

on account of low prices and low yield. That the yield is lower than what was originally fixed at the time of settlement of 1893 which has been adopted at the settlement of 1923 is a fact which can be proved beyond doubt. The gross yield fixed at 1893 may have been fixed on a correct basis: the causes for the lower yield should be found out by experts of Government after verifying my statement if needed. These are however matters which should be put forth elsewhere than in a Government College function presided over by the highest Revenue Official of Government.

### Discussion.

*The President* referred to the forthcoming Bill in the Legislative Council, and observed that the Agriculturist's Loans' Act would go a long way to relieve indebtedness. The point according to him was that with the finances of the Government limited, a larger number of smaller debtors could be benefitted with the finances available, and this was a more desirable thing than helping the bigger debtors.

*Rao Bahadur K. S. Venkatarama Iyer* said that he only wanted the restrictions under the Mortgage loan to be slightly relaxed. He also suggested that Government might raise a loan and then finance the bigger debtors and thus in addition to helping them, might also earn a profit.

*Mr. Sanderson* speaking of his experience in a village in Coimbatore District, remarked that barring half a dozen people who had debts of Rs. 1000 and more all the debtors in the villages were those with debts of 500 and less, and in his opinion, they were the people in need of immediate relief.

## AGRICULTURE AS A PRACTICAL PROPOSITION

BY C. S. NAMASIVAYAM PILLAY

The great Tamil sage Thiruvalluvar, in his immortal couplets called *Thirukural* has said

“ சுழன்று மேர்ப்பின்ன துடை மதனா  
உழந்து முழுவே தலை ”

meaning

“ The world revolves behind the plough, hence  
Ploughing is foremost in spite of difficulties.”

The truth of this statement was well realised by the industrial nations of the West a short while ago. During the last two centuries, western countries vied with one another in industrialising themselves. Industries sprang up in quick succession, resulting in the concentration of population in the cities. Villages were deserted. As a natural consequence, most of the lands had to remain fallow for want of cultivators. These industrialised countries were getting their supplies of food from foreign countries. But when communications were interrupted during the War, these countries were threatened with starvation, as local production was absolutely insufficient for their needs. Then they began to raise the cry of 'back agriculture.' They realised that it was necessary to give the most prominent place to agriculture in all their national enterprises.

The slogan of "back to the village" is repeated in our country also from almost every platform by almost all men of position, culture and influence. It is declared to be the only remedy for all the ills of our country. 'Back to agriculture' is more easily said than done. Precept without being preceded or followed by example is never valued by anybody in any clime. The advice is generally given by men in high position, whose only qualification for giving it is their eminence in life, and probably their possession of extensive areas of lands. If an enquiry were made, it would be found that every inch of their land is either leased out to others to cultivate, or large portions of it lie waste for want of a husbandman. If agriculture is really profitable, have they taken up to agriculture themselves, or at least have they made their sons to take up to agriculture? If not, why not? Have they at least given any practical help to any one to take up to farming? To all appearances, it seems that the advice is intended to be followed only by others and not by themselves.

Now, let us examine how far this criticism is justifiable. To quote again from Thiruvalluvar,

“ இவ் பெண் றசை இ யிருப்பா யோக்காணி  
 னிலெமன் றி நல்லா னாகும் ”.

meaning

“ Seeing one idling for want of work  
 The good woman called land laughs ”.

To explain more fully, 'when a man says that he has been idle for want of an occupation, the good woman called 'land'. laughs at him. Why! Because it is she who gave birth to him and she is always there to give food to any number of her children. When a child is in need of milk, it has only to go to the mother to be fed with milk. When a man complains of starvation for want of occupation, it looks as though he has forgotten the existence of the mother 'Earth' who naturally laughs at the extreme ignorance of the man.

