

as sweet and pure as honey ; that the process of manufacture would be very simple without any elaborate arrangements of evaporation and vacuum pans, and the result would be exactly suited to the exigencies of Indian conditions ; that the working of the Fryer's concretor can be done by a few intelligent men competent to work the few necessary bits of machinery. That the concrete produced will be a purer substitute for jaggery both for native consumption or factory purposes. This 'Concretor' is therefore worth a trial. If it should serve all the purposes better than jaggery then it would be worth having. Then a central factory will be able to deal with all cane within easy reach and obtain the so called "Concrete" from long distances. The one obstacle in the way of sugar factories will be successfully met with if this concrete could be done with small expense and trouble.

The sugarcane cultivation is at present threatened and is on the decrease for reasons already given. It seems to me quite possible to resuscitate the sugarcane cultivation by the ways detailed above.

It also appears to me the goal will be sooner reached if the cheap sugars are stopped by import duties until India has made sufficient advance in sugar production methods and if experimental factories or subsidized factories are opened in more suitable localities as a beginning.

M. MANGESA RAO.

Correspondence.

To

THE EDITOR,

JOURNAL OF THE

MADRAS AGRICULTURAL STUDENTS' UNION,

COIMBATORE.

SIR,

Your correspondent, "a member" accuses me of holding the *western* idea that it is better to spend too fast than too slow. I regret I did not make myself clearer. I endeavoured in my original contribution to emphasize the fact that the Union was not at

present justifying its existence, and that to do so, it must extend its activities. If such an increased programme implied the spending of money, the Union—I tried to point out—must face the fact and spend it. If it did not imply any expenditure, there was no ground for the Union to continue collecting subscriptions and accumulating reserves. I cannot see that there can be two opinions about this, and discussion is more likely to centre round the particular direction or directions in which the Union can increase its usefulness. “A member” suggests increasing the attractiveness of the Journal, and I think we should most of us agree, though as for his proposal to lock up a large sum of money in a building, there is not so much to be said, and I doubt if he will for this obtain so many supporters. More suggestions are wanted, so that the matter can be thoroughly discussed at the meeting next year.

I am, Sir,
Yours etc.,
“Hustle.”

All members of the Union should welcome the contribution by “Hustle” in the August issue of the journal, offering constructive criticisms on the lines on which the Union might develop its work in future.

2. To the suggestions made by “Hustle” in his contribution some of which may be generally acceptable and some not, many more may be added, e. g,

(a) Purchase of a Printing Press, so that the printing of the Journal may be done on the estate and the Journal published more punctually than hitherto. Job work may also be undertaken.

(b) Award of a medal for the best all round man in the senior course. There are prizes so far for Agriculture and

Chemistry, and there is no prize for the Licentiate in Agriculture who secures the highest number of marks in the final Diploma Examination.

(c) Awarding of a prize for the best managed Home Farm of those members who take to private farming—the judging to be done by the Director, Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors of Agriculture.

(d) Awarding of prizes to those student-members who maintain a good garden round their hostel blocks.

(e) Making an allotment to the officers' club for the improvement of their library or games section.

3. Before considering the various suggestions mentioned above and those made by "Hustle," most, if not all, of which aim at spending away the Reserve Funds of the Students' Union, it is perhaps best to direct our attention to the Reserve Fund itself. A close scrutiny of the rules of the Union does not show that there is a provision for creating a Reserve Fund and how that Fund is to be utilised. The annual Reports, however, divided the finances of the club into (a) Permanent Fund, (b) College Day account and (c) Journal account; and as these financial statements have apparently been passed by the general body of the Union, we presume that the Permanent Reserve Fund has been recognised by the Union and that the College Day celebrations and the conducting of the Journal should be self-supporting. This Fund and the interest thereon have been helpful in meeting deficits in College Day and Journal accounts in previous years, in making advances for the same and recently in awarding a scholarship to a student of the college. As every attempt is made every year to make the College Day and Journal self-supporting, and as the Permanent Fund is made up of donations and life subscriptions, it follows that the Permanent Fund must increase year after year. It becomes also necessary now for the Union to

decide whether *the fund itself or the interest thereon* should be drawn upon in any future schemes of improvement in its work.

4. Very few of the members would object to the utilisation of the interest accruing year after year, but every one will hesitate before voting for the utilisation of the Permanent Fund. This amount has been piled up slowly and we may or may not be able to collect as well in future and there is the possibility of our repenting later if we follow the advice of "Hustle" that it is better to spend too fast than too slow. The Fund has to be considered, more or less, as an endowment and no one thinks of using up endowment capital. The award of a scholarship, on the lines already undertaken by the Committee, is, however, correctly speaking, a loan granted on the security of a Life Policy coupled with personal or other surety at 6% interest; and, in granting loans out of the Endowment Fund, we only change our investment from one form to another. The money is absolutely safe and when repaid, is useful again for a similar purpose over and over again.

5. Whatever suggestions may be accepted by the general body of the Union, the following guiding principles may be had in view:—

1. Permanent Reserve Fund should be recognised.
2. The interest thereon may be used up year after year in awarding prizes or medals.
3. Scholarships on the repayable system may be granted out of the Permanent Fund.

6. Before closing, I might invite the attention of the readers to the fact that some years ago, the Zemindars of Madras collected money for the institution of a scholarship—to be called Lawley Scholarship—for award to agricultural students, and

if the committee makes serious proposals, it is not unreasonable to expect that the endowment of the Zemindars may be handed to the Union which is now thoroughly recognised everywhere, for being administered by that body. Rather than use up the Fund in a number of ways, the system of scholarships should be persevered in, as it will benefit present and past students.

An old Student.

Notes.

Coconut fibre :—Enormous quantity of coconut fibre yarns and ropes made out of it are annually exported from the West Coast. The export figures had come almost to a climax, just before the beginning of the Great War. It is proposed to deal in this note with the fibre only.

The process of fibre extraction is very simple. Fresh pericarp of the coconuts, as soon as they are husked green, are carted and soaked along river banks often a little away from the river where it is miry and salt water gets in.

Pits about 9' by 9' and about 6' deep are made; each such pit holds the pericarp of 1000 nuts. About a foot of earth is put at the tops of the pericarp. The sides and tops of the pit are lined with coconut leaf mats. The retting and extraction of fibre go on from September to the next May, in some parts all round the year. The colour of the fibre and retting depend very much on the nature of the soil in which the fibre is buried. The water which gets in must be brackish. If the soil be very clayey and black, the fibre becomes black and dirty. If too sandy, retting takes too much time and there is wastage in fibre. The soil must therefore be more or less loamy. Under ordinary conditions it takes about 6 to 8 months for the pericarps to rot properly. The pericarps are removed, washed and beaten with wooden sticks about 1½' long. Palmyra stem which is heavy and hard is also much