

THE INDIAN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

THE Indian Agricultural Research Institute has been accorded the status of a university with power to confer the degrees of M.Sc. and Ph.D. in all the important aspects of agricultural science. The new Postgraduate School was formally inaugurated on October 6, 1958, by Shri Ajit Prasad Jain, Minister for Food and Agriculture in the Government of India.

The Institute is popularly known as the Pusa Institute, after a small village called Pusa in Bihar, where it was first established as the Imperial Agricultural Institute in 1905 with a gift of £30,000 from Mr. Henry Phipps, an American philanthropist. It has now developed into a centre of considerable size, providing facilities for training and research in almost all the important branches of agricultural science. These various activities are carried out by its seven Divisions, covering, respectively, agronomy, botany, mycology and plant pathology, entomology, horticulture, soil science and agricultural chemistry, and agricultural engineering, under the over-all supervision of the director, Dr. B. P. Pal. All the Divisions are housed separately in spacious buildings, furnished with modern equipment, and each is staffed with teachers and specialists in the appropriate field.

The Institute has inherited a great tradition of agricultural research and education, going back to the work of Leather in agricultural chemistry, of Butler on fungi and fungal diseases of plants, of Maxwell-Lefroy and Fletcher in cataloguing and combating insect pests, of the Howards in breeding the early 'Pusa' wheats, and of Venkataraman in breeding Coimbatore canes. High among the recent achievements are the breeding of *NP* ('New Pusa') wheats, of which *NP 710* and *NP 718* combine considerable resistance to rust with high resistance to loose smut. An outstanding success is the breeding of *NP 809* wheat for the hills, uniting resistance to the three rusts. Among other contributions of note are the building up of a fine milch herd of the Sahiwal breed; the construction of schedules for the control of some important diseases of sugar cane; and the improvement of techniques of breeding parasites for the biological control of some insect pests of crop plants.

The Library, which receives more than a thousand periodicals and possesses almost all the important publications on agricultural science, is considered to be the best agricultural library in the East, and caters

for the needs of agricultural scientists all over India. Other assets of the Institute include collections of varieties of crop plants from which the plant breeder can select the genes for his breeding work; the National Collection of Insects; the Herbarium *Cryptogramme Indiae Orientalis*, one of the best assemblages of fungi in the East; and the Indian Type Culture Collection.

The archives of the Institute show that, from its inception in 1905, it was meant to be a central organization of postgraduate teaching. In 1923, two-year postgraduate courses leading to the award of the diploma of the associateship of the Imperial Agricultural Research Institute were instituted, offering limited facilities to students in specialized fields, without, however, offering any definite courses. In 1945 the system of training was thoroughly re-organized, courses and syllabuses were prescribed and a system of examinations introduced. The diploma awarded is comparable with the M.Sc. degree of a university.

The present decision to provide the Institute with a Postgraduate School is a natural step in fulfilling the objects which the planners of the Institute had in view. The recommendations of the Indo-American team on agricultural research and education were instrumental in giving shape to the ideals of its founders. The Postgraduate School, which will mainly be responsible for carrying out the teaching programme, has come into existence with the generous aid of the Rockefeller Foundation. The aim is to train leaders for the programme to improve agricultural technology in India.

The students will have a large number of courses to choose from, including crop husbandry, soil and water management, agricultural extension; plant breeding and genetics, cytogenetics and plant physiology; taxonomy, ecology, toxicology, parasitology, and physiology of insects; pomology, olericulture, fruit and vegetable preservation; mycology and plant pathology; soil science and agricultural chemistry; and agricultural engineering. Courses in experimental statistics will be offered in co-operation with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

Provision has been made, for the present, for admitting each year up to one hundred students for the M.Sc. degree and fifty students for the Ph.D. degree.

B. P. PAL

THE EMPLOYEE'S POINT OF VIEW

IN the middle nineteen-thirties, the National Institute of Industrial Psychology was asked by a large and well-known company to help in solving a staffing problem. The company's employment policy was progressive, and reasons for a very high rate of leaving were obscure. It was arranged to take the (then) unorthodox step of inviting employees to come, in confidence, to the Institute's investigator to give suggestions for improvements in their working conditions or to mention features of them which they would like to see changed. These interviews had far-reaching results; from their success stems a

technique which has been fruitfully applied in the United Kingdom to the diagnosis of many working situations, in industry, shops and offices, hospitals and voluntary organizations. It brings to the study of people in their working environment, and particularly in relation to difficulties they experience, a special combination of human understanding with scientific discipline.

The core of the method consists in confidential, undirected interviews with a sample of employees of all levels; the interviews are conducted by an impartial investigator who is not on the staff of the