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PANCHAYAT SPECIAL

DECEMBER 1959

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मजिल

# KURUKSHETRA

AN OPEN FORUM ON COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT

Agrahayana-Pausa 1881 -

Vol. 8 December 1959 No. 3

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# LETTERS

## Out of Tune

The Editor

Kurukshetra

Sir,

Cooperation has been assigned an important role. The eyes of all are on it. Eradication of poverty is expected. It is an issue of great consequence. It is a challenge to people's effort. But do the people take it as a challenge? No, people think it as one-way of doing things. This is correct, I have no doubt. Is the system perfect? No system is perfect. This too is not. The world today has a complicated and complex economic system. No economic activity can exist or operate in isolation. It is a part of the whole. All activities are dovetailed and interdependent.

The women I am associated with in my official capacity are poor. They endure life. They do not live it. The doctrine of self-improvement is a meaningless jargon with them. They have an exaggerated expectation of outside help. Little do they understand that outside assistance is there only to evoke and supplement but on no account to provide a substitute for self-help and voluntary effort. These women live below subsistence level. They cannot tighten their belt any more. Even now there is little between the belt and the bones.

Grim realities are facing them. A superficial treatment of the problem will not do. Let me tell you my experience. I have organized a Spinners Cooperative Organization at Chattabal. 232 women are working collectively. Seemingly they are paying their way. I am congratulated. But do the Wool Spinners Organizations I have organized at Kakapora or am organizing at Heer or at other places, find it as easy to pay their way? No. Why it is so? At Chattabal there is a society of male weavers that is working as an adjunct to their women's organization. That society buys the spinned *Pasham*. Not so at Kakapora and Heer. A Men's Society has not come into being. Who is then to buy the spinned wool? The Khadi Commission is not prepared to accept spinned wool from a Cooperative Society. It insists on receiving spinned wool from women individually. What is needed, therefore, is not only the organization of women spinners but of men weavers and the marketing of the blankets and the cloth the men will weave. There are two lakh women spinners in the valley. One woman can spin 4 chatanks in 30 days. One weaver can weave one yard in seven days. Will it be ordained by the State that winter uniforms in schools, in colleges and in Police will be of this cloth — *Pattoo*. If not, can Khadi Commission be persuaded to agree to buy spinned wool from women Cooperatives? "Cooperation has failed, Cooperation must succeed," will otherwise remain a phrase. Slogans cannot take us forward. What is needed is a dynamic programme of action. Attitudes have to change and so the methods. The exploiters have been long in the saddle. They have to be dislodged. Exploitation should not be accepted as fair trade. It is not only the State that should accept the cooperative way of life as correct and conducive to distributive justice. The institutions that have grown in strength and reputation should also accept it and work for it and not against it. Cooperation cannot be allowed to lead to a dead end. Every individual and institution has to be in tune with the community as a whole. The chords will have to harmonize or they will be out of tune. No chord should have the option in the age of planning for prosperity to go out of tune.

Yours etc.,

Jai Kishori Bhan

Organiser, Women Cooperatives.

20-10-59  
Srinagar.

# GREAT EXPECTATIONS



## Right side of Forty

Sir,

With due respect to the friend who wrote the 'Twin Headaches' in the August issue of *Kurukshetra*, let me answer him in his own language. According to our friend, the lady S.E.O. is a headache to him and his colleagues, if she is young, i.e., below 40 years. If he and the other members of the staff cannot even look at their co-worker without thinking she is a 'head-ache', how on earth are they going to work among men and women of the villages who are less than forty years? Does he want all the village women who want to get some help through the Block to wait until they complete their 'forty'?

Does any one bother to think of the single woman working in the Block? If she becomes a headache to all the men workers, does anyone consider that she has to get on with so many men of different categories who view her as a headache? One feels shy to talk to her, one runs away from the company if he sees her coming to join it; another feels it below his dignity to answer her; some laugh at any one coming forward to help her or be a friend to her and some others regard her as a 'headache' and so on.

I suggest that our friend and his class can go to a nearby forest and start a 'Yogashram', call it a "Yuktha Nari—Dweshi Ashram" and may admit only women above 40.

1-10-59 Yours etc.,  
Andhra Pradesh A Young S.E.O.  
(W)

## Unwanted Letters

Sir,

I have been reading *Kurukshetra* even before I joined as a Block Development officer in Uttar Pradesh. The articles are quite valuable, interesting and thought-provoking. But one thing has recently pained me much. The 'letters' from some B.D.Os, E.Os and S.E.Os have not been quite upto the standard of the Journal. Their tone has been rather malicious and full of pessimism. This would only help in creating indiscipline in the vast

army of development personnel working under differing conditions. I do not suggest that letters from such persons should be totally banned. But the crying need of the hour is for valuable suggestions to remove the road-blocks in the way of the various programmes. We should have a constructive approach in dealing with all the difficulties and problems. We should not limit ourselves to our personal amenities, pride and prejudices.

I hope *Kurukshetra* will not give any space to such unwanted letters.

5-10-59 Yours etc.,  
Kakuan, U.P. S. S. Srivastava  
B.D.O.

*(The easiest way of escaping inconvenient issues may be to call them malicious or pessimistic when some one presents them in cold print. But we can assure our correspondent that the surest road to indiscipline would lie in a refusal to discuss problems freely and frankly. This Journal owes it to the Project personnel to provide a forum for the free discussion of issues touching our programme. The freedom with which our workers can discuss our field activities should give us a new sense of security that the programme has passed the stage of adolescence.—Editor)*

## Begging the Question

Sir,

Shri Vivek Sharma has given an honest and frank expression of his views and impressions about the Training Problems of Village Industries in an article appearing in the April issue of *Kurukshetra*. But it suffers from lack of an integrated approach as well as some vital gaps of information here and there. The problem is as much fundamental and deep-rooted as the age-old controversy between the village or small scale and the large scale industries. The minds of trainees, as of any other thinking individual, are bound to be disturbed by fears and doubts about the feasibility of having a village and small scale industries pro-

gramme along with the large-scale industries. It is the aim and purpose of the training programme to resolve those fears and bring about the realisation that our economic policy of "Common Production Programme" is not only feasible but the only correct solution under the present circumstances.

The one year integrated training programme consisting of four months training in a Small Industries Service Institute and eight months training in a Khadi & Gram Udyog Mahavidyalaya as followed at present is calculated to achieve that balanced approach towards the "Common Production Programme". It is wrong for Shri Sharma to hold that since the Small Industries Institutes are established in big cities, they do not give the real picture of India. After all, cities are a part of India and whether we like it or not, the large-scale industries and big factories have come to stay. It is therefore, as well necessary for the trainees to get themselves acquainted with small scale industries which can be set up in the rural areas wherever suitable facilities of power, machines and capital exist.

Again, Shri Sharma's approach towards the village industries is defective. To say that the average trainee has neither faith nor conviction in the utility of village industries is to beg the question. It is too late in the day to question the importance of the role of village industries in the economic development of our country.

Shri Sharma is certainly wrong in drawing the conclusion that "the costly bureaucracy of Industrial officer" has been created without providing enough work for him. There is plenty of work to be done in so far as the organising of village and small scale industries in the villages is concerned. The problem of wiping out unemployment and under-employment in the villages is largely related to the successful implementation of the village & small scale industries programme.

29-9-59 Yours etc.,  
Burari. Shanti Sarup  
Delhi State

## Development Terminology

Sir,

I wish to thank you for the valuable service you have done to those who are interested in C.D. and N.E.S. by your beautiful Summary of the Recommendations of the Mysore Conference.

Will you permit me to point out one difficulty in this connection? A large number of Hindi words have been used in this Summary. I fear

the non-Hindi readers would find it difficult to get at the meaning of words such as (1) Sarpanches, (2) Up-sarpanches, (3) Zonal-Sammelanis, (4) Zila Parishad, (5) Gram Kakis and (6) Yuvak Mandals. As one, who values your periodical, may I request that as many phrases as possible in Hindi could be kindly avoided in the interest of South Indian readers.

10-10-59  
Coimbatore

Yours etc.,  
M. Raghuramaiah

(The words referred to by the Correspondent have been in current use all over the country and we should have thought that anyone closely following our programme should have little difficulty in understanding them. Recently the Working Group on Panchayats has suggested a list of terms for use at All India Conferences and in drawing up the list, the Group decided to have the minimum of changes in the existing terminology in the different States. The Working Group's All India list is as follows.—Editor)

| Term                           | Meaning   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Gram Sabha.                 | All voters within the jurisdiction of the Panchayat area. |
| 2. Panchayat.                  | Executive body of the Panchayat area.                     |
| 3. Sarpanch.                   | President of the Executive Body.                          |
| 4. Upa-Sarpanch.               | Vice-President of the Executive Body.                     |
| 5. Secretary of the Panchayat. | Clerk of the Panchayat.                                   |
| 6. Nyaya Panchayat.            | Court for administration, civil and criminal justice.     |
| 7. Pradhan.                    | President of the Nyaya Panchayat.                         |
| 8. Upa-Pradhan.                | Vice-President of the Nyaya Panchayat.                    |
| 9. Panchayat Fund.             | Fund under the village Panchayat.                         |
| 10. Panchayat Samiti.          | Local Body at Block/Tehsil level.                         |
| 11. Zila Parishad.             | Local body at District level.                             |

## The Lamp to Kindle

Sir,

The article "The Lamp to kindle" in October issue of *Kurukshetra*, contains the simile of "A put out earthen lamp with a half-burnt wick and still a little oil in the lamp",—a nice way of describing the present condition of life! The oil in the lamp is the borrowed foreign aid. So long as the foreign aid is available the lamp will be burning. When once it is withheld, the lamp will be put out

for ever. There is no end to the increasing needs of man in this machine world. Gandhiji wanted simple life and high thinking for the masses. We are experiencing quite the reverse.

20-10-59  
391, Abjiamavatharam  
Tanjore

Yours etc.,  
R. Venkatarama Iyer,

(It is wrong to think that the C.D. Programme is based on foreign aid and that

it will come to a dead end if the foreign aid is withdrawn. The C.D. Programme has always been conceived essentially as a 'self-help' movement. At no stage foreign aid formed a substantial part of the programme. Since July, 1957 no foreign aid whatsoever has been taken into account. Even in the earlier stages, the foreign aid was nominal and that too, in the form of Jeeps or other machinery for which the foreign exchange position was very tight. It should not also be forgotten that there is nothing basically wrong in accepting foreign aid where the situation so demands it. After all, we do not live in isolation and we must follow the policy of 'give and take' to ensure the smooth progress of development work all over the world.—Editor).

## The Blak-Walas

Sir,

We have often heard of terms like the 'Tongawala', the 'Rikshawala', the 'Pakorawala', the 'Kangreswala' and others. Of late, a new term has been added to the long list of 'walas'. This is the 'Blakwala' which refers to an employee of the C.D. Block. Fortunately or unfortunately, this is becoming very popular in the Blocks and is on the lip of every Government official and even of the villagers whom the 'Blakwalas' are out to serve.

It is difficult to say whether this term has been coined more out of contempt than from a genuine effort to discriminate the C.D. employees from other Government officials working in the block. But in either case it is regrettable since it is a pointer to some basic defects in the unfoldment and development of our Community Development schemes. Although our leaders at the top have time and again asserted that the various programme activities in the rural area are being channelised through the only agency of the N.E.S. and that maximum efforts are

(Continued on page 22)



# THE CRISIS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

SUSHIL DEY

*Shri Sushil Dey who was Development Commissioner, West Bengal before he left for an assignment first in the United Nations and later in the F.A.O. has focussed in this article current conflicts against the basic background of Community Development in India.—Editor*

THERE IS A very wise saying which points out that the highest virtue in life is moderation, and that this being so, there should be moderation in the practice of virtue itself. Self-criticism is a good thing, but that, too, can be carried to excess. The authors of community development in India, being persons of great earnestness and scruple, set up an evaluation organization to keep a running measure of the programme's progress. It was hailed as a bold and useful device for discovering and checking faults in time. Like the programme itself, its built-in evaluation system attracted widespread attention and admiration outside. But inside the country the endless post-mortems have begun to provide material for much ill-conceived criticism, creating despondency and distrust, which threaten to cause a set back to the programme now.

Evaluation can be a spur to programme improvement and a safeguard against persistence in error. But to accomplish its purpose two requirements must be first fulfilled. It must define the values which the programme sets out to attain. It must then construct an accurate scale to measure the progress of this attainment. There has never been an adequate and agreed definition of the value objectives of community development. There have been occasional references to the ultimate destination in terms of picturesque and poetical imagery. Those who pride themselves on their realism have scoffed at these flights to the clouds and have stamped their feet in their impatience to get on. But a clear understanding of the values for which one is striving is essential if one's efforts are not to go astray. Also, this understanding must inform every practical measure that one plans and implements. Thus, an unambiguous declaration of purpose and ideals is not only not an unrealistic exercise but has, on the contrary, very great practical significance. What is needed is, however, more than a procla-

mation of the ultimate objective, destination or goal. The declared purpose must be a continuously running thread through all the earlier stages of action by means of which it is to be achieved in the end. One must assure steadfast adherence to this purpose at every step and turn that one takes. This means that every element of the programme needs to be subjected to the value test. There can be no true evaluation of community development until one is in a position to carry out this test.

The current evaluation system cannot adequately perform this task, because it is mainly equipped to test not values but concrete performance. This is not surprising, because only concrete performance is quantifiable and measurable. Thus, one can test the degree of success of a programme by taking into account the quantity of fertilizers distributed, the number of new cooperatives established, the miles of roads built, the acreage of land brought under irrigation or improved seeds, the number of drains cleared or adults taught to read and write. But none of these accomplishments by itself and in combination can be said to constitute the purpose which community development is meant to serve. They are irrelevant in determining whether or not the programme is advancing towards the fulfilment of this purpose. They are tests of fulfilment of physical targets. The crucial test is of a different kind, which will measure progress towards achievement of the ultimate purpose and value-objectives of community development.

This brings one back to the question of definition of the values which community development is intended to promote. Values are abstract concepts and therefore difficult to define and still more difficult to measure. Nevertheless, the problem must be squarely faced if one is to attempt any judgment about the effectiveness of the efforts made. One may recall the slogan which was

inscribed on the banner of the pioneers. This was "Destination-Man". The implications were never clearly analysed, which is one of the misfortunes from which the movement suffered from the beginning, but it was generally understood that the focus was a human growth and not on material development. The two are not unrelated. A favourable environment (which is not to be identified with continuous accumulation of wealth or increasing complexity of technology) can stimulate growth, an unfavourable environment can retard or arrest it. On the other hand, material development is itself a product of human growth. But recognising that the living dynamic element in this interacting process is the urge to grow implanted in the human being, the objective in community development was to nourish this urge and enable it to have unfettered play. Material development and outside aid are welcome only to the extent that they stimulate and support man's innate potential for growth.

The criteria for value judgments can be all derived from this thesis. The programme must be such that it stimulates initiative. This initiative must be forthcoming freely, out of people's own volition. It means that no programme must move forward until those affected by it have an adequate understanding of its methods and targets and accept these as useful and necessary. Thereafter, it must develop only as fast as understanding and initiative will mature. Plans, programmes and targets must flow out of this maturity, they can claim no independent validity in community development.

These desiderata did not go unrecognised. The emphasis on selfhelp, people's participation, group action through Panchayats and cooperatives and local leadership is an indication of the importance attached to the human factor in development. The trouble was that no devices were developed to test the authenticity of these manifestations and a great deal of spurious evidence was accepted through wishfulness. Labour mobilised without payment was not always freely rendered and installations and organizations were set up before the people who had to run them had developed adequate understanding and conviction. The true indications

of success could only lie in the motivations and attitudes which inspired the outward actions of people. These could be ascertained only through patient and sympathetic questioning and observation. Very often their expression could not even be verbalised and had to be detected from people's demeanour, from the light in their eyes, from the way they carried themselves. There have been sporadic attempts to study such signs, but these attempts were generally discouraged and regarded as a waste of time.

The planners have been in too much of a hurry, and they have been so, because, notwithstanding the lip-service to human values, their real concern is about maximising the material output in the shortest time. This may be a laudable ambition in itself and is particularly understandable in an impoverished country. But if this was to be the primary objective, community development was the wrong method to choose. The logic of community development attaches every importance to material improvement as an indispensable condition and support for human growth. But, however, essential they may be, economic goals and targets have to be regarded as the means to achieve human ends and cannot claim any significance in their own right. Their role must therefore be always subordinate to the requirements of the ends they are to serve.

