

2/1/52

The background of the problem which is proposed to be taken up under the Scheme stated above is that the major sugarcane belt in India witnessed a severe epidemic of Red-rot in 1938-40 which resulted in the disappearance of two outstanding commercial varieties Co.210 and Co.213. The cause leading to this epidemic was discovered to be the appearance of a new light strain ^{of the causal organism} which was highly virulent. All subsequent work regarding testing of varieties was carried out with this virulent strain before the varieties were labelled as resistant and released. Co.455 and Co.453 were then found to be resistant to this strain, but by 1951-52 the percentage of area under these varieties had fallen because these also began to show signs of susceptibility to a new strain of the fungus which appeared at this stage, so that the position at present is:

- (i) The unpredictable nature of resistance ~~to~~ of varieties given out for cultivation due to sudden appearance of new and generally more virulent strains;
- (ii) Uncertainty regarding periodicity of such changes in the fungus;
- (iii) Edaphic and climatic conditions ^{and} responsible for such changes;
- (iv) Future varietal policy in view of this critical situation. ^{Therefore} requires careful consideration

The sugar industry is faced with a serious problem of stabilising varieties ^{available} from agronomic point of view which also possess desirable quality of resistance to this serious disease, but in view of the fact that the causal organism throws ^{out} more virulent strains under conditions so far unknown to science, it is not possible to stabilise the varietal position in the country till this information is forthcoming. The Indian Central Sugarcane Committee ~~will~~ while discussing the scheme on several occasions viewed this position with ^{great} ~~great~~ concern because ^{of serious losses to the} the ~~the~~ sugar industry of the country is threatened. The Committee therefore decided that the most ^{capable workers} ~~competent men~~ available in the country should be put on work to find the conditions under which more virulent forms of the organism appeared and ^{to find means} ~~whether it was possible to combat the~~ disease after this knowledge was available, ^{also to discover} ~~or to take other~~ measures so as to reduce the multiplication and production of new strains. The Committee therefore felt that in view of the gravity

of the problem no expending^{ture} was too great and therefore recommended that a senior officer may be selected and higher initial salary ~~be~~ offered to attract him to take up the research work in the direction stated above, personally. Keeping in view the intricacy of the problem involved ^{it is suggested that} I recommend Dr. B.L. Chona, one of the senior-most Mycologists in the country, who has about 27 years of experience in mycological research and has been dealing with problems relating to sugarcane diseases for the last 18 years, be entrusted with this task. ^{offer} I also recommend that he be allowed 20 per cent deputation allowance to take up the work proposed by the Indian Central Sugarcane Committee if it is not possible to give him an initial salary of Rs. 1,000/-.

It is necessary in the interest of work to start the scheme immediately otherwise some heavy loss will be incurred.

In view of the above, it is recommended that Dr. Chona may be given an initial salary of Rs. 1000/- and if this is not possible he may be offered 20% deputation allowance, as a special case.

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B.P.P. D.