

## Correspondence

### I

Sir,

In the "Madras Mail" of about 9—2—1949 there is some news on rain making in Australia.

In about 1912 or thereabout, one Narasimma Naidu (of a printing press, in C. B. T. R.), explained at Peelamedu the same thing, that is, a similar explanation was given for Rain Making.

A cold fluid, ice or water at 1 to 4 degrees centigrade is sprayed in the clouds and a 4 inch rain was got in Australia.

Instead of spending a 1000 crores of rupees for huge tanks, one rain of some 4 inches can be got by spending a 100 or 50 rupees. for hiring an air plane and spraying some cold fluid.

I beg at least the Agricultural Department can try this experiment.

Avarampalayam,  
Ganapathi P. O.,  
Coimbatore.

Yours cordially,

A. P. KRISHNASWAMI.

### II

Sir,

I have read carefully the article in your December issue — "The Economic Price of Paddy" by Sri Chidambaram Pillai, M. A., It is a pity that an article dealing with such an important question has been published without any editorial comment for I feel more muddled than ever, after reading it.

The gist of it is obviously that the price for procurement fixed by government is uneconomic and in support are given figures which have every appearance of careful and learned accounting. But they fail to convince me of anything, except that there is something wrong somewhere. May I put before you the main points which have intrigued me?

Firstly the value of the land is put at Rs. 6000/- an acre and so Rs. 270/- is added to the cost of production. Either, (a) this value has no relation at all to the productive capacity of the land and is simply an arbitrarily inflated figure; or (b) the land is so fertile as to be worth the value placed on (or paid for) it. If (a) is right, then the first thing to do to convert a loss into a profit is to place a correct value on the land and reduce the Rs. 270/- to some more reasonable figure and there you are with a nice profit in your pockets.

If on the other hand, the land is really worth the value put on it judging by its productive capacity, then:—

1. The ceiling price fixed is uneconomic because the cultivation is inefficient, or



2. the costing should be revised, or
3. the ceiling price should be increased.

The world position in regard to food is such — if we are to believe the frequent statements made by Sir John Boyd Orr — that land should no more be entrusted to an inefficient cultivator than you would entrust your Aeroplane to an inefficient mechanic. Tinnevely is the only district in the province in which I have never set foot and so I know nothing about the efficiency of the Tinnevely ryots. On the other hand, there are certain other figures in Sri Chidambaram pillai's statement which intrigued me.

Why the annual recurring item of Rs. 15/- for permanent improvements on land valued at Rs. 6,000/- per acre? Does gold require gilding? Why use 140 lbs. of seed per acre in such fertile lands? Even we use no more than 90 lbs. on our sands. Why pay Rs. 24/- in 1948 for 140 lbs. of seed when the agricultural Department supplied me with seed at 2 as per pound?

Again, apparently, the straw which is breaking the Tinnevely camel's back is iniquitous land tax of Rs. 28/- per acre. I have to pay Rupee one per acre which I bought in 1944 for Rs. 60/-, whereas, land worth Rs. 6,000/- per acre is taxed Rs. 28/-. Calculating on an 'Ad Valorem' basis I am paying a tax of Rs. 100/- while Sri Chidambaram Pillai pays only Rs. 28/- on a capital of Rs. 6,000/-. This reminds me of the story of an American which I read the other day. He visited a circus where he saw a camel. He picked up a straw and placed it on the camel's back. As nothing happened he was noticed walking away shaking his head and muttering "wrong straw".

But let me cut the story to save this trouble Mr. Editor. So just one final point. Mr. Pillai pays only Rs. 1/8/- for a cart-load of cattle manure. Owing to the paucity of cattle and their miniature size and to the serious competition for the little cattle manure available from growers of native (chewing) tobacco, we have to pay anything from Rs. 20/- to Rs. 25/- per cart-load. Yet in what was barren sand four years ago I am now finding that even the 1947 price is not at all uneconomic while the 1948 price recently fixed (i. e. from 1st November 1949) leaves a nice little profit for me.

Sir Albert Howard said 'The Arsenal of Democracy is fertile soil'. It is dangerous to entrust an Arsenal to inefficient users.

Y. R. Farm,  
Nileshwar,  
March 8, 1949.

Yours truly,  
R. M. SAVUR.

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