

Rural reconstruction and village uplift are receiving much greater attention to-day from all quarters both official and non-official and there is no better equipped set of men for this work than the graduates of this College. I hope that Your Excellency may keep this in mind and be pleased to utilise the material available whenever opportunities arise.

I find from the records of the Union that there are still many officers and a large number of them, ex-students of this College who have either not joined the Union or have discontinued their membership. I request you all to remember that during the last 25 years it is mostly due to this organisation that it has been made possible for us to come together annually to take part in these functions. I request all these officers to join the Union at once and to give it their full support.

We are fortunate in having a Viceroy who is a Practical Agriculturist. He has set a very good example for others to follow in purchasing and maintaining three breeding bulls for the use of the ryots to improve their cattle. It is to be hoped that many Zamindars and large land owners in this Presidency will follow his example. Breeding bulls alone will not fulfil this, it is essential that the young stock born to these bulls should be well fed and maintained from birth onwards. The female stock produces all our work cattle and milk and it is imperative to see that they are well fed and maintained. The high position of English Livestock to-day is largely due to the efforts and example of our noblemen and landed gentry in the past. These gentlemen devoted a large amount of their time and money to the development of Agriculture and the improvement of Livestock on their home farms and among the tenants in their estates.

I would like here to congratulate the members of the Coimbatore District Board and especially their President The Hon'ble Mr. V. C. Vellingiri Gounder on their efforts in the improvement of Livestock in this District. There are over 60 premium bulls in the District of which the District Board owns about 40 and proposals to place five Scindi and five Delhi Buffalo Bulls to improve the milking qualities of the cows and buffaloes in towns and villages have also been accepted by the District Board this month.

It is to be hoped that Government will see their way to open more cattle breeding stations in the near future so as to improve the various breeds of cattle and buffaloes in the Presidency, especially the Ongole breed, and to distribute more pedigree stock to the villagers.

The Secretary will shortly place before you a detailed report on the working of the Union for the last twelve months.

My colleagues and I trust that your visit here will be useful as well as pleasurable and that you will carry away with you pleasant memories of our Jubilee Celebrations.

### **Agricultural Education in Madras.**

BY RAO BAHADUR D. ANANDA RAO,

*Director of Agriculture.*

*Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

In response to the request of the Working Committee of the Madras Agricultural Students' Union, I have undertaken on this important and unique occasion—the sixtieth year anniversary of the Agricultural Education in this Presidency—to present to you, Sir, a brief account of the past. Ten years ago when the Golden Jubilee was celebrated those who were present on the occasion would have listened to a very succinct account of the history of agriculture in



India traced from a time even prior to the British days. It is therefore, sufficient if I but briefly recall to your minds only the salient points in its history.

Let me for a moment ask you to imagine with me a piece of land entirely sandy in nature infested with prickly pear—free at that time from the molestations of the Cochineal insect—destined to be the site of a Government model farm because it was the only land belonging to Government available in the vicinity of Madras. History tells us that the Superintendent of the farm was a good gardener but with a very superficial knowledge of farming and was assisted by an overseer with no knowledge of farming whatever, one who could neither read nor write but a steady and trustworthy man all the same! Here were laid sixty years ago the foundations for a College of Agriculture—though in the beginning it was only a school located in a granary—for the improvement of agriculture of this Presidency and as in many other things, Madras led the way in being the first in the field in possessing at Saidapet the only College of its kind in all India. The object of that college was chiefly to create a class of men who would go back to the land and carry out the methods of farming on modern lines which was sought to be attained by conducting experiments—varietal, cultural, manurial, and irrigational and by the introduction of new and improved implements and by improving the live stock of the country by conducting experiments in breeding.

The College at Saidapet had a chequered career; it was transferred from the Board of Revenue to the Educational Department, the courses of instructions varied at frequent intervals, candidates were prepared for technical examinations and examined by men who had no knowledge of what was taught at the College or what was required of Agricultural students.

The reorganization of the Agricultural Departments in India in 1904 under the influence of Lord Curzon meant a drastic change in policy. It laid emphasis on the interdependence of research, education and demonstration in the scheme laid out for the amelioration of the condition of the ryot. It at once meant a change in staff, buildings and surroundings as the farm and small laboratories at Saidapet were quite unsuited and inadequate to meet the new requirements of Scientific experts. The curtain was therefore dropped on the scene of activities at Saidapet in 1907 after a course of 31 years and when it was raised again in June 1908 at Coimbatore, we found ourselves established on a broader and more secure foundation.