It is to be feared that the planners reversed this logic and thus fell into an error. They hoped that the tempo of human growth could be made subservient to the dictates of economic policy. Community development was used as a convenient instrument of that policy and was judged according to its capacity to deliver food grains and contribute to capital formation. There is no doubt that community development can energise the wealth potential of the country. But it sets out to do so in only one way, and that is by building up the creative powers of individual men and women who are the ultimate producers of wealth. This is a slow process, demanding great care, patience and understanding. It means leading people gently to a gradual realisation and assertion of their own latent strength and the

progressive development of that strength through carefully regulated exercise. The tasks set in the early stages have therefore to be simple, homely and modest. There can be no imposition of targets which are calculated according to assumed needs of overall economic expansion and bear little or no relation to the immediate capacity of the people who are to fulfil them. There can be no expectation of spectacular leaps in achievement.

Leaps and take-offs are feats which are normal for only panthers, acrobats and acroplanes. If demanded of a capital-starved, population-laden society, such performances must call for a regime very different from that of community development, in which targets of economic ambition reign supreme and human values are left to take care of themselves. Such a regime was not practically feasible in India. It is to be feared that community development found ready acceptance on this ground. For the most part, the acquiescence of planners and administrators in community development was an act of shrewdness and not of faith. The programme presented a chance of getting hold of the masses for the planners' own ends. In fact, the shrewdness proved to be shallow, because it is in the nature of community development that the people would not move until they could respond freely with their minds and hearts. Their response would have been slow in any event, but the inordinate expectations led to faulty approaches, distorting the programme and delaying the results even further. Those who have been always sceptical are now quick with their denunciations. Many others have felt demoralised. The continuing and increasing outflow of reviews, evaluations and criticisms, stemming very often from erroneous premises and using inadequate criteria, have either added to the confusion or provided a handle to those interested to do damage. Criticism of a programme can serve a constructive purpose only when the basic postulates are beyond dispute.

Happily, there are some still in India whose faith in community development remains undimmed. They are to be found in all walks of life, more of them in the lowlier stations of the administrative hierarchy which were

directly drawn into the programme in the countryside. They have been privileged to see the first faint stirrings of the human spirit which can be evoked under sensitive ministration. It is an experience they cannot easily erase. It has quickened their imagination, deepened their insight, enlarged their understanding, sharpened their feelings. Having set out to transform the lives of others, they began to perceive the transformation occurring within themselves and have come to the realisation now that change is worthwhile and can be sustained only when there is direct and joyous involvement of those who are intended to benefit from the process. These people will not waver. They will not be daunted by the set-back in public favour. In some ways they will even welcome it and feel relieved, because much that is spurious in the movement will now drop away. And they will persevere, because they have an awareness of what is involved, which is much more than production targets, more than their generation and more than one country.

It may be asked: these are fine sentiments, but what happens to the food problem meanwhile? Will the process of growth visualised by the faithful be sufficient to produce the 110 million tons of food grains needed annually at the end of the third plan? Their answer will be, it may or it may not, but this is the way to make the effort and there is no other. Seeds, water, fertilizers and credit may be supplied, prices may be assured, technical guidance may be forthcoming, but these cannot bear fruit until farm labour will rise to make full use of these other factors. The human factor will still remain crucial. It is not conceivable that the millions of members of farm families who comprise this factor in India can be mobilised to ordered response through some process of hypnosis of the naked whip. Even if one were to concede for the sake of argument that mobilisation by such methods were possible, the effort would fall away as soon as the external compulsions are removed. There can be sustained response only when people feel the urge within themselves. Community development is the only way in which that urge can be awakened.



# GRAM PANCHAYAT OF MY CONCEPTION

ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE

GRAM PANCHAYAT is India's unique contribution to social thinking. In the remote past when Europe had hardly awakened to social consciousness we in India made considerable progress in political and social thinking.

In those distant days India evolved a social science. Perfection is not claimed for that. It needed many additions and alterations and our ancestors made them. Many races from outside came and settled here. The different races in their own interest found in co-existence the way to mutual adjustment. Just as today different countries profess to subscribe to the theory of letting each country pursue its own political and social ideas, so too here in that distant past we resorted to co-existence. There were, of course, tensions in the beginning following the arrival of various religions and races. There were clashes between different customs, clashes between different traditions. But soon they made caste-wise divisions and came to an agreed understanding that each caste would be free to follow undisturbed its own customs and manners. Today these caste divisions appear to be narrow in outlook but they proceeded from good intention and fulfilled a necessity. Here was an endeavour to accommodate conflicting ideologies in this country. The Panchayat System was evolved for dealing justice to all and providing protection and education to all. In those days there were five castes (or *varnas*) in India—Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras and added to these four, there was the fifth made up of people come from outside. And councils of five began to be constituted with representatives drawn from these divisions. This was Gram Panchayat. All had to submit to the unanimously agreed decisions of those councils. This can be regarded as decentralized social order. And it is India which gave it to the world. This is the

history of the origin of Gram Panchayat.

## VOICE OF "FIVE"

"I wonder why this thought-provoking idea of Gram Panchayat which appealed to our ancestors, fails to appeal to us now! Those Panchayats gave unanimous decisions. In languages like Hindi, Guzarati and Marathi the expression, "God speaks through five" occurs. People should regard a decision unanimously given by five people as the dictate of God and abide by it. But as a result of the 'isms' and politics now imported from abroad we have come to regard 'God speaks through three' as the rule to go by. If there be two against three, still a resolution is quite effective! So "God speaks through three" has come to be accepted. Sometimes "God speaks through four"—The four-vote-God. But neither is the true God. For they lead people to quarrel. Only a decision unanimously given by five inspires confidence in the people and makes them respectfully carry it out. In that case there is no dispute, no quarrel. Democratic rule i.e., majority rule should remove this curse from villages. That is its primary test. Gram Panchayats should ever give unanimous decisions.

Is that feasible? If there be a black sheep that flouts the decision, what is to be done? But when the entire village manages its own affairs, such an occasion will not arise. Today villagers have no or very little responsibility. The whole show is run from the centre. Naturally villagers have no interest in it. It is, therefore, necessary that villagers should manage their own affairs themselves. If that be what we want, all intelligent people must act as one mind: I want to bring this home to you. I want you to realize that the "three-vote-God" and the "four-vote-God" are out of bounds in Sarvodaya. The only God recognized by Sarvodaya is the "God that speaks through five."

Today Gram Panchayats are curses. They are so because Gram Panchayats have been constituted without removing inequalities. The result is that those who have better education, more riches and greater opportunities have more lands. And people such as these became the heads of Panchayats. All powers vest in them. Thus a Gram Panchayat comes to be an instrument of exploitation. Gram Panchayats were not meant to be so. Because of inequalities it has become so. Gram Panchayats are constituted by majority votes and they give their decisions by majority votes. The body should be elected unanimously and so should it give its decision unanimously.

The other change I want to bring about is to create an atmosphere for Gramdan in villages. Let the villagers resolve that the village as a whole would think of and look after all its members. Assume that the village is a joint-family and that it is a village-state. A unanimously elected Gram Panchayat in such a village-state will never be an instrument of oppression but an instrument of service. The first should be done first and the next next. The effect of changing the order and doing first what need be done next is never good.

## THE VIRUS

"We all are one, we all would look to the interest of all, none of our interest would clash against the interest of others"—so should the entire village make up its mind to be. And as a token of that lands should be given to the landless of the village. Land does not any more than air or water belong to any. Therefore lands should be made the common property of the village. The village as a whole shall manage its affairs the way it likes and so shall it elect its Gram Panchayat. If things shape in this fashion, the decentralization of power we aim at shall be realized. Otherwise quarrels and conflicts would continue to plague the villages and caste distinctions which are about to die, will return in a new form. We want to abolish them. It would be a pity to replace them by others. Another virus will get into the villages.

(Continued on page 18)



## THERE IS NO SHORT CUT

By YUDHISHTAR

THE COUNTRYSIDE in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh is astir with a new fever. It is the fever of the electioneering campaigns of contending parties for seats of power in the new Palace which is being built to house the Zila Parishad and the Panchayat Samiti. There are some who have made it their life's job to force an entry into this Palace. There are others who are fascinated by it but do not possess the know-how to reach this new edifice. There are still others who would like to keep away from this Palace, though they might have something very valuable to contribute to its building.

The election fever is creating a new ferment in our countryside where today a seat in the Panchayat Samiti or the Zila Parishad is considered to be no less important than a seat in the State legislature. By this a large number of people are being educated in the physical processes of a live democratic set-up. They are waking up to find themselves confronted with a new technique of choosing their leaders who would speak for them in the new Palace.

Who can speak for them effectively in their own voice? Certainly, only persons who have shared their joys and sorrows and are prepared to live like them in the villages. And yet these elections may not throw up leadership exclusively from the heart of the countryside. There can be no doubt that the Palace is being built exclusively for them and by them and

will be owned in common by the people and the Government. When this happens, the welfare state will have been born.

The occupants of the new Palace are certainly too well looked after by the courtiers. But in a democracy, the courtier can also call the tune. He is no mere slave to custom and tradition. It will be his job to help the members of the Panchayat Samiti in running the Palace, to guard against palace revolutions and turn the edifice into a stronghold of democracy. In this task, he must be assured of the full support and co-operation of the members of the Panchayat Samiti. The hundreds of Training Centres for non-officials which are being conducted throughout the country will initiate a new process of education for our new masters.

Everything would depend on the manner in which the elected members of the Panchayat Samitis go about their business. They should realise that the technique of winning the elections can be more easily mastered than the work of administering the affairs of 100 villages. The problem of administering such a small unit by the chosen representatives of the people has been posed for the first time in this country. They should remember that they represent not merely the individual constituencies or interests which send them to the Samitis but that they have to voice the feelings of the

entire population of the Block. The party labels at the election time should not be allowed to exercise an unsavoury influence on development work. Some Western countries, including the United Kingdom, have already shown the way that the pure waters of local self-Government shall not be muddied by political or partisan interests. With every extension of the democratic machinery in this country, we have to make sure that we do not lose sight of the spirit behind this new way of life in the process of setting up the necessary machinery.

### EMOTIONAL BIAS

There are many ways of evaluating this programme. Since its inception on October 2, 1952, not a year has passed without a good number of Commissions at the State and Central level, deliberating over the working of the programme, pointing out the gaps and suggesting remedies. But no one has seriously suggested that its success should be measured in terms of what it has been able to give to the Harijans. And yet Gandhiji used to attach as much importance to the condition of the Harijans as he did to the problem of political freedom. I have often been told that our programme, meticulously worked out on paper lacks the emotional bias which is necessary to give it a broad popular appeal. It is true that the Panchayat and the Panchayat Samitis have now effected a change of emphasis in the current goals of the programme of Community Development: they have strengthened the texture of the programme. But it still lacks colour. Human beings are not fascinated by a mere production drive, however necessary or urgent that may be. They require to be awakened. Perhaps no other programme can do this better than ours. These thoughts came to me as I read through the proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Conference of the Bhartiya Depressed Classes League. Let us not forget that the Harijans and backward classes form the majority of the landless agricultural labour in the country. Even as a production programme directly connected with agriculture, Community Development should be able to contribute directly to the awakening of the vast number

of families depending on agricultural labour. A member of the Planning Commission recently complained that those who are propertyless have remained, more or less, where they were before the commencement of this movement. The complaint is only partially valid because it is outside the scope of this programme to carry out fundamental changes such as land reform which is a State subject. And yet the lone farmer behind the plough cannot find any solace in such an explanation—and much less in his present position.

### ECONOMIC DECENTRALIZATION

This is again the reason why Shri Jai Prakash Narain has specially pleaded for economic decentralisation side by side with administrative and democratic decentralisation which is being pushed through in all the States today. We may argue that economic decentralisation may be equated with development decentralisation which is perhaps the immediate objective of most of our efforts. And yet the Panchayats cannot be strengthened by themselves unless the country's economic structure is also decentralised on parallel lines. Experience of other countries is clear on this point. As indicated in Shri B. Mukherji's article "The Communal System of Yugoslavia" published in the Anniversary Number of this journal producers at all levels have to be more intimately associated with the various organs of social self-Government. This is provided in Yugoslavia by the Council of Producers, Management Boards etc., involving as much as ten per cent of the entire adult population of the rural areas. I wonder how many of our villagers are readily available for participating in the work of the new bodies that are being set up at the village, Block and District levels. An analysis of the composition of the elected representatives of these bodies may not be very heartening today from this point of view. The villagers' true representation in these bodies is likely to be diluted as they recede from the village level. It is most necessary, therefore, to safeguard the independence and initiative of these bodies at various levels. The Yugoslavian system has provided

against this by laying down that "the mutual relationship of the Federal, Republican, District and Communal organs of government shall not be founded on a hierarchical and mandatory relationship but on mutual rights and duties established by law and that their relationship shall be based more on free and correctly conceived co-operation, exchange of experience and specialist services than on their respective formal rights and power."

Under a full-fledged functional democracy there would be a direct link between the Parliament at the top and the Panchayat at the village level. This is obviously not the immediate objective of the programme of decentralisation. Up to the district level, self-governing bodies would be reared on the basis of indirect elections while at the State and national level, the legislatures except for the Rajya Sabha and State Councils, consists of representatives returned on the basis of direct elections. Shri Jai Prakash Narain has suggested that there is bound to be clash between the two sets of institutions unless an organic link can be forged between them. It may be too early to talk about these future developments but let us not forget that what we sow today, we should be prepared to reap in the fullness of time.

### TEXT-BOOKS

Seven years is a long enough period for an essentially developmental programme to provide the basis for academic research and perspective planning. I understand there is hardly a Selection Board interview in which the young candidate is not asked about this programme of Community Development. There is a near scramble for authentic literature on the subject though I find shoals of pamphlets and leaflets being pushed across from table to table. Suggestions have been made that the subject of Community Development should be introduced in the school and University curricula. This would indeed be useful and progressive measure, provided we can also offer the students a few standard books on the programme as it has developed in this country. In spite of the huge mass of literature on the subject published in the daily press and the periodical publications, both official and non-official, there is not a single text-book for the student either at the high school or university stage. Every Indian student can be trusted to have some background of village life but he is to be introduced mentally to the subject of rural development. The need of the hour is for simple well-written text-books at various levels of intelligence on a subject which is new and fascinating.

### Smaller Peasants

*The State Governments have advanced hundreds of crores of rupees to the peasants during the last nine years directly as well as indirectly through cooperative societies. If a factual analysis can be made, it will be found that only a small portion has gone to the benefit of the vast majority of peasants with uneconomic holdings. I am not sure that the same will not be the result of the new intensive drive for service co-operatives. Care has to be taken that at least half the loans and advances issued through such societies go to*

*the smaller peasants. It may even be preferable to have co-operative societies in each village, one for the exclusive benefit of peasants with economic holdings and the other for those with uneconomic holdings and the landless families. Then, the objective of the later will be to proceed to joint co-operative farming as early as possible while the former will be content with providing services for efficient cultivation without any suggestion of inducing the members to pool their lands.—K. Santhanam.*

# THE NEW ROLE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

B. MUKHERJI

AMONG THE many problems which the implementation of the policy of "democratic decentralisation" is going to throw up none is likely to present more difficulties than the problem of the new relationship that has to evolve between the present day functionaries of government and the newly created decentralised units of Democratic Government. There will be other problems too, such as of the legal form and organisation that must support democratic decentralisation, of resources that must be found for the newly created units of local government, of factions and political rivalries that will stand in the way of their success, of ensuring unity of planning and national policies in the midst of decentralisation of authority. These also will be important and difficult problems and would need careful attention, but none in my view, require as much attention and clear thinking from the very beginning as the problem of the new relationship that has to evolve between the present day functionaries of the government and the newly created decentralised units of Democratic Government. It is this problem that I wish to discuss in this article.

## NEW RELATIONSHIP

Before going to deal with the problem itself let me state what I think should be regarded as the real purpose and significance of democratic decentralisation. These need to be stated, for different persons have described them in different terms. Some say that its significance lies mainly in the real transfer of power to the people, which did not take place on the 15th of August, 1947 when the British transferred power to us. Some regard the new policy as designed primarily to remove the hold of the bureaucracy on the people so that the latter's latent energies may be released and democracy grow and thrive on it. Still others consider the decentralised democratic units of the people to be created under the new policy neces-

sary for controlling and supporting the government agencies functioning at lower levels to help them to do good and hinder them from doing harm to the people. And still, others emphasise that the creation of local authorities at lower levels will ensure, as nothing else can, that there shall be real coordination in planning and implementation of the development programme at those levels. These views present only sectional pictures of what is really something of much greater significance.

