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WELCOME ADDRESS*

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SHRI RAJYAPAL, CHIEF MINISTER, DELEGATES AND FRIENDS,

It is a matter of rare privilege and immense pleasure for me to welcome you all to this Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics and to this beautiful historic city of Gwalior. This city is set in a landscape full of nature's beauties as also monuments of great historical, archæological and artistic interests. It is also humming with activities aimed at building the India of tomorrow. Here, I hope, you will find the necessary atmosphere for your deliberations. I am greatly delighted to have in our midst many distinguished guests, eminent scientists, statisticians and economists, and particularly Dr. P. V. Sukhatme, Head of the Statistical Activities of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation. We very much feel the absence of Rashtrapati Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the President of this Society, from its very inception. In spite of his multifarious and onerous preoccupations, he has always taken very keen interest in the activities of the Society, which could not have achieved the monumental success it has but for his guidance and patronage.

As you are all aware, the Society has made great efforts to promote research in the theory of this comparatively new science of statistics and to evolve effective statistical tools for application in the field of agriculture and animal husbandry. Its journal has received acclamation from scientists all over the world for the service it renders in disseminating the results of research in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry, forest and fishery statistics. The Society has also published valuable

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books on statistical theory and practice which have received very good notice both in India and abroad.

There is another reason why I feel happy at the choice of Gwalior as the venue of this meeting of the Society. This city is the Headquarters of the Department dealing with Agricultural Statistics in Madhya Pradesh, and I am sure that the various improvements that have been effected in the quality, range and content of agricultural statistics in this State will receive your notice. I may mention that Madhya Pradesh is one of the few States in India, in which the agricultural statistics in its entirety is dealt within one department, namely, the Directorate of Land Records. It covers the whole field of statistics pertaining to area and yield of crops, land utilisation, periodical reviews of season, weather, crop and cattle conditions, rainfall, crop forecasting, land revenue, land holdings, livestock numbers and products, farm implements, agricultural prices and wages, and the various agro-economic barometers, *e.g.*, the index numbers of (i) agricultural production, (ii) farm harvest prices, (iii) wholesale prices, (iv) retail prices, (v) agricultural wages, and (vi) parity between the prices received and the prices paid by the farmers.

A number of methodological studies have been made by this Directorate, providing the basis for research and for organising statistical work on sounder and more comprehensive lines. New data have been collected and compiled and have been processed and analysed along with existing data to yield basic information for planning agricultural development in the State, to evaluate the work done as also to guide us in our march ahead.

Detailed forecasts or estimates of area and yield of almost all the crops grown in the State are now issued. The subjective method of eye-appraisal which often gives highly biased and unreliable estimates of yield of crops has been replaced by the objective method of random sampling crop cutting surveys in the case of all important food and non-food crops as also fruits and vegetables. The coverage now accounts for more than 85 per cent. of the cropped area in the State. The estimates of crop yield have thus been placed on a very sound footing providing a more reliable basis for formulation of crop production programmes and evaluation of the results achieved.

The method of random sampling has also been applied to estimate livestock numbers and to rationalise the supervision of the census enumeration of areas under crops done by the primary reporting agencies. This has not only introduced necessary elements of surprise

in the inspection of the work of collection of primary data but has also provided a basis for framing independent sample estimates of cropped areas. A census of ownership holdings and a sample survey of cultivators' holding have been conducted.

Index numbers of agricultural production and farm harvest prices have been compiled to provide a picture of the main trends in the agricultural economy of the State. Other index numbers are under preparation. A family budget enquiry has been designed to find out the size of different farm and domestic expenses of cultivators. The data so collected will be utilised in the construction of index numbers of the parity between the prices received and the prices paid by the farmers.

Another survey to ascertain the extent of culturable waste land and the measures necessary for its most profitable utilisation has also been planned. To meet the statistical requirements in connection with the formulation of agricultural development programmes in our rapidly changing economy, new concepts and definitions for the classification of land utilisation have been evolved and put into operation. The work relating to collection, compilation and interpretation of agricultural price statistics has been organised to meet the needs of planning in a developing economy. As a result, overlapping and duplication of efforts, conflicting reporting and multiplicity of reporting agencies have been eliminated in respect of collection and compilation of price data.

All this organisational and methodological work in the field of agricultural statistics in this State has been done during the last decade. So far the major part of time and energy of the Department has mainly been directed towards the organisational aspects of the work. The work relating to agricultural statistics was not organised on uniform systematic lines in all the integrating units of the present Madhya Pradesh. These had divergent systems of land records and agricultural statistics. Whatever organisation and systems were evolved in the former Madhya Pradesh State, are now being extended to the whole of the present Madhya Pradesh. In area, this State is the second largest in India, and thus the work relating to the organisation of agricultural statistics is quite stupendous. I am, however, confident that this work will be accomplished successfully.

The Directorate of Land Records has brought out a number of valuable publications relating to theoretical, procedural and organisational aspects of the work. The work done in respect of the analysis

of the data collected is also by no means small. Considerable improvements have been introduced in the presentation of the statistics of agricultural prices and wages and preparation of crop forecasts, and they provide useful information for the planners and administrators as well as the trade and the public. The index numbers of agricultural production and the farm harvest prices compiled by this Directorate have received good notice and have been widely acclaimed.

A good deal of progress has thus been made to fill the lacunæ in the field of agricultural statistics in this State. We have often felt the want of statistics relating to the cost of production of crops for fixation of proper prices of agricultural commodities and for co-relating the pitch of assessment of land revenue with agricultural productivity. Data pertaining to livestock products are incomplete and conjectural, indicating the necessity for conducting suitable surveys. Reliable data, relating to the progress of improved cultivation practices and improved varieties of crops and the additional yield derived therefrom, have not so far been collected. Planning for the maximisation of the production of a crop in the State as a whole involves decision regarding concentration of its cultivation in those areas where climatic and topographical conditions are more suited for its maximum yield per acre. No statistical studies have been made to plan such crop-shifts. Our efforts need be directed towards these problems as well. Proper equipment for organisation of a graphic division and for mechanical tabulation and analysis of data is lacking. Provision for the training of statistical personnel also needs to be strengthened.

The agenda for the meeting is quite heavy. I am glad to find that there are two symposia, one pertaining to "Agriculture with Special Reference to Statistical Aspects in the Third Plan" and the other pertaining to "1960 World Agricultural Census". Discussions and exchange of ideas on these subjects, in which experts will be participating, are most opportune in the context of their topical as well as abiding interests.

Your stay in this city is rather short and you have a heavy programme of technical discussions, seminars and lectures. Still, I hope you will find enough time to see this historic city and visit some of the beauty spots and places of historical and archaeological interest in the neighbourhood. The Mandu Fort and Khajuraho temples are well known as tourist resorts. I need hardly mention that a visit to these places will be a refreshing change after your arduous work in the Conference.