

THE JOURNAL
OF
The Madras Agricultural Students'
Union.

Vol. X.

May 1922.

No. 5.

Editorial Notes.

Our Union.

The time and the place and the exact circumstances under which Our Union originated are perhaps yet green in the memory of some of the older members. It was on the forenoon of the 14th July 1910, on the occasion of the celebration of the First College Day by the Students' Club, that this association was called into existence at a meeting of Agricultural Students—past and present. Since that day, the Union has been progressing steadily, though slowly, pursuing the objects which it was intended to fulfil; it has been expanding year by year in an orderly way and, we fervidly hope, that it will continue to do so for a long time to come.

The objects with which it was started were firstly to create and foster an *esprit-de-corps* among its members, secondly to facilitate an exchange of opinions and experiences in agricultural matters, thirdly to act as far as possible as a bureau for procuring employment to the members and fourthly to protect and to promote their interests, and in order to attain these objects it was decided that the Union should undertake the celebration of the College Day annually, and in addition hold an Agricultural Conference in continuation thereof, wherein papers of agricultural interest could be read. Further a corrected list of addresses of the members was to be maintained and finally a journal was to be conducted as an organ of the Union. All the above various objects

of this association have always been kept in view and been fulfilled as far as practicable. We cannot sufficiently appraise the value of the institution of the College Day and Conference, in affording opportunities for members to meet each other and exchange experiences, nor can we over-estimate the usefulness of the Journal in enabling the association to keep in touch with the members scattered throughout the Presidency.

It may, however, not be without advantage to take exact stock of the work accomplished up to the present, so as to gather an idea of the limitations under which it labours. For instance, though we would earnestly wish our readers would believe that the Union is deeply solicitous of the welfare of its members and is anxious to protect and promote their interests, we are afraid the scope of the Union for such a task is rather very much limited; and it is needless to state that the spirit and the constitution of our Union are such as would not allow of its adopting the tactics of associations of the nature of Labour-Unions. Again though the Journal is fondly believed to be the accredited link between students past and present and members in and out of headquarters, yet to our regret one has to admit that the Journal does not receive the patronage of many of the members of this Union. Further more, if we except the activities of the Journal and the occasional stimulus given to members by the institution of prizes for Essays, the Union cannot, we fear, own to any tangible piece of work turned out—in aid of agriculture—during the interval between one conference and another. We are tempted to ask should such a state of affairs be allowed to continue? Can we not remedy it?

As early as July 1911, the late Rao Bahadur J. Dharmaranga-Raju, in his inaugural address to the 1st Agricultural Conference, said "This sacred duty (to the government and the country) can be performed by supplementing the work of Government by independent enquiries on the same lines as those pursued by Government, and by spreading to the people the information concerning

experimental work gathered by Agricultural Experts of Government. These, if done in an organised manner, would very much hasten the objects of the Agricultural Department. One of the purposes of this Union is, therefore, to collect from its members scattered throughout the Presidency, all available agricultural information and to place it on record in the office of the Union.—” We are of opinion that our Union would be doing substantial work and be actively helping the cause of Indian Agriculture, if it would work on lines indicated above.

In this connection we would instance the work turned out by a sister Association in Mysore—the Mysore Agricultural and Experimental Union. This association came into existence as an outcome of the desire of several young men, who, in the words of Dr. Coleman in his opening speech of the fourth annual meeting—“felt that there should be a closer bond of union between the Agricultural Department on the one side and educated agriculturists on the other. They aimed specially to gain the co-operation of men trained in agriculture in our (Hebbal) school and elsewhere and had returned to the land.” The membership to this association would appear to be drawn largely from those who had had agricultural training and from educated agriculturists. As to one of the objects of this Union, Dr. Coleman states that, owing to the varied conditions of soil and climate in Mysore, it was necessary that the experiments tried in the State Experimental Farms should be tested in as many localities and under as many different conditions as possible. While the Union had within its province all questions connected with the improvement of Agriculture, it had as its special function the carrying out of tests in co-operation with the Department of Agriculture. This is a phase of work which, we would wish, our Union might usefully endeavour to undertake. This would, of course, involve our admitting into our fold a large number of educated and interested agriculturists who may be expected to understand the improvements suggested by the

Department and to undertake to help it by conducting the tests on their own lands. It is regrettable that the ryot,—and even the educated agriculturist,— often views with some slight suspicion and distrust the motives of officials of our Department, even though their functions are admittedly beneficial. We are confident, however, that, by seeking their co-operation through a private body like that of our Union, and by actively associating them with the aims and work of this department, it would be possible to remove such a taint of suspicion.

We venture to think that such a policy, while enabling the Union to enlist the active sympathies of the practical agriculturist for the department, would also make it possible for the Union to spread the improvements suggested by the Department: and we are hopeful that under these conditions, it would be improbable that the Department would meet with such ill-informed criticisms, as it has of late, in the Legislative Council.

Of course, our members will naturally be diffident about admitting among themselves a class of men who cannot by any stretch of imagination be considered as “Old Boys”, as thereby they run the danger of being easily swamped and the Union, of losing its essential character as an “Old Boys” association. But, we are of opinion that it would not be impossible to devise ways and means to preserve this character and safeguard the Old Boys’ interests and at the same time to introduce this new element which is so essential for its further expansion. It might even be possible to keep this phase of the Union quite separate from its ordinary functions. In making these suggestions, we venture to hope that we will be able to set our members a-thinking on this aspect of our Union and trust that they would have the effect of eliciting criticism from them.

Monthly Digest of the Operations of the Agricultural Dept.

Since January 1922, the Publicity Bureau has begun to circulate copies of a consolidated monthly report concerning work done

during the month by the various sections of the Agricultural Department. The report is written in a popular style and deals with all items of interest which the public might desire to know and we hope it would interest the public and prove popular. Such a report is specially to be welcomed in view of the strictures—unfortunately due to imperfect information—the department was subjected to, during the recent budget debates of the Madras Legislative Council.

The Director of Agriculture and the Legislative Council.

We observe it to be rather a strange circumstance that, while in many other Provinces the Director of Agriculture is a member of the Provincial Legislature, in Madras he is not taken to represent the Department at the Council. It appears to be an anomaly, especially when one finds the heads of similar sister departments—the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Industries, for instance—represented in the Councils. In view of the severe criticisms passed on the Department recently, we would very much wish that the Government would also nominate the head of the Agricultural Department as a Member, so that he may be present there to give active help and supply correct information to the Honourable the Minister for Development in his task of answering such criticisms.

Obituary.

We regret very much to report the loss by death of one of our members, Mr. C. Arulanandam Pillai, in February this year. He passed out of this College in 1916, taking the Proficiency Certificate in Agriculture. He joined the Department forthwith and served with much credit as assistant Farm Manager and Agricultural Demonstrator in the IV Circle. He was transferred to the section of the Cotton Specialist early in 1921, but had to take leave on account of ill-health and we are very sorry to hear that his illness ultimately culminated in his decease. We hear he was an able district officer and the department can ill afford to lose him.