At Saidapet, it should be mentioned the students were recruited largely from the clerical ranks of the Revenue Department in the hope that these revenue officers after training in the practice and theory of agriculture would diffuse the agricultural knowledge amongst the ryot population. The result was that several students



were too old to profit themselves by the training nor did they go back to land but only as officers of the Revenue department. In spite of the limitations that Saidapet suffered from, there is no denying the fact that it has produced some excellent men who have been the mainstay of the activities of the reorganised department of agriculture. In fact, we have before us men who, faced with new situations rose to the occasion and served the new College loyally, faithfully and efficiently and are enjoying their well-earned physical relaxation. The foundation stone of the new College at Coimbatore was laid by His Excellency Sir Arthur Lawley who declared that the object of the College was the culture of the land and culture of the people who work the land. Since its inception even this college has had its vicissitudes. The single course of 3 years leading to Diploma was dropped in 1914 as it was considered advisable to have two courses—one a thoroughly practical course lasting 2 years known as the Certificate of Proficiency, and another—an extension course of 18 months—called the Diploma course—to a picked few from the successful ones of the short course at the end of which a diploma was awarded. Further changes took place later as a result of the recommendations of a special Committee appointed by Government in 1920 which stated that as the Certificate Course was not popular, the standard of education should be raised in order to attract suitable type of students, and to do so, the College should be affiliated to the University. The Diploma course was, consequently abolished in 1922 and the Certificate Course came to an end in 1925.

The College was affiliated to the University of Madras with effect from the academic year 1920—21 synchronizing with Montford reforms, when you, Sir, were our First Minister for Development. The interest and sympathy you evinced in the welfare of the department during those early years of your connection with us are still green in the memory of those who had the good fortune to come in contact with you.

Intermediate in Science was fixed as the minimum qualification for admission into the College and the first batch of B. Sc. Ags. came out successful in 1923. Several scholarships were awarded in the beginning to attract good students but as the number seeking admission increased, these were restricted to a few.

With the opening of the Freeman Building in 1926 which synchronised with the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Agricultural Education, the number of admissions was raised from 20 to 48 in view of the greater facilities for laboratory and class room accommodation. Free tuition was given till 1932 when the axe of retrenchment rendered it necessary to discover fresh avenues for revenue with the result that students now pay Rs. 120 a year while those belonging to the Native States Rs. 1200 per annum.



The number of graduates that has passed out of the College up-to-date is 344 out of whom 130 are reported to be without employment. As stated already, when the object of the College is to train men to become scientific agriculturists one might well ask why a reference is made to the large number of unemployed graduates. We must, however, face facts. On the one hand, in a poor agricultural country like ours where cultivation is largely in the hands of people who, though experts in their art, have not the wherewithal to spend on permanent and major improvements and who are hard put to it to eke out something by the sweat of their brow, the majority of whom have not yet been influenced by the department to such an extent that it could be said that their general economic condition has been raised and on the other in a country where the educated well-to-do classes have no interest in the land except as a safe investment for their savings and from which class most of our students are drawn, it is perhaps to be expected that the majority of students passing out of the College look forward to appointments in Government or other service.

There is another aspect to this question. The budding lawyer considers it essential to apprentice under a senior before he could stand on his own legs. Similarly, though the agricultural graduate knows the correct methods of farming, he has not when graduating the detailed knowledge of the business side of farming which can be obtained only by experience. He therefore prefers to learn it at the cost of Government. When once he enters service he is caught by its glammers and is loathe to enter the adventurous field of farming. It is therefore in the hands of the agricultural graduates themselves to remedy the defect. How many of the past students of the College who have lands have attempted to undergo training in Government farms or on estates of private gentlemen as honorary workers? I may sound a note of warning. Although there is yet room for the department to expand, there is a limit to it and as years go by and as more graduates become available the country would need more and more experts in modern methods of farming. A time will come when our landed aristocracy and other landowners will take more direct interest in their lands, and would need the assistance of trained men in Agriculture. When there is a demand for such, the department should be in a position to say that not only are there a large number of agricultural graduates available but also men who have gained experience in managing large farms, private or Government. The department will only be too willing to give a helping hand to such as are anxious to supplement their practical training at the College in the way indicated.

Let me now pass on to another aspect of agricultural education. Though it was confined to this one college till 1918 it was felt that there was a need in the districts for schools for sons of labourers



employed in the Agricultural stations in the Presidency. There are only three such schools at Anakapalle, Palur and Coimbatore and one under the control of the District Board at Usilampatti originally intended for Kallar boys. Besides, agricultural middle schools were started in 1922, at Anakapalle and Taliparamba for the sons of landlords but as it was soon found that there was no demand for them they were closed in 1927 and 1932 respectively. Agricultural instruction has also been sought to be imparted in a few schools under the management of missionary bodies but nothing outstanding has been the outcome of these schools so far.

