

I wish to close this final contribution by thanking the editorial board for requesting me to write a series of articles on the subject of Tea cultivation and for finding space in the *Madras Agricultural Journal* for my elementary efforts at giving some idea of tea cultivation to those who previously knew nothing of the subject.

The Annamalai University Colonisation Scheme.

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Introduction. In India, agriculture absorbs and provides employment to millions of our people. With a view to find out whether scientific farming would provide a decent income to the educated unemployed, Rao Bahadur Sri. M. R. Ramaswami Sivan, Retired Principal, Agricultural College, Coimbatore, made a special study of the colonisation scheme in progress in the Punjab. He had the opportunity for this study, when he visited Lyallpur. In the Punjab, extensive areas with irrigation facilities are available and such lands were assigned to graduates who were willing to colonize them and make agriculture their profession. The initial assignment of land was on a temporary basis but with the proviso that if the lands were properly cultivated and the colonies were kept in sanitary condition, permanent occupancy rights might be granted to the lessees any time after a period of 5 years. The first batch consisting of 48 graduates from Arts, Science and professional colleges started the colony in 1932 and is still continuing as colonist farmers.

The Colonization Scheme. The impression created by the efficient working of the scheme in the Punjab made Rao Bahadur Ramaswamy Sivan enthusiastic to try a similar scheme for the benefit of the graduates and other educated men of this province. As a member of the Syndicate, he persuaded the Annamalai University to give a trial to a similar scheme utilizing the cultivable lands belonging to the University. The University permitted Mr. Sivan to start the scheme and allotted 100 acres of its lands rent free for this purpose. It also agreed to provide residence for the colonists and bear the cost of the permanent improvements to the lands. But it was not prepared to advance any sum to meet the cost of the live and deadstock, working expenses or the subsistence allowance to the colonists.

To find funds for the above purposes, a Co-operative society was formed and registered on 2nd May 1938 with the Vice-Chancellor and Registrar of the University as the ex-officio President, and Secretary respectively. Sympathisers of the scheme were also made eligible to become members of this Society and as many as 20 gentlemen have taken shares to the extent of Rs. 510, (at Rs 5 a share). Graduates of the Universities and other educated unemployed men who have at least completed their Secondary School Leaving Certificate and who are not below 18 years of

age were eligible to become colonist members. The candidates selected as colonists were to take at least 20 shares of Rs. 5 each payable in five quarterly instalments. They should also bind themselves to serve for five years in the first instance and must abide by the bye-laws of the Society. As the University cannot part with the lands to the colonists at any time or grant permanent occupancy right to any body, the scheme was intended to train the educated men for the profession of agriculture. These may later on be absorbed when the Provincial Government start any such scheme in the areas reported to be available as cultivable wastes in the several parts of the Presidency.

Initiation of colonization scheme. At the time of starting the scheme, four graduates joined the Society as colonist members but only two of them were able to take up the work. These two graduates have continued to do their work cheerfully for the last two years.

Based on the first year's experience, the bye-laws of the Society were considerably altered in the second year and are at present being considered for registration by the Registrar of Co-operative Societies. According to the original bye-laws, the individual colonists were made to share the profit or bear the loss in cultivating the land. The society was merely to act as a lending institution recovering the loan or advances given to the colonists at the end of the year. The main changes now made are that the Society as a whole instead of the colonists individually is to cultivate the lands and raise the crops, the colonists acting on behalf of the office bearers and under their instructions. Secondly, the remuneration to the colonists is to be fixed according to the net income from the crops raised each year and should be treated as a regular expenditure of the society before working out its annual profit and loss account. Another important change in the bye-laws makes provision to enable the colonists to leave the society on certain conditions if they are obliged to do so before the stipulated period of five years.

Just before starting the scheme, a small committee was appointed by the University to work out the details of the cropping etc. The committee included experts like Rao Bahadur M. R. Ramaswami Sivan, Nawabzada Saadat Ullah Khan, Deputy Director of Agriculture, Mr. R. N. K. Sundaram, Assistant Director of Agriculture and a few others. They prepared an estimate for equipping a farm of 100 acres with live and deadstock and also a cropping scheme. According to their scheme each colonist is to be allotted 8 acres of wet lands and 2 acres of garden lands.