## THE OBJECTIVE

It is significant that the Community Development Programme focused attention on the vital importance of democratic decentralisation. The Community Development Programme aims at a comprehensive and all round development of the rural areas based primarily on the initiative, ability and organisation of the rural people themselves. The Balwant Rai Mehta Team pointed out that the community development movement could become a peoples' movement only if real power and authority was decentralised and taken to the people. They pointed out that without building up of virile democratic institutions of the people community development could neither become a permanent nor a self-generating process of development. What the Team failed to explain, though in a way it was implied in their Report, was the essential inter-dependence between the community development movement and the development of democracy. What it is essential to recognise is that we are faced at one and the same time with the task of building up democracy and bringing about development of a very underdeveloped economy. The rural economy is stagnant and incapable of growing on its own strength. The level of production is very low. The people are wedded to old methods of production and their capacity to take advantage of science and tech-

nology is extremely limited, for the reasons that they have neither the resources nor the knowledge to do so. Capital resources needed for development hardly exist nor is any capital formation taking place in the rural sector of our economy. The demands on the resources of the country for developing the other sectors of the economy, heavy industries, transport, Railways, shipping, the multi-purpose River Valley Projects, rule out the possibility of resources from other sectors being diverted to the development of the rural areas to any appreciable extent. Thus, we are left with only the abundant man-power, that undoubtedly does exist in the rural areas and we have to build very largely on its basis. In this situation is to be found the rationale and the vital significance of the community development approach which aims at the building up of the man and of the rural communities in which he lives. It aims at promoting the solidarity of the community, organising the members for cooperative action, educating them for a more progressive way of life, in short, increasing the capacity of the common man and harnessing it, to an ever increasing degree, to the task of their own development and the progress of the country.

## INTER-DEPENDENCE

The process of community development, relying as it does, on its faith in the capacity of the common man, must, therefore, be essentially a democratic process. Thus the close relationship and interdependence between democratic decentralisation and community development. In truth it is not really the decentralisation of democracy that we aim at but the building up of democracy from the grass roots. We have yet to create in the vast masses of our people an understanding of democracy and their own responsibility for its promotion. Such understanding and responsibility can come only through practising democracy, enjoying its benefits and getting convinced that it is a way of life more satisfying than any other. In this process of the building up of democracy the same educational method has to be applied as for community development, i.e., education through effort and practice, through trial and error,

through undertaking responsibilities. Community development also employs the other equally important process, namely, that of community organisation. This process is closely allied to the process of democratic decentralisation.

The task before us is both to build up democratic institutions and organise the community for effective action in shaping a new life for itself. The solidarity of the community has to be promoted. Its members' sense of belonging to the community has to be developed and an urge created to work for goals of common benefit to the community. This needed emphasis on promoting solidarity in the community explains why our planning should give equal importance to economic, social and democratic progress. Without social justice there can be no harmony and therefore no solidarity in the community. Without economic progress social justice can only distribute poverty. And without the progress of democracy we can have neither social justice nor sustained economic progress. Thus we see how the approach of community development and the fundamental aspects of our planning get closely inter-related.

### BASIC VIRTUES

Indeed in describing the significance of democratic decentralisation we can say that only by this process will the ultimate purpose and philosophy of the community development movement be achieved. Community development must ultimately draw inspiration from the knowledge that the basic virtues of humanity, friendliness, generosity, kindness, good neighbourliness, regard for one's fellow being, etc. are qualities that grow and thrive best in small face-to-face communities. These qualities tend to weaken and even disappear in large concentrations of population such as are to be found in the big cities. Centralised power whether in the political, social or economic field always works against the preservation and growth of the importance of the small community. Thus, decentralisation in these fields becomes necessary even for ultimately safeguarding civilization itself. Serious thinking on these lines is already

visible among the wise men of the world.

It will thus be seen that democratic decentralisation is not merely a device for ensuring coordination in development or merely a transfer of power to the people or a way of curbing bureaucracy and weakening its hold on the people, but it is fundamental to our national development. Emphasis has to be placed on the sharing of responsibilities, on developing the capacity of the common man and his resources, on building up of the solidarity of the community and on changing the structure of the rural society by promoting cooperative action, social justice and functional efficiency of the different groups that constitute the village community. These real purposes of democratic decentralisation should govern its form and function and the kind of administrative agency of its own that it should have and that agency's relationship with the agencies of government.

### EXECUTING AGENCIES

Let us first consider the form of functioning of the new decentralised democratic institutions of the people that we need. If the parliamentary form of functioning is repeated in the autonomous authorities created at the District, Block and Village level, we would not achieve the purpose of organising the community for effective action and getting the people to contribute to the maximum extent possible to the development of the country, in resources of men and material, in ingenuity and enthusiasm, in leadership and sacrifice. We will have more deliberating and policy making bodies when what we need is more executing agencies. The policies may be better and more in keeping with the aspirations of the people, but the task of implementing them will not be eased. It may even be made more difficult. At the lower levels, particularly at the village level, the people and their leaders must take up more executive responsibilities. Their representative institutions must be more broad-based. The form of democracy will not be as important as its processes. Too narrow a concept of democratic procedure will be an obstacle to democratic functioning. Important deci-

sions which have to have widespread support require long discussions leading to a near unanimous conclusion. The effort has to be to draw in as many as possible well-meaning, willing and knowledgeable persons to lend a helping hand in the gigantic task of re-building rural society. It will not be so important to get a sound decision taken democratically, i.e., by a majority vote, but how many people have participated in the process of decision-making and stand committed to it and work for its success. It is in this approach that lies the real significance of our idea of functional sub-committees of Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis that will have among them not only persons elected to these representative bodies but others also having the requisite knowledge and qualifications and willing to work for progress in their different fields. The classical idea of Local Self-Government has to be discarded. It is no longer a question of entrusting some limited functions to the democratically created local authorities and using them as agents for executing development schemes formulated by government or other authorities. We have to promote the idea of a socio-economic community at the community level (it may be a village or may have to be a larger unit) responsible for all its development, having command over the bulk of its own resources, responsible for the fullest exploitation and development of these resources, and interested in building up a new social structure that progress in our country demands. To talk of democratic decentralisation as a process of transference of power to the people hardly expresses its real purpose. Even less is that purpose expressed by the idea of removal of the hold

*In executing a work one who has fearlessness, ability to protect the subjects, wisdom acquired by learning and manly effort together with the five characteristics, knowledge of means, proper time, nature of the work, its end and the benefit derived therefrom, is the proper person to be a minister.*

—Tirukkural.

of bureaucracy on the people or the idea of control of the people over the agencies of government at lower levels.

### NOT DIVISIBLE

Democracy or the sovereignty of the people is not divisible. Centralism, particularly when a State is involved in planning and economic and social development, can and often does lead to the growth or entrenchment of the bureaucracy as a permanent ruling class over society. Decentralisation of authority is a necessary corrective to such a situation. But to our policy of democratic decentralisation we have to give a more positive purpose, not only a negative or preventive one. The anxiety therefore, to prevent the growth of the bureaucracy as a permanent ruling class over society or to release its hold on the masses should not be allowed to distort our views as to the role of the public services in the future set up. That that view can get so distorted, is not an imaginary fear or a very remote possibility. I have heard several enthusiasts of democratic decentralisation announcing with pride and pleasure that the revolutionary steps taken in Rajasthan will soon relegate the government servants completely to the back ground—to a place to which they should have always belonged—that they will be brought down from their high chairs which they had usurped and so long occupied in a Colonial State. That Rajasthan's step has been a revolutionary one, no one can dispute. But let us try to see the real revolutionary character of the move and not see it in a superficial, subjective or distorted way.

### THE TWO PARTNERS

Undoubtedly, there has to be brought about a very great change in the character of our administration, in its structure, methods of functioning, attitude of the personnel, their equipment etc. It is not only democratic decentralisation that requires this change; the Welfare State concept which has been enshrined in our Constitution and has been made the goal of our Plans requires alike that this change in the administration should be brought about as quickly as possible. The whole of the apparatus of the State has to be converted

into a welfare administration and a new relationship has to grow between the people and the public servants. To say that the public servants have to be the servants of the people, is a truism. When stated in the context of the kind of administration that we have inherited from the British it exaggerates the ideas of subservience to the people and their representatives, of divesting government servants of their power and authority. It even tends to belittle government servants' role and utility. Even before democratic decentralisation came to be talked about as frequently and vociferously as at present a particular line of criticism of the community development programme was tending to confuse the respective roles of the government agency and of the peoples' agencies. The criticism was that the community development movement was not becoming a peoples' movement, that the government agency was not transferring initiative and leadership to the peoples' agencies and their leaders, that peoples' self-reliance was not being developed but that on the contrary the people were becoming more dependent on government. There was sometimes even the suggestion that government servants were deliberately keeping the initiative and authority in their own hands as they were not willing to part with power and prestige. While this criticism has been partially justified, a conclusion drawn from it by many was misleading. This conclusion was that in a programme of Community Development of the right character, the government agency should have very little part to play and that should go on diminishing until it may almost cease. It should be obvious to any one who approaches the issue unbiased that the programme must have two partners for all time to come—the people and the agency of government. As progress takes place the role of the two partners will change and a new relationship between them will develop. To start with, it was inevitable that the government agency must keep to itself much of the initiative and leadership. If it failed to develop gradually leadership and initiative in the people; it failed in an essential task. But though leadership and initiative may increasingly pass on

to the people, their institutions and their leaders, the government agency will continue to remain important as an essential advisory agency whose advice the people will always need. The level and quantum of the advice will have to go up as the people get better informed and better organised and desirous of achieving higher goals of progress for themselves. This will apply particularly to the technical services. The interest of the country demands that such an adjustment of the relationship of the two partners should be facilitated and for this, responsibility must necessarily rest on both sides.

### UNINFORMED ATTITUDES

There is a fear, and it is but human, among government servants of their declining prestige. There is also noticeable an uninformed attitude among non-official leadership. What position the government servants acquire in the future, would depend very largely on themselves. To oppose the change which is inevitable in a growing democracy and under the demands of a Welfare State will be foolish and unpatriotic, just as is the reactionary opposition from some quarters to social justice or of authoritarians to decentralised democracy. If our technical services keep on improving their efficiency and calibre and therefore remain always in a position to render service to the people however high their demands may be they should have no reason to apprehend any decline in their prestige or usefulness. I visualise that the Collector of the future will be a person who because of his maturity, impartiality and objectivity will always be able to guide and advise the democratic institutions and to whom their leaders often will turn for impartial objective advice. Such should be the prestige and position which a Collector should be able to build up for himself in the future. And he will remain the representative of the State Government, the guardian of law and authority and vested with adequate powers for effective action in an emergency in the interest of the people in general. Such a position should not appear unattractive to any one, however, ambitious he may be. And it is a position, if well merited, that the new political leadership connected

with the new democratic institutions of the people that will be promoted under democratic decentralisation should be willing to concede in favour of the government agency, technical and administrative.

### SPECIAL HANDICAPS

While there is need for a radical change in the qualities of public servants of to-day and this must come about as quickly as possible, we have to recognise that the change has to be so great that it must necessarily take some time. Some who have been long in service under the old regime and advanced in age and thus with hardened attitudes may not be able to make the change. A few may even resist it, but the majority should be able and willing to make the change. About this, there should be little doubt. We must also recognise that there are some limitations under which public servants must necessarily work. They have to observe rules and regulations, follow precedents, obey the instructions of their superior officers and work within the powers given to them. They have also to maintain a certain degree of objectivity and detachment and have always to be impartial. Often these qualities and requirements give the impression of a government servant lacking in enthusiasm for progress, zeal in his work or a human approach to problems. Where these failings really exist, they have to be corrected. To-day our administration is suffering from some special handicaps. The majority of the people are from urban areas with an urban orientation and without intimate knowledge of the rural people. The administration, as a whole, has yet to win the confidence of the people which it did not have during the British regime because of its collaboration and identification with the alien rulers. During the freedom struggle every thing possible was done, and necessarily so, to bring down the prestige and credit of the administration. The rapid expansion of the administrative machinery that has taken place in the post-Independence period, with the heavy recruitment to the services that it has entailed, has not only diluted the quality of the services but has placed many persons prematurely in positions of responsibility

far beyond their capacity to bear. It has also seriously disturbed the proportion, between senior officers and junior officers resulting in inadequate guidance for these junior officers from their seniors. Training periods have also been severely cut down. For these reasons the transformation of the administration, difficult in itself, has become still more difficult. The need is for understanding, sympathy and patience and for giving the right lead and helpful guidance. In the training of political leaders, their responsibility to assist the process of transforming the administration, must receive emphasis. Training of the officials for their new role is equally important. As a long term measure, we have to ensure that the basic educational equipment given to the youngmen who are to join the public services is such as will make them better public servants in the new situation. Our education in the traditional schools and colleges has not been satisfactory from this point of view.

### INHERITED QUALITIES

It is important that while the personnel in the administration develop those human qualities and that enthusiasm and the social sense, necessary for building up the Welfare State, they do not lose some of the inherited qualities of the administration that are its strong points, such as, impartiality, objectivity and anonymity. These qualities need not stand in the way of the development of human qualities, zeal and enthusiasm. These qualities are necessary if the administration is to remain a non-political permanent instrument of government such as the Constitution requires. In the preservation of these qualities the new political leadership that will arise with democratic decentralisation will have a very important role to play and must be trained to be able to do so. The task will be more difficult at the lower levels of government where the relationship between the people's representatives and the public servants will necessarily be more personal and intimate. The adjustment of relationship will have to pass through a transitional stage when the State Administrative machinery will largely work for the local authorities and that often in a dual capacity—in

the capacity of an agency charged with the responsibility of promoting the development of the democratic aspirations of the people and also functioning as their administrative organ. Sooner or later the local authorities will have to have largely their own administrative agencies. But even at that stage the importance of developing the correct relationship between the political authority and the public servant and giving to the latter the essential characteristics that it must possess will continue and the same considerations will apply to the situation as at the present stage.

Just as the approach to the question of democratic decentralisation has to be pragmatic so also the approach to the question of evolving the future relationship on right lines between the newly formed local authorities and the official agencies. We should be willing to concede that if the people can and have to commit mistakes to learn, so also the officials. All that is possible should be done to guide both the sides in the right directions and avoid mistakes. For their relationship to develop or evolve on right lines we have to ensure free inter-play of different forces and avoid dominance by one group over the others. I am not sure that it would be the right course to give a disproportionately more important position to the M.Ps and M.L.As on the one hand or the Collector on the other. Rajasthan has given to the M.L.As only the position of associated members with

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*The self-governing village communities were the foundationstone of ancient Indian policy. Their strength came from within and not from without. Their authority rested not on rights and powers granted by a central government, but on the willing consent of the families that constituted them. The powers they wielded and the functions they performed were far wider than those of the village panchayats of today, which are mere empty shells as compared with their ancient predecessors.—*

**Jaya Prakash Narayan.**



# PANCHAYAT AND PLANNING

R. N. MOHANTY

ONE EVENING last June I sat up full three hours with the Gram Panchayat of my village at one of their meetings. The discussion was hot. The subjects included collection of contributions for the local High English School and tackling of defaulters in the Cooperative Credit Society. At one stage, the steam was let loose on me too.

## BLANKET TERMS

They wanted to know how exactly their requirements were being taken care of in the country's Plan. One old man, very wise and clever, refused to accept what he called "blanket terms" used by officers to avoid details, when I tried to explain what I knew of the Plan. The Sarpanch was more specific when he said, "Before the 2nd Plan was formulated, the S.D.O. and B.D.O. asked us to prepare plans for the Panchayats. We did it, filled up many sheets with data and estimates. We are told that these are stacked up in a corner of the District Office. We believe it, as no trace of our requirements are found either in the printed Plan nor in the works which are being undertaken. Is it going to be the same—for the next Plan as well?"

Last month I chanced upon a group of farmers at Delhi. I knew them earlier in 1952. They had come in the Kisan Special on Bharat Darshan. Some of them were young active members of Panchayats. One of them tried to corner me with exactly a similar question. I was perhaps chosen particularly because they had seen me closely associated with the hectic activities of the earlier days in getting village and Panchayat Plans prepared, as head of the local Government agency.

