

Notes and News.

ELICITING INFORMATION FROM RYOTS.

Our readers will remember that, at the time of the last College Day His Excellency the Governor accompanied by the Zemindars and some of the Departmental officers made a visit to the cattle farms of the Pattagar of Palayakottai. In his monthly report for July Mr. Carruth states that the Pattagar had lately made a small beginning to cross the Kangayam and the Mysore breed and that his object in doing so was not at present clear and ascribes the failure to elicit the point to be mainly due to (1) the very large number of questions asked by the visitors in a very short time and (2) the failure of interpreters to understand the questions asked in English and, therefore, to the failure of conveying to the Pattagar the correct impression in Tamil, the obvious result being an incorrect reply to the questions asked.

This candid statement is one which we would commend to the attention of our younger officers who cannot be too careful in the matter of eliciting information from ryots and submitting reports of their enquiry which may ultimately find their way into a blue book. Talk to the ryots in their own colloquial language and you will generally get a straight answer to the straight question, although occasionally you may have to put a number of apparently irrelevant questions to elicit your point.

M. R. R.

KANGAYAM AND MYSORE BREEDS.

Mr. Carruth has carefully gone into the question of the relative merits of Kangayam and Mysore cattle in the districts and finds a larger percentage of Mysore cattle than he expected. The reasons for purchasing Mysores were on the whole due to the Kangayam not being sufficiently available. The ryots generally preferred the Kangayam to the Mysores, because they were hardier, required less

care and not so much good food, and were more spirited and enduring on long journeys, especially when travelling conditions were adverse. Mr. Carruth is glad to find that the ryots do make intelligent observations on these points.

M. R. R.

SCARCITY OF KOLINGI SEED.

Mr. Kulandaiswami Pillai, after touring in Watrap and Vasudevanallur tracts thinks that there will be a great shortage of kolinji seed this year for green manuring purposes. The chief sources of supply are from tank beds, foot of hills and harvested fields. First of all, there was sufficient water in the tanks for a second crop of paddy. Then the dry and garden lands which used to be under short duration crops like cholam and ragi are now replaced by the longer duration crop of Cambodia cotton wherein the kolinji plants are pulled out by the roots like a weed. Kolinji leaves are cut and carted to distant places in some cases. There have sprung up men whose sole business during the seasons seems to cut and cart away leaves, selling cart loads at from Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 themselves paying to the owners of the pattah lands Re. 1 to Rs. 2 for the right of collecting the leaves. This practice of cutting the leaves before the plants are in pod or before the pods open has nearly exterminated the kolinji crop for purposes of collecting seed. The cooly labour has also increased, as the picking of Cambodia cotton pays better. Not more than 400 bags are estimated to be obtained from this tract at a cost of Rs. 7 per bag, provided, after all, that rainfall conditions are favourable.

M. R. R.

AGENCY FOR MONSOON PLOUGHS A POSSIBLE NEW LINE FOR BUSINESS MEN.

In spite of the dislocation of the business during the War, the agency of Monsoon ploughs in this and other districts is worth keeping an eye on. It is not pretended that even a smart would yet get a living out of it, but the figures up to date, i. e., from January 1916 to June 1918 show that over Rs. 500 worth of ploughs, shares

and points have been sold, and this sum, at an anna in the rupee, the commission which the firm is willing to offer, means a profit of Rs. 33. It must be remembered that though this is not very much, it necessitates no capital, the minimum of godown accommodation, and little time, while the chances of expansion, with judicious advertisement would seem favourable.

R. C. Wood.

POULTRY.

What the teetotaler thinks of it is not stated but the story of the experiment of the winefed hens is something to arrest attention. A professor of Agriculture at Fontainebleau has simply revolutionised poultry keeping by means of an experiment which has proved that the more drunk they are the more eggs the hens lay. He selected a dozen young hens and divided them into two indiscriminate lots of size each. Both were fed on exactly the same diet but to the food of one half a dozen there was added a daily ration of a glass of wine per head. The results were surprising. From the hens which got no wine Mr. Joubert had in October four eggs, in November one, and in December none and in January twenty two. The fowls which drank their glass of wine daily, responded nobly to the stimulant. In October they produced twenty seven, in November 28, in December 44 and in January 46, so that the two lots showed an excess of production over the teetotalers of 118 eggs. The wine is stated to have not only increased the output of eggs but also to have greatly improved its quality. What wine was used is not given but if it was Vin ordinaire, the experiment will be a commercial success. "This is an experiment worth trying." (Industry).

S. Sitharam Pathrudu.

Estate Notes.

Dr. Barber's son, Geoffrey Osborn Barber (aged 13½ years) obtained the Francis Wilmer Macaulay Scholarship of £75 per