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The Indian Science Congress.

The Indian Science Congress, organised after the model of the British Association for the Advancement of Science by the Asiatic Society of Bengal for the second time, was held in January 1915 in the Presidency College, Madras. Judging from the large attendance of delegates who had come from all parts of India, the quality of the addresses and papers read and the nature of discussions, it may be said that the Indian Congress will not take long to reach the ideal of the British Association, and great credit is due, for the success of the Congress, to the organising committee, especially the President, Surgeon General W. B. Bannerman and the Secretary, Professor J. L. Simonsen.

The Congress was welcomed to Madras by His Excellency the Governor, and Surgeon General Bannerman

delivered the Presidential address, his theme being Biological Research with special reference to medicine, a subject with which he was perfectly at home, having been connected with researches on the plague bacillus and inoculation, from the year 1896 when plague first came into India. Agriculture and Applied Sciences, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Geology and Ethnography were the different sections and they were presided over by eminent scientists.

The existence of an Agricultural section in the Science Congress was not generally known and this was unhappily the cause of the remark which His Excellency made that there were few Indians who were to read papers in the Agricultural section. All the same the Agricultural Department of Madras was fairly well represented, the Director of Agriculture, 4 or 5 gazetted officers and half a dozen assistants being present. Dr. H. H. Mann, Principal of the Poona Agricultural College presided over the section of Agriculture and Applied Sciences and delivered an interesting address on "the lines of development of Indian Agriculture." To some people who think that agriculture is "simply an art, a trade, a profession, an industry, call it what you will, which involves the application of a number of Sciences", a separate Agricultural section in the Science Congress may be an anomaly. But the British Association has set the precedent within recent years by having a separate Agricultural section, and we believe that, in future, this section will take the foremost place in the Congress, as there are so many Agricultural

Research Specialists all over India. With his previous vast experience as Scientific officer to the Tea Planters' Association in Northern India and as Principal of the Agricultural College and Agricultural Chemist of Bombay, and with his intimate knowledge of the economic conditions of the people, especially of Bombay, Dr. Mann fulfilled the duties of the first Vice-President of the section in an eminent manner and his sympathetic address was characteristic of the man. He pleaded that extensive system of agriculture, involving little capital and bounded by the conservatism of the Indian cultivator on one side and climatic and other problems over which he has no control on the other, should gradually give place to a more scientific and intensive farming. He drew particular attention to the urgent need for increasing underground sources of water by the opening of artesian and subartesian supplies, the ryot's greatest trouble being the fickle monsoon.

Mr. Howlett, Imperial Pathological Entomologist, Pusa read a paper on "Chemical Entomology" in which he explained that insects could easily be influenced by the sense of smell and illustrated, with the help of lantern slides, flies being attracted to pieces of paper which had the faintest trace of chemicals like iso-valeraldehyde or eugenol.

Dr. L. C. Coleman of Bangalore and his Mycology Assistant, Mr. Venkata Rao were responsible for 2 papers on the *Black Rot of Coffee* and the *Koleroga of the Arecanut Palm*.

In the Botany Section, Dr. C. A. Barber, Government Sugarcane Expert, was the Vice-President. Equally with Dr. Mann, he has an intimate knowledge of India. He is the oldest Botanist in Southern India and has seen more service than any other Agricultural officer in Madras. The Subject he chose for his address was "Sugar and Sugarcane", which he treated in his usual masterly style, going into a historical review of the subject, the conflict between sugarcane and sugar beet, the diseases of sugarcane and the lines on which sugarcane is proposed to be improved at the Chettipalayam Cane Breeding Station. Dr. Barber stated that he had already succeeded in raising 40,000 seedlings of cane which are being rigorously selected, with due reference to chemical, botanical or agricultural merits or defects.

A number of papers were contributed to this section, and, in fact, this was one of the best attended and longest sitting. Of these, may be mentioned "Some of the Mendelian characters of the Paddy Plant" by Mr. F. R. Parnell, Government Economic Botanist, which was profusely illustrated with charts, "The Depressed Habit of Sugarcane" by Mr. T. S. Venkataraman, illustrated by lantern slides and the "Flora of Madras" by Mr. C. Tadulingam who has done extensive work in Systematic Botany in Madras.

In the Geology section, Mr. M. R. Ramaswami Sivan read a paper on the "Possibilities of developing a number of Industries in the Cretaceous Formation in

Trichinopoly," with the help of specimens gathered in the locality.

Although not connected with Agriculture, a description of the work of the Science Congress will be incomplete without a reference to Mr. C. V. Raman who presided over the Physics section and delivered the Sir Subramania Aiyar University Lecture on his original researches in Acoustics.

The visit to the newly established Madras Water Works under the superintendence of Mr. J. W. Maddely, the hospitality of His Excellency the Governor at the garden party at the Government House and the final meeting and leave taking in the spacious Bungalow of Surgeon General Bannerman, brought the scientists into closer touch than the learned papers and discussions would have done by themselves; and many is the friendship which has been formed between co-workers in different parts of the country.

A New Rice Pest.

The old proverb 'There is many a slip between the cup and the lip' comes home to none so truly and painfully truly as to the poor cultivator. One rain too little, one rain too much, one contrary wind when the ears are filling, a disease to the plant as it grows, an unwelcome shower when the harvest is ripe for the sickle, all or any of these is enough to dash down the cup of prosperity. The inevitable natural agencies being left aside, attempts are now being made to prevent or remedy the diseases prevalent, with some success. There are as many diseases in the