These people knew and had not lost hope. They were no cynics. But what they told me raised issues which should assume considerable importance in the present context of thinking about the Third Plan and the rapid pace at which we have begun

decentralising authority and responsibility to the people's institutions.

How far can the Panchayat be effectively associated with the formulation of the Plan? When we talk of building up the Plan from below, it will be quite reasonable to think that in practice the Panchayats, if not the villages, would be called upon to prepare a plan of their own, and these plans would form the base on which the whole pyramid will grow up to reach the apex in the form of a National Plan. Panchayats were not perhaps taken too seriously when the 1st and 2nd Plans were formulated and executed. It won't be far wrong to say that the role assigned to them were more symbolic than real. With the experience of both the Plans behind, it is admitted that to stimulate people's real enthusiasm and active participation, the Panchayat must be given a distinct share in all that is planned and done. It has to be involved fully and completely at all stages—beginning from the stage, when thinking starts, takes shape, crystallises into solid policies and lastly when it is worked out in the different facets and details.

## POOLING PROBLEMS

This raises a new issue. How can a Panchayat make a contribution to "the pool of thinking" which would ultimately give shape to a plan? Nobody can perhaps dispute the fact that people to whom the Plan is expected to bring prosperity should have a full say in its formulation and that it would be undemocratic to deny them this. For this, the involvement of as large numbers as is possible and feasible should be ensured. But how can the 'thinking' of 1,77,633 Panchayats, spread over 314 districts of the country and covering about 4½ lakh villages, effectively register itself on the making of the country's Plan? How can this thinking be pooled together?

There can be two approaches to the problem. Broad limits and principles may be laid down and the Pancha-

yats may be called upon to think, discuss and formulate their plans within the same. This should not be just asking them to fill in details into a broad pattern, in which decisions, pre-conceived notions and schemes are too rigidly pegged to restrict free action or free thinking. It must be admitted that this is one of the main reasons why even a psychological participation, which the glitter of Government aid could attract, broke down or waned when the aid was withdrawn, far from changing into a living interest. This lesson should tell us that the people's association with the Plan, has to be something quite different and that this has to come through the Panchayat.

Leave it to the villagers, ask them to sit together and build up their plans for the family, the village and ultimately for the Panchayat. They will be eager to discuss, and even forget their quarrels and feuds in compiling their needs. I have seen them doing this. The result can be foreseen. It will be a large pile of demands. These will be so enormous that the entire resources of the country for several years will be eaten up to meet the same. But this would give an indication of the size of people's requirements in the form as it comes directly from them. Given this size on the one hand, and the country's total resources which can be set apart for this purpose in a year on the other, it may perhaps be possible to approximately work out the period over which these targets may be spread, for complete fulfilment. This may also help to indicate to the people with some exactness, how much they may have to contribute to match the Government aid and towards the total resources necessary to meet their demands. If they wanted quicker fulfilment, their contribution should be more. Too much of dictation from above over a century has deprived the villager of his capacity to think coherently and fully and to size up properly the requirements for any unit bigger than his own family, such as his village community.

This approach may create a new initiative which will help to dispell the above. When the villager finds

that the promises made and hopes raised by the official agency or by the political programmes, remain unfulfilled, he does not allow his initiative to continue to enliven his approach. This approach, however, would involve him too deeply, not to expect everything from an outside source.

There may be a second approach. Certain broad principles, based on the economy of the country as a whole are indicated and the Panchayat is left to plan, fix up priorities within the same. This would appear more practical. But the planning machinery should afford ample scope for the collective thinking of the Panchayats to be reflected in the Plan. And at all levels—district, State and the nation, the shape and size of the Plan should unmistakably indicate this element. It is essential that the people really and honestly, accept the plan to be their own, in the sense that they helped to build it up. This confidence is vital, as it creates a helpful reaction.

#### CLOGGED CHANNEL

But what is being done at present? The lines of communication between the people and the Panchayat on the one hand, the official hierarchy on the other, is so clogged with disbelief from both ends that the wishes and plans of the people can hardly get through it fully and speedily, to reflect in the many schemes and programmes which are offered from top official levels. The impact of this flood of programmes on a common villager is unfortunate. He generally chooses to be indifferent rather than hostile. The intelligent and knowing among them sometimes react differently and grow openly hostile. This spells disaster for many of our well-intentioned programmes, which succeed only so far as Government contributions make them possible. Their good effects disappear, no sooner than they are realised, as real participation from the people had been wanting. It is essential that the line of communication between these agencies should be free and open.

The other important factor which can keep this properly tuned up is that every worker should not only recognise fully the role which people's

institutions, have been assigned in the new set-up, but also have faith in them. They should also be fully responsive to the wishes of people articulated through the institutions like Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis.

#### TARGET DISTRIBUTION

'Planning' implies some amount of centralisation; and yet, considerations of regional development or national interest should not override local needs; and to the extent it is recognised that the Panchayat is the only agency to integrate local needs, there should be complete decentralisation. For instance, at present a determined and planned approach is decided upon to step up food production and necessary targets are to be fixed up. The policy as to the total amount of food which the country need produce to meet normal requirements, for stand-bys to meet emergencies, for providing surplus necessary to support industrialisation and such others, has certainly to be decided at the top; and the national target for production based on such a policy has also to be determined at this high level. The target has, therefore, to be broken down and distributed till the lowest level of a village, which is by far the most important level, as it directly involves the producer. The question is whether the rural communities will be pressed to fulfil quotas of production indicated from above. How far down this mathematical distribution of quota fixed at high level should go and at what point exactly consultations with the Panchayats should be brought to play in determining the final production quota for the village community? These are moot questions.

Are the State Governments in a position to tell with any degree of correctness, how much is the potentiality of a particularly village community to produce food crops? This they can, if they have reliable data to show the total production of the food crops by that particular village community in a normal year or a year in which normal cropping conditions were prevalent. On this would depend the upward limit to which that village community can possibly raise their total production through improved conditions or facilities. It is not unlikely that as a

result of mathematical breaking down and distribution of targets, a village community may be given a figure which is equal, or slightly more or may be even less than what they usually produce in the normal year? The other possibility is that the target turns out to be too high and unreal. As a result, the importance of the drive is lost to them. A Panchayat Samiti when it is fully operative may perhaps be able to suggest a workable target for a village community, through consultations with the Panchayat members. This may need prior consultation by the Panchayats with small groups of farmers (if not individual farmers) in the village. The agricultural plans which we now ask them to prepare, should in fact, be the nucleus for building up the targets of production, which at some stage, should also reflect other considerations stated above.

Idle and unutilised manpower is our greatest reserve of resources. The reserve is vast. Economists have always advised that its utilisation should be planned, so that a programme which relies on this to go through, is not just a leap in the dark. Those who have worked in the villages for long periods will, perhaps, agree that in a large number of cases, in both small or big rural projects the experience is one of the following four:—

- (a) Too many programmes, each calling for matching contributions, are clamped on a village community at the same time, with the same time schedule for execution. This has a disastrous effect on each such programme, as the village community in trying to attend to all simultaneously fails to attend to any, fully and wholeheartedly. As a result many of the works are done haphazardly and the quality turns out to be poor.
- (b) Participation which the people readily give in the initial and early stages, keep on waning and disappear completely, as flow of Government aid slows down, or finally stops, so that officials find it extremely difficult to complete certain works left half-done.

(c) Work is started relying on promises of participation from people to be available at a later stage. To keep up the time schedule officials proceed with execution, with Government fund, but when these are exhausted, the portion of the work programmed to be completed by people's voluntary contribution is left incomplete, and the promises remain unfulfilled.

(d) In case of many projects which are successfully completed, it always involves a lot of struggle (efforts) on the part of the government official to draw out participation from the people. This, in fact, robs, to an undeniably large extent the voluntary character of such participation.

I think that want of correct and full assessment of the manpower that could be harnessed for the programme, before it is taken up, is responsible for this state of affairs. Manpower or "fund of participation or contribution" of the village community is not inexhaustible, though it may be vast. For example, a particular village community can contribute in all forms, only to a certain maximum limit, in a particular period, say a year. It is possible to compute the quantum of such contribution during a given period, for, usually such a community is not very big. For instance, it is not difficult to work out how much each adult in every family can donate to the community, who of the villagers can give labour, cash, or materials and how much of it during that year. A village community or a Panchayat alone can make these enquiries realistically, and also decide whether such assessments should be based on considerations of property, capacity to give, general economic condition or any other factors.

Once the quantum of its total contribution is assessed, the size of the programme which a particular village community can undertake during that year, can be easily determined by the community. This will facilitate execution but calls for full prior consultation with the village community

or the Panchayat before a programme is given to it for execution.

I had some experience of this. Once with five programmes (with detailed estimates) on my card, a fixed amount of Government aid, and the requirement of people's contribution mentioned against each, I approached a village community. I had a number of lengthy discussions with their leading men. They wanted a few days to consult other members of the village, as to how much they could possibly draw out as contribution and which programme or programmes they could accept for themselves. They took about 10 days and decided to take up a new building for the school and one well during that season. The Panchayat member produced one long sheet of paper and in it I found names of all the families of the village—and against each a note as to what he can give. None except the sick and infirm, was left out. Even the old were to sit at the work-site to supervise. The labourers who would work in the project were to accept a small voluntary cut in their wages. Those who won't work, would donate bricks, timber, rope, thatch, etc., and the comparative basis was in terms of the rupee value—and it was quite fair. The assessment was on the earnings of the family. In addition, they were sure of some *ad hoc* contributions to the two pro-

jects by the rich, those whose children were in the school and those who were to be directly benefited from the well.

Participation may be shy and slow in coming, and it has to be stimulated by various methods, such as creation of better understanding, demonstrations, and above all trust and proper contact. Utilisation of a sizable part (may not be the whole of it) of the manpower resources in a village is possible only if the Panchayat is involved in the preparation of the Plan. An assessment of such resources by any agency other than the Panchayat, would perhaps be incomplete and unreal; and any programme which would rely on this for its achievements, can never be too sure of success.

"Left to themselves, they too can think for themselves" this declaration of faith has to be accepted and practised by the services and by the non-service leaders. Interference from either source is to be stopped. The Panchayats need intelligent guidance, at all stages but no interference nor dictation. "They can also plan in a small way how best to improve their own lot. Guide them and they can also think and plan in the big way. It is a matter of faith, and how much of it you can afford to give them."

## THE NEW ROLE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

(Continued from page 13)

no right to vote nor the right to be elected as Pradhan or Up-Pradhan in the Panchayat Samitis. There is need for balancing the different forces for their collaboration in terms of their respective special talents. We must recognise that the growth of initiative, self-reliance and the capacity of the people can be hampered not only by official domination but even by political domination or because of too much spoon-feeding, whether it comes from the side of the administration or from the side of political leadership.

Threat to a new democracy can come not only from possible sources of dictatorship such as the Army, political groups, etc., but also from

political instability resulting in ineffective action and weakening of democracy. This is particularly so when, as in our case, we are faced simultaneously with both the tasks of building up democracy and developing the country. We, therefore, do need an efficient administration. It would be a great tragedy if due to impatience, bias, lack of understanding or any other cause, we failed to bring about the transformation of the administration in the manner necessary for making it an effective instrument of a Welfare State but demoralised it and made it a weak instrument unable to serve the country both in its development and in an emergency.

## Panchayat Palki



### SPOT NEWS

## Significant Role of Panchayat Samitis

(As reported by the Hindu correspondent at Samalkot, Andhra Pradesh)

WITH THE advent of Panchayat Samitis, there is a lot of activity in the rural areas around here. The District Board Administration, now in the hands of official agencies, will be wound up as soon as the elections to the Zila Parishads are completed. The period of lull for the last seven to eight years in the countryside is coming to an end. The recent elections to the Panchayat Samitis have aroused a great deal of enthusiasm even in the interior areas. The common man is prone to think that he will be at the helm of affairs, through the process of democratic decentralisation, which will eliminate red-tape and officialdom, the two things delaying progress greatly.

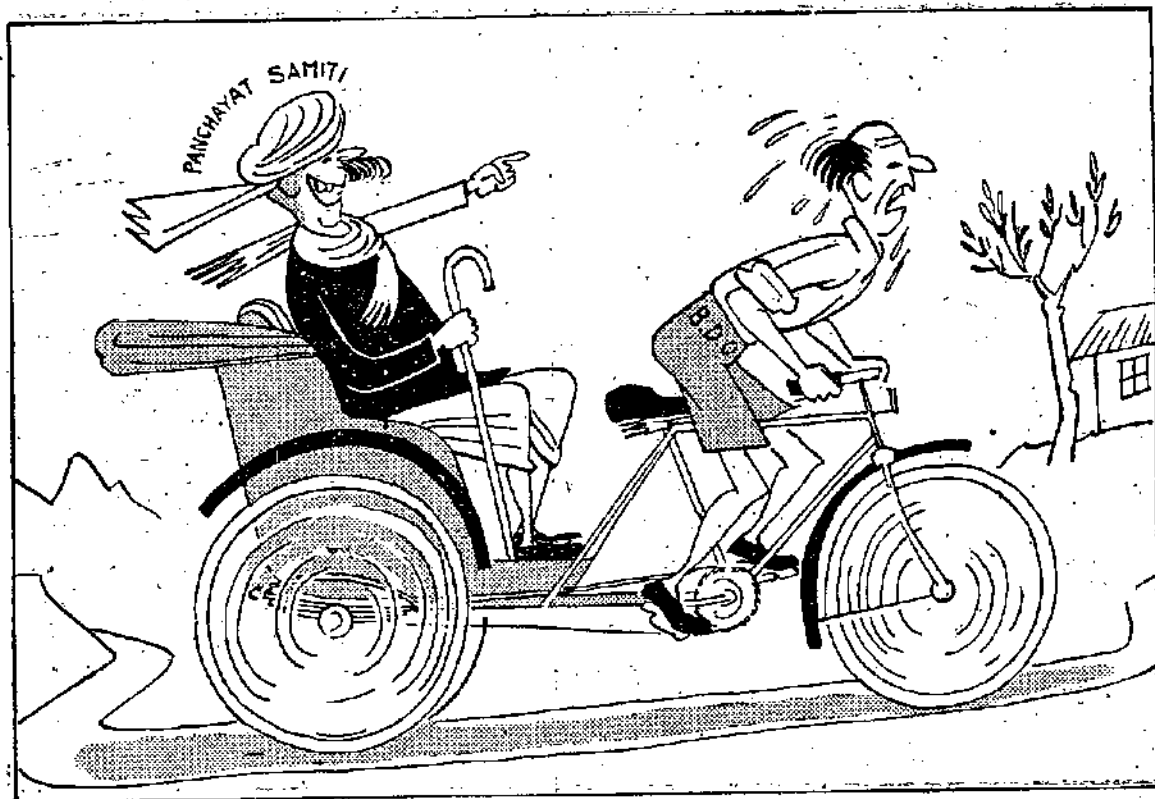
At this juncture, it is necessary to view the picture of Panchayat Samitis

against its background of the National Extension Movement and the Community Projects. For instance, the Kakinada-Peddapuram Community Project, with its head-quarters at Samalkot, was one of the only two Community Projects allotted to the Andhra region. This project was inaugurated on October 2, 1952. Over Rs. 80 lakhs were spent during 1952-55. Nevertheless, it kindled very little enthusiasm among the people here. Community plans then were neither understood nor appreciated to the degree necessary. Successful implementation of Community Development is not possible unless the villagers fully participate in the programme. More so, because the Extension principle prescribes half-to-half share by villages where the

community schemes are to be executed in the shape of 'Sramadan' or by way of public subscription or both. The basic idea underlying the National Extension Movement is to attain intensive development reaching every family in the countryside and to secure co-ordinated development of life as a whole. The Second main purpose of these programmes is to organise the community for co-operative endeavour, and to see that people living in the village are awakened to a better life, provided with opportunities for self-expression, creative living and cultural development and to see that villagers take to new ways of thinking and new aspirations. That is why the Community Projects were designed as plans of the people, by the people and for the people.

But, unfortunately all these years, the Community plans remained as plans of the officials without captivating the masses. With the result, the Block officials showed good progress on paper. Superior officers naturally appreciated this paper-progress all

## New Masters



right. People were not having any say in the matter.

