provisions of the present act may be pressed into service to revive that ancient village life.

THE VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

CIRCULAR No. 96, DATED 24 10 1930.

Please note that from April of next year any grants for panchayat works will be made through the District Village Development Committee constituted under the Amended Local Boards Act. If the panchayat wishes to be certain of drawing grants already sanctioned, it should complete the work by the end of February 1931. I can give no assurance that the Village Development Committee will give grants for incomplete works sanctioned by the Registrar-General although they will be recommended to do so. Estimates received during the current year for which it has not been possible to sanction grants will be forwarded to the District Committee and intimation given to the panchayats concerned. This Committee will consist of the District Board President and Taluk Board Presidents and its fund will consist of 3 pies (1/6th) of the land cess, such moneys as the District and Taluk Boards can spare from their general funds and all grants made by Government for development of village communications, water-supply and sanitation for both panchayat and non-panchayat areas. It is probable that none of the Government grants will be specially earmarked for panchayats but the sum total of the grants to the District Committees will be partly regulated according to the expenditure for each district of panchayat grants drawn through the Registrar-General.

CIRCULAR No. 97 DATED 6-12-30.

In Circular No. 73 published at page 292 of the Village Panchayat Bulletin for December 1929, the Panchayats were informed about the three different kinds of iron ploughs available for purchase for demonstration purposes. The Director of Agriculture states that he has been successful in selecting a suitable type of medium weight plough—Cooper plough No. 26 - which can be used in place of the "Monsoon type" and can be had at Rs. 12 each, iron parts only, from the depots of the Agricultural Department. If the Panchayats would buy them by the case containing 8 ploughs each the cost per plough will be reduced to Rs. 11-8-0. Arrangements for demonstration will be made wherever necessary. These Cooper ploughs No. 26, are much cheaper than 'Jai' and Chattanooga' and other medium weight ploughs that are now sold in the market at prices varying from Rs. 20 and upwards.

The Honorary Organizers are requested to make this known to Village Panchayats. Presidents of Panchayats who are agreeable to purchase this type of plough from their funds may put themselves in direct communication with the Director of Agriculture.

CIRCULARS

CIRCULAR No. 98 DATED 6-12-30.

In G. O. No. 702-I dated 2nd July 1926, the Government were pleased to extend the concession of the grant of the right to cut grass and enjoy usufructs of trees and the right to appropriate income from sale proceeds of wind fallen and withered trees on canal and drain porambokes in charge of the Public Works Department to all Panchayats in East Godavari and West Godavari and Kistna Districts subject to the condition that the panchayats pay annually to the Government a sum equal to the average annual revenue, realised during the five years ending with 1924-25 and that they conform to the usual conditions imposed on individual lessees. It has come to the notice of the undersigned that some of the panchayats that were availing themselves of the concession have refused to do so without adequate notice when the yield anticipated is poor. From the wording of the G. O. the concession was that arrangement once accepted by a panchayat was intended to be a permanent one and the panchayat's liability continues annually unless it gives adequate notice that it wishes to terminate the arrangement. Once this is done the panchayat will not be entitled to a renewal of the concession. Panchayats are allowed to take the lease of the porambokes at a five years' average so as to allow for good and bad years and they cannot expect to be allowed to play fast and loose at their pleasure.

2. The right to enjoy usufruct of windfallen and dead trees only accrues to panchayats when they have taken over under the above G. O. the porambokes on which such trees stand.

CIRCULAR No. 99, DATED 6-12-'30.

SUB:—*Taxes of Levy Village Panchayats—Procedure under the Local Boards Act as amended by Act XI of 1930—Instructions issued.*

With the approval of the Registrar-General the Village Panchayats were till now levying the following taxes and fees:—

- (1) Under Section 26(1) of the Madras Village Panchayat Act, 1920.
 - (a) a yearly tax on the capital value of buildings situated in the village;
 - (b) a yearly tax on certain callings, trades, and professions exercised in the village.

- (2) Under Section 26(2)

Any other miscellaneous tax or fee, like the family tax for specific purposes, kudimaramath fee etc., which the Panchayat found it convenient or suitable to the village community.

