
"GROW MORE FOOD" IN COCHIN

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Introduction.—Rice is the staple food of the people of Cochin. For a long time past Cochin has been a deficit area in the matter of the food supply of its people and has been dependant on the rest of India and latterly on Burma also for its requirements of paddy and rice. How far dependant and how precarious the position was, were not realised until the closing years of world war No. 1 when there was Government control of imports from Burma owing to temporary shortage of shipping. The restrictions on imports of rice and paddy from Burma imposed by the Government of India brought about a first class crisis in the food situation of Cochin and it was only through an extraordinary effort on the part of the Government and the people of Cochin and the good offices of the Government of India that the crisis could be got over. But these imports from Burma never ceased altogether; only the quota allowed to Cochin was much less than her normal requirements. The rice and paddy imported under this quota supplemented by the purchase and even commandeering of locally grown paddy just, but only just, enabled Cochin to tide over the crisis. A sort of control had to be exercised over the distribution of the available paddy and rice.

The statistics of production and consumption collected then revealed that the rice produced in the State would be just sufficient to feed the people of Cochin for about 6½ months only in a year and that for the remaining 5½ months Cochin would be dependant on imports from the rest of India and Burma. The population of Cochin was then about 10 lakhs and there was only 2 lakhs of acres of land under rice. The population was increasing by about 2 per cent every year, while the area under rice remained almost stationary. The area of the State was only about 1,480 square miles. Reserve Forests covered about 600 square miles of this area. Another 50 square miles were taken up by backwaters and lagoons. Only about 800 square miles remained for a population exceeding a million.

It was realised even at that time that under these conditions the State could never hope to become self-sufficient in regard to its food supply. Though the true position of agriculture in the economy of the State was appreciated early enough and successive rulers and the Government of Cochin have always evinced the keenest interest in agriculture and the well-being of its agricultural population, it was probably not realised until 1918 how near the brink Cochin stood in the matter of the food supply of its people.

The lesson of 1918 immediately bore fruit. With a view to make the State self-sufficient in the matter of food supply, an investigation was started towards bringing in more waste lands under cultivation particularly by the disafforestation of reserves not required for forest purposes. A preliminary selection of the blocks to be excluded was made by the Tahsildars. An experienced Officer of the Forest Department was placed on special duty with a view to determine whether there was any objection from the forest point of view to their being excluded and assigned. He took two years to complete

the investigation. On his recommendation an extent of about 20,000 acres of reserve forest land mostly on the fringes of existing cultivation was decided to be excluded from reserved forest and made available for food crop cultivation.

Simultaneously with the decision to make more waste lands available for cultivation, it was also decided that schemes for the improvement of existing sources of irrigation and for the construction of new ones should be taken up. The Department of Agriculture was also directed to investigate the possibilities of more intensive cultivation by means of better manuring, selection of seeds, rotation of crops, etc.

So long as agricultural products were fetching good prices everything seemed smooth-sailing. New lands that were made available for cultivation were taken up by the people as soon as they were excluded. After the experience of 1918, there was almost a fascination for land and hunger for more and more land to cultivate. But with the economic depression that began in 1929, the enthusiasm began to wane. Soon, there was no demand for land and no enthusiasm for cultivation. In view of the very low prices of agricultural produce the ryot could not be shaken out of his lethargy. Even the Government had either to give up or postpone some of these more ambitious irrigation projects on the ground of finance. Of the 20,000 acres of virgin forest land made available for cultivation, only about 12,000 acres had so far been disposed of and brought under some form of cultivation. No purchasers could be found for the remaining 8,000 acres in spite of every possible concession held out to prospective purchasers. This state of affairs continued till the very eve of the Japanese Occupation of Burma. The war in Europe had left the people of Cochin in common with the people of the rest of India almost untouched. But Pearl Harbour and the events that subsequently followed culminating in the Japanese Occupation of Burma rudely shook them out of their lethargy. With the complete cessation of imports from Burma, it soon became apparent that Cochin will have to face a serious shortage of rice. Prices of food stuffs began to rise. Along with the measures to control the rise in prices and the forces of demand and supply it had to be seriously thought of how best to conserve the existing resources and find out new ones. The imperative need of the hour was to increase the food resources of the State.

The Japanese Occupation of Burma was complete by January, 1942. In March of that year the Diwan convened a conference of the Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development, the Secretary to Government and the Heads of Departments most directly concerned with the subject. The conference decided on the following measures.

(a) Every effort should be made to provide additional land for food crop cultivation. So far as State owned lands were concerned, it was decided that the Conservator of Forests should be instructed to make available for immediate leasing all areas within the reserved forests of the State which have not been excluded for purposes of cultivation and which were suitable for the cultivation of paddy of all kinds including Hill paddy and other food crops such as tapioca, bananas, etc. It was also decided to take steps to make available for cultivation all these lands which, though not intended for cultivation and assignment could be temporarily made available for raising food crops, more especially hill paddy.

(b) The Diwan Peishkar was directed to make available for leasing all available areas in forest exclusions, porambokes in the possession of the Revenue Department and available portions of village reserves and cattle grazing grounds after reservation of sufficient extents for the use of the villagers and their livestock.

(c) To deal with lands in private possession suitable for cultivation of food crops but not actually cultivated, a general notice would be issued calling upon all holders of such lands to put such lands to cultivation if it was not essentially required for other purposes. Power would be taken where necessary to compel land-holders to cultivate food crops on all such lands.—

(d) It was decided that State lands available for cultivation under the scheme should be leased out for three years at very low rates of rent, the lessees being accorded preferential treatment, wherever possible when the question of the assignment of the land is taken up by Government. Rent would be charged at the rate of 8 annas per acre for parambas and Rs. 2 per acre in the case of nilams.

(e) Advances not exceeding Rs. 15 per acre may be granted to the lessees in cases of absolute necessity to enable them to start immediate cultivation. A sum of Rs. 25,000 was set apart for the purpose. The advance will be re-payable in three annual instalments but in case of default, it was made recoverable in a lump. Arrears of advances and rent were made recoverable as if they were arrears of Land Revenue.

(f) Applications for leases in a village were to be disposed of on the recommendation of a Village Committee of three members appointed by the Hon. Minister and consisting of the Panchayath President, the President of the Co-operative Society if any, and one or two leading non-officials.

(g) The Agricultural Department will make advances of seeds and plants in deserving cases, seeds and plants being stocked at various centres for distribution. The Agricultural Department will give advice and assistance to cultivators in regard to the growing of food crops in particular areas and will publish leaflets on the subject.

(h) In order to encourage the cultivation of paddy occasional double crop charges will be remitted for the duration of the war, commencing with the year 1118.