Now, with the formation of the Panchayat Samitis, the picture is changed for the better. The Stage II Samalkot Block is now converted into a Panchayat Samiti and the administration of the Block rests with the Panchayat Samiti and its standing committees. The Block Development Officer, who is the Chief Executive Officer, and all officials borne on the establishment of the Samiti are subordinate to the Panchayat Samiti with wide powers and finances to act quickly and effectively. All the village Panchayats are brought into the picture. The Samiti will be entrusted with elementary education, communications, medical and public health and social welfare, including Harijan Hostels. The Samiti will also administer the Community Development programme which covers agriculture, animal husbandry, co-operation and cottage, small-scale and village industries. The expenditure incurred by the Government on

development activities will be made over to the Samitis as grant-in-aid. The Samiti will get three-fourth anna in every rupee of the land cess and one-fifth from the proceeds of the duty on transfer of property. It has also been decided to give 25 nP. per head of population as grant-in-aid to the Samiti and another 30 nP. per head for communications. The extension movement has supplemented the Community Projects inaugurated on October 2, 1952 and now, the Extension Programme is rightly entrusted to the Panchayat Samiti. Only this way, can the plans be worked as plans of the people, by the people and for the people.

Fortunately, an independent gentleman with experience in administration has been elected as the President of the Samalkot Block Panchayat Samiti. He was formerly a Municipal Commissioner. He will not be content to say ditto to the Executive Officers nor will he allow party politics to intrude. This is no doubt a good augury.

## GRAM PANCHAYAT OF MY CONCEPTION

(Continued from page 7)

Today some of the villagers are well-off, and others are poor. Political parties come to villages to canvass votes. If you vote for this party, the other party gets offended and vice versa. Thus it introduces the virus of enmity into the village body-politics. And it is ever difficult to get rid of this virus. The village being a small unit almost everyone there knows everyone else. Some one may every day point to you and say to other: "This man voted for that man; he belong to that party." Thus enmity in a village flourishes as a tree flourishes when watered every day. Towns are comparatively free from this nuisance. The poor in the village as a result come to grief, for they have to depend on the rich for money, even for medicines. Therefore, this party-government business though recognized in the Constitution should have no place in rural state-affairs. (Based on a speech made in Hindi).

## FROM PATENCHERRU TO JAISAMAND

RAGHUBIR SAHAI M.P.

IT WAS AGREED at Patencherru that a similar camp (for MPs and MLAs) should be held in some other State. Rajasthan representatives came forward with an invitation forthwith. At Patencherru, in Andhra, we had seen Panchayat Samitis at work, formed in anticipation of the relevant legislation on the subject which was then pending before the Assembly. That was something remarkable and very welcome.

But at Jaisamand, the finest place from scenic point of view that could have been selected in Rajasthan, democratic decentralization had become a *fait accompli* throughout the State having been formally inaugurated on 2nd October, 1959, i.e. a month prior to the holding of Study Camp commencing on 3rd November.

Unlike Patencherru, in Jaisamand, fewer M.Ps. and M.L.As. took part in the deliberations, their attendance was rather poor, but the representation of the official element was no doubt considerable apart from a number of Pradhans and Pramukhs recently elected in the Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishad elections. From the Chief Secretary down to the B.D.O. including the Development Commissioner, several District Magistrates, Commissioner of the division, Director of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Director of Co-operatives and others were present. They took an active part in the discussion that ensued.

One feature that could not escape attention was the admirable spirit of cordiality between the official and non-official element both of whom appeared anxious to make the scheme of Democratic Decentralization a great success. Perhaps this is due to the absence of any bureaucratic traditions, as we know them in other States, which stand in the way of the two meeting each other without any mental reservations. One would wish this attitude to continue in the interest of the State. It would be a matter of sincere gratification if the services in other parts of the country

would also copy the methodology adopted by their brethren in Rajasthan.

We had occasion to see something of Pramukhs (Chairman of the Zila Parishad) and Pradhans (Chairman of the Panchayat Samitis) recently elected to either Zila Parishad or Panchayat Samitis. In each day's deliberation, one of them was requested to preside. They are certainly people possessing sturdy commonsense and a desire to make themselves understood.

Another feature that came to our notice was the great enthusiasm evinced by everybody in regard to Democratic Decentralization, which they refused to regard as an experiment but something accepted as a matter of faith or adopted as a way of life. We can very well understand their enthusiasm because one of their prominent representatives put it very bluntly:—'We had been groaning under the weight of feudalism for a very long time, and since that weight has now been removed, we want to soar in the sky'. That is why some of them refused to hear a word of caution or a word of friendly advice. It is all the more necessary that in Rajasthan, where they have begun so well having gone ahead with Democratic Decentralization throughout the State, the progress should be watched with very great sympathetic care by the Centre, giving them guidance whenever needed without letting them entertain a feeling that they were being interfered with.

It is not as if the entire implications of Democratic Decentralization are clear to all those who are intimately associated with it. For instance, there was an apparent confusion in the mind of some of the prominent protagonists of decentralization whether the basic institution was the Panchayat Samiti, or the Village Panchayat.

From the trend of the discussion in the Camp, it was more than evident that in the minds of some people there was great prejudice against the

M.L.As and M.Ps, especially the latter, who are not to be allowed to associate with the working of the Panchayat Samitis. The Rajasthan Panchayat Samitis Act has however permitted the M.L.A. of the area to be an Associate Member without any right of vote, but even this association has been denied to the M.P. It is unfortunate that such a prejudice should have arisen against the M.P. or even an M.L.A. Why should they be prevented from giving such cooperation as they are capable of in making the development work in their area a success? This kind of work can receive a lot of impetus by the active cooperation and participation of the members of the legislature of that area, who instead of interesting themselves in matters of individual concern can take up questions of general application for the benefit of the community.

Despite all that took place in the Camp, it will have to be admitted that on Democratic Decentralization, the mind of Rajasthan as a whole was not made clear. There should have been greater exchange of views between officials and non-officials and many more non-officials should have given expression to their views. There is no doubt about it that Rajasthan has begun well. It has almost a clean slate to write upon. It has taken a very bold step for which it deserves thanks and congratulations from each and every other State of India. Intensive training on the part of everybody concerned who has anything to do with Democratic Decentralization would be absolutely necessary and would have to be provided. Evaluation and assessment of the work at every stage will also have to be simultaneously made so that there may be no mistake as to what has been achieved and what is left to be done and the Rajasthan people will also be well advised to bear in mind the history of local-Self-Government in other States of India so that the pitfalls which hampered the progress there may be avoided.

*If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.— William Blake.*

# ASSAULT RACE





# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Hyderabad Conference on Panchayats

We give below the main recommendations and conclusions reached at the fifth meeting of the Central Council of Local Self Government, held at Hyderabad from 22nd to 25th October, 1959.

### FUNCTIONAL SUB-COMMITTEES

AT THE PRESENT stage of development of our Panchayats, it is desirable that the decisions, particularly those involving financial implications, should be taken by Panchayats as a whole. Functional Sub-Committees can and should strengthen the Panchayat by assisting them with suggestions at the stage of planning, and once Panchayat has taken decisions, at the stage of implementation of programmes of development.

In case of multi village Panchayats covering larger areas, if subject-wise functional Committees may not be feasible, "local committees" may be formed in each village consisting of the Panchayat representatives of that village and other co-opted members from the village. Such local Committees may make proposals on all aspects of development of the village for consideration of the Panchayat as a whole, and should also assist in implementation of programmes.

### RESOURCES OF PANCHAYATS

Each Development Department should help Panchayats to devise schemes which will help in building up community assets capable of giving recurring income and thereby increase local resources of the Panchayat.

### GRAM SABHA

Gram Sabha should be recognised as a legal entity comprising the whole electorate of Panchayat, free to meet as often as possible. Legislation should provide for at least two meetings of the Gram Sabha in a year—one for discussion of the budget and another for a six monthly review of progress.

### PANCHAYAT BUDGET

Panchayats should have the power to approve their own budget. For enlisting due support of the electorate,

the budget should be placed before the Gram Sabha for information and discussion. Suggestions for improvement, if any, offered by the Gram Sabha should be duly considered by the Panchayat.

### WORKING GROUP'S REPORT

The Council broadly approved the Report of the Working Group on Panchayats and felt that the 'new role of Panchayats' and the 'New concept' of safeguard as detailed in the Report should be accepted. Guidance rules should be framed by the individual State Governments in light of their requirements. There should be flexibility both in regard to the group of subjects to be dealt with by functional Sub-Committees that may be formed by Panchayats and also as to the size of each such functional Sub-Committee. The principle of broad-basing through co-option was acceptable subject to the final decision remaining with the panchayat as a whole. Sooner the artificial distinction between obligatory and discriminatory functions is abolished the better. State level legislation making the levy by Panchayats of a few taxes, e.g., house tax, compulsory may help Panchayats. The poor people could be given relief by exempting houses below a certain valuation from such compulsory taxation.

Capital resources vested in Panchayats by State Governments should be utilised by Panchayats to create better assets which may give recurring income and thus increase local resources. Panchayat Departments should fully guide Panchayats in this matter.

It is highly essential that suitable arrangements should be made for audit of Panchayat accounts. State should bear the cost of audit and not the Panchayats.

It would be desirable to set up some evaluation units in the State for concurrent study of the working of Panchayats and of Democratic Decentralisation. It would help in applying correctives, if deficiencies are observed. Central Government should financially assist in setting up such Evaluation Units.

While a start may have to be made by having Panchayat Secretaries as whole-time paid servants serving either a single or a group of adjoining Panchayats, effort will have also to be made in progressively finding and training honorary Secretaries from amongst the village people to serve as Panchayat Secretaries.

A certain basic minimum level of understanding should be ensured through the various training programmes of personnel at various levels. To achieve this, it would be very desirable that a few booklets in simple language are prepared to cover different items of the syllabi of such training. The Ministry of Community Development may consider preparation of such standard booklets.

### THE EMERGING ROLE

Widest possible involvement of people was necessary if they are to render real support to Panchayats for community development. This could be achieved by utilising the available spare time and energies of people through association of their voluntary organisations with Panchayats for development programmes. The basic philosophy governing this aspect of functional democracy as illustrated in the Agenda note will prove very helpful in guiding future programme of Panchayat work.

### TRAINING OF OFFICIALS

The Council was happy to note that the training of District Panchayat  
(Continued on page 23)

## LETTERS

(Continued from page 4)

being made to bring about the desired coordination between the Government departments at various levels, it is strange that the various Government departments begin to view the C.D. Department as something alien and different from them.

10-10-59  
Nalagarh,  
Punjab

Yours etc.,  
Lakshmi Dutt Kalra,  
S.E.O.

### A Paradox

Sir,

One of the paradoxes that I have not been able to understand fully is that on the one hand we complain of paucity of funds for our development programmes and on the other, there are large chunks of unspent grants even though there is a heavy rush-through of expenditure at the close of each successive year.

This is a very undesirable state of affairs and reflects adversely on our planning and administrative machinery. The chief difficulty perhaps arises out of the fact that the Central Government insists on the submission of standardised returns from all parts of the country irrespective of the fact that conditions vary sharply from place to place. It is next to impossible to take into account all the regional peculiarities in any Central scheme. Unless enough scope is conceded for flexibility within the broad pattern of a scheme, the local initiative and drive will not be forthcoming to complete it within the stipulated time-limit. The delay in the implementation of the Industrial Housing Scheme is an object-lesson. Initially the scheme evoked poor response because of the rigid standard pattern of cost and development and the agency through which work was to be done. The scheme got going only after it was shorn of its initial rigidity and made flexible so as to suit local conditions.

Another potent factor that slows down the pace of utilisation of the sanctioned grant is more basic and relates to the officers' outlook on development. The routine office work takes away the better part of the officers' time so that they cannot

do justice to the work on the field, and thus the progress of work is held up.

The fact that the State Governments always demand far larger initial grants and the Centre is equally unwilling to sanction the same, calls for some rethinking on the subject so as to evolve simpler and more fool-proof procedures for the sanction and utilisation of grants.

5-10-59  
Jajpur, Orissa

Yours etc.,  
B. B. Khandai

### Desilting

Sir,

Tanks play a significant role in village economy. They supply drinking water for cattle and irrigation for fields. The breeding of fish in tanks is highly remunerative and provides a handy source of income to the village community. It was for these reasons that in the past, digging of a tank was considered a highly sacred job. There are thousands of tanks all over the country which due to long neglect have become silted up.

It is not difficult to organise a campaign for desilting of these tanks. During the off-season, a majority of the villagers are idle and have no work to do. Besides in every village, 50 to 100 carts can also be made available. These can be utilised for removing silt as part of Shramdan drive. A tank fund should be organised out of collections made from beneficiaries. The silt itself will make valuable manure and bring revenue. The desilting of tanks should be made a regular feature by making it part of minor irrigation scheme under the Community Development programme.

22-8-59  
Wardha

Yours etc.,  
G. Marutrao.

### B.D.O's Recruitment

Sir,

Considering the magnitude and importance of the Community Development movement in India the problem of recruiting the proper personnel particularly the B.D.O. who is to guide the programme and

function as a captain of the team at the Block level is of vital importance. Hitherto no uniform procedure seems to have been followed in different States regarding the recruitment of B.D.Os. Perhaps the Ministry of Community Development has not issued any clear or specific directions on the subject to the State Governments.

Take for example, the case of the Government of Mysore, which during the last year recruited about 50 B.D.Os. through the Public Service Commission. The minimum educational qualification laid down was Matriculation with five years of experience in any one of the Departments viz., Revenue, Agriculture, Veterinary, Co-operation and Community Development and National Extension Service. The minimum age limit was fixed at 28 years.

It appears that the intention is to lay emphasis on practical experience in the field rather than on educational qualifications. This is good in so far as it goes since it gives opportunities of promotion to the Gram Sevaks and other Extension officers. But the condition of 28 years of minimum age limit appears to be on the high side. Young men who after graduating from universities were drawn to the C.D. programme and who, having already put in 4 to 5 years of service, are now unnecessarily deprived of the opportunity of promotion as B.D.O.

In my opinion, the minimum age-limit for recruitment as B.D.O. should be brought down to 21 years. This will bring a ray of hope to many a young man wanting to be of greater service to the cause of Community Development.

18-8-59  
Mysore State,

Yours etc.,  
An E.O. (S.E.)

### The Block Budget

Sir,

The total budget allotment for Stage I C.D. programme for five years is Rs. 12 lakhs—out of which nearly 4 lakhs is to be spent on establishment alone. Out of the remaining amount about Rs. 3.5 lakhs is 'loans' for irrigation. Thus actually about Rs. 4.5 lakhs only are proposed to be utilised for all other activities. The

proportion of establishment charges to the actual amount 'other than loans' in the programme is thus 50 : 50. This is obviously on the high side. No running concern whose establishment and overhead charges are so high can be called efficient and economical. There are two alternatives of remedying this defect, viz., (1) either to reduce the staff, (2) or to increase the output of work. I prefer the second alternative and suggest that the whole work covering the first and second stages of a Block should be completed within five years instead of ten as at present. It should not be difficult to achieve this only if we strive to carry on the programme on a war footing. The second defect is more intrinsic and relates to the type of personnel that is being recruited for running the show. My feeling is that a large number of the members of the Block staff hail from the cities and are out of tune with what is usually known as the rural frame of mind. They are unable to talk to the villagers as man to man and therefore, are unable to evoke any enthusiasm in them. On visiting a village, most of them, true to their Babu mentality ask for a chair to sit, a table in front and a mike to speak and soon they develop into "lecturebazi". But this does not carry us far. The programme based on "Plan for each Family" can be worked out only by door-to-door contact. There are 20 touring officers at the Block level.

I feel that in 6 years, it is possible for them to contact all the families of the Block six times at the rate of 600 families each officer per year. For this purpose, each officer may be allotted 2 or 3 villages where he should concentrate his efforts on the family basis.

13-8-59

Yours etc.,

Suryapet,

Krishna Murthy.

(LETTERS Continued on page 25)

*'A minister who possesses his own native subtle intelligence combined with knowledge acquired by wide learning, will never have a task too subtle and intricate for him to solve.'—*

**Tirukkural.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Hyderabad Conference on Panchayats

(Continued from page 21)

Officers has started. For the job-training of Block Panchayat Officers to be organised in the States, financial assistance will be necessary. Ministry may consider this and convey their decision to the States as early as possible.

