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CONTENTS

	PAGE		PAGE
Editorial	427	Retirement	447
ORIGINAL ARTICLES:			
1. Kole Cultivation of Rice in the Malabar District, with Special Reference to Insect Pests	430	Scheme for Economic Development of Madras Presidency	449
2. The Provincial Economic Council	436	Abstracts	461
3. Rational Feeding of Cattle	439	College News and Notes	462
4. A Preliminary Note on the Effect of Hand Dibbling on some of the Characters in Cotton	443	Weather Review	462
5. The Final Year Students' Tour	444	Departmental Notifications	464

Editorial.

Agricultural Improvement and Madras Provincial Economic Council. We publish elsewhere in this issue of the journal, the recommendations made by the sub-committee appointed by the Madras Provincial Economic Council to examine the question of rural welfare and improvement of agriculture of this Presidency. We are gratified to note that they cover a very wide field and commendably aim at the introduction of efficiency in the existing channels of amelioration of the peasants. We feel sure that they would receive general approval of the discerning public. We appreciate their suggestions with regard to the training of rural guides, opening of a fruit section in all Agricultural Stations, employment of agricultural graduates in every High School, the granting of *takkavi* loans by the Deputy Directors of Agriculture, castration of scrub bulls, utilisation of the underground water resources, training men in fruit preservation, and the introduction of the system of controlled credit in the village co-operative credit societies.

The recommendation of the sub-committee on the growing of crops on the cultivable waste lands of each district does not however commend itself to us. In most of the cases these lands are left in that condition by the villagers on account of their being situated in an

unhealthy locality, or of their unsuitability for cultivation being either too shallow or alkaline to grow crops. It has to be remembered that it is not sound economics, particularly so in days of low prices, to carry out farming on lands which generally allow of a little or no profit to the grower. The fact that the neighbouring farmers are loath to till them is a definite index of their falling under any of the above categories.

It is not known how the subject of training of agricultural graduates in rural economics could have evoked difference of opinion amongst the members of the sub-committee in view of the generally accepted fact that out of all the ancillary sciences essential for success in farming, book-keeping holds a very important place and that a knowledge of economics will be valuable in framing an efficient cropping of a farm.

We feel that sufficient stress has not been laid on the measures leading to the prevention of avoidable waste and maintenance of soil fertility.

The portions dealing with the education of the farmers might with advantage have been more specific and thorough. There is a growing tendency in the villagers to leave ease to the detriment of agricultural production, to migrate to the town on the score of lack of certain amenities, and to waste time and wealth not only on unproductive but also on destructive pursuits. It is incumbent on the part of all workers in the field of rural improvement to direct their attention to changing this mentality and widening the outlook of the present and prospective farmers. We would rather lay greater emphasis on the latter class of the village population. We are glad to read in this connection a recent press communique issued by the Government on the reorganisation of elementary education in this Presidency, and that a committee has been appointed to go into this important problem and suggest measures. Any recommendation on these points, had it been made by an influential and authoritative body like the sub-committee of the Provincial Economic council, would have been most opportune, as that might enable the Government to arrive at correct and speedy decisions. We would recommend, while on this aspect, the adoption of the method said to be pursued with success in Canada and U. S. A. and also in the peasant University of Zagreb in Yugoslavia, with necessary modifications suited to our Presidency. In those countries small plots of ground are allotted to boys in each village school and crops are raised according to the latest methods under the supervision of the expert teachers. Special scientific staff are appointed to give them instruction on agriculture, horticulture, rural economics, public health and personal hygiene. Weekly lectures are given on ethics, poetry, psychology, fine arts with the object of making them appreciate the dignity of labour, value of

truth, ability to look ahead, and efficacy of united action for common good and happiness. We would like to add to the above list that arrangements should be made to instil selfconfidence in their minds by taking them periodically to places of agricultural interest and explaining to them how the various situations are being faced by the cultivators.

The sub-committee of the Provincial Economic Council have felt that their recommendations will not be given effect to on account of financial exigencies. We may suggest in this connection that the Government may be persuaded to introduce measures for diverting a portion of the funds at the disposal of the temple committees, charitable institutions, and insurance companies with a stake in the country, for the noble purpose of ameliorating the condition of the villager whose forbears and relatives have mainly contributed for the establishment of these concerns. We would also urge that the promoters of 'Pinjrapoles' and 'Goshalas' should be encouraged to take up the work of maintaining stud bulls and the rearing of calves of typical breeds of cattle for the benefit of the poor agriculturist—the ultimate carrier of all burdens in the land.

NOTICE

All unemployed old students of the Agricultural College, Coimbatore, can continue to be members of the M. A. S. U. at the concession rate of Rupees Two only, by an application to the Manager, M. A. S. U.