The following paragraphs describe the steps taken in pursuance of the food production drive, especially how the decisions made at the Conference were implemented.

A. Leases of Government Lands

In order to give speedy effect to these proposals, a Department of Food Production was organised under a Commissioner with a field staff and an office staff. The Commissioner was given plenary powers of leasing lands in consultation with the Hon. Minister, the Diwan Peishkar or the Conservator of Forests in necessary cases. In the interests of administrative convenience, it was found better to entrust the Conservator of Forests with the leasing of cultivable reserved forest areas. The Village Committees and the Food Production Department were to confine themselves to the leasing of other lands at the disposal of the Government.

A preliminary selection of the areas to be leased was made by the Food Production Commissioner with the help of the Food Production Tahsildars and the Special Parvathiams. A list of the survey numbers thus selected was published in successive issues of the Gazette and applications were invited by publication in the Gazette and some of the daily news-papers, from prospective lessees. The applications for leases were to be presented either to the Village Committees or direct to the Food Production Commissioner, who would of course take the advice of the Committees on all applications received by him direct.

The areas selected comprised the following categories of lands.—

(1) Forest Exclusions originally made available for assignment but which had not yet been leased or assigned. There was no forest area in the Cranganur Taluk and hence no exclusions. In the Cochin—Kanayannur Taluk forest exclusions were confined to the single village of Malayattur and very little of it remained unoccupied in the Kurisumudi block and the original Teak Plantation area. Similar was the case with the forest exclusions in the villages of the Nemmara Firka of the Chittur Taluk. In the Chittur Firka a small extent of Kanom exclusions remained yet to be disposed of in Moolathura Village. The case was more or less the same in the Talappally Taluk where the areas originally surveyed and demarcated for exclusions were, as the result of a later decision not included in the general exclusion scheme but were to be excluded only if there was actual demand for the lands either as protective margins or for cultivation. In the eastern villages of the Mukundapuram and Trichur Taluks, however, there were large areas of forest exclusions some of which were already under occupation but most of which was virgin waste covered with dense undergrowth.

(2) *Village reserves and cattle-grazing grounds.*—In normal times these are intended to subserve the needs of the agriculturists for leaves for green manure, grazing for their cattle and small timber for being converted into agricultural implements. Paramount considerations of Food Supply demanded, however, that portions of these areas should be made available for raising food crops. It was decided after careful consideration that roughly one-fourth of these areas should be reserved for common benefit and that the balance alone made available for leases.

(3) *Railway "A" and "B" class Lands.*—There were Railway "B" class (temporarily occupied) lands along the entire length of the Shoranur-Cochin Railway. Though small narrow strips of lands, these were eminently suited for paddy cultivation, being mostly ditches formed by the removal of earth for embankment works. A considerable portion of these "B" class lands had already been relinquished by the Railway Company as no longer required for Railway purposes, and were revenue porambokes at the disposal of Government. The Railway Company also agreed to place immediately at the disposal of Government as much of the remaining extent as possible, consistently with the Railway interests.

The Railway Company also agreed to place temporarily at the disposal of Government such portions of the Railway "A" class (permanently occupied) lands as could be spared on condition that they would be reverted to the Railway Company, whenever required for Railway purposes. In leasing such

lands preference was to be given to Railway employees. But owing to difficulties about jurisdiction, the Railway authorities were asked to grant leases of such lands themselves.

(4) *Accretion lands and pozhils.*—There were accretion along the entire length of the Vypeen coast. Some of these accretions were only in the process of forming while others had already become terra firma. Pozhils or shallow portions of the backwaters which could be made to yield a crop of paddy if proper embankments could be provided to prevent ingress of salt water were also available in the backwater Villages of the Cochin-Kanayannur and Cranganur Taluks. Realising, however, that the reclamation and cultivation of such lands called for the investment of a considerable amount of capital and the return could not be expected immediately, applications for leases of such lands were discouraged. The question was, however, taken up for detailed investigation by Government with a view to ascertain the extent of lands that could be reclaimed and the financial commitment involved. It was thought that Government would be in a better position to attend to the preliminary stages of the works in connection with the reclamations.

(5) *Forest lands.*—The Forest Department was in possession of area consisting of scrub-jungle devoid of tree-growth. There was also area expected to be cleared for "taungya" cultivation in time for the planting season. These lands were made available for temporary cultivation only as they included portions of Reserved forests which could not be permanently excluded for assignment but would have to be resumed for reafforestation according to the exigencies of the Department. It was made distinctly clear in the case of these lands that the right of temporary cultivation granted did not carry with it any preferential claims for subsequent assignment and that the areas should be relinquished whenever called upon by the Department to do so.

(6) *Tank beds, beds of irrigation and drainage channels and margins of public roads.*—Many tanks and irrigation and drainage channels which were in a silted up condition and which could not serve their original purpose in their then condition were made available for food crop cultivation. So also, margins of public roads, especially those where ditches had been formed by the removal of earth for road works.

(7) *Public Office Compounds and Gardens attached to Government buildings* were also, brought under cultivation by being leased out to the menial staff of these offices at concession rates.

These categories almost exhausted the lands at the disposal of Government which could be made available for cultivation without serious detriment to public interests. All that remained was public thoroughfares and open spaces, irrigation and drainage canals and tanks and rivers. With the announcement of the Government's decision to make more waste lands available for cultivation there was a general scramble for lands and indiscriminate occupation and clearing with a view to get preferential treatment at the time of leasing. This was countered by the decision to limit occupation and leasing to a maximum of 5 acres to an individual. The object aimed at was to make Government lands available for cultivation to as many as possible, selected from all communities and to eliminate mere land-grabbers. Care was

also taken to see that bonafide agriculturists got preferential treatment. It was also made clear that occupation of porambokes essentially needed for public purposes would not be countenanced.

Leases up to maximum of 5 acres to an individual were granted on the stipulation that the leases will terminate and the lands revert to the Sirkar whenever needed for public purposes earlier. Subject only to this condition the leases were to run for a term of 3 years to enable the ryot to get the full fruits of his labour and investment. Rent at the rate of annas 8 per acre for parambas and Rs. 2 per acre in the case of niloms was made payable either in advance or along with each year's harvest. The land was to be utilised only for some form of food crop cultivation. Sub-leasing and also transfer of the leases was prohibited. Applications for leases under the Food Production Scheme were exempted from the liability to stamp duty, so also the stamp duty and registration fees payable on documents evidencing such leases.

Outright assignment of big blocks of Government lands was kept in abeyance for the duration of leases under the Food Production Scheme except in cases where there was a guarantee that such assignment would immediately result in the promotion of food crop cultivation. The lands reserved for the colonisation of the educated unemployed under the collective farming Scheme were also thrown open for such leases.