Panchayat Secretaries' Training should be provided to full time paid Panchayat Secretaries first. Central financial assistance should be given to all States on a uniform basis without any discrimination based on the type, duration, or extent of their existing training arrangements. There should, however, be no objection to Central assistance on a per-capita basis uniformly to all States. Such assistance on per-capita basis should be given in respect of trainees whose training might have started at any time during the current financial year, i.e. from 1-4-59 onwards. The training should be for 10-12 weeks. Should any State like to provide extra training, the excess expenditure over such per capita Central assistance should be found by the States themselves.

#### TRAINING OF NON-OFFICIALS

In the context of Panchayat Development and Democratic Decentralisation, training of non-officials at all levels becomes the most important single item of work. Panchayat Departments should take the initiative and attend to the earliest comprehensive and systematic organisation of the training, particularly of Sar-Panch, Panch and the people.

#### DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION

The Council was happy to note the progress in the sphere of Democratic Decentralisation being made in the various States. After very detailed consideration of various important aspects of Democratic Decentralisation, the Council came to the conclusion that while the broad pattern and the fundamentals may be uniform, there should not be any rigidity in the pattern. In fact, the country is so large and Democratic Decentralisation is so complex a subject with far reaching consequences,

that there is the fullest scope of trying out various patterns and alternatives. What is most important is the genuine transfer of power to the people. If this is ensured, form and pattern may necessarily vary according to conditions prevailing in different States.

#### REPRESENTATION ON B.D.Cs

It is the duty also of Panchayat Departments to ensure that there is the fullest representation of Panchayats on the Block Development Committees and also that such representation is through the electoral process and not through nomination.

#### LOCAL WORKS THROUGH PANCHAYATS

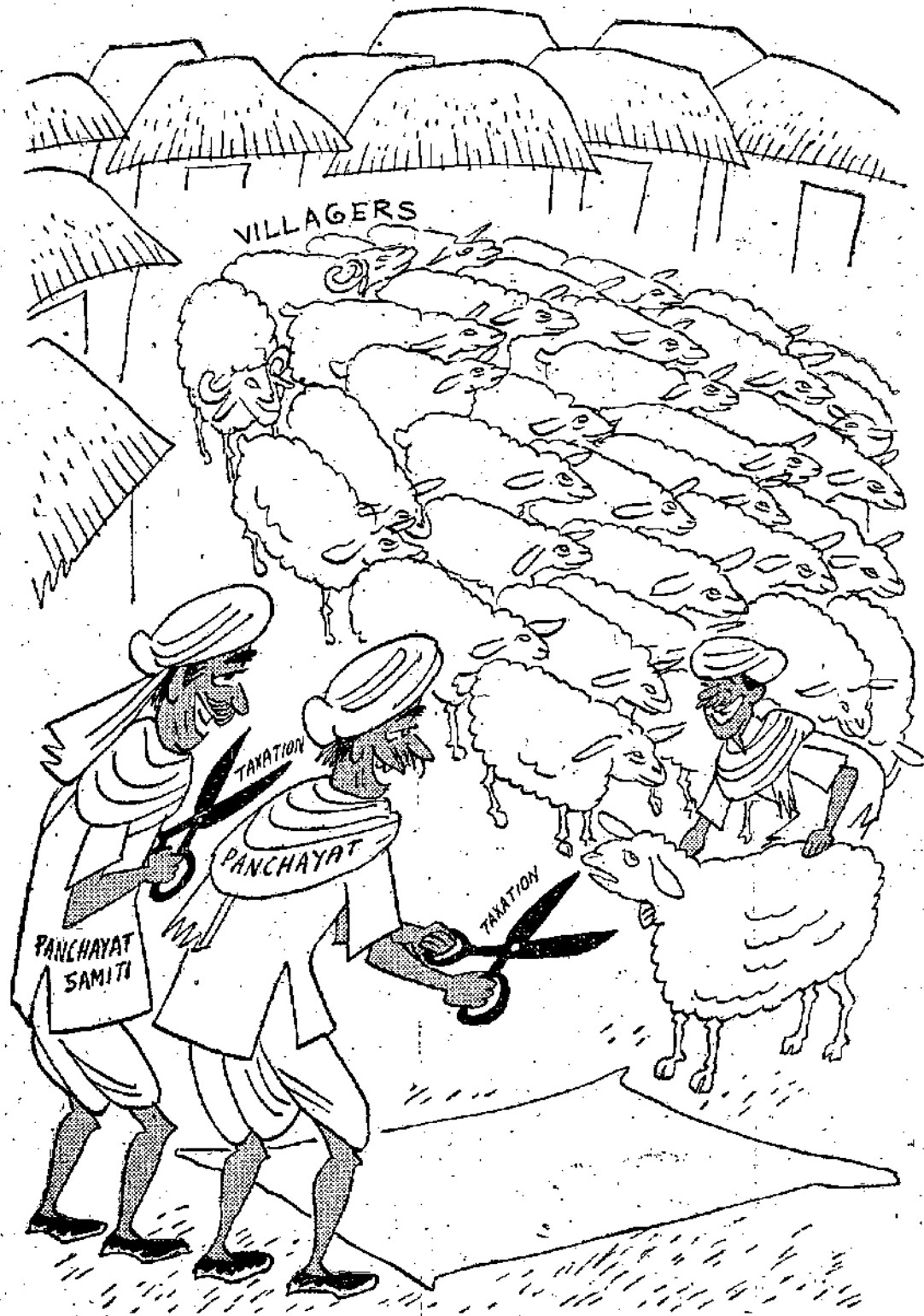
Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation has already issued instructions to States for using Rs. 2.9 lakhs in Stage I and Rs. 2 lakhs in Stage II from the Block budget through Panchayats for programmes in the nature of local development works. Panchayat Departments should follow this up by not only seeing that orders from the State Headquarters are issued, but by ensuring that they are in fact being implemented at the ground level.

It is highly desirable that as a part of normal departmental routine, the Panchayat Departments should build up important statistics. This would in course of time provide a factual basis for framing future policies or modifications in existing ones. A Committee of six Directors of Panchayats with the Director, Administrative Intelligence, Ministry of Community Development, as Secretary should thoroughly examine this matter and submit to the Ministry proposals for such information to be built up in each State.

#### INTEGRATION OF PANCHAYAT & C.D. ORGANISATIONS IN STATES

In pursuance of the Abu decision for organic integration between the Panchayat and Community Development organisations, some States have already progressed well in achieving such integration. It was felt that other States should soon take steps to achieve the same.

# SHEARING SEASON



(After a visit to Rajasthan by our Cartoonist)

# PANCHAYATS IN KASHMIR

N. KAUL

AS FAR BACK as April, 1956, Panchayats in the State of Jammu and Kashmir had been integrated with the programme of Community Development. The Panchayat Department and the Rural Development Department were merged at all levels with the Development Commissioner at the top. The Panchayat comprising of four to five villages corresponding to a Revenue unit came to be recognised as the basic unit for planning and execution of the Community Development programme. No wonder, therefore, that when the Union Minister for Community Development visited the State in July, 1957, he found that "Kashmir had stolen a march over the rest of India by utilising Panchayats in the planning and execution of Community Development programme."

With this transfer of power and responsibility to the people, a new spirit of self-help has been generated. All the major facets of the programme, such as Agricultural demonstration, Horticulture, improved practices, poultry development, minor irrigation, etc., have been entrusted to the Panchayats. The Block budget has been broken into Panchayat budgets equitably amongst all Panchayat units, with a reserve at the block level for inter-Panchayat programme. Ceilings have been suggested under each head of activity and the major emphasis is on agriculture and allied activities.

Since the Community Development machinery was placed at the disposal of the Panchayats to plan and execute the programme, the role of the various functionaries at different levels had to be re-defined. Thus the Village Level Worker was appointed as the Secretary of the respective Panchayats. Administratively this did not create any difficulty as one Village Level Worker was provided for each Panchayat area. Care was taken to see that the Village Level Worker did not get mixed up with the judicial functions of the Panchayat. Fears that this arrangement would interfere with the Extension functions of the Village Level Worker have now been proved to be

unjustified. It was not a mere works programme which was transferred to the Panchayats; the entire economic as well as amenities side of the movement was handed over by the State to be planned and implemented by the Panchayats. Under a recent Act, separate judicial Panchayats are being constituted with which the V.L.W. as the Secretary of the Panchayat will not be associated.

Another noteworthy feature is the statutory provision of nomination on the Panchayats. While the elected element has to be in majority under the statute, the Government has powers to nominate a few members in the interest of efficient functioning of these institutions. It has been the experience in Kashmir that under the system of elections, men with the proper calibre do not come forward to contest. If the right type of the people are not to be associated with the functioning of the Panchayat, the whole experiment might fail. It is in order to avoid this that the Government have reserved to itself the right of nomination. There is much to be said for this provision so long as the Government does not propose to utilise it in the favour of candidates who may have been defeated at the polls.

The new Act also envisages the constitution of statutory Block Panchayat Boards. Each Panchayat will send its representatives to serve on the Block Panchayat Board. They will also have other co-opted members and will function under the Chairmanship of a non-official. For the first few years, however, the Government has reserved the right to nominate an official as the Chairman of the Board. All items of work including the budget of the Panchayats will be placed before the Board for approval. Even though constituted under a statute, these Boards have only advisory functions. But in practice the official machinery will find it almost impossible to reject the recommendations of this Board. The experience of Kashmir which has virtually followed a scheme of democratic decentralisation since April 1956, might be of some interest to other States as well.

## LETTERS

(Continued from page 23)

### Rural Industrialisation

Sir,

The need of the hour is to decentralise and disperse industry in the countryside without which the rural industrial growth will be difficult. This has also become necessary in view of the political and administrative decentralisation which is already under way in the States. To start with, there may be a three-tier system for rural industrial structure, beginning from the village up to the district level.

At the ground level, about 20 villages may be grouped together to constitute the lowest unit of rural industrial organisation to provide services and skill for the local artisans who are the smallest entrepreneurs in the Indian economy. Credit and Service Co-operatives will have to be organized for the purpose. At the intermediate level which will be at the Block Headquarters facilities of workshop and improved mechanical instruments of work and services may be provided for. These workshops will help in lifting village industries from muscle-power stage to steam or electricity power stages of production. At the top level which would be near the district or sub-division level, rural industrial estates may be established. At this level, the local industry would acquire the form of a factory management, which may as well be the starting point of new industries. These estates would also accommodate within their fold such of the ancillary industries, etc. which might be elbowed out of the urban industrial towns.

Such a three-tier system can work properly under a well organised production system allotting to each of its sector items of production which could fully exploit the production potential available at its various levels. This production machinery will have to be from its very inception interlocked with a complementary marketing system which alone will make the rural industrial programme a self-propelling movement. The growth of this structure demands a twin approach to rural industrialisation:

1. decentralisation of urban industries through the instruments of fiscal operation and licensing system, and
2. making industries more agriculture oriented and labour intensive.

2-11-59

New Delhi.

Yours etc.,

H. U. SAIN

# Sample Survey

*The fifth meeting of the Central Council of Local Self Government, held at Hyderabad, has recommended that a Sample Survey of Village Panchayats should be taken.—Editor.*

1. Name of State
2. Name of District
3. Name of Block/Block Unit (Shadow Block)
4. Name of Sample Panchayat.
5. No. of villages covered by the Sample Panchayat.
6. Population covered by the Sample Panchayat.
7. No. of schools in the Sample Panchayat.
8. No. of village cooperatives in the Sample Panchayat.
9. Term of Panchayat : From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_
10. Information about Panches :
  - (i) No. of Panches statutory provided.
  - (ii) No. of persons who contested in the election.
  - (iii) Whether party symbols were used in the election ?
  - (iv) No. of Panches returned unopposed in the election.
  - (v) No. of Panches elected.
  - (vi) No. of Panches nominated.
  - (vii) Composition of Panches
 

|          |                           |
|----------|---------------------------|
| Male :   | (a) Scheduled Caste/Tribe |
|          | (b) Backward Classes      |
|          | (c) Others.               |
| Female : | (a) Scheduled Caste/Tribe |
|          | (b) Backward Classes      |
|          | (c) Others.               |
11. Status of the Secretary :
  - (i) Is the Secretary for the Sample Panchayat alone or for more than one Panchayat. If latter, for how many Panchayats ?
  - (ii) Is the Secretary full-time or part-time ?
  - (iii) Is the Secretary paid or honorary ?
  - (iv) Is the Secretary trained or untrained ?
  - (v) What are the emoluments/honorarium per month drawn by the Secretary ?
  - (vi) What are the qualifications of the Secretary ?
  - (vii) What was the previous vocation of the Secretary ?
  - (viii) Is the Secretary a native of the district or not ?
  - (ix) Does the disciplinary control over the Secretary vest in a Govt. officer or in a democratic body ?
12. Functional Sub-committees :
  - (i) Has the Panchayat any functional Sub-committees ?
  - (ii) If the answer to (i) above is 'yes', give the following details :—
 

| Name of the Functional Sub-committee. | Subjects dealt with. |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| (a)                                   |                      |
| (b)                                   |                      |
| (c)                                   |                      |
| (d)                                   |                      |
13. Associate Organisations :
 

Give below the details of the associate organisations within the Panchayat :

| Associate Organisation | No. formed | Whether represented on related functional sub-committee | Financial assistance given to them by the Panchayat during 58-59 |
|------------------------|------------|---|--|
|------------------------|------------|---|--|

1. Bal Mandals
2. Yuvak Mandals
3. Mahila Mandals
4. Others (specify)

**14. Meetings of the executive of the Panchayat :**

- (i) No. of meetings to be held in a year according to Act
- (ii) No. of meetings held in the preceding year
- (iii) No. of meetings adjourned for want of quorum during the preceding year.

**15. Income and expenditure of the Panchayat during 1958-59**

| (a) Income (Rs.)                                 | (b) Expenditure (Rs.)                          |
|--|--|
| (i) Balance carried over from previous year      | (i) Exp. on staff.                             |
| (ii) Govt. grant                                 | (ii) Other administrative exp.                 |
| (iii) Share of land revenue                      | (iii) Exp. on Agri. and Animal Husbandry       |
| (iv) Donations & contributions                   | (iv) Exp. on Education/Social Education.       |
| (v) Money realised by disposal of capital assets | (v) Exp. on Public Health & Sanitation.        |
| (vi) Income from community assets                | (vi) Exp. on communications.                   |
| (vii) Self-imposed taxes                         | (vii) Exp. on industries.                      |
| (viii) Compulsory taxes                          | (viii) Exp. on community buildings.            |
| (ix) Fines for contravention of rules            | (ix) Exp. on village planning & rural housing. |
| (x) Others                                       | (x) Others.                                    |

TOTAL

TOTAL

**(c) Arrears of collections**

- (i) Arrears of collection at the beginning of 58-59.
- (ii) Amount of taxes that fell due during 58-59.
- (iii) Amount collected during 1958-59.
- (d) Voluntary Labour (Shramdan), if any, during 1958-59.

Quantity (Man days)

Value (Rs.)

# PROGRAMME NOTES

HIGHLIGHTS of this year's celebrations of the Children's Day, on November 14, in Community Development Blocks included Bal Mandirs, Mahila Mandals, recreation centres, Parks, and schools.

More than 1,600 children's recreation centres, parks, playgrounds, libraries and Mahila Mandals are among the gifts made by the people of the community development blocks as a birthday present to the Prime Minister.

Of the 1,614 recreation centres, parks, playgrounds, etc., presented to the Prime Minister on his 70th birthday by the people of the community development blocks, Rajasthan accounts for 600; Uttar Pradesh for 308; Punjab 297; Kerala 157; Pondicherry 100; Bombay 84; Orissa 26; Assam 18; N.E.F.A. 12, Himachal Pradesh 11 and Andamans and Nicobar Islands 1.

Other gifts include 638 schools, 966 acres of land and Rs. 25,67,699 as voluntary cash contributions for setting up new, and extension of existing schools, and as miscellaneous gifts.

People of the community development blocks also invested over Rs. 2 lakhs in Small Savings Certificates in the name of children. A sum of Rs 50 lakhs was invested by the people of block areas in Rural Life Insurance for the benefit of children.

## ANDHRA PANCHAYATS

THE ANDHRA PRADESH, which has a total of 26,000 revenue villages has been fully covered by a network of panchayats. There are now a total of 15,000 panchayats in the State, 10,000 in the Andhra region and 5,000 in Telengana.

