



The Madras Agricultural Journal

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Editorial

Plantation crops : At their 52nd annual gathering the U.P.A.S.I. have pleaded for an all-round relief. The small cultivator has perhaps for the first time in his life, been able to make a clear profit. With this he has to now clear himself of long accumulated debt and rebuild his depleted stock of implements and cattle, rebuild his home and also the fertility of his soil. Certainly he has a cause to grumble, since his profits are only short lived unlike those of the other industries. He is the back bone of the country and on his welfare and prosperity lies the prosperity of the country. With the plantation crops the case is not entirely so. The industry from the beginning was built up in a manner that it depended on foreign countries for its prosperity. So long the British Empire dominated the world and empire preference and vested interests lay with India a monopoly was created. Now that Tropical Australia and South Africa have been rapidly developing these same plantation crops preference will slowly and surely veer to those countries, especially with regard to tea, jute and coffee. Though an internal market has been created in India for coffee and tea it is not large enough to consume the surplus, especially, in tea. The situation has to be therefore, reviewed whether preference should not be given to such plantation crops in which India is dependent on foreign countries, crops like rubber, cloves, jute and pepper to a certain extent. Climatic and soil conditions conducive to the growth of rubber and cloves are available in South India from Travancore to Northernmost coffee belt in Mysore. Rubber has been tried and grown in these areas. It is gratifying to note that the Central Government have taken steps to develop and protect this important civil and wartime material. The planter deserves relief and encouragement in effecting its expansion, since he deals with a long-term crop and his capital gets locked up. Research work has to be encouraged in all the plantation crops and if India has to maintain her present place in the open market tomorrow, her produce will have

to be cheap and of the best quality. We earnestly hope that with concentration on quality production through research and the co-operation of labour the object will be achieved.

Sugar Price control: It is a timely and quick action that was taken and the Government of India should be congratulated, in that it did not inspite of all criticisms and excuses lose sight of the interest of the cultivator and consumers. Sugar prices even during thick of war was far lower than the normal price now. A firm action has to be taken to remedy an evil disease.

Expert Committee on Agricultural Research: On a recommendation of the Retrenchment and Reorganisation Committee, the Government of Madras have set a Committee of Experts to review the progress of research work done in the Provincial Agricultural Department during the five year period 1944-'48, in order to assess the value of the results achieved so far in terms of practical application to agriculture and to suggest further lines of work to be carried out in all branches of agricultural science. Dr. G. S. Cheema, D. Sc., Retired Fruit Development Adviser to the Government of India is the Chairman of the Committee, and the other members are: Dr. T. S. Venkataraman, D. Sc. former Sugarcane Specialist to the Government of India; Dr. D. V. Bal, M. Sc. Ph. D., Director, Institute of Plant Industry, Indore and Dr. Jayachand Luthra, Principal, Agricultural College, Benares Hindu University. We understand that the Committee have started work this month, and it is expected that their reports will be ready before the end of November this year. The members of the Committee are all persons with great experience and achievement in research behind them and we have no doubt, that a critical review from them with constructive proposals for the further development of Agricultural Research in the Province, would be very helpful both to the Government and research workers also. We extend our hearty welcome to the members of the Committee and wish them success in their task.



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