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Editorial.

Sugar. Today, sugar has become a primary necessity and "is recognized as a strategic military requirement in wartime furnishing about 13 per cent. of the total energy we obtain from foods". The investigations of numerous chemists, biologists, plant breeders and technologists have made the growing of sugarcane and manufacturing of sugar one of the most efficient industries. In providing sugar at reasonable prices with due regard for a decent living for the sugarcane farmer, the most important part of the task devolves upon the plant-breeder. The continuous procession of varieties of sugarcane that we see emerging from the Coimbatore Sugarcane Breeding Station, amply demonstrates that the cane-breeders are ever alive to meet the challenge of diseases, pests and altered environmental and economic conditions.

We invite the attention of our readers to an article on "Sugar Tangle" in the current issue of the Journal. The author has referred to two important issues that India will have to face in the near future.

The recent expansion in the cultivation of the sugarcane and in the manufacture of sugar has been so rapid that there is an imminent danger of the supplies of sugar over-reaching the Indian demand, creating the complex problem of adjusting sugar supplies to requirements. In this connection attention may be drawn to the system of production-adjustment contracts which prevail in the United States of America, Philippine Islands, Porto Rico and Hawaii. The farmers who curtail the area are paid compensation for the losses consequent on the reduction of the area. The adjustment programme is largely financed through the income from the processing taxes on the industries which in sugar, is one half cent (3 pies) per pound of sugar. It is claimed that the corresponding reduction (one half cent per pound) in the import duty prevented an increase in the cost of sugar to the consumer. It may, however, be pointed out that limitation of production either through competition or co-operation, restricts the employment. In eliminating surplus of goods a surplus of labour and capital is created.

The only other alternative is to export the surplus of sugar with the aid of the subsidies. With the production unchecked, such subsidies involve presenting to foreigners at less than its value. There would then be an ever increasing gap between domestic and world prices. The world has already given clear indications that it would interpose effective barriers to dumping.

In April, the Tariff Board will enquire into the problems of sugar industry. Maximum benefit must accrue to the producer with the imposition of minimum cost on the consumer. Whether this obtains at present or not is a point to be looked into by the Board. When the internal competition is very keen the tariff is generally not effective in maintaining returns to the growers. This is an additional point in favour of limiting the area under cane. In most of the modern countries, the unemployed are supported by the tax-payers and when the consumer expends more for the goods manufactured by the tariff protected industries, he actually pays to maintain the employment and thus prevents the increase among the unemployed.

The interest of the consumers can be protected against excessively high prices, by adjusting the excise duty or the import duty in accordance with the difference between the average wholesale price of sugar and the price based on the fair margin to the grower and the manufacturer.

We are glad to announce that a book on "Livestock of Southern India" by Captain R. W. Littlewood, Deputy Director, Livestock, has been published and is available for sale at Rs. 3-6-0 a copy either from The Superintendent, Government Press, Madras, the Principal Agricultural College & Research Institute, Coimbatore, or any of the Deputy Directors of Agriculture.
