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Editorial.

The Agricultural Graduate. Six decades ago, the first agricultural college in India, was started in Madras, and we recently celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of the event. Madras can justly feel proud of the progress, during this period, of agricultural education, a clear and interesting account of which as presented by the Director of Agriculture at the Conference, is published elsewhere. Sixty years constitute a considerable span in human affairs and in the process of evolution towards attaining the most satisfactory ideal, there have necessarily been considerable changes in the curricula of subjects taught in the college, in the courses and periods of training given, etc., and it is a matter for gratification that the products of the Madras Institute have played no mean part in the development of agricultural research and education in this province.

During this period changes have also been evidenced in the general outlook of agricultural education and the objects with which instructions were imparted in the College. In the words of the Royal Commission on Agriculture "It is plain that a most important function of the Colleges must be to *train the men required by the agricultural departments as without such men the departments must cease to exist*; but the agricultural student who goes back to his own land after passing

through the college course may be, *individually*, every whit as great an asset to his province as is the student who enters the public service. He has obtained the inestimable benefit of a general scientific training and the result should be to make his own land at once a demonstration centre of approved agricultural practice for the neighbourhood and, if he is of that turn of mind, an experimental centre also."

In the earlier years, with the impetus given to the expansion of the Government Agricultural Departments, both on the research and propaganda sides, by Lord Curzon, practically everyone who passed out of the college was absorbed into the Department, thus proving the Royal Commission's first statement. With the expansion of the department however becoming limited after a certain stage, a large number of graduates are without employment. While we might earnestly wish that these men fulfil in every measure the expectations of the Royal Commission by becoming "assets to their Province," it might not be quite legitimate to measure the success of the agricultural education imparted in the college by the number of men taking to private farming.

In the words of the Royal Commission again, it is the want of the correct mentality rather than the kind of instruction given in the college, that is responsible for graduates fighting shy of private agricultural enterprise. In addition to the mentality there is the inevitable feeling that the enterprise is risky because such complicated problems as availability of suitable land, general financial depression, unsatisfactory marketing conditions etc. induce a mood of hesitancy. We found during the discussions at the conference there were differences of opinion about the reliability of the statistics concerning cultivable waste lands available in the province. The scheme of colonisation with agricultural graduates adopted in Mysore has not proved, we are told, a success in spite of the help and impetus given to the scheme by the State. It is no wonder therefore that the prospect of unemployment is sometimes even more tempting than a risky speculation!

The example of the Punjab however, should merit some attention as the scheme of settling graduates on land has proved a success there within a short period. Here the graduates were each assigned 50 acres of land in a block in the newly opened canal areas with also other facilities such as loan of a small capital on easy terms etc. Here the large areas newly brought under irrigation with the development of irrigation projects, (cultivable waste lands in the real sense) have been made available for colonisation. In our own province new irrigation projects are afoot and we suggest that these will serve as better avenues for settling graduates on land than the so called cultivable waste lands about the suitability of which, for a commercial enterprise very little is known. It has often been mentioned that agricultural graduates not coming forward to take up the cultivation of the

Chintaladevi farm which was closed down in 1932 is an example of the lack of enterprise on their part. It is however, very doubtful whether this could in any way be compared to lands assigned in the Punjab or that might be available when the new irrigation projects are opened in Madras.

Here is an opportunity to test whether it is the mentality of the men or the availability of land with suitable facilities that has not induced graduates to take to private farming. If suitable areas under the new irrigation projects are thrown open for colonisation on moderate terms, we are sure, many of the unemployed graduates will rise equal to the occasion and prove themselves worthy of their *alma mater* and wipe off the stigma of inertia attributed to them.

Granting that the conditions for starting private enterprise are not very propitious at present, may we hope that Government will again examine the question of employing the agricultural graduates in other departments of Government which are directly or indirectly connected with the welfare of rural community such as the revenue, irrigation and co-operative departments. The Royal Commission which examined this question were afraid that if opening in other departments were held out as inducements to enter agricultural colleges, the best men from the college may not be available for the agricultural department. The question of unemployment among the agricultural graduates did not exist then and things have changed considerably since the Royal Commission reported. At the present time when every one, Government included, is actively thinking of schemes of rural reconstruction, this question of utilising the services of agricultural graduates who, by their very training are the most suitable for employment in rural uplift schemes, we feel, requires a more sympathetic consideration on the part of Government.