There are hundreds and thousands of acres of land lying idle without anybody to tap their resources. These are either assessed waste lands of Government or proprietary waste lands. In one of the most fertile taluks of the Presidency, viz., Periyakulam taluk, there are over 20,000 acres of assessed waste lands. It is the richest taluk in the Madura district. It is the taluk where the famous Cumbum valley is situated. It has the benefit of both the monsoons. Its climate is very salubrious. And yet such a huge area is lying waste, not to speak of the proprietary waste lands. I believe that almost every taluk in the Presidency has a similar large area under waste. We may therefore safely take it that land is available for those who care to take it up. He who cares can get an assignment of Government waste lands, or purchase then from those who might part with them for a consideration or can take them on lease from those who own them.

The second of the two things necessary to start a farm, is, capital. In this connection, it is necessary to point out that parents would be well advised to take cognizance of this problem before they invest money on their children's education. If education is intended purely to attain culture, cost does not certainly count. It has to be acquired at any cost. But if education is intended to be only a means to a living, then certainly the cost of education should have a proportion to the results of the education on the practical side. Also it should have a bearing on the ability of the parent to pay. There have been cases where the parents spend their all on the education of their children. They exhaust themselves so much that they do not have anything to give their children a start in life. There have been cases where graduates in law have to accept a salary of Rs. 15, merely for want of capital to set up practice or to sustain themselves till they secure a suitable job. Hence the parents have to take care that there is something with them, as far as practicable, to enable their children to make a start in life. Thus, those educated young men who can rely on paternal property can easily find their capital. But in most cases, parents are unable to set apart any capital in spite of their best efforts. For it may be that his income is too poor to set apart anything or that he has too large a family to support. How can these young men secure the necessary capital? Capital in these days seems to fight shy of agriculture. In ancient days money-lending was not a profitable business, because it was considered to be a crime to collect heavy rate of interest. Similarly, trade also was not quite so profitable. For, it was considered also a crime to sell at more than a reasonable price, irrespective of the demand and supply. Since there is no such restraint now on money-lending or trade, money flows to these two channels, which give a much easier and quicker return than agriculture. But such of the money lenders as lend money to agriculturists do so only at usurious rate of interest. It is a notorious fact that the Rural Co-operative Credit Societies which were intended to finance the agriculturist really work as a mill stone round his neck, rather than as a buoy to help him out of deep waters. For they issue mostly short-term loans which cannot serve as working capital for investment in agriculture. These short term loans on the other hand tempt the agriculturist, to incur expenditure without enabling him to repay the loan easily. Coming to the much advertised Land Mortgage Banks, it appears that only the wealthy can approach it. For, in practice, one has to mortgage Rs. 10,000 worth of property to enable him to obtain a loan of Rs. 1000. Added to this, the ordeals one has to undergo before and after obtaining a loan would forbid any reasonable man from entangling himself in the meshes of those rules. The Land Mortgage banks help only the rich landed proprietors and not the poor agriculturists who are trying to make a living out of waste land. In fact, the Land Mortgage Banks appear to have been conceived more as a means of safe investment of



overflow capital than to help the needy agriculturist. By this I do not mean to say that the interest of the investors should be neglected. I realise that for the successful working of the bank, it has to create confidence in the mind of the investors. My only complaint is that an equal attention has not been paid to relieve the distress of the agriculturists. Coming to the State Bank, viz., the Imperial Bank, agriculture is out of the purview of its operations, except probably the plantations on the hills. Coming next to the Government loans, issued under the *Takkavi* Loan Rules, it is true that the rules have been framed in the most liberal spirit. Worked in the proper spirit they ought to give a good deal of relief to the agriculturist. But unfortunately the Government machinery is such that in the actual working, it helps only a negligible few.