2. The Madras Village Panchayat Act, 1920, has been repealed and the provisions of the Madras Local Boards Act, 1920, as amended by Act XI, 1930, now govern Panchayats. Under the latter Act, the Panchayats can only levy a general profession tax on all persons exercising a trade, calling or profession in the Village Panchayat area without reference to any specific calling or trade as was hitherto and permissible under the repealed Madras Village Panchayat Act. The minimum taxable half-yearly income is Rs. 150 and the Panchayat should assess persons to the profession tax on the basis of the income subject to the maximum half-yearly rates prescribed in Rule 9 (1) of Schedule IV to the Local Boards

Act as amended and submit proposals to the District Board concerned for sanction. The District Board may under Section III of the Act exempt any specific class like the Agriculturists from the levy and the Panchayats may also suggest exemptions.

3. *House tax and Miscellaneous taxes.*—The proposals for the levy of house tax (from Panchayats not previously Union Boards) and other miscellaneous taxes should be submitted to the Inspector of Local Boards for sanction under Section 75 (2) (a) of the Local Boards Act as amended. Panchayats should assess houses for the purpose of house tax either on their capital or their annual value, but not on any other principle. In rural areas it is always convenient for Panchayats to assess houses on their capital value and in doing so, such a progressive rate of half-yearly tax should be suggested as indicated below, and the houses should be divided into not less than six classes.

On capital value of houses.	Rate per half year.
Valuation, Rs. 100—Rs. 200.	X
Rs. 201—Rs. 300.	Y
Rs. 301—Rs. 400.	Z, and so on.

Panchayats which were previously Union Boards have to get their house-tax, should they wish to keep it on, revalidated by the District Board from 1-4-31. In these areas it may be noted that the District Board has power to determine compulsorily the levy of a house-tax. Proposals for the levy of other miscellaneous taxes may be submitted as before observing the formalities prescribed under the Village Panchayat Act till fresh rules, if any, are prescribed.

4. Under the transitional provisions and orders of Government under Rule 10 thereof taxation already sanctioned under the Village Panchayat Act remains in force as follows:—

(a) House tax RP 31-3-31.

(b) Taxes on callings, trade etc., till 31-3-31.

(c) Miscellaneous taxes only, to 26-8-30, when the New Act came into force, since there is no provision in the Act for their being carried on other than by fresh sanction under Section 75 (2).

Therefore, Panchayats wishing to validate these taxes should apply at once to the Inspector of Local Boards. Where liability for such taxes was incurred before 26-8-30 the Panchayat can still collect arrears on the authority of Section 8 (d) of the General Clauses Act. By liability is meant inclusion in an assessment list, or receipt of a demand for an ascertained sum, e.g., tax on animals or commodities or kudimaramath fees, where the amount due by each tax-payer has been fixed before 26-8-30. On the other hand octroi duties or mahimai on commodities collectable from day to day per transaction cannot be enforced after 26-8-30 without revalidation.

5. Method of notification of sanctioned taxes will be intimated later, but it will probably be by tom-tom in the village and posting on the Panchayat, Taluk Board and District Board Office notice boards.

True Extract of the Proceedings of the Sub-District Panchayat Committee, Namakal, of its General Body Meeting held at 12 noon in the Board Girls' School, Namakal on the 30th November, 1930.

Present: THIRTY ONE PANCHAYATS.

SIXTY SEVEN MEMBERS.

Resolution No. 1.—It was proposed by M.R.Ry. Sellappa Gounder and seconded by M.R.Ry. Kandasamy Gounder Avargal, that M.R.Ry., Sivasamba Iyer Avargal, be the Chairman of this meeting. (Carried unanimously.)

Resolution No. 2.—The following rules of this committee were passed unanimously after bringing the old rules in consonance with the new Local Boards' Act Section 30.

RULES.

1. **Name.**—Namakal Sub-District Panchayats Committee.

2. **Jurisdiction.**—Rasipur and Namakal Taluks (i.e., Namakal Taluk Board area or the Namakal Revenue Division).