The applications for leases were disposed of with the greatest expedition. The Village Committees did yeoman service in this direction. In the large majority of cases all that had to be done was to regularise the occupation already made.

By the time the Food Production Department ceased to function as a separate entity more than 11,000 acres of Government lands were given on lease. Nearly 15,000 applications for lease had been received. Leases were granted in as many as 6,500 cases, the extent given on lease ranging from $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre to 5 acres.

When the Food Production Department was abolished the remaining work connected with that Department was thrown on the Revenue Department and applications for leases continued to be disposed of by the normal Revenue staff. An additional extent of about 2,000 acres has since been granted on leases by the Department. Action is also being taken to take back the lands from the lessees who have failed to cultivate them and to give them to those who are prepared to raise food crops on them.

Advances to lessees of Government lands.—In order to enable the lessees under the Food Production Scheme to start immediate cultivation advances not exceeding Rs. 15 per acre according to the nature of the locality were given. Most of the forest exclusions was covered by dense undergrowth. There was some form of inferior jungle wood species in many of the village reserves. The undergrowth had to be cleared and the branches of the trees at least had to be lopped off before the areas could be made fit for cultivation. Some levelling was also necessary and seeds had to be purchased. Most of the lessees were poor agriculturists who but for the advance made by Government would not have been able to do anything immediately on the lands. Arrangements were also made through the Agricultural Department for

advances of seeds and advances for the purchase of Agricultural implement in necessary cases.

The advances made to the lessees of Government lands through the Agency of the Food Production Department amounted to nearly Rs. 17,000 and resulted in a large portion of the forest exclusions and village reserves being brought under immediate cultivation. Including forest areas leased by the Conservator of Forests but excluding the hill paddy area an extent of about 13,000 acres of Government land has so far been leased out under the Food Production Scheme. It is by no means claimed that all this area is brought under food crop cultivation or that the entire extent is under any cultivation. In the first year of the lease, however, about 75 per cent of the leased areas was brought under cultivation mainly under paddy and tapioca. But after this, enthusiasm appears to have waned mainly due to the indifferent results of the first year's cultivation. The season was very unfavourable for hill paddy cultivation. There was shortage of labour and what little there remained could be procured only under very unfavourable conditions. Tapioca failed to prove attractive owing to unfavourable market conditions. When the Hill Paddy Scheme sponsored by Government and worked with all the resources that Government could command did not prove such a success as was anticipated, it is probably no wonder that private individuals with limited resources drew back with apprehension from the risky undertaking. It was found that large areas were left uncultivated in the second year of the lease. In several cases lessees have relinquished their holdings. Steps have been taken to re-lease all lands that have been left uncultivated. In these cases in which such neglect was found to be wilful, steps have been taken to penalise the lessees for non-cultivation.

B. Measures to enforce Cultivation on Private Waste Lands

When Government were doing so much to promote food crop cultivation they could not view with equanimity large areas of privately owned lands being left as waste. Before resorting to coercive measures, however, it was decided to appeal to the good sense and patriotic duty of the land owning class to contribute their mite towards the success of the Government's Scheme. The least that they could have done was to see to it that every bit of land owned by them was brought under cultivation. A notice in the following form was issued calling upon all holders of lands suitable for cultivation of food crops but not actually cultivated, to bring such lands under cultivation if they were not essentially required for other purposes.

"Whereas it is necessary for maintaining supplies essential to the life of the community during the period of the War that all lands in the State held by pattadars or Pandaravaka or Puravaka tenures of any kind and suitable for production of food crops, should be brought under cultivation, all land-holders and persons in possession of lands are hereby required to bring under cultivation lands in their possession or control for the production of food crops of some kind or other before the 30th of Edavam 1117."

2. They are further informed that Government would, on their failure to comply with this request take appropriate steps to take possession of such lands under the Defence of India Act and Rules as made applicable to Cochin

by Proclamation VIII of 1115 or otherwise, on such terms as Government may deem fit.

3. Food Crops for the purposes of the notice shall include paddy, ragi, tapioca, bananas and any other articles which form an item in the "dietary" of the citizens of this State.

4. Such of the land-holders and persons in possession of lands as are not able to cultivate these lands either directly or through others, may surrender such lands temporarily to the Government for a period of 3 years on or before the 15th of Edavam 1117. In the event of Government accepting the surrender the land revenue assessment payable in respect thereof will be remitted for the said period of 3 years. At the end of the three years the land would revert to the possession of the person who surrendered the land subject to the liability to pay future land tax and subject to all other rights and liabilities, as they stood on the date of surrender to Government".

With a view to safeguard the interests of people who might be compelled to lease their lands to private parties to bring them under cultivation it was provided by Proclamation XVIII of 1117 that lessees of such lands shall not be entitled to claim value for the improvements effected by them provided the leases were granted with the previous approval in writing of the Commissioner for Food Production. The Commissioner for Food Production was also authorised to requisition private waste lands under Section 75 of the Defence of India Rules as made applicable to Cochin. The power to requisition was however, kept in abeyance for considerations of administrative convenience.

Advances to private land-holders.—Representations having been received for financial assistance from private land-owners to enable them to bring waste lands under cultivation it was decided to grant loans in cases where private lands were newly brought under cultivation and where the persons concerned would, but for the loan, be unable to undertake the work. Each applicant was to be given a loan of Rs. 75 provided he would bring under cultivation a minimum extent of 5 acres of land. If the extent of land was less the loan would be proportionately reduced. The loan was repayable in three equal annual instalments in the harvest season. A sum of Rs. 3,000 was disbursed as loans to private cultivators. This was besides the usual agricultural improvements loans granted by the Department.

In spite of the appeal made to the owners and occupiers of private waste lands to bring all such lands under cultivation four to five thousand acres of cultivable lands registered in the name of private individuals were seen left uncultivated. In view of the extreme urgency of the food production question it was realised that some amount of coercion was necessary. The initial step taken was the decision to levy penal assessment on such lands. By Proclamation XIX of 1118 power was taken for Government to levy an annual penal assessment not exceeding 25 times the land revenue assessment on the lands left uncultivated without reasonable excuse being shown to the satisfaction of the Diwan Peishkar. The Proclamation also provided for an opportunity being given to the owner or occupier of such land to show cause why the land was left uncultivated.

Incidentally the Proclamation provided also for the penalisation of cultivation of sugar-cane on lands till then used for food crop cultivation. It was

observed that owing, probably, to its more remunerative character sugar cane was replacing paddy in some of the eastern villages of the Chittur Taluk and in Malayattur village of the Cochin-Kanayannur Taluk. On paramount considerations of public interest this tendency had to be curbed. The legislation provided for penalising the planting of sugar cane in any land on which paddy used to be cultivated prior to the first day of Chingam 1118.