Working of the scheme. The actual work was started in June 1938. The two colonists who were non-agricultural graduates were given a fortnight's training at the Palur Agricultural Research Station. Their farm was equipped with four pairs of cattle costing Rs. 225, a few country ploughs and tools like mammatties and sickles at a total cost of about Rs. 46. An area of 18.65 acres of wet lands and 1.50 acres of dry lands was cultivated during the first year. Paddy followed by black and green grams were the

crops raised in the wet lands. Tobacco, groundnut, vegetables, toddiar cholam and plantains were the important crops in the irrigated dry lands. Two permanent coolies were engaged by the colonists to help them. The department of Agriculture provided them with a maistry for help in their day to day routine. The local Agricultural Demonstrator was instructed to visit the colony periodically and render them all possible help. (The statement of receipts and expenditure extracted from the audit report for 1938—39 is given in Appendix A. A similar statement for 1939—40 is given as appendix B.)

Results of two years work. It may be too soon to judge the ultimate success or failure of the scheme from the results of the past two years. In the first year the society incurred a loss of Rs. 350. This is due to various causes. The wet land that was available for cultivation had been lying uncultivated for a number of years before allotting it to the colonists. It was overgrown with *bobool* trees and shrubs of various kinds. These had to be uprooted and removed and a lot of earth work had to be done before levelling the land and bringing it into a fit condition for cultivation. The colonists began the work late in the season, no cattle manure was available for purchase and the crops had to be raised without any manure. Paddy therefore raised in 18.65 acres gave a poor yield of 1260 lb. per acre. Black and green grams had also showed a poor stand. Among the garden crops, tobacco and tomato did well and brought in some profit. Due to the absence of rains, dry groundnuts failed. A perusal of the accounts shows however that the results of the second year were encouraging. But the accounts included the subsistence allowance granted to each colonist at Rs. 15 per month and the expenditure on live and deadstock and the permanent improvements. Deducting all these and allowing for depreciation on the live and deadstock, there was a gain of Rs. 298—13—2 against a loss of Rs. 357—15—0 in the previous year. Thus the colonists were able to get an average monthly income of Rs. 27—10 each, from a total area of 32 acres of wet lands and about 1.50 acres of garden lands. It is true that such a poor income will not attract more colonists and may even puzzle the sympathetic critics.

Difficulties met with in working. Since the University could not finance the scheme, the society had not enough funds for the purchase of manures etc. in time and to do the agricultural operations as advised by the Agricultural officers. The encouraging results of the second year were mainly due to the adoption of two simple improvements viz. thin nurseries and economic planting. To get better returns, money crops have to be grown in the garden lands extensively. Unfortunately the water in the ponds dug in the garden lands was brackish and the crop did not come up well. To give a convincing example, 200 plantains in that area were irrigated with the pond water while a similar number was left unirrigated. Within 2 or 3 months, all the irrigated plantains died while the unirrigated ones survived and are at present yielding. The University was approached

again after about $1\frac{1}{2}$ years, detailing all the experiences gained so far. The Vice-chancellor and the other executive officers have been watching the progress of the scheme from its inception and have now come forward to help the society by giving an advance of Rs. 700 every year to be repayable at the end of the season. They have also recently sanctioned a fairly large sum to build residential quarters, cattle shed, store room etc. for the benefit of the colonists. The Director of Agriculture when he recently visited the colony suggested the diversion of fresh water from a drainage channel nearby, to irrigate the garden lands. This scheme is being investigated by the Engineering staff of the University. If it materialises, definitely better results, comparable to those of the Punjab schemes, can be expected. A beginning has also been made to cultivate sugarcane in a portion of the wet lands. The stand of the present crop is good. The results of the second year have been a definite advance over those of the first year. Since the University has come forward to advance the required amount to meet the cultivation expenses, it would be possible to cultivate the crops systematically and adopt the improvements advocated by the department to a greater extent than in the previous years. There is therefore no ground to doubt the stability of the scheme in the future.

An appeal to Agricultural graduates. The Scheme is the first of its kind in Madras and is a unique venture started mainly through the untiring efforts of Sri Rao Bahadur M. R. Ramaswami Sivan, ex-Principal of the Agricultural College. As the two colonists who offered to work the scheme were non-agricultural graduates, they had to seek and obtain far more technical help than would have been necessary, if agricultural graduates had offered themselves to work the scheme. It is a pity and an irony that agricultural graduates failed to respond to work a pioneer scheme of this kind for which they were most fitted by training. The society is prepared to admit a few more colonists and it is hoped that a few ex-students of this Agricultural College, would come forward to work the scheme more successfully and demonstrate to other educated men that farming, if done on scientific lines is always a paying proposition. They would thus enhance the reputation of their *Alma Mater* and prove to the outside world that a degree in agriculture counts in life's struggle and enables one to make a decent living, even under depressing circumstances.

