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**INAUGURAL ADDRESS\***

BY DR. K. M. MUNSHI

*Governor of Uttar Pradesh*

I AM very happy to be present here to-day to inaugurate the Tenth Annual Session of the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics. As Thakur Hukum Singhji has said, my association with the Society is of a long duration. It was when I was the Minister for Food and Agriculture in the Government of India that I first came in close contact with the work of the Society. In 1951, the Society honoured me by electing me as its honorary member and I had occasion to address the Fifth Annual Session of the Society in that year. I also remember having presided over the symposium on the assessment of our Grow-More-Food Campaign which was organised on that occasion.

I am, therefore, very pleased to see that the Society continues to pursue its aim of promoting studies in the field of agricultural statistics by various means like its annual meetings, symposia and seminars, the publication of its Journal and other literature, with the same high standard which the promoters of the Society set for themselves in its early days. I am specially happy to see that the Society has brought out a valuable publication on sampling theory and its application to sample surveys in agriculture by Dr. P. V. Sukhatme. I am also glad to learn that this publication is helping the promotion in other countries, under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, of the sampling techniques developed in India by Dr. Sukhatme and his colleagues associated with the Society.

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\* Inaugural Address delivered on 20th January 1957 on the occasion of the Tenth Annual Meeting of the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics, at Lucknow.

In my address to your Society in 1951, I had referred to the un-informed public criticism of agricultural statistics generally and of our Grow-More-Food Campaign, then in operation, in particular, and had stressed the importance of disabusing the minds of the people with regard to some of the misapprehensions that used to be expressed. I had explained that it was necessary to educate the public in regard to the methods adopted by the Government for collecting statistical data; the extent to which these methods are scientific and based on sound statistical principles; and the efforts that are being made to bring about further improvements in the collection of data. On the other hand, an all-out effort has also to be made to develop and apply scientific methods for collecting reliable data in those sectors of our agriculture where such data are not yet available. In the former sphere, namely, that of educating the public, your Society has an important role to play and I would strongly endorse the suggestions made by Thakur Hukum Singhji that the Society should place a still greater emphasis on this aspect of its work than it has been doing in the past.

In regard to the development and use of statistically sound methods for the collection of agricultural data in fields where these have not been applied in the past, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, in co-operation with statistical organizations in the States, has been hard at work for several years till recently. During these years, I am glad to note that commendable progress has been made in extending the area of application of statistical techniques. At present, annual estimates of yield of principal food crops are being obtained through random sample surveys over almost the entire country. Consequently our statistics of production of these crops are to-day far more reliable than at any time in the past. The successful application of these methods to assess the number of live-stock and the catches of marine fish has also been demonstrated on a large scale. I hope therefore that the States will adopt these methods systematically for the improvement of our data in these fields.

In connexion with the assessment of the progress made in the additional production of food through the Grow-More-Food Campaign and other similar measures, a great deal has been achieved. As a result of random sample surveys, we have now more dependable yardsticks of additional production from the use of improved seed, fertilisers, irrigation, reclamation of land, etc. It has also been possible with the help of these surveys to demonstrate that the Grow-More-Food Campaign did really achieve a substantial measure of success. Since then, agricultural statisticians have made a further contribution to our

drive for the increase of production by devising a method of simple experiments. These are carried out on cultivators' fields with the object of demonstrating to them the benefits from the use of fertilizers and other improved measures, and at the same time collecting scientifically valid data on the additional production to be expected from such measures. Thousands of these simple trials are now being conducted in the Community Project areas and a countrywide scheme of such trials is included in the Second Five-Year Plan.

We have now entered a new phase in the development of our agriculture. In place of a Grow-More-Food Campaign, we have comprehensive plans consisting of multifarious projects aiming towards the achievement of targets which we have set ourselves for the speedy improvement of our agriculture and of the standard of living of our rural population.

The target in the Second Five-Year Plan, as you know, is to increase the agricultural production by 30 per cent. over the achievement in the preceding period, and at the same time to provide maximum rural employment. These objectives place a very heavy responsibility on the shoulders of the agricultural statisticians in that they will have to intensify and systematize the efforts that they have been making in the past for the collection of reliable data. This alone will provide a firm foundation for the Plan and to make a continuous scientific appraisal of its progress.

We all know that data regarding our land resources and crop yields are still incomplete. We have still no statistics for land utilization in certain unsurveyed and other non-reporting areas, like the hilly areas of U.P. We have no reliable measure of the production of the so-called minor food crops like fruits and vegetables, which, nonetheless, play a vital role in our nutrition, or of industrial crops like cotton, sugarcane, oilseeds, etc. We also do not possess reliable data on our animal products like milk or wool or the catches from our marine and inland fisheries. These lacunæ must be filled up very rapidly as the reality of our targets depends to a large extent on the validity of these statistics.

The same remarks apply to the assessment of the progress of the Plan. Our experience with the Grow-More-Food Campaign has underlined the great importance of scientific appraisal of the progress of the Plan. On the one hand, popular enthusiasm must be roused and maintained by dissemination of correct information on the achievements made. On the other hand, excessive and unsubstantiated claims,

which might result in frustration in the end, must be refuted. Agricultural statisticians have demonstrated that they can discharge their responsibilities in these matters efficiently. In fact, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research had prepared, at my instance, a comprehensive programme for the collection of essential basic data in the various agricultural fields that I have mentioned above by the application of statistical techniques, and for a systematic appraisal of the progress of the various projects under the agricultural plan. The work has, however, since been centralized in the National Sample Survey, but I feel confident that the agricultural statisticians in the country will realize the national importance of this work and extend their unstinted co-operation in the accomplishment of these tasks.

On the question of the appraisal of the Plan, I would like to invite your attention to the observations made by our President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, at the last annual session of the Society. We must ponder seriously over his suggestions that the Planning Commission should seek a wide measure of co-operation in making this appraisal by delegating this task to independent regional bodies comprising of agricultural statisticians, economists and representatives of the Government and the rural population in the region. In the words of the President 'A continuous appraisal of the results of the Plan, made by such bodies, will not only help to increase the people's confidence in the efficacy of the Plan but would inspire them to participate more actively in the Plan for accelerating the tempo of progress.'

I am pleased to find that you are wide awake to the tasks that lie ahead of you and note that a discussion on the statistical study and analysis of the agricultural plan under the Chairmanship of Dr. Yates, is a part of the programme of the present session.

I wish your deliberations all success and hope that they will help agricultural statisticians to become better equipped to play their part in planning for the agricultural prosperity of India. I also hope that your meetings will focus the attention of the administrators and the lay public on the importance and difficulties of the agricultural statisticians' work in this respect.