This is the actual state of affairs at present. Let us now examine whether, given the necessary land and capital, agriculture can be a good means of livelihood for the educated unemployed. Before proceeding to examine the value of agriculture as a profession for the educated unemployed it would be interesting to find out how far other walks of life generally chosen by them at present, do really help them. They are (1) the legal and medical professions (2) the Government service (3) Local Board service and service under similar quasi-Government institutions. Taking the legal and medical professions, it has to be admitted that with a few exceptions these really form good sources of income to the educated. But there is a limit to the number of men who can enter these professions. Hence these can afford employment only to the fortunate few. The Government and Local Board Services, provide good income to those who occupy the upper berths which can necessarily be only be given to a few. The vast majority of those who enter these services, do not have the necessary means to put by something for even their ordinary expenses, such as marriage and education of their children. In most cases, men in these Services find it difficult even to make both ends meet. Generally, they are able to pull on so long as they are alive. In the event of their death, the condition of their wives and children becomes most pitiable. Having been in service, they have become accustomed to an artificial life, which would neither permit them to adopt the simplicity of the farmer nor would it give them enough courage to brave the situation. The children suddenly find themselves left all alone to their own resources with nothing to help them. They find themselves both unwilling to go to the village and unfit also to lead a village life. They have lost all touch with the village. They have naturally to find out some means of livelihood in the town itself, however low may be the income. They naturally curse their parents for not having left enough property, to enable them to live in the same comfort as they did during the life time of their parents. It is true that there are some parents who insure their lives, so that on their death their children get

something. But this does not go very far to help them. An ordinary member of any of these services cannot insure for more than Rs. 5000. If he has half a dozen children, this Rs. 5000 is very small indeed to be of much help to them. Thus it will be seen that the vast majority of the educated men have to go without making a decent provision for their children.

Let us now see whether agriculture offers them a better prospect. If we suppose that an average man in service gets an income of Rs. 150 and retires on a pension of Rs. 75/-, what would be the requirements for a farming profession to obtain the same income? From the statistics available at the various Government farms, it may be computed that the average net income from an acre of garden land is Rs. 100/- even after allowing a margin for all contingencies, like insect and fungus attack, unfavourable seasonal conditions etc.

Thus to enable one to obtain the same income as in Government service, one has to do 20 acres of garden farming. But this is only a very modest estimate. By intensive farming and adopting prudent methods of management and marketing, it is possible to obtain the same income from 10 acres of garden. Instances are not wanting where an acre of land has been made to yield a thousand rupees. But leaving alone these phenomenal cases, it may be safely assumed that 20 acres of garden land is the normal area required to obtain the required income of Rs. 150 per mensem.

The cost of sinking a well in a dry land under normal conditions would be about Rs. 1000. Purchase of two pairs of cattle, maintenance of cattle for one year, construction of cattle shed, purchase of implements, seeds, manures etc., hiring of labour permanent and casual, construction of a small hut for the owner of the farm, maintenance of the owner till the farm begins to yield and a margin to meet unforeseen expenditure would require a sum of Rs. 2000. Thus with a capital of Rs. 3000 the farming can be started. But the provision here made is only for conversion of 10 acres into a garden. The remaining 10 acres have to be brought under garden cultivation only from the income obtained from the first 10 acres. It would take 7 to 10 years to bring the whole area under garden cultivation. With a capital of Rs. 5000 the whole area can be brought under good yielding garden conditions within 3 to 5 years. Thus in any case, after 10 years, the income from the farm is Rs. 150 per mensem. Here I wish to point out, that while a man in service reaches an income of Rs. 150 only during the closing years of his service, the man taking to farming gets that income within 7 years of starting his work. But the more important point to be mentioned is the fact that while a man in service drawing a salary of Rs. 150 at the close of his service and retiring on a pension of Rs. 75 does not leave anything to his family to inherit, the man who takes to farming leaves a fine garden of 20 acres yielding

a permanent income of Rs. 150 per mensem. In fact, if a man who enters service dies after 10 years, his family becomes penniless, while the family of the educated farmer is well-provided for, by this period.

It will thus be seen, that farming is far more profitable than service and provides a decent income to the educated, quite comparable to other walks of life. In other walks of life also, the average income is not very much more than Rs. 150 per mensem. There also, it is not possible for one to save within 10 years enough capital to purchase 20 acres of garden land. Hence it may safely be asserted that agriculture is the most profitable and the most prudent of all professions, which all educated young men can take up.

Let me also appeal to those who are in a position to do so to find ways and means to help the educated young men with land and money. More than all, it is the Government who ought to find the necessary means to divert the energies of the educated youth into such useful and fruitful channels. But the way to achieving the desired end lies in financing the enterprise. To make a beginning, let such of those alumni of this College who are not absorbed in the Department, or who seek to retire from Service be helped to run a farm of their own. The provision may be extended to other educated men later, if it cannot be done immediately. The matter of spreading the improvements among the ryots would then become an easy problem.