Authority was conferred on the Diwan Peishkar to enforce these penal provisions. Nearly a thousand notices have so far been issued to the owners and occupiers of cultivable land left uncultivated. In all those cases in which it was shown that the lands were left uncultivated either owing to causes beyond the control of the owner or occupier or on the ground that the lands were required for other essential purposes such as for grazing and growing green manure the defaults were condoned. Penalty was actually levied in about 300 cases affecting an extent of about 1200 acres. In most of the cases the levy of penalty had the desired effect. The lands were subsequently brought under cultivation and the collection of penalty was waived in most of these cases.

Government realise that there are still many cases in which lands fit for cultivation are left uncultivated by their owners or occupiers on insufficient grounds. The levy of penalty is only the initial step to bring home to them their responsibilities in the matter. When the State is passing through such a crisis in regard to its food supply Government will not hesitate to resort to more severe measures to bring under cultivation every bit of available lands. As citizens of this State the owners and occupiers of such lands have a patriotic duty to perform in this direction. If they wilfully continue to neglect this duty they will have only themselves to thank if they force Government to dispossess them of such land and give them to others who are willing and even anxious to cultivate them.

C. Direct cultivation by Government

Hill Paddy Scheme.—It was at the suggestion of Mr. H.J. Walmesly M.L.C., an experienced European planter of the State that Government took up the Scheme of hill paddy cultivation. It was he who pointed out the possibilities of large scale production of paddy in the forest areas of the State. He had himself experimented with the cultivation of paddy and tapioca over 300 acres of rubber area throughout which the trees had been destroyed in the Cyclone of May 1941 and which were being prepared for replanting rubber in 1943. It was not his intention to grow these crops on a commercial basis but to sell the produce as near cost price as possible and if any profit should result, to use it for the general good of the estate employees or for contribution to the local war fund.

Government took up the Scheme immediately. An area of 15,000 acres of forest lands in the Kormala, Muppiliam, Ollookara, Killannur and Nelluvaya blocks together was proposed to be cleared and cultivated with Hill paddy and crops like tapioca and ragi. The work of clearance of the forest areas commenced on 1st December, 1942. The undergrowth was first cut which was followed by clear felling of trees. Owing to shortage of axe-men it was found impossible to carry on clear felling on the whole of the area and the expedient of partial felling coupled with girdling or lopping off of branches of the trees

was resorted to in some of the blocks. By the end of March 1943, cutting of undergrowth had spread over 10,000 acres in which clear felling or girdling, pruning and partial felling were over in 7,000 acres. The work of clearance continued till the end of May 1943 and a total extent of 12,000 acres was cleared. The work had to be stopped there as the whole attention of the department had to be concentrated, by that time, on paddy sowing.

Burning in the cleared areas was started in March 1943, but owing to the quick and heavy Secondary growth which came up a proper burn could not be obtained over the whole area. A second weeding followed by picking, heaping and burning had to be done before sowing. Terracing and contour trenching were attempted on a small scale in some of the blocks but these could not be carried out extensively for want of time. Wherever this was done it was found to be very effective to check the soil erosion along the slopes.

The total extent put under paddy was 5,350 acres. The extent that could be covered under paddy depended upon the availability of the land cleared and found suitable for paddy, availability of seeds, and availability of labour during the limited period through which paddy sowing had to be rushed through. The chief difficulty was with regard to stocking of adequate quantities of paddy seeds. Hill cultivation required special types of seeds like the "peruvaka" and "Modan" whose stock was limited in the country. As a result of vigorous efforts, 12,000 paras of seed were purchased and stocked for sowing.

Sowing commenced with the first rains of April, but it had to be suspended after a couple of days for want of rains. Sowings were resumed on the recommencement of the rains after a period of 3 weeks. By the middle of May 2,000 acres were sown with "Peruvaka" paddy. Heavy rains continued and interfered with sowing but sowing was continued against these odds till the end of June.

The period of sowing extended over 2½ months. The season was favourable for sowing till the end of May, but the sowing work was continued for another month more unmindful of the risk and with the hope that at least a second rate crop could be obtained from these vergin lands. Out of the total extent of 5350 acres under paddy only 2000 acres could be sown in the right time.

Tapioca was planted on an area of 4050 acres. This was the next most important crop after paddy. Out of the total area of 4050 acres only 300 acres could be planted as Meda-kolli (early planting May, June). The rest was planted as Karkidaka Kolli (late planting July and August) Planting was done in pits 5 feet apart.

Other crops raised were Chama, Ragi and pulses like redgram, black gram and horse gram sesamum and vegetables. Redgram was raised as a mixed crop along with the modan paddy and its seed was sown along with the paddy seed. Horse gram and sesamum were taken in rotation with the modan paddy after the harvest of the paddy crop. The area under these crops had to be very much restricted for want of favourable season. Vegetables, mainly cucumbers were raised in the midst of the paddy crop. They were also cultivated in separate

plots of limited extent. Exotic vegetables like the radish and carrot were also tried in a small extent.

From the time of clearance till the end of sowing there were on an average 5000 coolies at work in the several blocks. The scheme was under the charge of the Superintendent of Hill Paddy till its amalgamation with the department of Agriculture. There was an Assistant Superintendent to assist him in the Supervision of field work.

There were 9 hill paddy blocks of which 7 were major blocks and 2 smaller ones. There was a Unit Commander for each of the major blocks who was in charge of the block, each of the small blocks was placed in charge of the Supervisor. There were altogether for the 9 blocks 7 Unit Commanders, 30 Supervisors, 80 Sardars 40 Maistries and 7 Clerks. A Supervisor was intended for every 200 coolies and a Sardar or Maistry for every 50 coolies.

At the beginning recruitment of labour was done on the same model as for the Assam Labour about 1200 coolies were thus recruited and sent for work in the Muppliam block. They were encamped in the block in temporary sheds where they were provided with ration and medical aid. The recruited labour dwindled in strength and ultimately the work had to be carried on with the local labour.

Two fair price shops were working for the benefit and convenience of the coolies and staff in the interior blocks of Muppliam and Kormala.

Two dispensaries were run with a medical officer in charge of them in the interior and highly malarial blocks, one each in Muppliam and Kormala.

The following quantities of food were produced.

<i>Name of Produce</i>	<i>Quantities</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Paddy	75,307 paras	Expected yield was not obtained on account of adverse season and late sowing. The yield obtained was mainly from the 2000 acres of timely sown paddy.
Other Cereals (Chama and Ragi)	509 paras	Owing to the very low prices and lack of demand the crop could not be harvested. In the consequent delay in harvest nearly 3 times the quantity harvested was lost in wilderness by decay and damage from wild animals
Pulses Black gram, Horse gram and Red gram.	3839 paras	
Tapioca Gingelly Vegetables	2000 tons 142½ paras Rs. 1,200 worth of vegetables	

Direct cultivation of the hill paddy area by Government was done only for one year. It was considered by Government that Government Supervision and Departmental execution had not produced the desired result and that the hill paddy area could best be leased out for cultivation. It was ordered by the end of 1943, that all the hill paddy area should be given on lease.

