

REVIEW

Food Problem in India in General and in Kolhapur in Particular — By Dr. P. C. Patil: Dr. Patil, a pioneer in the field of agricultural economics, deals with the burning problem of the day which tends to become more and more acute as days go by. India and Pakistan, he estimates, will have in 1971 a population whose food requirements will be double the present. He traces the growth of the problem in recent times and dispels some unfounded notions that there is any extent of culturable land in India, that our land is a *swarnabhumi*, superior in fertility to lands in other countries, that our climate and rainfall are on the whole favourable for crop production — all resulting in the belief that our population is not excessive for the land we have. But we have in fact only 8 acres per capita in India. The situation has indeed grown worse since the partition of the country, which has not been stressed. Information of a familiar kind is furnished on functions of food, on the calories required for sedentary workers and manual workers 2500 and 3500 calories respectively. The deficit in different kinds of food as estimated by Dr. Burns is given though the statistical basis for estimates of vegetables, fruits, milk etc., is flimsy. Dietary conditions of different groups of society are pictured but are not based on any elaborate data collected over a wide area. We are told that the diets of the first two groups are satisfactory. We are not sure whether they are so qualitatively. But we are sure that 65 per cent of the population do not get enough food grains.

Dr. Patil is of the view that the problem of food production can be solved best by the construction of irrigation works — major and minor so far as western India including Kolhapur is concerned — particularly by the construction of Koyna and Daddi projects. The Kolhapur ryot is said to be keen and progressive especially in lifting water by a series of mholes or oil engines for cultivating sugarcane on a large scale. The ryot at Coimbatore does as well in lifting water from very deep wells and now-a-days is resorting to electric pumping for the cultivation of a variety of garden crops.

He praises the work of the Regency Council in the past in putting up dams across rivulets, in sanctioning loans for digging wells at 2 per cent (but only up to Rs. 6 lakhs) and in the work of reafforestation of Satyayadri hills. But Kolhapur has now ceased to be an independent state, we are sure however, that by its merging in a wider Province with far greater resources it will not suffer — K. C. R.