3. **Objects.**

- (1) To do propaganda work, to spread the Panchayat movement in accordance with the Madras Local Boards Act XI of 1930 and to start new Panchayats.
- (2) With the object of improving Panchayats, to supervise their working and to keep them in proper order.
- (3) To guide and inspect the Panchayats.
- (4) To obtain sanction for the works undertaken by them and to attend to their execution and supervision.
- (5) To carry out, through joint committees, works in which more Panchayats than one are interested.
- (6) To safeguard the rights and uphold the ideals of the Panchayats.
- (7) To arrange for the holding of conferences and public meetings accompanied by magic lantern lectures for the development of Panchayats; for the distribution of literature for the progress of Panchayats.
- (8) To do all things necessary for the betterment of Panchayats and orderly transaction of business at their meetings.
- (9) To conduct other schemes conducive to village reconstruction and improvement of the villages as stated in Schedule V, I A clauses (1) and (2) of the Madras Local Board's Act XI of 1930.

(d) The Chairman shall ordinarily preside over all the meetings of the committee and in his absence, the Vice-chairman shall preside. If both are absent, the Secretary shall propose one of the members present to take the chair. If the resolution is carried, the meeting may proceed.

(e) Who so, is absent for three consecutive meetings, in spite of the notices of the meetings having been served upon him shall *ipso facto* cease to be a member, of the respective committee. But he can be reinstated by the Committee on the proposal of the Secretary on sufficient grounds.

12. The Duties and Functions of the Executive Committee:—

(a) Every member of the Executive Committee with the exception of the Secretary will be entrusted with the supervision over the Panchayats in one firka. He will either singly or with other members supervise the Panchayats under his control and he shall submit report at periodical intervals.

(b) The Secretary and any staff appointed by the Executive Committee for the purpose, have powers to inspect on behalf of the committee whether the Panchayats are conducted on right lines and also convene special meetings of Panchayats and instruct them on their immediate wants. They have powers to convene these meetings without the prescribed notice. But care should be taken that no other business other than that for which it was called is transacted at these meetings.

13. Resolutions regarding Works Etc.—The Executive Committee shall ordinarily dispose of all the work in the meetings. In extraordinary circumstances, they may delegate their powers to a committee consisting of not more than three members.

14. Expenditure on Office Establishment Etc.—(a) Any pointment exceeding Rs. 10 and for not more than a month shall be proved by the Executive.

(b) The Staff will work under the immediate supervision of the Secretary. The Secretary is empowered to fine his subordinates to the extent of Rs. 2 and suspend them from work till the next meeting of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee can dispense with the services of any of the subordinates without any previous notice or dismiss any one from its service. The dismissed person may appeal to the General Body.

15. Honorary Work.—The members of the Executive Committee all work honorarily without any remuneration. But if they have to

travel over long distances on the Committee's business at his own discretion can spend at the travelling allowance. Likewise, the Secretary can spend at the discretion for other expenditure to an extent of Rs. 5 only.

16. Disputes.—Should differences arise between the rules of the Committee and the Village Panchayat rules, the rules of the Committee shall prevail.

17. Amendments of the Rules.—The rules of the Committee can be amended only on the votes of a two-thirds majority present at a General Body Meeting.

18. Notice of Meetings.—Except in cases of emergency, three clear days' written notice should be given previously as to the date, hour and place of the meetings and the business that is to be transacted thereat. This will apply to all General Body Meetings, Executive Committee Meetings and Sub-committee meetings. A copy of the proceedings of any of these meetings may be sent to any publication according to the Secretary's discretion.

19. Audit.—The General Body shall elect three of its members at the beginning of the year as the Audit Committee. They shall audit the accounts frequently and submit a report once a year.

20. No action shall lie in any court in connection with the matters pertaining to this committee three years after the date when the cause of action arose.

OTHER RESOLUTIONS.

III.—The following gentlemen have been co-opted as members of the General Body under Section 30 (2) Madras Act XI of 1930 according to the new rules:—

1. M.R.Ry. T. P. Subramania Kandar Avargal.
2. „ T. Rama Rao Avargal.
3. „ Rao Sahib N. R. Venkatarama Iyer Avargal.
4. „ Diwan Bahadur R. Ramachandra Rao, C.S.I.

IV.—M. R. Ry., Rao Sahib N. R. Venkatarama Iyer Avl., has been elected as Secretary under the new rules. The Executive will elect the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman.

V.—The Audit Committee is requested to send their report after auditing the accounts soon.

VI.—The Accounts of Income and Expenditure from 20-4-1930 to 30-11-1930 were read and accepted. The balance on this date is Rs. 306-2-10.