Besides the 12000 acres cleared and worked by the Department 8000 acres more of fresh forest lands were intended to be cleared by the Forest Department and handed over for leasing. Out of the total of 20,000 acres declared for leasing only an extent of 5880 acres were immediately available for leasing during the year 1944. The remaining area was either not cleared completely or made free from timber, fuel and the standing tapioca crop of the department.

A very large response came from the public by way of application for land. There were in all 3005 applicants and a total demand for 47,008 acres. But by the end of March when the lands were actually allotted and were ready to be given, there were lessees to take up 1100 acres only. Fresh leasing was therefore done for the unoccupied areas and ultimately 3701 acres of the area were leased out. Nearly 1000 acres of the immediately available area could not be leased for want of lessees.

Out of the total area of 3701 acres leased out 1972 acres were cultivated with paddy and other crops were raised on 673 acres. The results of cultivation by the lessees have caused greater disappointment than the results of departmental cultivation in the previous year. The season was unfavourable for hill paddy cultivation Departmental cultivation in the previous year suffered from untimely and excessive rains. Cultivation by the lessees suffered for want of rains. In all about 14,000 paras of paddy only were obtained by the lessees.

The scheme was launched at a critical period when food ceased to be an article obtainable for mere cash. It had to be produced before it could be purchased. Irrespective of the risk and financial commitment production alone was aimed at. The scheme itself was a novel one for nowhere in India has such a piece of agricultural work involving clearance of forests on such a gigantic scale been rushed through in so limited a time.

The experience gathered both from departmental cultivation and cultivation by the lessees has shown that hill paddy cultivation is an extremely risky undertaking. The cultivation can become successful only under very favourable circumstances of weather and rainfall.

The heavy incidence of Malaria, difficulties of accessibility to these interior regions and scarcity of labour for work in the regions and excessive damage to crops both from wild growth and animals, are rendering hill cultivation very difficult and expensive. It is worth attempting only when the exigency of the hour calls forth such a risky undertaking.

D: Government Help to Agriculturists

A very effective propaganda was carried on by the Officers of the Agricultural Department and through the agency of the National War Front. Inspiring articles and leaflets were published and lectures and demonstrations were given in association with the village committees, Co-operative Societies and Panchayaths.

Seeds of paddy and other cereal and tapioca-seeds were issued on loan by the Agricultural department on an extensive scale repayable in cash at the time of the harvest. During the last three years seeds and planting materials

to the value of Rs. 32341-0-0 were issued to deserving ryots on the recommendations of the local village Committee.

The ryots were persuaded to grow food crops in the places of mere commercial crops like cotton, ground nut and sugar cane.

A vigorous campaign about manuring of paddy and other food crops was conducted all over the State. Manure depots were started under the auspices of all the Panchayaths. We have now 85 Panchayath Manure depots operating in the State in addition to 6 Taluk depots and another half-a dozen depots under Co-operative Societies. Manures from the Panchayath depots are issued on credit to the ryots. In order to encourage the ryots to use more manure Government have offered a subsidy of 25 per cent in the selling price of all manures sold from the depots. The result is very encouraging: Sales of Manure rose by leaps and bounds. From Rs. 5,500 in the year 1117 (1941-1942) the sales of manures rose to Rs. 20,000 in 1118 and 1,25,000 in 1119. The important manures sold are ground nut cake, fish, bone meal and ammonium Sulphate. Recently a supply of 250 tons of ammonium Sulphate has been promised to the State by the Government of India at a concession rate and as a consequence the State is offering to ryots a further subsidy of 25 per cent on the stock and it is hoped that this will have a lasting effect on the agriculturists of the State by creating in them an increasing faith in the use of manufactured fertilisers in larger and larger quantities year after year, thus increasing the productive capacity of the soil in all nooks and corners of the State removing from them their conservative bias against the use of manufactured fertilisers. A vigorous campaign is also conducted by the Agricultural Department in popularising the use of Municipal composts and also in opening compost pits in the holdings of the ryots themselves.

One big difficulty experienced by the ryots was the shortage of iron and steel for the manufacture of agricultural implements. The prices of iron and steel rose to unknown heights and it became difficult for the ryots to purchase implements except at exorbitant prices. The offer made by the Government of India for the supply of defectives and cuttings of iron and steel for the manufacture of agricultural implements was therefore taken up and indents were forwarded to the Government of India for the supplies necessary for the State. The State has now begun to get limited supplies of iron and steel for agricultural implements at control prices.

Another difficulty experienced by the people was with regard to cattle. The State was getting its supplies of cattle both for work and for milk from the neighbouring districts of the Madras Province. But with the imposition of the ban on the exports of cattle from the Madras Presidency by the Madras Government, the State found all its supplies cut off. Negotiations were conducted with the Government of Madras and later with the Government of India and Mysore as a result of which the Government of Madras have now permitted an import of 1200 cattle per year from the Coimbatore District to the Cochin State.

The problem of milk supply also has assumed great importance and in order to cater to the increasing needs of the people the dairy at the Government Central Farm has been strengthened. A goat dairy consisting of

50 milking goats has also been started at the Central Farm to popularise the use of Goats' milk among the people.

A vigorous propaganda was conducted to push on with the cultivation of vegetables. Large quantities of seeds and seedlings of vegetables are now distributed from the Government Central Farm and every ryot advised to put some area under vegetables. In the demonstration conducted by the department and also in the village centres now opened under the auspices of the National War Front due prominence is given to vegetable cultivation. A scheme to run a fruit and vegetable farm of over 500 acres in the Nelliampathis has been undertaken by the Government.

The fruits of jack, mango and tamarind form an important item in the dietary of the people of the State. In order to conserve these resources these trees are not allowed to be cut for use as timber or fuel except under permits given by the Officers of the Agricultural Department. Vigorous propaganda is conducted to persuade the ryots to plant more and more fruit trees and to enable the ryots to get the required number of seedlings and grafts of fruit trees, large numbers of seedlings and grafts of fruit trees are now raised at the Government Central Farm.

In order to conserve the cattle population of the State Government have prohibited the slaughter of all cattle fit for agricultural or dairy purposes except under permits given by Veterinary Officers. Government are also following a very liberal policy in the issue of grants to Panchayaths and other institutions or private persons for the maintenance of stud bulls.