The finances of panchayats were previously poor, but now revenues have considerably improved and they are now in a position to take up programmes for provision of amenities like water supply, roads, bridges and culverts. The total revenue of panchayats in the 11 districts of Andhra

alone amounts to Rs. three crores annually. This fiscal year, Panchayats in Andhra would be executing works costing Rs. 40 lakhs, for which they would get half grant from the Government.

## STUDY TEAM

A TWO-MAN study team left India on November 15, to study for 10 weeks the working of local-self-government institutions in Yugoslavia, especially the communes. The team consists of Shri B. Mehta, IAS, Chief Secretary, Rajasthan Government, and Shri G. F. Mankodi, IAS, Panchayat Commissioner, in the Union Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation. The team's recommendations will help the implementation of the current programme of democratic decentralisation.

Another six-man study team left the country early November this year to study co-operative farming and marketing in Yugoslavia and Israel. The team is likely to take about three months in completing the study.

THE UNION MINISTRY of Community Development and Co-operation have requested the State Governments that Village Level Workers, and other Block staff, should not be appointed as collection agents for the Small Savings Scheme. State Governments which have already appointed them as agents have also been asked to arrange to discontinue the practice.

In place of Village Level Workers and other Block staff, it has been suggested, the Village Panchayat should be encouraged to act as agents of the Small Savings Scheme. This representative body, it is pointed out, is likely to be more effective as an agent of the Small Savings Scheme; the commission secured can also be utilized to augment its funds for community benefit. For encouraging the Small Savings movement, the vil-

lage Panchayat may set up a sub-committee, if considered necessary.

THE MINISTRY OF Community Development and Cooperation have asked the State Governments that quarters yet to be constructed for Village Level Workers should serve as model houses for the villagers. A similar policy is to be adopted in respect of schools and quarters for school teachers.

The Union Ministry have always stressed upon the State Governments that buildings constructed in the Development Blocks should not only fit in with the local environments but also be simple in design and execution. New specifications for houses in rural areas are to be devised for each region. These specifications may not, however, be rigidly adhered to and local adaptation permitted wherever necessary.

THE SEVENTH COURSE of Orientation Training at the existing seven Centres commenced on 3rd December, 1959 and will end on 16th January, 1960. The job course of the Block Development Officers will continue thereafter up to 29-2-1960. The States/Administrations have been allotted seats on the basis of requirements of the trained Block Development Officers *vis-a-vis* the number of Blocks allotted to them or according to specific requests from the State Governments. Non-officials like M.L.As, Presidents of the Block Development Committees/Panchayat Samitis and others who can follow lectures in English have also been allotted seats on State-wise basis.

REPORTS FROM several districts in Rajasthan indicate that the panchayat samitis have undertaken with vigour and enthusiasm new responsibilities that devolved on them as a result of the new pattern of democratic decentralisation. The special job which the chairman of the samiti will have to own in this new set-up is activation of inactive panchayats and a general vigil on their functioning. He will have to make tours of his block, meet sarpanches and officials



and keep up the drive for attainment of targets. The monthly targets will form part of the annual and Five-Year plans of the particular block which in their turn will be dovetailed into the State Plan.

THE MYSORE State Government has a programme of starting service Co-operatives to cover the entire 25,000 villages in Mysore during the Second Plan. Already about 13,000 villages have been reached and arrangements are being made to start societies to cover the remaining villages. During the last year, out of Rs. 8 crores lent through societies 95 per cent has been recovered. The lending capacity of the co-operative societies is being sought to be increased to Rs. 12 crores.

THE PUNJAB GOVERNMENT has appointed a nine-man committee consisting of four officials and five non-officials to suggest modifications in the co-operative law, rules and procedure to make them simpler. The committee is expected to submit its report within three months.

THE CENTRAL INSTITUTE of Study and Research in Community Development at its first meeting held recently recommended that the orientation courses held by it should be attended amongst others by Ministers, University professors, Development Commissioners, Head of Technical Departments and Presidents of Zila Parishads. The meeting also approved a research project for observation and analysis of the process of democratic decentralisation in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh so that mistakes, if any, are corrected in time. Another project approved was a study of the Village Level Workers' role and case study of agricultural research demonstration with a view to identify the common characteristics of different groups of Village Level Workers. It was decided to set up a clearing house of information on Community Development which should not only keep abreast of the documentation on develop-

ment but also provide bibliographical service.

ENCOURAGING REPORT has been received of the good work done by the 20 *ad hoc* Panchayat Samitis, one in each district formed in Andhra Pradesh, as an experiment in democratic decentralisation prior to the passage of the Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads Act. The average attendance at meetings of various Samitis and Standing Committees was over 75 per cent and in fact better than that of the Advisory Committees in the rest of the Blocks. Agriculture, health and education were given special attention. In one Block, as much as 60 per cent of paddy cultivation had been brought under the Japanese method of cultivation. In another place, over 800 acres of land was brought under ragi cultivation where previously such cultivation was rare. Many Blocks had purchased appliances for fighting pests and put them to excellent use. Satisfactory progress was made in the field of education too. In one Block over 40 buildings were made available by the villages for locating elementary schools. Public contributions on the whole, were on a larger scale in the areas where Panchayat Samitis were set up than in the rest of the blocks.

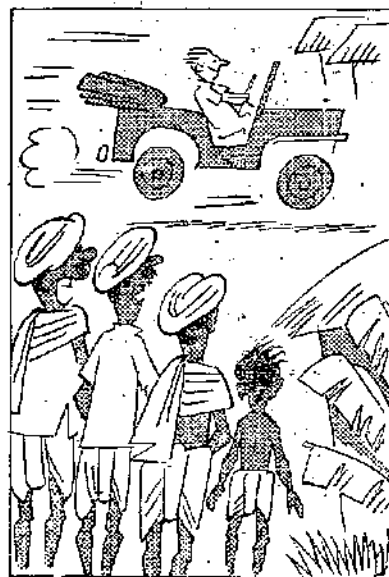
WITH THE enforcement of the Village Panchayats and Local Boards Act on November 1, Mysore State has launched on its scheme of democratic decentralisation of administration. The new scheme envisages elected Panchayats for villages or groups of villages with a population of not less than 1,500 persons, elected Taluka Boards and District Development Councils. The Mysore Scheme has several unique features. For the first time in India, liaison is being established between the revenue and developmental wings at the village level. Trained persons would be appointed to serve both as Panchayat Secretaries and village Accountants. Secondly, 60 per cent of the land revenue would be placed at the disposal of the village Panchayats and Taluka Boards. A local self Government cadre will be constituted

for providing the necessary personnel to run the scheme.

OVER 75,000 ACRES of land are held in Uttar Pradesh by 339 cooperative farms with a total membership of 8,022 and a share capital of Rs. 17,38,981. Of these societies 224 are joint farming societies, 17 collective farming societies, one tenant farming and 97 better farming societies. As many as 24 cooperative farming societies have been registered against a target of 20 societies for the whole of the current year.

THE RADIO Rural Forum programme was inaugurated on 17th November by the Minister for Community Development and Cooperation. The Forum will enable the rural people throughout the country to profit and advance by mutual exchange of views and solutions of common problems affecting them.

#### MODERN PROVERBS



"Spare the jeep and spoil the BDO."



## OUR POST BOX

(Readers' questions are answered in these columns by Vidur)

**Shyam Sunder (West Bengal):—** Are the village Panchayats intended to be the natural and primary units of Local Self-Government or as mere agencies of the Government for planning and development?

**Answer:—** They are to be both. The Village Panchayats will function as the Government of the people at the village level. They are to be treated in their own sphere on a par with the Assembly at the State level or the Parliament at the Centre. If the Panchayats were to be treated as mere agents for collecting revenue or money under the Small Savings Scheme or for ensuring the fulfilment of agricultural and other development targets handed from above, their contribution to rural life will be negligible.

### PARTY SYSTEM

**Mohan Singh, (Punjab):—** The success of the scheme of democratic decentralisation depends on the calibre of the elected Panches. Does not the present system of elections, fought on a party basis, run counter to this objective?

**Answer:—** There is no doubt that the present party system as it may be formed in rural areas may suffer from many weaknesses. It would of course be best if we could have Panches unanimously chosen by the people. But in practice, it is not possible to achieve such unanimity. The next best alternative is to have the elections free from caste, communal or sectarian outlook. It is time that we concede to our people the right to make their own mistakes. At the village level elections, the personalities of the candidates are too well-known to be mistaken

or confused by extraneous considerations and therefore the selection would be more thorough and justified. The hullabulloo created by the 'party walas' will not cut much ice in the face of the personality of the candidate. In fact, the village elections will prove to be the real touchstone of the people's feelings and political parties would not dare to face the people without some concrete achievements to their credit. Democracy will thus have a truer meaning and a broader base.

### THE TWO WINGS

**Krishnappa (Mysore):—** What will be the relationship between the Panchayats and the Cooperatives? What steps have been taken to ensure that there is no conflict between the two?

**Answer:—** The Panchayats and the Cooperatives represent the political and the economic wings of the village democracy. Their managements and staff are independent of each other. But as the Panchayat is the elected sovereign body of the village, it is responsible for all matters concerning the welfare and development of the village, including the promotion of economic and cooperative activities. But the Panchayat will have no power to interfere in the day-to-day working of the Cooperative just as the latter will have no right to call into question the working of a Panchayat. And yet the chances of a conflict between them cannot be wholly ruled out. In order to guard against such a situation, it has been suggested by some that an Advisory Committee consisting of the Presidents, Secretaries and the executive officials of the two bodies may be set up.

### NEW SOURCES

**Des Ram, (Delhi):—** Now that the Panchayats are being entrusted with the responsibility of development work, what assistance—financial or otherwise is proposed to be given to them in order to help them discharge their duties well?

**Answer:—** The allotments in the annual budget placed at the disposal of the various departments including the Community Development will be pooled together and earmarked for Blocks and villages at the meetings of the Zila Parishad and the Block Samitis respectively. This amount will then be placed at the disposal of each village Panchayat to be spent on items of development approved by the Block Samiti. Besides this, a sizable portion of the land revenue will also be allotted to these bodies. It is understood that the Mysore Government has allowed 60 per cent of the land revenue to the Panchayats. In order to strengthen the internal resources, the Panchayats are being delegated powers to levy and collect different types of taxes. They are being invested with ownership rights of community assets such as buildings, common lands, land under cultivation, quarries, fish ponds etc., which are fruitful sources of village income. Other measures taken in this respect include Study tours and camps. These are being held to educate the village representatives for enabling them to discharge their new functions and responsibilities properly. A separate local self-Government cadre comprising of officials at the village level like the school teacher, the Panchayat Secretary, the village level workers and others is also being formed. This will be under the administrative control of the Block Samitis and Panchayats.

### NO TUSSLE

**Arjun Bhutani (Rajasthan):—** Will not the creation of a Block Samiti between Zila Parishad and the Village Panchayat result in a constant tug-of-war between the Samiti and the Panchayat?

**Answer:—** Fears regarding the possible clash between the Block Samiti and the Panchayat seem to be premature and groundless for their spheres of activities are clearly demarcated. They are complementary

to each other. Under the C.D. Programme, the Block has been adopted as the administrative unit for developmental activities. Being poorly equipped to face their new responsibilities, the Panchayats need the help and guidance of the Block Samiti. The chosen representatives of the Block area, assisted by the B.D.O. and the extension staff, is in a pivotal position to render that service. But there is nothing sacrosanct about these Committees at various levels and the matter has been left open for the States to take necessary steps in the matter suiting the local needs. In a country of our size, there is plenty of scope for trying such administrative experiments and in the end to adopt what suits one best. In fact, States like Bombay, Mysore and Bengal are not in favour of setting up Block Samitis at this stage.

#### NO EMPIRE

**V. Ramaswami (Madras):**—There is a feeling in certain quarters that after the ushering in of the new scheme of democratic decentralisation, the C.D. Programme has been given a "safe burial" in as much as the responsibility for doing or not doing anything in the field of development will now rest with the Panchayat and not the Community Development department. Would you agree with this view?

**Answer:**—To say that the C.D. Programme will be buried and the C.D. staff will go to sleep once the torch has been passed on to the Panchayats is to misunderstand things completely. The C.D. staff will have to bear the cross till the ultimate objective of rural development in all its aspects is achieved. This is no easy task. It involves comparatively bigger responsibilities. The success of the programme will now be judged by what the Panchayats do. There is nothing wrong in entrusting the Panchayats with the responsibility for carrying on development activities. In fact the Ministry of Community Development has never been under any illusion about its ultimate objective. It has never sought to build up an empire of its own.

#### WRONG ASSUMPTION

**L. N. Gupta (U.P.):**—Don't you agree that 25 per cent of the Block

Funds which are spent on staff salary are a dead weight on the programme?

**Answer:**—This is an oft-repeated criticism but is not correct and is based on a misunderstanding of facts. Actually most of the staff employed in the C.D. Blocks is not involved in administration but engaged in service programme of assistance and guidance to rural people, and therefore, the same cannot be regarded as an overhead administrative charge.

#### SILTED TANKS

**Y. Srinivasaiah, (Andhra Pradesh):**—How is it that the C.D. Programme which laid so much stress on approach roads has completely missed the more urgent need for renovating the silted tanks which has played an important role in the village life through the past centuries?

**Answer:**—The need for understanding the renovation of silted tanks was always recognised in the programme. In several blocks the activity of deepening the silted tanks has been carried out as part of the Shramdan drive by the villagers. However, this is expected to be carried out in a more systematic and thorough manner after the transfer of such works to Panchayats which are now being made increasingly responsible for developmental activities under the scheme of democratic decentralisation.

#### TELL-TALE STATISTICS

**G. S. Joshi (M.P.):**—Is it ever realised by those in authority that the statistics pertaining to achievements in the C.D. Blocks, particularly the People's contribution for the evaluation of which there are no uniform and systematic norms and records, are likely to be grossly exaggerated for obvious reasons and therefore, are unreliable?

**Answer:**—The inadequacy of our statistics in general is realised by everybody. Under the C.D. programme, necessary precautions are taken to ensure the correctness and soundness of the statistics. A separate Directorate known as the Administrative Intelligence has been set up both at the Central and State levels. Besides, Programme Assistants have been appointed at the Block level to help collect and sift the material for statistics. Although this staff is inadequate to meet the needs of the situation, yet every effort is made to ensure that the statistics have uniform and sound basis. So far as the evaluation of the people's contribution is concerned, there are practical difficulties in the way of arriving at correct figures. It is expected that with the devolution of powers to the Panchayats and the appointment of literate persons to work as secretaries of these panchayats, it will be possible to keep a more systematic and complete account of the work done voluntarily by the people.

### RESULTS OF THE ARTICLE CONTEST ON

### "THE SECOND FRONT"

We are glad to announce the results of the Article Contest on "The Second Front", details of which were published in Kurukshetra of March, 1959. Response in terms of the number and standard of entries this time has not been quite heartening. Save the three entries which have won the first three prizes, no other entry has been considered to be of sufficient merit to win either a fourth prize or a letter of commendation. The winners of the first three prizes are as follows:—

#### FIRST PRIZE

Shri P. R. Dubhashi

— Deputy Development Commissioner,  
Planning & Development Department,  
Bangalore, Mysore State.

#### SECOND PRIZE

Shri B. B. Mohanty

— District Social Education Organiser,  
Dehenkanal, P.O. Angul, Orissa.

#### THIRD PRIZE

Shri B. S. Someswaraiyah

— Gram Sevak, Development Block Stage I,  
Malur Taluk, P.O. Kudenur, Kolar District, Mysore.

# THE LAST PAGE

MANY HAVE been looking at this programme from far and near. Evaluations have been attempted from many levels. These evaluations act as a spur to fresh activity and as an incentive to better performance. They provide a halting place from which the Project workers can have a new look at their field and gain a new insight into their problems. They also provide confirmation, provoke comment and offer consolation in various degrees to field workers all over the country. One such Evaluation Report has recently been issued by the United Nations Evaluation Mission which toured this country for nearly three months studying the programme. (This is the third U. N. Report on India, the two previous ones being issued in 1953 and 1957.)

The Report of the U.N. Mission contains useful suggestions. It attempts a bird's-eye-view of the total programme. The merit of the latest U.N. Report lies in the fact that development problems are viewed as practical problems to be solved here and now.

