

WELCOME ADDRESS*

BY SHRI V. P. NAIK

Minister for Agriculture, Bombay State

SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN, DELEGATES AND FRIENDS,

It gives me great pleasure to extend to you all, a hearty welcome to this historic city of Poona, to participate in the deliberations of the 13th Annual Conference of the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics. Two of the founder-members of the Society—Dr. P. V. Sukhatme and Dr. V. G. Panse—both present here—belong to Bombay State. Both of them are outstanding agricultural statisticians. Dr. Sukhatme is the Director of the Statistics Division of the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations at Rome, and Dr. Panse is the Head of the Indian Institute of Agricultural Research Statistics, New Delhi. Naturally, we from Bombay, feel proud of them.

The vital role of statistics in every sphere of State activity is being increasingly recognised. The Indian Statistical Institute at Calcutta is closely associated with the work of the Planning Commission. The activities of the Institute are held to be of such great value that, as you all may know, only last month, the Indian Parliament passed a Bill giving it the status of a National Institute. Similarly in the field of agricultural statistics, the former Statistical Wing of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research is now formed into an Institute of Agricultural Research Statistics at Delhi. This is in recognition of the great utility of its activities in the sphere of agricultural statistics.

It is very gratifying to know that the Society has completed 13 years of extremely useful existence. Your activities are considered so important that the President of the Indian Union, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, is the President of your Society since its inception and continues to extend his patronage and guidance.

I am happy to note that this is the second time that your Society is holding its Annual Meeting at Poona. The last meeting held in

* Address delivered on 8th January, 1960 on the occasion of the Thirteenth Annual Conference of the Indian Society of Agricultural Statistics held at Poona.

1949 was the first occasion for the Society to hold its Annual Conference outside its headquarters in Delhi. This meeting is again, the first occasion when the Society is holding its Annual Session in the same place a second time outside its headquarters. I take this as a tribute to the academic and scholarly atmosphere of Poona and to the rapid progress made in the improvement of Agricultural Statistics in Bombay State.

There are, at present, a number of government and private institutions in this State, which have sections dealing in specialised statistical activities.

There is no need to enlighten you on the valuable contributions made by the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics at Poona to the study of agricultural economy. Of late, the Institute has carried out a survey of economic changes in the rural areas. It has just completed a follow-up of the rural credit survey in East Khandesh District. It has also interested itself in the study of methods and practice of farm accounts. Very recently, it has undertaken the assessment of the economic advantages of bunding carried out, on a very large scale, in two talukas of Ahmednagar District. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things, that the technical Address, at this Session, should be delivered by the distinguished Director of this Institute—Prof. Dhananjairao Gadgil.

The Central Water, Power and Research Station located at Poona has carried out a study of rainfall and run-off data in different catchment areas to establish their relationship with the irrigation potentialities of the regions.

The Agricultural Meteorology Division of the India Meteorological Department has been collecting, over a number of years, valuable crop-weather data, with a view to analysing the phenomenon of crop growth and forecasting of crop yields.

The Statistical Department of the University of Poona is concentrating on the theoretical aspects of statistics.

In the Finance Department of the Government of Bombay, we have the Bureau of Economics and Statistics which is mainly responsible for co-ordinating the statistical work of different departments and for collecting and processing the data in the manner required by Government in connection with their economic and other policies. The Bureau also conducts livestock census, socio-economic and other surveys.

The Forest Department has been conducting sample surveys to collect data to estimate the timber resources and minor forest produce of the State.

Similarly, in the Fisheries Department, a beginning has been made to assess, by sampling methods, marine fish catch.

The State Department of Agriculture has a full-fledged and well organised statistical branch devoted to the development of new statistical techniques, application of statistical methods to the different fields of agriculture and the improvement of existing agricultural statistics by increasing their scope, reliability, timeliness, content and coverage.

Although, there has been in recent years commendable progress in the field of agricultural statistics, the Government is fully aware that there is yet considerable work to be done, to cope up with ever-increasing demands of the Five-Year Plans. It would, therefore, be necessary not only to expand considerably the Statistical Section in the Department of Agriculture, but also to strengthen the Department of Animal Husbandry with a Statistical Section, as there is considerable paucity of data about livestock and their products.

I note that you have a very interesting, though heavy, agenda to go through during these three days.

The two symposia, one on the 'Problems of Estimation of National Income from Agriculture', and the other on 'Chinese Methods of Agriculture', as well as the popular lecture on 'Co-operative Farming' are all of topical interest.

I have every hope that your deliberations will prove a great help to the Government in its task of improvement of agricultural statistics.

The Local Reception Committee has arranged visits to some of the important local institutions and also a cultural programme. I trust, you will enjoy them as a refreshing change at the end of your day's arduous work.

I wish your deliberations all success and hope your stay in Poona will be pleasant enough to induce you to come to us more often.

Once again, I offer you all a hearty welcome and request our Chief Minister to inaugurate the Session.