

INDIAN VETERINARY RESEARCH
INSTITUTE

DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

THE celebration of the diamond jubilee of the Indian Veterinary Research Institute, which was founded at Poona in 1889 and was transferred, in 1893, to Mukteswar, was held on March 11, 1951. Distinguished by the attendance of many workers from the different States of India, the gathering was addressed by the Hon. Shri K. M. Munshi, Minister for Food and Agriculture, who inaugurated, at the same gathering, the ninth meeting of the Animal Husbandry Wing of the Indian Board of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry.

India, said the Minister, possesses a quarter of the world's bovine population and also millions of sheep, goats, poultry and other animals; yet her production and consumption of milk are, perhaps, the lowest in the world. A sustained and multi-pronged effort to remedy this state of affairs is required and is being planned. Breeding, proper management and feeding of all kinds of livestock, and control of diseases from which they suffer, must be studied in a unified and comprehensive scheme which should be linked with India's "Grow More Food" campaign. The largest scheme ever presented by the Research Institute is, the Minister said, that for the eradication of rinderpest, which takes the heaviest toll of the lives of cattle and, in addition, debilitates and reduces the production of those beasts which survive. Everyone will endorse the Minister's hope that this scheme, to be carried out in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, will be financed and implemented soon. Meanwhile, a pilot scheme, designed to prepare the ground for the larger scheme, has been sanctioned by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

Discussing further the immense task of upgrading the millions of Indian cattle, the Minister commended the utilization, as part of the task, of artificial insemination. The central organization for the study of artificial insemination is housed in the Indian Veterinary Research Institute, and the Minister expressed the hope that this organization would be used to the fullest extent and that it would train the many personnel required for the Key-Village scheme.

The Key-Village scheme, on which the Minister asked the Animal Husbandry Wing to concentrate, has been drawn up by the Indian Council for Veterinary Research. It seeks to establish, all over India, a network of key-villages, the key-village being defined as a compact area consisting of one village or of a group of them, containing a total bovine population of five hundred. Each key-village will be surveyed to find out the distribution of cattle in it, its present productive capacity, the existing arrangements for the production and distribution of milk, the local supply of feeding stuffs and kindred matters. Bulls available in each area are to be examined and, if they are not satisfactory, they are to be castrated or removed and approved bulls are to be supplied. When the initial information has been obtained, the second phase of the scheme will introduce control of breeding, recording of milk production and other measures necessary for the improvement of the cattle. Still later it is hoped that the key-villages will operate as Government breeding farms helped by Government subsidies and supervision. Because

there is an acute shortage of approved bulls in India, the possibilities of artificial insemination are already being studied, and the pilot scheme sponsored by the Indian Council of Veterinary Research is examining these possibilities in ten selected villages near Delhi.

Continuing a speech distinguished by its wide outlook and grasp of essentials, the Minister for Food and Agriculture expressed the view that the aim of breeding should be to produce a type of animal that can flourish under the conditions peculiar to its locality. The animal, he said, is fashioned by the type of husbandry used, by the kind of food and pasture available, by the factors in the environment which favour the occurrence of disease and by the climatic conditions generally. All these factors must be given due consideration. His speech concluded with a tribute to the Indian Veterinary Institute, the history of which, during sixty years of vigorous work, was outlined in an instructive address given to the gathering by the Institute's present director, Dr. S. Datta.

In a special jubilee issue of *Indian Farming*, which replaces the issue for March 1951, Dr. Datta describes the history of the Institute in greater detail. In this article, in fact, he gives a history of the development of veterinary science in India. Tracing its origin back to the men imported by the John Company in 1774 to look after stud farms, Dr. Datta describes the work of Moorcroft, Hallen and Cook and the appointment, in or about 1889, of the medical man, Dr. Lingard, as microscopist—and, soon after, bacteriologist—to the Government of India. To Lingard's work in the isolated surroundings of Mukteswar, Dr. Datta pays high tribute. The Indian Veterinary Research Institute should, he says, really be called the 'Lingard Institute of Animal Science'. He goes on to describe the work of Lingard's successors, paying just tributes to Holmes, Sir Leonard Rogers, Shilston, who unhappily fell a victim to glanders, Sir Percival Hartley, Macalister, Sheather, Pool, Doyle, J. T. Edwards, Cooper, Sir Frank Ware, Haddow, Macdonald and the last British director, Minett, who left the Institute, when the era of Indian independence began in 1947, to become animal husbandry commissioner to Pakistan.

For those who wish to know what 'Mukteswar' is now doing, there are, in this jubilee issue of *Indian Farming*, articles which describe the work going on in the Institute's various sections. The departments of pathology, bacteriology, parasitology, animal nutrition, biological products, poultry research and animal genetics are all confronted with varied and difficult problems. The section concerned with the training of workers is also an important one, because, as Dr. Datta points out, many senior workers have left Mukteswar to fill important posts elsewhere, and the need is great for experienced workers to carry out the extensive schemes that the Indian Government has in mind.

The future, it is clear, provides great opportunities for the Institute, and the solution of some of the difficult problems that confront it will provide fundamental knowledge that will be valuable to veterinarians all over the world. There is great and beneficent work to be done and a strong will to do it effectively. The good wishes of everyone interested in the welfare of man and his domesticated animals will go out to all those who are grappling with the complex problems that India now presents to her people.

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