*Are we moving too fast?* The U.N. Mission is positive that our rate of expansion is too fast and unrealistic which can only multiply existing difficulties and create illusory coverage achievements. It suggests that future expansion should proceed at the rate accepted for 1959, namely, 300 Blocks and that additional efforts should be concentrated on consolidating the existing Blocks. In its opinion, the rate at which this expansion

takes place will be crucial to the ultimate success of the programme.

*How efficient are we?* A weak spot, which no previous report had touched specifically, refers to the need for weeding out inefficient and undesirable personnel which, according to the Mission, is estimated at as much as 25 per cent of the total in some States. We are not unaware of criticisms regarding the efficiency of our personnel. Ultimately this programme will be saved or killed by the level of efficiency represented by our field workers. The Mission's warning in this respect should serve as an eye-opener to those who have taken for granted that the conversion of a Police State into a Welfare State would offer no special problems. The Mission pleads for some kind of drastic change involving a more alert and open mind among the community development officials.

*How good is the Training Scheme?* According to the Mission, probably no single aspect of Community Development work in India has received more attention than the training schemes. The Mission feels that other countries should profit by the Indian experience in the field of the training programme. And yet everything does not depend on training, for some of the most penetrating and constructive thinking about Community Development, says the Report, has come from people who have not had specific training in the scheme.

*Is there need for annual evaluation?* The Mission feels that

the programme has now attained a stage when its pattern of administration and content should not be subjected to annual scrutiny.

*Are we top-heavy?* The Mission makes a clear distinction between purely administrative services on the one hand and the technical or the programme services made available to the people on the other. It does not regard the salaries of the Block staff which constitute 25 per cent of the Block fund as an over-head administrative charge because most of the staff is not involved in administration but is engaged in giving technical assistance and guidance to the villagers.

*Village self-sufficiency:* The Mission feels that India must gradually accept the concept of village self-sufficiency and relate its rural improvement programme to the industrial development of the country as a whole under the Five Year Plans. It also warns against "crafts making use of subsidies to preserve out-moded methods".

According to the Mission, lines of communication between the top level and the village level exist administratively, but the flow of new thinking from top to bottom seems blocked. In other words, "there is too much rigidity in the States in the application of Community Development programmes sent out by the Centre."

The Report takes in its stride fundamental issues side by side with topical problems which no serious student of Community Development can afford to miss.

—D.R.

# The mice that ate iron

(A TALE FROM THE PANCHATANTRA)

NATUKA was a merchant who lost all his money and left home to do business in a foreign country. Before he left, he went to his friend Lakshman and said: 'Please keep this pair of scales for me until I return. I do not wish to sell it, because it has been in the family for many years.' Then he departed.

In a short time, Natuka made a lot of money and returned to his native city. Going to Lakshman, he said: 'Thank you for keeping my scales. May I have them back now?'

'Your scales have been eaten up by mice,' replied his friend.

'How can mice devour such a huge pair of scales?' cried Natuka angrily. 'It weighed 250 seers.'

'There are a great many mice in my house. Surely 250 seers are not too much for so many of them.'

Natuka began to think. 'Well,' he said with a smile, 'it's not your fault. It's just my bad luck. Now, I want to go and bathe in the river. Will you please send your son with me to carry my bathing things?' Lakshman could not refuse this simple request.

On their way back from the river, Natuka thrust the boy into a cave and blocked the entrance with a great rock. He then returned to Lakshman's house. 'Where is my boy?' asked Lakshman.

'A great hawk swooped down and carried him off from the river bank,' explained Natuka slyly.

'You liar! How can a hawk carry off a fifteen-year old boy?'

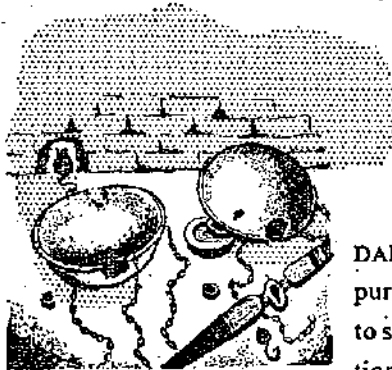
'If mice can eat iron scales weighing 250 seers, surely a hawk can carry off a boy of fifteen: Listen to me, Lakshman! If you want your son, give me my scales.'

Natuka got his scales.

**MORAL:** Whoever has Truth on his side can always expose a falsehood. Take Vanaspati for instance.

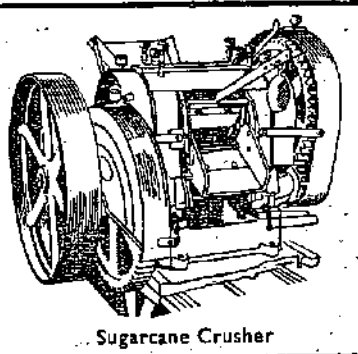
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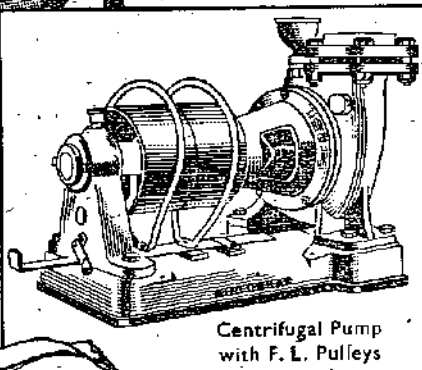


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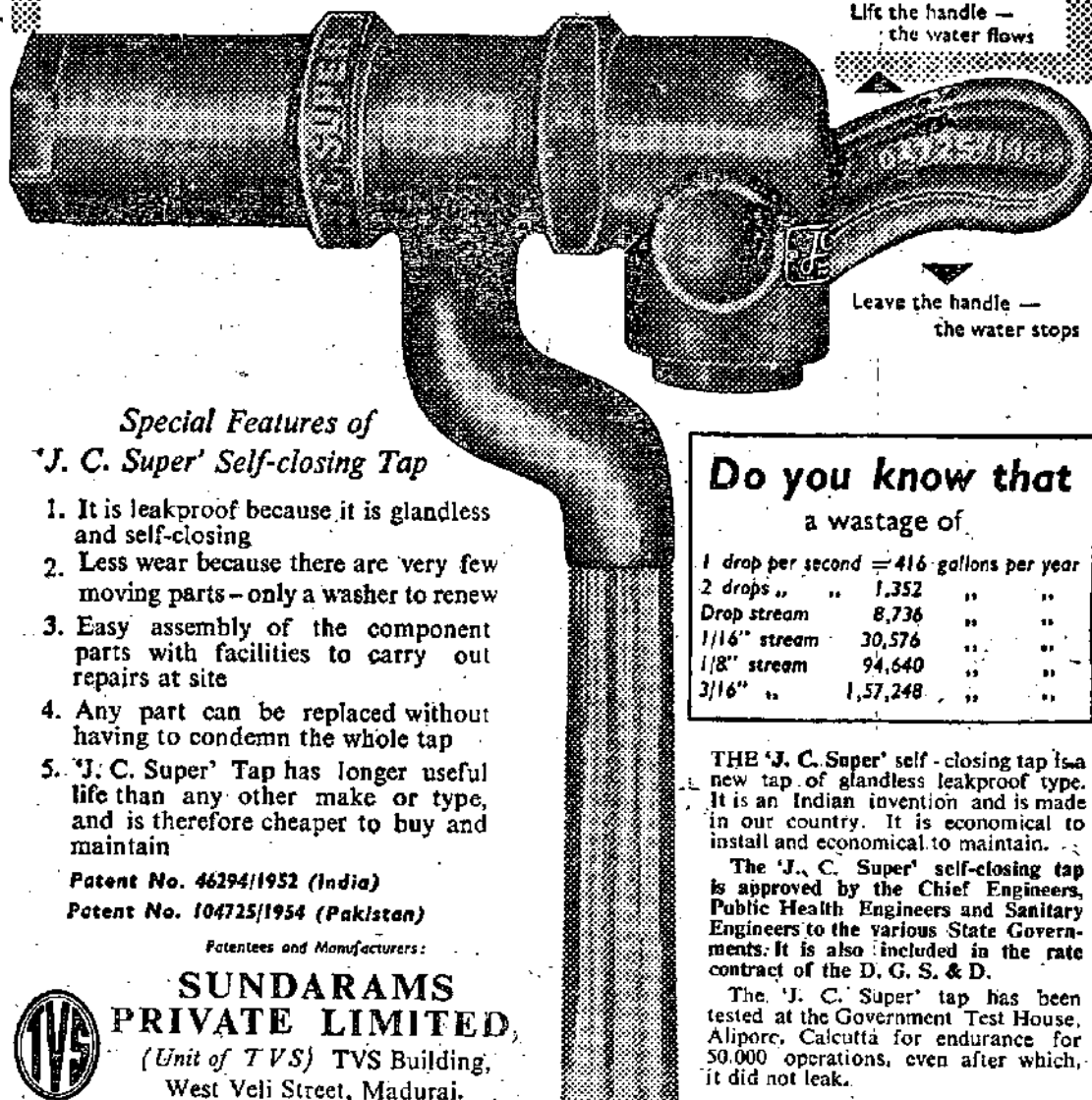
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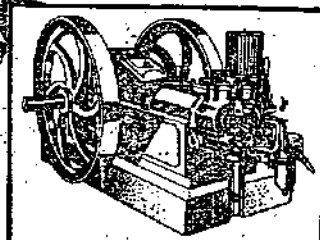


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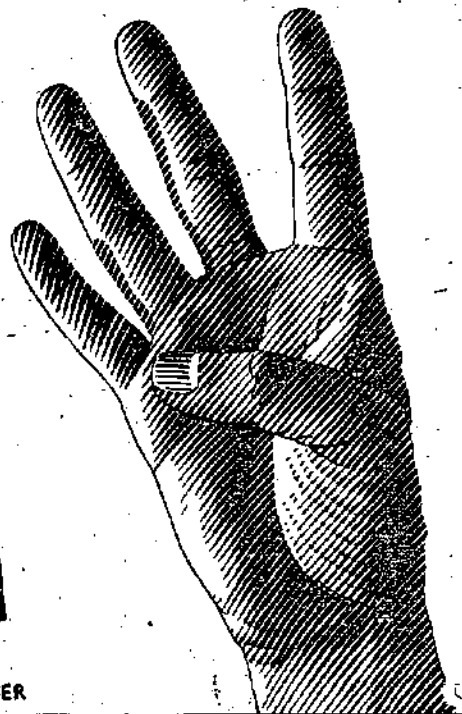
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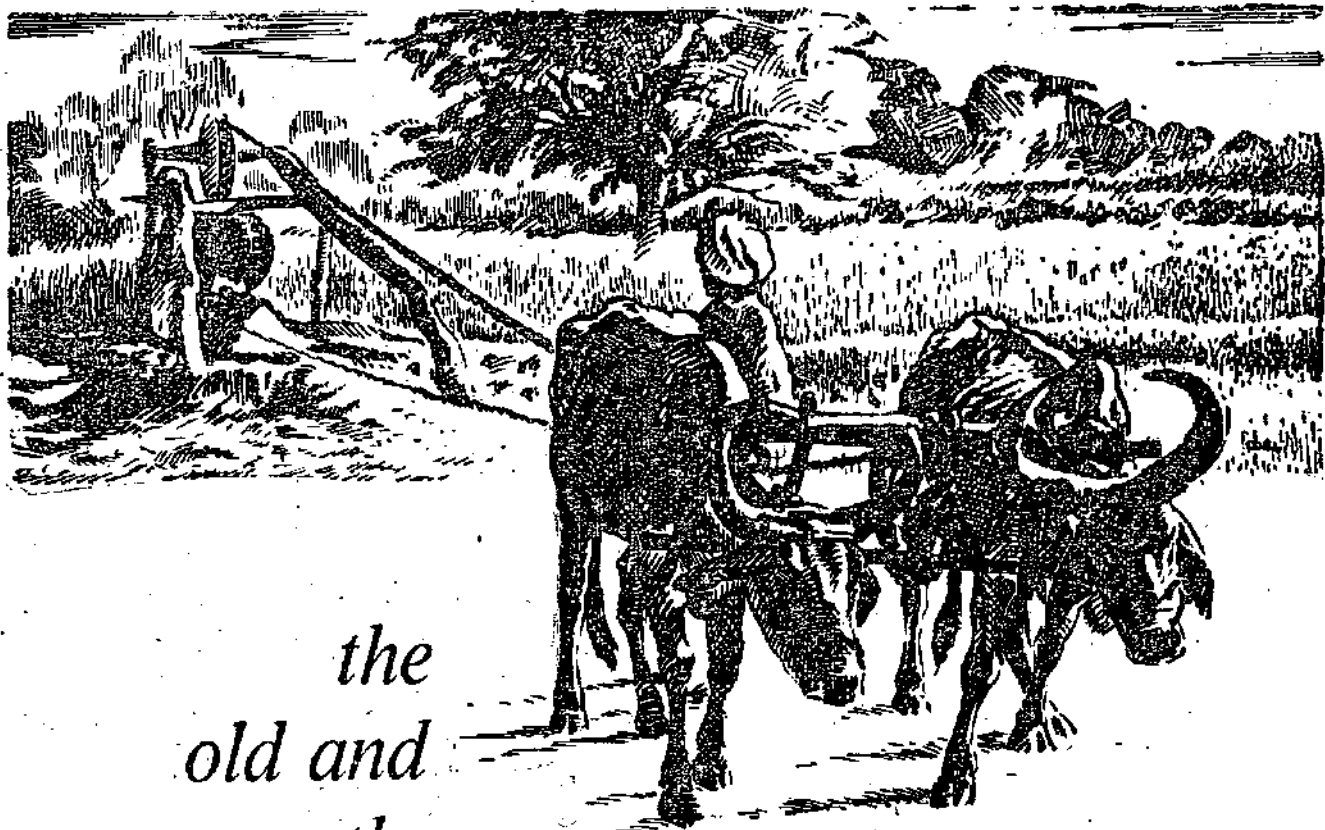
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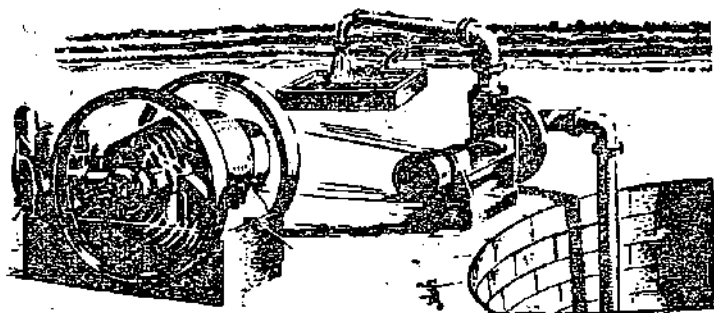
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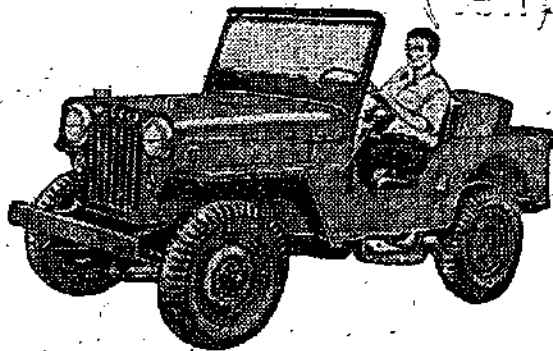
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M/s. Bihar Farm Equipments, Patna. M/s. Hirakud Automobiles, Sambalpur. M/s. India Garage, Bangalore. M/s. Inland & Overseas Enterprises, Calcutta (for Bhutan, Nepal and Sikkim). M/s. Jammu & Kashmir Motor Corporation, Srinagar. M/s. Metro Motors (Kathiawar) Private Ltd., Rajkot. M/s. Narain Automobiles, Lucknow. M/s. Narbheram & Co. Private Ltd., Jamshedpur. M/s. Patnaik & Co., Cuttack. M/s. Provincial Automobile Co., Nagpur. M/s. Provincial Automobiles (M.P.), Durg (Madhya Pradesh). M/s. Sanghi Brothers Private Ltd., Indore. M/s. Sundaram Motors Private Ltd., Madras. M/s. Supreme Motors Private Ltd., Chandigarh & Delhi. M/s. T. V. Sundram Iyengar & Sons Private Ltd., Madurai. M/s. United Motors of Rajasthan, Jaipur. M/s. Walford Transport Ltd., Calcutta (Branches: Dibrugarh and Siliguri) and over 100 sub-dealers throughout the country.



# Plan(ned) Progress