Acknowledgements. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the help given by the colonists and the officers of the University by furnishing me with the relevant particulars and figures needed for this note.

STATEMENT A

Receipts and Expenditure during 1938-39.

Expenditure.

I. Expenditure on permanent improvements to be done		Rs. a. p.
by the University.		83 6 7
II. <i>Capital Expenditure.</i>		
Livestock	221 9 0	
Deadstock	90 11 0	
	<hr/>	
	312 4 0	312 4 0

III. Kist paid by the University		114 0 0
IV. Working expenditure in cash and in kind.		
Seeds and plants	76 0 10	
Manures	30 7 6	
Cooly labour	458 0 2	
Maintenance of cattle	156 2 10	
Miscellaneous cultivation expenses	15 5 0	
Subsistence allowance to the two colonists both in cash and in kind	390 0 0	1,126 0 4
Grand total		1,635 10 11

Receipts.

By sale of vegetables	36 9 0	
" milk to the colonists	29 12 0	
By value of green gram	19 8 3	
" black gram	7 0 0	
" groundnut	5 3 0	
" straw	81 0 0	
" tobacco	60 0 0	
" paddy	600 14 6	
Donation in cash and kind	117 4 0	957 3 6

STATEMENT B.

Receipts and Expenditure during 1939—40.

Expenditure.

I. Expenditure on Permanent Improvements to be borne by the University,		27 2 6
II. Capital Expenditures.		
Livestock	47 0 0	
Deadstock	70 1 9	
	117 1 9	117 1 9
III Kist on the lands paid by the University		200 0 0
IV. Working expenses.		
Seeds and plants	91 12 10	
Manures and chemicals	35 0 0	
Wages of labour	579 9 6	
Maintenance of cattle	133 11 7	
Miscellaneous cultivation expenses	25 11 7	
Subsistence allowance to the two colonists	364 10 7	
	1230 8 1	1230 8 1
	Total	1574 12 4

Receipts.

By sale of milk to the colonists	30 0 0
" vegetables	32 11 9
" plantains	4 4 5
" paddy seedlings	25 10 0
" groundnut	1 4 9
" straw	5 0 0
By value of 2 kalams and 3 marakals of blackgram at Rs. 5—0—0 per kalam.	11 4 0
" 34 kalams and 3 marakals of green gram at Rs. 3—4—0 per kalam	111 5 0

By value of 233 kalams and 5 marakals of Adt. 2 and 8 paddy at Rs. 2 per kalam	466 14 0	
.. 560 kalams of Adt. 17 and PLR 1 paddy at Rs. 1-12-0 per kalam	980 0 0	
.. 800 bundles of straw at 6 per rupee	133 8 0	
.. tobacco	26 3 9	
	<u>1828 1 8</u>	<u>1828 1 8</u>

STATEMENT C.

Profit and loss statement.

Details.	Sub-total.		Total.
	Rs.	A. P.	Rs. A. P.
1938-39.			
Share of permanent improvement 10%	8	5 5	
Depreciation on livestock 25%	55	9 9	
.. deadstock 12%	11	3 0	
Kist paid by the University	114	0 0	
Working expenses as in statement A	1126	0 4	1315 2 6
Less receipts as in statement A			957 3 6
Net loss			357 15 0
1939-40.			
Receipt as in statement B.			1828 1 8
Expenditure:			
Share of permanent improvement			
1938-39	8	5 5	
1939-40	2	12 0	11 1 5
Depreciation on livestock 25%			
1938-39	55	9 9	
1939-40	11	12 3	67 5 9
Depreciation on deadstock 12%			
1938-39	11	3 0	
1939-40	8	12 3	20 5 3
Kist paid by the University	200	0 0	
Working expenses as in statement B	1230	8 1	1529 4 6
Net expected gain			298 13 2
<i>Average monthly income per colonist.</i>			
Subsistence allowance given to the two colonists	364	10 7	
Net expected gain	298	13 2	
	663	7 9	
Average monthly income	$\frac{663}{2 \times 12}$	7 9	27 10 3