E. Improvement of Irrigation

Minor Irrigation.—The type of irrigation works taken up by the Government through the agency of the Panchayath Department under the "Grow More Food" Campaign may in general be classed as "Protection work" for instance there are large areas of single crop paddy lands on high ground, or on the slopes of hill, which depend entirely on monsoon storm water from the hills, diverted through high level channels by diversion arrangements by the agriculturists themselves. These lands are often adversely affected by scarcity of water, due to the crude diversion arrangements during scarce rainfall periods. This defect was remedied by the construction of pucca masonry diversion weirs across Valleys with necessary surplus flood arrangements. This ensured adequate supply for these single crop high level lands and in addition when the south-west and north-east monsoons are both very good even second crops are being cultivated here. Also, by the construction of such diversion weirs and opening out channels at high levels existing dry lands or parambas as they are called are converted into single and sometimes even double crop lands.

A second type of works taken up by the Panchayat Department was the "Tanks Renovation" works. Most of these tanks served double crop lands, the first crop being more or less dependent on the south-west monsoon and the second depending on the combined effects of the north-east monsoon and storage in these tanks for the latter half of the crop period. In the past, many of these tanks had been completely neglected resulting in the bed silting up and agriculturists were often found cultivating the beds of these silted up

tanks. One of the chief reasons for the frequent failure of the second or mundakan crop in the State was the total neglect of these storage tanks. Quite a considerable number of these tanks were restored by the clearance of silt and construction of permanent sluices to regulate the draw off. It is expected to continue the programme of minor irrigation works until all these tanks are properly restored.

A third type of work undertaken was the construction of the usual typical small storage reservoirs by throwing masonry or earthen dams across narrow valleys with necessary draw off sluices and surplus arrangements. These reservoirs have fair sized catchment areas and store up the south-west and north-east monsoon run off to ensure an adequate supply for the mundakan crops, of the Ayacuts served by these reservoirs. Several such small reservoirs have been constructed.

Another type is the construction of permanent masonry sluices to replace the temporary bunds put up by the agriculturists annually across storm water courses to head up water particularly during the second crop season—what are known as mundakan chiras. These temporary bunds were a constant source of worry to the agriculturists. They were liable to breach when the north-east monsoon was very heavy and had to be put up again at considerable cost, if the crops were not to suffer. The expenditure was ever recurring. The construction of masonry sluices will solve this difficulty and ensure adequate supply for the second crops. A number of such sluices have been put up.

Yet another type of work was the clearing up of and opening out of new drainage channels in the low level areas near the sea coast. During heavy monsoon these low level lands are very often submerged, causing damage to the monsoon crops due to want of effective drainage. This is remedied by deepening and widening existing drainage courses and by opening out fresh courses where none existed. In practice this work was found to be very effective, without being showy.

In the coastal areas affected by salt water ingress permanent masonry sluices have been constructed replacing the usual temporary sluice, with all their defects of leakage, etc., New bunds have also been put up enclosing large areas of single crop lands to ensure good protection against salt water ingress.

Nearly 300 items of minor irrigation works costing about 6 lakhs of rupees were undertaken during the last few years.

Major Irrigation Works.—The works undertaken through the agency of the Public Works Department were naturally more ambitious in scope. It was realised that some of the bigger scheme like the Chalakkudi Irrigation project, the Puthur river diversion scheme, the Thanikudam, (Naduthodu) reservoir scheme would open up large new areas for paddy cultivation and afford better irrigation facilities for existing cultivation. But they would necessarily take some time to complete. The scheme of converting single crop lands to double crop by affording better irrigation and drainage facilities was therefore taken up. It consisted mainly of diverting the waters of the streams to these lands during the 2nd crop season. This season is from the 25th August to 30th December. During this period there will be the normal north-east monsoon between October 10th and November 20th. One or two waterings will however be needed in September

and in early October and then again in the 1st 20 or 25 days in December. During the period when water will be required for the 2nd crop the flow in the stream is seen to be well in excess of the requirements. The Scheme therefore, attempted to bund up the rivers by the beginning of September according to requirements. These bunds are expected to be washed away when the regular north-east monsoon sets in and will have to be put up again early in December for the 2nd Period of the Irrigation. The following works were taken up and completed by the end of 1942.

1. Facilities were afforded to above 1600 acres of lands in Trichur, Talappalli, Mukundapuram and Cranganur Taluks to raise a second crop mundakan by putting up temporary bunds in the Puthenkad Stream, Peruparakulam, Kumaranchira padom in the Kurumali river at Manjamkuzhi and Streams in the Methala village. These bunds were put up in 1119 also.

2. The works done in the Puthur river in 1119 provided facilities for the conversion of above 1200 acres of single crop lands in Marathakara, Trikkur and Namminikkara villages into double crop besides securing water supply to the existing 150 acres of double crop lands. It was first thought that by the bunding up of the river there will be water only for the mundakan crop. But it has now been ascertained that there will be water for some puncha cultivation enabling a third crop being raised on a certain extent of the lands. Some puncha cultivation is actually going on in lands irrigated from the water stored by the bund.

3. Similarly, new canals and temporary bunds have been constructed across the Nelli thodu and the water directed to areas near the Keli thodu and about 1000 acres of Virippu lands have been newly converted to double crop. Attempts are being made to increase this mode of diversion, and the conversion of single crop lands to double crop wherever possible.

4. The second mode of converting lands to double crop is by the method of lift irrigation. In the year 1119 an experiment was tried of converting about 350 acres of Virippu lands in the Vynthala Padom into double crop by installing pumping sets.

5. An area of about 300 acres in Padinjara Chalakkudy and a similar area in Vynthala and about 200 acres more in Kadukutty in Kallur Vadakkummuri village situated by the side of the Chalakkudy river have had the benefit of the overflow of rich silt from the river during floods. Two crops are raised in those areas and for raising a third crop puncha 3 sets of engines two at each place have been installed to supply water by lift irrigation from the Chalakkudy river.

6. Similarly there is a block of 1200 acres in Desamangalam village using the waters of the Bharathapuzha. Three sets of pumping sets are proposed to be erected in this place each covering an area of 400 acres. The investigation for the installation of the engines is nearing completion. The difficulty is that a large amount will be required for the acquisition of the site required for the construction of the canal. The owners once promised to surrender the sites free of cost, but they now show reluctance. However, attempts are being made to persuade the parties to surrender the sites.

7. Schemes are under investigation to protect the existing wet lands from the ingress of salt water and from inundation by providing suitable drainage facilities.

The works for the protection of the Kari niloms to the extent of 400 acres lying in the Pallipuram village west of the Mala—Poyya road have been completed.