In these days when so much is talked of rural reconstruction it is indeed strange that there are hardly half a dozen schools imparting instruction in agriculture in this Presidency though agriculture has for over 30 years formed a separate subject for examination under the Government Technical Examination scheme and though it has formed an optional subject for the S. S. L. C. examination and has been recognised by the Madras University also as an optional subject for the Intermediate Examination.

However the Government through the suggestion of the Department took another step forward to popularise agricultural education in starting short courses to serve the needs of the sons of well-to-do landowners who are likely to take more than ordinary interest in their lands. They however differ from the old short courses started in 1914 in that the courses are all limited to the cultivation season of the year and that they do not lead to any examination. These were started in 1933 and include courses in Bee-keeping, Dairying, care of animals, malt-making etc., varying in duration from 2 weeks to 9 months. These courses have so far cost Government very little and are reported to be popular judged from the number of applications received but it is too early to pronounce a definite opinion on them. This year the farm management course has been extended to Nandyal and Taliparamba Agricultural Stations as it is felt that Coimbatore cannot cater to the needs of the whole Presidency. It is hoped that if these courses become popular each district possessing an Agricultural station should be able to run similar courses.

So far for the history of agricultural education in this Presidency and the different directions along which attempts are being made to spread it among the masses. Sixty years are but a short period in the history of a nation, and though the achievements are not great, the future is hopeful. This is not the time for despondency. We are in the fortunate position of having a Viceroy who has promised to do all he can to help the lot of the ryot. That he is a gentleman of action is evident from the practical steps he has already taken. There is little doubt that during his tenure of office he would lay the broad foundations for the material prosperity of this Agricultural country



of ours. But in an important matter such as this, to achieve much it cannot rest entirely with one but all those who have the requisite facilities and opportunities should help the cause. I therefore request you, Sir, coming as you do from the farming class, to exert your influence in making the landed aristocracy take a practical interest in the cattle and lands they possess and endeavour their best to improve them.

### The Report of the Managing Committee.

Your Excellency, Ladies & Gentlemen,

The Committee beg to express their sense of deep gratitude to His Excellency Sir K. V. Reddy Naidu Garu for graciously consenting to be in their midst to-day, on this most happy occasion when the Union celebrates the Twenty-fifth year of its existence along with the *Diamond Jubilee* of Agricultural Education in India. The Principal and the Director, have in their speeches referred to the great services rendered by His Excellency to the cause of the agriculturist while he was Minister for Development. The Union most heartily endorses their statements and takes this opportunity to tender its respectful congratulations on his appointment as the Governor of the Madras Presidency. For the Union it is a matter of no small amount of gratification, that one who has been closely associated with Agriculture by tradition and office has been exalted to the highest eminence in the Province. It recalls with pleasure the words uttered by him as President of the Conference in 1923 to the effect that whether as a Minister or member, Agriculture would always be dear to his heart, as he believed that its development was one of the best means of bringing about the uplift of the country. True to his word he has given us a proof of his abiding interest in Agriculture by his presence to-day.

**The Minister.** To the Minister for Public Works the Honourable Mr. P. T. Rajan whom we venture to claim as one of us, the Committee tender their grateful thanks, not only for consenting to preside over this year's Conference but also for the great interest he has been evincing in the affairs of the Union all these years.

**The Madras Agricultural Students' Union.** It is appropriate on an occasion like this to give an account of the birth and growth of the Union and recall with gratitude the labours of the early founders of this institution whose devoted attention in laying its solid foundations has enabled successive committees to build the superstructure of which we are rightly proud.

The Union, as such, was founded in the year 1911 when the First Conference under its auspices was held under the distinguished Presidentship of Mr. M. A. Couchman, I. C. S., the first Director of Agriculture of this Province; though an association of Agricultural Students was in existence as early as 1885 at Saidapet, the Union was organised as the result of a resolution passed at an informal meeting on 14th July 1910 and was primarily intended as an organisation to bring together in a common bond of interest the past students of the Saidapet Institution and the students of the Coimbatore Agricultural College. The objects of the Union, as set down in the memorandum were as follows:—

1. To create an *esprit de corps* among its members.
2. To exchange opinions and experiences in matters agricultural and to make a record of the same,
3. To act as far as possible as a bureau for procuring employment of the members of the Union and the objects were sought to be attained by the annual