### Discussion.

*Rao Sahib T. V. Rajagopalachariar* endorsing the views of the author, said that he knew of large tracts in South Tinnevely fit for colonisation. In his opinion, three things were necessary for such colonisation. (1) People must take some risks. (2) necessary capital in the beginning must be furnished by the State and (3) a bias towards agriculture should be cultivated, by introducing school gardening as a compulsory subject in schools.

*Rao Bahadur D. Ananda Rao* remarked that the figure of Rs. 100 profit per acre mentioned by the author was rather high-pitched and for his part he would consider even Rs. 50 a very good income. He wished to know, why people do not ask for the land, 20,000 acres of which, according to the author were available in Periyakulam. As regards introducing school gardening as a compulsory subject, he said the idea was not practicable at this juncture, because there were not enough trained teachers to teach the subject.

*Rao Sahib N. S. Kulandaiyami Pillai* mentioned about an area of 40000 acres in Perambalur Taluk, proposals for colonising which, Government were not prepared to finance, on the security of land alone. He instanced the example of Mysore, where loans were advanced to settlers cultivating new lands under departmental supervision and observed the example might be followed in Madras also.

*Rao Bahadur K. S. Venkatarama Aiyar*. Observed that the reason why people do not ask for new lands, are that Government not only assigns such lands, but even assess them, which people are not prepared to pay at least in the beginning.

*Mr. K. Ramiah* referred to the only instance in the Punjab, brought before the meeting of the Board of Agriculture, of successful colonisation. He said conditions in the Punjab and Madras were different, and remarked that in addition

to area being available and cultivable, facilities for cultivating them also must exist.

*Mr. A. K. Annaswamy* said that the impeding factor was not lack of bias, but lack of courage. He appealed to retired officers of the Department to set an example, by colonising.

*Mr. V. Suryanarayana* said that the necessary bias to school children, would be given by employing agricultural graduates in the Educational Department.

## DETERIORATION IN THE QUALITY OF CAMBODIA COTTON

BY V. RAMANATHA IYER,

*Cotton Specialist.*

[Recently the attention of the Department was drawn by the Secretary, Indian Central Cotton Committee, Bombay, to an impression gaining ground among a certain section of cotton trade and mill industry in Bombay that, of late, the quality is steadily deteriorating in Southern cotton, in which Cambodia exported from Tirupur, Coimbatore, and Pollachi has also been mentioned. Such an opinion is rather unexpected in view of the fact that cotton is one of the crops to the improvement of which Government are ever paying the greatest attention. Amongst the several measures taken in this direction during the past 15 years or more, may be enumerated the evolution of high yielding strains like Co. 2, arrangements for the rapid multiplication and sale of the seed of these improved types to the growers, the enacting of the Cotton Pest Act against the spread of cotton pests causing damage to both quality and quantity, the passing of the Cotton Transport Act against the import of inferior cottons into tracts where cottons of quality are being grown, the enforcement of the Cotton Control Act which penalises the grower of low grade cotton in such tracts, the introduction of a Market Act for the securing of better prices, and the insertion of certain clauses in the Cotton Ginning and Pressing Factories Act to prevent inadvertent mixing.

Enquiries were made of the growers, exporters and consumers of this cotton in this Presidency on the alleged fall in quality. An analysis of the replies so far received revealed that the report was not unanimous. Some of the mills declared that they had no reasons to complain, and were, on the other hand satisfied with the gradual improvement noticed.

A study of the past history of Cambodia in Madras shows that the cry of deterioration is nothing new and is being raised periodically. Cambodia cotton entered India about 1905. It came to be grown in commercial quantities in 1910. Deterioration of quality was first expressed in 1914 at the time of the Trade Conference convened by the Government. The cry was repeated before Mackenna's Cotton Committee in 1918 and at the time of the enactment of Cotton Transport