8. For protecting the Kari niloms to an extent of 735 acres in Amballur and Keecheri villages from the ingress of salt water, etc., works are in progress. By the completion of these works protection will have been afforded for the entire extent of Kari niloms in the State from Vettuvelli and Kango chira in the north to Puthenthodu in the south over a length of about 12 miles.

9. Works have been completed for protecting the paddy fields lying between Maradu and Kundannur desoms from the ingress of salt water. Besides protecting these lands from the influence of salt water the work has also enabled the conversion of 400 acres of single crop lands to double crop.

10. The existing single crop lands around the 2nd bridge of the Hill Palace Road comprising an area of about 200 acres in Elankulam and Poonithura villages are at present subject to ingress of salt water. It is proposed to construct an embankment just to the north of the Puthenthodu connecting the two high grounds on either side to protect these areas and thus converting them to double crop lands. The work has already been let on contract.

11. A scheme is under investigation for protecting about 200 acres of lands in the Tholur village, Trichur Taluk from inundation during floods.

12. The rain water which now flows through the low level fields in the Chowwara and Vadakkumbhagam villages into the river and is wasted, is proposed to be made available for the conversion of 150 acres of Virippu lands on the Vadakkumbhagam village and 70 acres in Chowwara village. Besides this the work will also ensure water supply to about 150 acres of mundakan lands in other villages. This work has also been let on contract.

13. The Chalakkudy river diversion scheme, the investigation of which is over is the most important irrigation project. The scheme is estimated to benefit 22,900 acres of lands as detailed below.

New conversions	..	10,900 acres
Single crop to double crop	..	4,000 acres
Existing double crop	..	8,000 acres
	..	<u>22,900 acres</u>

The scheme is ready for execution. It is pending settlement of the riparian question with the Travancore Government.

14. The Nadathodu Scheme which is under investigation is intended for the conversion of about 4,000 acres of dry lands to wet.

15. The works of improvements to the Kumbalathara Eri in the Chittur Taluk which were held up on account of disputes with the Madras Government have now been ordered to be taken up. The works when completed will ensure adequate supplies of irrigation water to a very large extent of wet lands now depending on a precarious supply in years of insufficient rainfall.

16. *Mullurkayal Irrigation Scheme.*—The extent of fresh water lakes in the State is about 20,000 acres. Paddy was being cultivated in the area for a long time past during the summer months. In olden days when the draining away of lakes for making them fit for cultivation was done by the use of Persian wheels worked by men, large parts of the lakes used to be left fallow serving as water reservoirs for irrigating the crop. With the advent of the engines for draining away the water every available extent of the lake began to be cultivated. The fallow lands which served as reservoirs disappeared with the result that crop failure began to be frequent owing to drought. The problem was being investigated for the last 20 years. The Mullurkayal Reservoir Scheme was taken up by Government on the eve of the Food Production Drive on the recommendation of the Irrigation Board to provide irrigation to the kole lands. A block of about 700 to 800 acres of the least productive of the kole lands was selected for the storage. The area was to be bunded and blocked soon after the north-east monsoon. If necessary water was to be pumped into the storage from the surplus water of the other portions of the lake. The owners of these lands were adequately compensated for temporary dispossession. The scheme was in the first instance to be tried as an experiment for 3 years. The cost of the scheme was recoverable from the owners and occupiers of the lands benefitting under it.

The scheme has now been tried for 2 years. In the year 1118, conditions were not favourable for judging about the success of the scheme. The unprecedented early rains of the south-west monsoon of that year led to inundation and consequent damage to the crop just before the harvest. The year 1119, clearly demonstrated the essential soundness of the scheme. The experiment is to be tried for another year before Government decide on the final steps to be taken to afford protection to the kole lands from frequent loss due to drought.

There are only a few among the works that Government programmed for execution for improving existing sources of irrigation and providing new ones. Government fully realise to what extent wet cultivation in the State is dependant on artificial irrigation and drainage. They are also awake to the urgency of the problem. Several schemes are now being considered, either by the Irrigation Advisory Board or are under investigation by the irrigation experts of the Public Works Department. Owing to the limited area available for being newly thrown open for cultivation the State has to concentrate on intensive cultivation if it is ever to reach the goal of self-sufficiency.

Private irrigations.—Several of the irrigation systems in the Chittur Taluk were and are still privately owned. Representations having been received by Government that the management of some of these private irrigation systems was not quite satisfactory owing to internal dissensions and that paddy cultivation was in danger of being abandoned owing to short supply or total stoppage of supply of irrigation from these systems. Government stepped in and assumed management of three of those irrigation systems to ensure equitable distribution of irrigation water from these systems in accordance with subsisting agreements. To conserve existing private irrigation sources, loans were offered to ryots in the Chittur Taluk to dig new eries and to improve existing ones. With a view to prevent the eries being converted into paddy lands it is proposed in the interests of existing wet cultivation to prohibit

such conversion, under heavy penalties. The bill introduced in the Legislative Council with this object is at present in the Committee Stage.

F. Concession to Ryots

Waiving of occasional double crop changes.—The Land Revenue system of the State proceeds on the assumption that the State is entitled to a share in the produce of the land. To this principle is traceable the provision in the Settlement Proclamation laying down the liability to pay assessment on all single crop paddy lands on which a second paddy crop is raised. With a view to encourage holders of such lands to take as many crops as possible Government have given up, for the duration of the War, the right to levy such assessment. It is estimated that this concession and the impetus of the high price of paddy coupled with the additional irrigation and drainage facilities provided by Government have enabled the ryots to raise a second crop of paddy on an extent of about 20,000 acres of land that was previously yielding only one crop.

Waiving of penal water cess in the Chittur Taluk.—Under the rules penal water cess usually at double the normal rates is charged for the unauthorised use of irrigation water from the Sirkar Irrigation Systems in the Chittur Taluk. Originally conceived as a purely revenue measure the rule had latterly to be enforced as a deterrent to prevent diversion of water to new conversion of parambas into niloms to the detriment of the sanctioned ayacut. As a Food Production measure the right to penal water cess was waived for the duration of the War.

Concession rate for lift Irrigation.—There are certain localities in the Chittur Taluk where direct irrigation is impossible owing to the lands being situated on a high level. Nevertheless, these lands could be cultivated with paddy if water could be taken to them by mechanical contrivances. Regard being had to the high cost of lifting water by mechanical contrivances it was ordered that only half the normal rates will be charged for taking water from Sirkar irrigation source, by installation of pumping sets.

LEGISLATION CONCEIVED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE RYOTS

The Cochin Verumpattomdars' Act and the Cochin Devaswam Verumpattomdars' Proclamation conferred permanent occupancy rights on a large class of tenants who were previously, in the eyes of the law, mere tenants-at-will. Though the ideas underlying these pieces of legislation were before the public for a long time prior to the initiation of the Food Production drive it was the impetus of the Food Production drive that precipitated this legislation.

G. Guarantee of Fair Price for Agricultural Products

In order to allay the apprehensions of a sudden and heavy fall in the price of Agricultural products soon after the cessation of hostilities the Government of India have announced in a Communique that steps are being taken to prevent such sudden and heavy fall and to guarantee a minimum fair price for agricultural products. This Government also took the necessary measures. That communique is an annexure to this review.

CONCLUSION

Government wish to conclude this review with an appeal and a warning. The experience of the last few years must have brought home to the citizens of the State how precarious the position in regard to its food supply is. Owing to the small area of the State the limited extent available for cultivation and the steady and rapid increase in population the State may find it hard to attain the goal of self sufficiency in regard to its food supply however much she may try to do it. However it by no means follows that we should relax our efforts to grow more food even after the present crisis is over. It is incumbent on us to make greater and ever greater efforts to get the maximum out of the soil. Government stand committed to the policy of making more and more land available for cultivation by throwing open forest and by reclamations from the backwaters. More and more irrigation facilities will be made available. The efforts to introduce and popularise scientific methods of cultivation will be continued through the officers of the Agricultural Department. The entire machinery of Government will be available for advice and guidances. But Government can only help; it can never replace the cultivator. It is up to the people of the State to co-operate heartily with the Government's efforts in this direction.

A very great responsibility in this matter attaches to the land owning classes of this State. Both as citizens of the State and as the monopolist holders of one of the most important sources of production, *viz.*, land, they should realise that they also hold a position of trustees for the public. The days of stern unmitigated individualism are over. The world that is dawning is one for co-operation for the common good. It is very doubtful whether there will be any place in the post-war world for people, who consider that private property is entirely for private benefit. The world that will be emerging out of this war will be a new world in many respects. Its motto is likely to be "each for all and all for each": They will be wise who, realising this, strive for the common good by making the land yield its utmost by every means in their power.

Office the Diwan Peishkar, }
Trichur, }
11th June 1945. }

A. MADHAVA PRABHU

Diwan Peishkar

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS NOTE, DATED 25th MAY 1942

Government Assurance to cultivators fall in Prices will be Prevented Scheme to buy food stuffs in contingency—Appeal for no slackening of production Drive

In connection with the Food Production Drive Inaugurated by the Government of India, the question has been raised whether the position of the cultivator may not be seriously affected if a nationwide effort towards increased food production leads to such an augmentation of output as to affect the saleability of the crops. It has been suggested that in the event of a sudden termination of hostilities the demand for food stuffs may fall off, leading to a deterioration in prices.

The Government of India regard the possibility of any such developments as remote. They would, therefore ask the cultivators to be on their guard as against any exaggeration of these fears and to go ahead with their plans for increased food production to meet the proved need of the hour. With the growing demand for food stuffs on all sides, there is little chance of any serious fall in prices in the immediate future.

Even after the cessation of hostilities, the demand for food stuffs from countries now devastated by war, is likely to increase rather than decrease. India herself with her growing population needs more food than she grows at present.

APPREHENSIONS

It is however likely that genuine apprehensions may be felt about the transport situation and certain temporary difficulties in the marketing of crops on that account, and it was to counter such apprehension that it was recommended at the Food Production Conference held in New Delhi on April 6, 1942, that "the Government of India should undertake, should success a contingency threaten, to buy such quantities of food stuffs in the open market as would prevent any serious deterioration in the level of prices."

The Government of India have accepted the principle of this recommendation, and the details of a scheme for giving effect to it are now being worked out in consultation with the interests concerned. Meanwhile, the Government of India desire to convey this assurance to the cultivators that should any developments take place which affect the saleability of the food crops, they will buy such quantities of food stuffs in the open market, whether in British India or in the Indian States as are calculated to prevent a serious fall in the prices. The Government of India are anxious to see that those who respond to their appeal for increased food production in this emergency do not suffer thereby.

(By order of the Government of Cochin)
RAMA VARMHA TAMPURAN
Secretary to Government

Government of India Press Notes, dated 3rd April 1943 and 25th May 1942 are herewith republished for general information.

Government of India Press Note, dated 3rd April 1943

The Price of Food stuffs: Government Assurance to Cultivators.

"The Grow More Food" Campaign which was launched last year resulted in the increase of the area cultivated with foodgrains by over eight million acres. The campaign is being pursued with the same vigour in the current year also and it is hoped to secure a still further increase in the area producing foodgrains by two million acres.

Apprehensions have been expressed that this increased production of food, coupled with the scheme for a Government monopoly of the export of major foodgrains beyond provincial and State Boundaries, may depress the prices of such grains to an Unremunerative level. The Government of India, however repeat the assurance which they gave to cultivators in May 1942.

The Government do not consider that there is any likelihood of a serious fall in prices resulting from the increased output of foodgrains which the "Grow more Food" Campaign aims at achieving. Even after the cessation of hostilities the demand for certain food stuffs from countries whose normal sources of supply have been interrupted by war conditions or enemy occupation is likely to be greater rather than less than it was before the war. Nor does Government control of the export of foodgrains mean that they will use their position to force down prices to the lowest possible level.

Further the Government of India desire to make it clear that if during the war and for the year thereafter the prices of foodgrains tend, as a result of the Food Production Drive, to fall below a level which would give a reasonable return to the cultivator, the Government of India will be prepared to intervene and buy at fair prices all foodgrains offered to them in the open market.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF HIS
HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF COCHIN

Revenue Department

**Legislative Council resolution—Prices of Agricultural
Products—Guarantee of**

Read 1. the following resolution tabled for discussion in the Legislative Council by Mr. A. V. Moothedan, M. L. C. "This council recommends to Government that in the interest of the Food Production Drive, in the State the Producers may be guaranteed reasonable prices for their agricultured products".

2. Letter No. M. 491/18, dated 23rd April 1943, from the Director of Food Supplies.

3. Letter No. A.1/17, dated 12th June 1943, from the Diwan Peishkar.

4. Sarvadhikariakar's communication G. No. 3051/18, dated 9th July 1943.

Order R4-7790/18, dated 22nd July 1943

Cochin is not a surplus area. The possibilities of over production of food materials as a result of the Food Production Drive and the consequent difficulties in the finding markets for these food stuffs are very remote. The possibilities of any sudden fall of the prices of foodgrains are also very remote.

2. The Government of India have issued press notes giving assurance to cultivators against any serious fall in the prices of foodgrains. They are published separately. Government consider that no further action is called for on the part of the Government at this stage.

(By order of the Government of Cochin)

RAMA VARMHA TAMPURAN

Secretary to Government